

## Ken Bragg

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**Question:** The first thing I'd like to do is just get your name and the correct spelling on tape if I could do that?

**Answer:** My name is Ken Bragg.

**Question:** And you served in the navy.

**Answer:** Yes, I was in the naval reserve for three years and two months on active duty and I served in the reserves for about three years after the war and took a couple of three reserve cruises up to Alaska.

**Question:** And you grew up in the Olympia, Rochester area?

**Answer:** Yes, I grew up in Rochester on a little tiny farm there. My father worked on the Union Pacific Railroad.

**Question:** I will start real quickly, sort of a Readers Digest background how you got in the service. You got in before Pearl Harbor or after?

**Answer:** I was still in high school on December 7<sup>th</sup>. I remember standing down on 4<sup>th</sup> street here and they didn't know when we were going to be attacked on the mainland and so they took all the troops out of Fort Lewis and ran them all through Olympia. There was no freeway so it blocked the whole city for about twelve hours while they got all the troops out from Fort Lewis to the beach at Aberdeen. That was my first reaction to what was happening, but I was a junior I think in high school, or something.

**Question:** See, I didn't know that they?

**Answer:** So then after, I wanted to get into the navy, and so I tried once and they said I had flat feet. I tried for this V-12 program which was officer training program in the navy. And so I went back and went to a podiatrist and went through a lot of pain trying to build up a natural congenital arch and I went back three months later and the needs of the navy had changed and they didn't even look at my feet, but I got in the navy. I went to (inaudible) Municipal University for two quick semesters. I'd had two years of college so they gave me one more year and then went to Columbia's 90-Day Wonder Midshipman's School. Then I went down to Miami to the anti-submarine Warfare School. We trained with some Russian officers incidentally because we were allies with the Russians in the Atlantic, not in the Pacific and that incidentally I became an assistant communication officer responsible for all the codes on the ship and that became very important about the Russians because when we went through the Panama Canal, we were commissioned on the East Coast we had to change all the codes and I had to take a 45 and go ashore with somebody and we'd burn them and then get back with the new ones. Got back aboard ship and as we came up from the canal up to San Diego why I discovered one of the codes is missing, and as a young officer I was panicked you know and I had to go tell the Captain. We received something in this one we can't you know he relaxed me.

**Question:** And you're still a kid at this point?

**Answer:** I think I'm twenty, yea twenty years old, but yea I was officer of the deck on this ship of 225 people, officer of the deck under way, under age twenty, and I thought that was pretty young and yet when we hold reunions I found there were seventeen year olds and so on down in the fire room. They had no idea what the mission of the ship was or what we were doing and they'd carry out their duties in their narrow context and I really respected that

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when I found out. When we were at the reunions I would tell them about what we were doing and they had no idea what we were doing because they weren't part of that intelligence operation you know management of the ship.

**Question:** I never thought about that. Yea, they were pretty isolated down there.

**Answer:** Yea, yea, after the battles that we went through they'd come up and what happened? They were very eager to see where the damage was and what happened.

**Question:** Now you the name of your ship again that you were on?

**Answer:** It was the USS Register. Interestingly it was named after Lieutenant Commander Register who was entombed on the Arizona and so that was in fact at the reunions his wife, yes his wife, would come to the reunions for years and has now passed away, but his son, he has a son and a daughter, and they still come to the reunion.

**Question:** Was it a fairly new ship when you got on it or had it?

**Answer:** Oh no it was brand new, in fact I was sent to Charleston where it was built two months ahead of time to be in charge of sort of the pre-commissioning detail as far as all the records on the ship was concerned. You see all the orders coming down from the commands would be addressed to the ship before it was ever commissioned. All of this stuff was in boxes and I had to help get it ready to function and its, but when they post the first watch on a commission ship they say, let's see what do they say, come to life USS Register come to life,. And from then on 24 hours forever there is somebody on guard watching or manning, even in port, there is somebody you know on the ship.

**Question:** Wow, I've never thought about that because everybody I've talked to so far talked about some of the rust buckets they were on and things like that early in the war.

**Question:** Well, we went to a shake down.. to Bermuda because that is where the Labrador current and the Gulf Stream kind of come together and so you have some turbulent water there and that's good for the experience of testing a ship. So you know we had, fueling at sea was the most, was one of the toughest, we went apart too far and parted the line at one point with all the oil and stuff, fuel oil, but it was a good experience. Then we went back and went through the canal and by this time, this was in January, 1945, and by the time we got through shakedown and everything it was into April and that was after the invasion at Okinawa had already occurred. And they were losing so many ships that we were just, they were just getting us out as soon as they possibly could. There were only about 9 people on the ship that had ever been to sea before and it was a great task for the captain to try to train this crew and head right straight for the combat zone. And we stopped at Pearl Harbor, Pearl, and at Maui we trained underwater demolition teams which is what we were designed to carry that's why we were made into a.. from a destroyer escort converted to a high speed transport so we could have these four LCV boats. So we trained at Maui, and then went directly on to Okinawa and on the way out the captain would walk around at night and yell man overboard starboard side or maybe he wouldn't say what side it was and see how the officer of the deck would react. If a man goes over the starboard side you turn to the starboard, you turn towards the right, so the screws would spin around and avoid the man that is the theory of it. And he would pull all kinds of stunts like this and finally he called the officers together in the ward room one night and he said I know you think I'm the biggest son of a bitch in the world, but he said I want you to be alive ten years from now to call me that. And that was leadership. That's leadership.

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**Question:** Obviously he had been, he knew.. Now today when you say Okinawa, I know Okinawa. I mean I know in history books.

**Answer:** Well, I don't know how many miles.. it is part of Japan of course. It is a special island south of Japan the main islands of Honshu and so on. It's maybe 200 miles, 300 miles south of there. It's and it's.. That was the last island we thought we had to have before we could invade Japan.

**Question:** Now as a twenty year old kid did you know what Okinawa was or what it was or?

**Answer:** Well, I didn't need to know, I wasn't the navigator. Yea, I knew what it was, I mean I knew what the charts are, and as officer of the deck you have to know where the ship is while you are on duty. But Okinawa was a very important battle. It was at the time when Japan knew they were losing apparently, or in desperation, they decided to organize the kamikaze group and they dumped about 4,000 planes into Okinawa and we destroyed the Japanese air force is what we did. In doing so the Japanese killed about 5,000 of our sailors and sunk 232 ships and damaged about 150 more, they couldn't be repaired. So it was a major effort. What, I guess I could say what happened at Okinawa on the ship I was on, we, as assistant communications officer, when we got to Okinawa, I went over to the captain to the people that were giving us the orders on what to do and they assigned us picket station 13 which meant we were out a few miles from Okinawa.

They had about 26 of these picket ships and we would do a figure 8 out there. And we were in Baker 13 as it was called. It was off of Kameretto?? Where Ernie Pile was killed, incidentally. And they told us you'll have to stay out there or you'll get hit and so we, there were some ships that had to stay there 3-4 weeks before they got hit, but we were very fortunate, we got hit in, very fortunate, in 3 hours. And there were four planes came out of the sun, the sun was low right at sunset. They came right out of the sun to avoid sight detection, we picked them up by radar, and they spun around and made a four pronged attack on us. We knocked down three of them and one of them hit us coming in from the bow, and the.. and he missed the bridge which is what he was apparently aiming for, and he missed the mast, and he hit the king post.

We had a little king post in the back to load cargo into a little hatch in the fantail there. He hit that and he had a bomb, I saw it, and I saw him, but he hit this king post, and this king post kind of diverted the plane up a little bit. And most of it went over the side and the bomb hit.. made a big dent in the deck but did not explode. And it left about a wing aboard and we all got souvenir pieces off of this wing but there were only I think eight purple hearts and no fatalities so we miraculously escaped. I felt very fortunate because that was my battle station to take charge of six 50 caliber machine guns we had mounted.. because.. they weren't designed for the ship but we got them out of the scrap pile at Pearl we read the battle reports and these kamikaze's were aware that we didn't have a 5" gun to make room for these four LCVP's that we had.. landing craft. And so we used those and that was my job.

So when the plane hit of course there were some injuries of my people. And one fellow the way these were manned in those days was you were strapped in a 50 caliber machine gun like handle bars on a bicycle you know, and this fellow was just frozen. I remember walking over and kind of taking his hand off the bar, he was in terror, he was just frozen, then there were some injured and being a good ensign and I didn't have experience to know when to break a rule and when not to break rules so I was very brittle and the crew didn't like me. The captain liked me. The crew didn't like me, I knew that because I wasn't able to be mature enough to do anything but play it by the book, it's the only thing I could do. I knew this and I didn't like it. I knew that was the role I was in so I looked around, and instead of saying let's take care of the people injured I said reload the guns and because the magazines were empty and we had to get some from below. So you always think of the ship. You always try to get ready for

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the next attack and that changed the whole psychology, their attitude towards me. I knew it immediately that they believed in me at that point, the moment I gave that order.

**Question:** There's a lot of questions that I have because you have a different perspective than a lot of people. In reading your article you talked about being on the fantail with the Bibles given from a church here in Olympia.

**Answer:** Oh yes, we weren't big enough a ship to have a chaplain, and I was a member of the United Churches here. In fact I was teaching a Sunday school class there, and when I went to war, then Governor Langley was a member of that church and he took over my Sunday school class. That was quite significant. And so when I got to Norfolk.. the major part of our crew was trained at Norfolk. And so I was there for a little while, and while there got an organ, a hand pumped organ, little tiny thing. And I let the United Churches know that we needed some hymnals. They sent us some little tiny hymnals just perfect for the purpose. And that is what that was about and I alternated with the supply officer, when I was on watch why he would conduct the service and vice versa, well the supply officer didn't really stand watches but.. I was also responsible for decoding messages and that was a laborious thing and I would have to con the supply officer into, coax him into helping me, because they were under the direction of the bureau of supplies or the medical department and in certain respects they couldn't be ordered to do anything, you know, they were staff rather than line and anyway I got help from them in helping me decode these messages.

**Question:** How did these messages come in?

**Answer:** There were two kinds of things. Some of them were cipher, some of them were codes but the main thing was a device they had at that time which was like a typewriter. It had wheels in it and every month you'd change the wheels and you'd type the. At that time all the messages came in by what they called Fox broadcast and we had twelve radio operators, 5% of the crew were radio operators, now there aren't any operators, it comes in automatically it is all decoded automatically. But because we didn't know that since we couldn't receipt for the broadcast because of the war the radio operators had to capture all the headings and they would have to be decoded to see if the message was address to us or something like that. So anyway the little place where I had to work was a little, in the back of the radio shack was a little tiny door and a little tiny room just wide enough for this typewriter and this chair and it was a perfect place to get sea sick because you couldn't see any orientation. So I would have to take some crackers and some water in there to do my job to keep from getting too seasick and that is the way you would type this stuff out.

**Question:** So when it came in as code did it come in as sentences?

**Answer:** No five er five.. each section was five characters, five letters.

**Question:** And the typewriter with the reels if you put those letters in

**Answer:** They would come out English.

**Question:** Yeah With seasickness that doesn't sound like a lot of fun in a little room on a hot day.

**Answer:** I didn't get seasick, well I usually felt squeamish for a couple three days when we'd leave port but after that it was alright. But in that kind of cramped quarter with dry air it's not good.

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**Question:** When you go on a ship today, are there certain smells that still remind you of navy and the ship.

**Answer:** Oh sure, sure, things have changed of course, the accommodations are better now. But it is still steel.. metal decks.. and they get hot when the sun hits them and you know. I remember going through the Panama Canal, through Culebra Cut There where incidentally that is fresh water in Lake Gatun is it, anyway the boat rose about.. or sunk about five inches in the water. You know, it's less buoyant in fresh water than in salt water, that was kind of interesting, but anyway it was very hot. Sun baking that cut, rock and stuff, sun just radiated back I remember that.

**Question:** What exactly is an APD?

**Answer:** Well, it's an auxiliary personnel transport.. or something, I guess I don't remember exactly. But it was a converted destroyer escort. Which meant it was around.. displaced 3,000 tons or something, a little over 300 feet long and then it was converted by taking off as I said the after 5" gun and putting on the four.. the boat deck with four LCVP's, two on port and starboard. And these were designed to launch troops in advance of invasions to reconnoiter and to do sabotage. And we were equipped to carry about 150 of these troops. Our war time compliment was about 225 ships.. ships company.

**Question:** And were those usually marines that you would take in?

**Answer:** No I don't think.. we just trained we never actually participated in an invasion because we were right at the tail end of the war but that is the way we were designed. We did escort work mainly and let's see what was the question?

**Question:** My mind goes blank. I was wondering if it was marines that?

**Answer:** No, it would have been army I guess, yes army. Yes, I think that was the people that were doing that kind of work.

**Question:** Now you described the kamikaze attack. Can you tell me what was going on in your head? I mean are you afraid or?

**Answer:** No, you are not afraid in the sense that it stops you from doing your work. Because it's obvious you want to get those guns firing and that is to save the ship and your own life, but afterwards, I remember.. as long as we were still afloat, it was great though we had some injured. But afterwards, I was off watch and I went down and went up to the wardrobe to get some food and my stomach was just in knots. Actually physically it just kind of turned like a stomach cramp and it was due to the terror or the shock. You know you could see the bullets coming at you and then of course when the kamikaze came in why that looked like that was the end.

**Question:** Cause that is a pretty good sized plane and your close enough you said you could see the person so to me it sounds like that big object is coming at you fairly fast and?

**Answer:** Yea, like I said 2-300 I don't know, probably 250, I don't know how fast they going but they weren't going real fast like modern planes. But there were two cables attached to this king post and they were snapped and my position was right kind of in the middle amidships. And I went out there the next day I saw the marking of the cable on the deck on either side so apparently those cables came right beside me so I had a miraculous escape. I was very happy that I didn't get a Purple Heart.

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**Question:** How do you think you, 'cause I think about this with all that is happening now with some of the young kids that we are sending over there and I always wonder. I was in-between wars; I never had to face it. How do you get through it?

**Answer:** I think the tough one was the Vietnam war where half the country realized that war should never have been fought and so they didn't get the backing. In the case of World War II it was so obvious that we had to fight and win there wasn't any question, what had happened, of course World War II went on for six years; we only participated in four of it, and so it was well underway. They even had a draft I think in 1940 or something so Roosevelt was trying to move the country in the direction of beyond neutrality but the country wanted to be isolationist and neutral. And so he did quite a good job of bringing the congress along the best he could, you know he gave 50 old destroyers from World War I to Great Britain and we had the Lend-Lease Program for Russia, and I think that was a very important thing. We don't realize but there were 20 million Russians died in World War II, more than any other country, and I think we lost 400,000 and so it was very important for us to keep the second front viable that the Russians were manning and if that hadn't happened I'm not sure how good the outcome would've been. We might have lost because it was that two front that Hitler couldn't handle and then of course when Japan attacked it gave us a two front but our strategy was to finish the war in Europe first, so we did a lot of things out in the Pacific but it wasn't an all out effort in the Pacific until we finished off in Europe. There are other things I wanted to mention that were significant in my experience and that was the episode of Indianapolis.

**Question:** I have one more question before we get to that because I don't know the answer to this one. One of the comments that Adolph suggested was that I ask you about the stolen jeep?

**Answer:** Well, this came after I left the ship so all I have are the stories, but the stories are kind of interesting, incidentally, I had a brother following me about three years behind me and it was at Whitman going through the same V-12 program anticipating coming a naval officer, well, unfortunately, when they gave him the shots it stimulated some kind of sarcoma and so he was, he didn't survive, and but he was still alive while I was out there so finally as soon as Japan surrendered the Red Cross got me off the ship so I came back off the ship in September of 1945. The ship came back a few months later, and so I didn't have the experience of the jeep.

The jeep was apparently an army jeep and they were, I don't know exactly how they got a hold of it but they did. They brought it back to the ship and painted it navy blue or gray and we had enough room in our cargo hatch area in the stern to load it with the king post. We could lift that thing up and put it in there and hide it and it was the basis for apparently all the beach parties and things ashore that they had while occupying Japan for six months and it was a great story. All the reunions talk about this jeep you know and apparently we were suspect but apparently they never pinned it to us.

We had uh, when we came down.. when we were commissioned, they were commissioning these ships, APD's they were quite frequently called, so somehow or other they allocated us two movie projectors, and two ice cream makers and we were only supposed to have one of each. And the ship behind us didn't have theirs or something or somebody kept sending us notes about this, but what it did was we could hold continuous movies without rewinding. It was a very basic thing and so other smaller ships would come along side and enjoy our movies and then we could have more than one flavor of ice cream.. so these are things you don't give up. Anyway, these are some of the things that happened.

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**Question:** Life has to go on. You started to get to, you connected to a very famous ship, and you have a connection to the Indianapolis.

**Answer:** The Indianapolis is a famous ship, a tragic ship. It was laid down, it's keel was laid down in 1932, at 10,000 tons which was the limit of the Washington treaty of 1925 or something, a convention that was held to control armaments. So the designers decided they would put the maximum amount into offensive weapons and it didn't have as much defensive armor plate as some of the ships might have had if they'd been allowed to have more tonnage. It was used during peace time by Roosevelt because it had very elaborate flag officer quarters apparently, so even before the war, Roosevelt took several trips on it to get across the Atlantic and so on before airplanes. Then it went through nine battles of World War II, all the island battles from Bougainville, all the way up and even at Okinawa it was hit by kamikaze and seventeen dead or something and as a consequence of that it was sent back to San Francisco for a major overhaul. It was due for an overhaul anyway, so it went back, got a new crew and about that time they successfully exploded an atomic bomb in Mexico, Los Alamos. As soon as that was done they immediately shipped two bombs out to Tinian To end the war, hopefully and it did. So the Indianapolis was nominated to do this. So it started out then from San Francisco and made a speed run with a new crew. Not a completely new crew on it, but a lot of new people on it that were about as green as our crew when we went out, only nine people had ever been to sea before on the ship I was on. so they made a record run from San Francisco to Tinian Which is just north of Guam. And they offloaded parts of the atomic bomb, parts necessary to complete the explosion, and I think I brought a picture here today of the last picture of the Indianapolis, before it started out. And then it was sent to the Philippines to join the fleet or do something. I guess initially it was supposed to go over there and to do some target practice with another ship. It never arrived, and it was supposed to The port director at Tacloban the Philippines, had knowledge that it was going to arrive. The ship it was supposed to practice with never received the message so he didn't know it was overdue. The port director at that time was supposed to because it was a ship on the line it was presumed that well the admiral just diverted it somewhere so he didn't feel any responsibility for reporting it missing after two days. At about the time it left Guam for the Philippines we left the Philippines escorting a couple of aircraft carriers over to Tugua.. or to Tinian. About on, or just about midnight on July 30, which would be July 29 here because of the dateline, it was torpedoed and sunk in twelve minutes. All communication was lost; it didn't get a message out apparently. And about 800 of the crew.. about 1100 got off in the water safely. And about that same time we were, our ship was headed in the opposite direction, our ship about 150 miles away so we were within 6-7 hours of the tragedy and of course that is the thing we deeply regret, because we didn't know. We could have saved 500 people who perished in the four days before it was known that they were there. And so we continued on over to Guam. We headed back again over the same water and got the message to search with about six other ships and we uhm.. I remember the first fellow we picked up was in very good condition relatively. He had clothing, he had a P-jacket on, he had a sailors hat on and he said he was shielded a little from the sun and he was on a cork net thing and so he insisted on climbing the Jacobs Ladder. He had the energy, everybody else was unable to climb aboard but he had the energy. Then when he got aboard and he saluted the quarterdeck, and I'm telling you everybody around there that watched that was in tears. It was a very moving thing. It was at that point that we found it was the Indianapolis that was sunk. We were on the outskirts of the area so we picked up stragglers over a period of hours, about 12 altogether. Because when we first got the message the captain had asked to refuel, we were low on fuel. We knew something big was going on because he said no go immediately. So we because we had to go then to get some fuel so we took on survivors from other ships and we took on about 37 into Peleliu about 300 miles south and they were all alive when we put them ashore and then we returned to the search area and all we found was empty life rafts and things.. we didn't find anymore survivors.

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**Question:** How many days had it been sunk before you ?

**Answer:** Four days.

**Question:** Four days that man, those people survived in the....

**Answer:** Well, 316 survived out of about 800. 500 perished during that four days either from shark attacks, that's been played up a lot. I think most of them died of exposure and you know, rather than sharks but the sharks did take some, and we picked up an ensign whose leg was gashed who was alive. He had a gash from a shark bite. All of these people who had, since we were equipped to carry these underwater demolition teams, we had a lot of bunks along the side and inside the passageway so we had facilities and we had a doctor because we were equipped to carry these troops, so we were able to feed them intravenously and restore their body chemistry which was very disrupted. They wouldn't have lasted much longer. There is one survivor still living in the state of Washington. Gene Morgan in Seattle. They had a dinner the other night at St. Martins for the veterans and he was down at our table and he had people from the Hollandia.

**Question:** Did he have a jacket on with .....? I wanted to get a picture, see I was out there, I wanted to get a hold of him because....

**Answer:** I tried to get the people to recognize him but they said there are so many heroes here we can't do it, so they wouldn't do it.

**Question:** I thought that was what the dinner was for, but?

**Answer:** Well, I tried, but I couldn't make them. The Olympian didn't cover it either.

**Question:** No, isn't that a shame?

**Answer:** Well, I don't know why it was. I'm surprised. So anyway, Gene is, do you do this around the whole state of Washington?

**Question:** Yes.

**Answer:** You may want to talk to him. I've got his address here. So the problem, there was a political problem associated with the sinking. That was the parents of the loved ones, these 500 started asking their congressmen what happened here, so the navy felt compelled to do something. So they court marshaled Captain McVay, which is the first captain.. only captain that has ever been court marshaled for losing his ship in battle. And so then the crew supported McVay so they spent the next 50 years trying to get this over thrown. About 56 years later now they finally had done it now it has been squashed, put aside. In 1995 they dedicated a memorial to the Indianapolis at Indianapolis, Indiana. It's a beautiful memorial and at the base of that memorial they took a piece of the Arizona and put it under the memorial with the concept that the Arizona was the first ship sunk and the Indianapolis was the last ship sunk in World War II so I thought that was rather appropriate. There were about 110 survivors that came to that ceremony in 1995. We were very honored to be invited because we get a lot of credit for saving their lives of course by the survivors but we're not the heroes they are but there is a bond in there between the people. You do feel very close to those people. That is a big ocean out there, particularly after they were in the water four days. I went to a luncheon several months ago, I guess it was last May, in which the new publisher of the Olympian, Mr. Ritter, spoke the Chamber of Commerce and after the luncheon



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I introduced myself and I'm on the board of trustees of the Timberland Library and I wanted to contact him and make arrangements to come in and tell him about some of the issues I think face the library. And while I was talking with him, he looked at my name tag and he said Ken Bragg and I says what is that about. He says I saw your name in that book, Abandon Ship on the Indianapolis from Olympia, Washington, so he immediately then called me the next day and we talked about this and also the library, but then he published this publicity in the paper about the roll of saving some of the survivors and so on and as a result of the publicity I got phone calls from several people. Somebody was a nurse on a hospital ship that took care of the survivors. Somebody had a good friend who taught school with a survivor that is now deceased. There were four people from the Hollandia. The Hollandia was an aircraft carrier that took survivors back to the states after they got well enough to do so and I couldn't figure out why would there be four crewmen from the Hollandia, maybe there was a crew of 800 on this small aircraft carrier, four from Olympia is quite a few. It turned out the Hollandia was decommissioned in Olympia. They got off the ship and some of them found wives here and married people here in Olympia and so I decided to have a get together so I invited to my house Gene Morgan, the survivor, and then all these other people so we had a special party at our house if you weren't part of that you would be wondering what it was but people were talking about everything. I mean it was a great party, a reunion of all those people after all those years. It was. I never knew the Hollandia was decommissioned here in Olympia. Apparently they were decommissioning ships in Seattle and Tacoma and they didn't have room everywhere so they came clear down here to Olympia. I thought that was an interesting little sideline.

**Question:** Have you ever had, cause you talked about it and this reunion you had and the feeling you had of the gentlemen getting out of the sea, since World War II have you ever had a bond like you've had with these people, I mean is it a one time experience in your life or

**Answer:** You mean have I had bonds with other people besides these people?

**Question:** When I talk to the vets their lives are this big and World War II was this long in that time continue but yet I talk to a lot of them and there is this amazing bond that has developed and I wonder if you find that somewhere else or that is a unique?

**Answer:** Well, I think it is unique yes. Well, I've had a very broad professional and personal experience in my life otherwise and you know I could talk a long time about that but it wouldn't make me choke up emotionally as I have here. Very honestly that isn't put on feelings, it just come out so it is a real bond there is no question about that particularly I think on a small ship, on a ship you're really close together on a ship. And I know.. I went over to see the Missouri one time when they were having a reunion of the shipmates Missouri and there were 600 of them there watching the ship and I talked to some of them and it turned out that ship had been commissioned three times so it had different crews over a 20-30 year period or maybe more and one fella said boy it doesn't look the same as it did and of course they keep changing the armament on it and it kind of devices they use for modern warfare. So it doesn't look quite the same. So the point is they didn't know one another so there isn't quite that same bonding and so I don't think there is. People do go to the Rainbow Division but unless it is the group that is in that company you know there there's a bonding I'm sure. It has to be a smaller group than a huge thing I think and then I think you have to have some experiences like we had. The experience of the kamikaze attack and the picking up of survivors of the Indianapolis was very bonding things because it's an experience you don't experience just as an individual but other individuals are experiencing that and you are in a group so yea I think it is true, I think there is a pride in serving that the military training I think gives you. I was very proud to be in the navy, I was proud to be an ensign, an officer,

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very proud, and it helps people carry out their duties and responsibilities in a good fashion to have that kind of morale.

**Question:** How do you think the war this is kind of a hard one changed your life that experience?

**Answer:** Well, for one thing I was taking pre-law courses, I was going to be an attorney and when I got back I got married at the end of the war. I was still in the navy for another year to get enough points to get out and so by the time I got back to school I had a wife and child to support so I did have a good career and I did get a master's degree but I did not become an attorney. I don't know if that affected me very much. Of course I lost a brother that was very close to me. And those are permanent scars that you never get over. The, but I don't know, I don't know what it would be like without the war, I guess it would have been nice not to have had the war, I agree with that, I don't think it took the war to give me a good life afterwards but it would have different I suppose.

**Question:** Was your now wife was she your sweetheart while you were in the service or did you meet her?

**Answer:** No, no, I met her before the war. We were, she grew up in Seattle and I was quite active in the church and she was quite active in the church and she was, in fact, president of some youth organization in the church. We would meet at conferences while we were in high school. And then she went down to Pacific University for a year and after going to a year at St. Martin's I went down to Pacific University in Oregon and so we were together down there and then after I got in the navy and I was coming through after the shakedown cruise, went through the canal and stopped a few days in San Diego I got leave for three days and got an army plane and came up to Seattle or up to Olympia and she came down from Seattle and went down to Talcott's Jewelers and got a ring. And I remember that and instead of a few thousand dollars it was a few hundred dollars in those days and I had a little payment book. I remember seeing this payment book when I made the payments. That was a, that was.. I'm sure that was brought on by.. the timing had something to do with the fact I happened to have three days before I went out to maybe get killed or not so.

**Question:** Did you get correspondence from her while you were on the ship?

**Answer:** Oh yes, oh yes.

**Question:** So letters could catch up with you then?

**Answer:** Oh yes, oh yes, oh yes, mail deliveries were good and I remember writing a letter to my parents after I escaped at Okinawa. For the first time I thought well my god maybe I won't come back from this thing. So I wrote them in a letter what would be a will almost. It was a horrible thing to do to your parents now that I think about it, so I wrote them and told them a few things what I would like to have happen in case I didn't get back. What a terrible thing to do to them you know I shouldn't have done that but I didn't know and now that I think about it that wasn't fair, I didn't need to do that.

**Question:** Well, what type of things did you want to put in order? I mean do you remember what you told them?

**Answer:** No, I can't even remember now but I just remember giving them.. obviously giving them the feeling that I couldn't tell them exactly what happened because it was

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security but I remember telling them I had an experience I just escaped and so on and so forth.

**Question:** Did you get a reply from them?

**Answer:** I can't remember that.

**Question:** Don't ever send us one of those letters again?

**Answer:** No, no, they would never do that either, but, no no, but they were under extreme stress they were sitting there waiting to get me back to see my brother, my son, before he passed away and he did pass away within a week when I got back.

**Question:** So you got back and got to see him?

**Answer:** I got back and got to see him on his deathbed you might say. It's the way it was so. I wouldn't have gotten back if it hadn't been for my uncle. My father's brother was a colonel in the army and he had gotten back from New Guinea and was in the Sheffield Barracks in Hawaii. And so I flew from the Philippines to Hawaii not nonstop it was.. you know, no jets in those days, so Johnson Islands and Midway Islands and various things. So anyway I went over to see them, they were going to put me on an aircraft carrier would take me about a week to get over, and he used his influence as a colonel. He got a hold of a captain which is the same rank in the navy, and they got me on an airplane. Army transport service I think it was called, ATS, and I got an airplane and got into Fairfax Base in San Francisco and then caught another plane up to Olympia or Seattle or something. That was a big help in that case.

**Question:** It's interesting you made one statement earlier that when you were young in the service you didn't know when you could break the rules, so I assume there came a point you learned that the rules are important but also survival you have to.

**Answer:** You have to give your people a chance to know that you understand their problems, and that whatever decisions you have to make as a command decision you are taking into account their feelings and you know what they need. I wasn't able to give them that feeling I don't think. This is the rule, this is the way it is, so you know, I don't know what I would have done if I never had to have this happen but suppose I've been walking around the ship at night and I found the gun crew asleep or something. I would probably have reported him rather than just shake them and wake them up you know, that kind of thing, when a more mature person would or he would have somebody else shake them so you didn't know it happened.

**Question:** So you'd still follow the rules but?

**Answer:** But that is a pretty extreme case, probably if the gun crew is asleep you really are jeopardizing the whole ship so or the lookout that would be a better example. You know minor things, that is a major thing, minor thing.

**Question:** Do you remember any of the meals? Do you have a favorite navy meal? And a least favorite navy meal?

**Answer:** Well, the food was in the cooking, you see, the raw products was pretty good, we got the best of everything the civilians at home didn't get as good. But I remember this one Thanksgiving or something or at least a turkey, maybe it wasn't Thanksgiving, and it had

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a tag on it frozen see, it had a tag 1928, and I never forgot that. Somehow they had managed to keep this thing frozen since 1928 and but I'm glad that I you know wasn't in the army where they had the foxhole and the "C-Rations". They have a lot better "C-Rations" today than they did then. But its puzzling, the people in the army didn't like to be on a ship and they would love to get off and get the security of a foxhole, they didn't like to be on a ship and whereas the navy people were just opposite of course.

**Question:** Keep me out in the water?

**Answer:** Well, if you get sunk you have a problem, but if you don't sink why then you're.. life goes on. Your bunk is still there and you're food is still there but it's a harder life than the army I think unless you get sunk.

**Question:** Two last questions, when I see the American flag go by, I've always had respect for the flag but after working on this project and what's happened back east I mean when I see a parade tears come into my eyes. When I went to the Veterans Day parade and see these young, what do you feel when you see the flag, or what does it mean to you, that it might not mean to me.

**Answer:** Well, I have two feelings about this. I really honor the flag and I don't know exactly why I honor it. I guess it's because I participated in the defense of the flag and, but I would agree in international relations, I'm very much aware of the world out there and I'm very much concerned about solving problems with just military power. So I think that is a big problem that Israel has faced. It seems to only have one way of solving a problem, it's superior military power and I don't think that is going to work in a long run for them. I'm sure it won't.

On the terrorism thing I feel we need to ask ourselves is there any relationship between terrorism and our policies. In a very broad sense, just on the matter on how food is distributed in the world, how unevenly it is distributed, or how unevenly education is distributed, in a narrower view it would be the lack of a level playing field in the Israel-Palestine problem. Of course, I'm biased there because I spent a year as the financial advisor to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan once, and took my family over to Jordan and in fact so I terrorism is much broader than just that issue, but even in that issue I feel that we've supported Israel far too much without her changing her positions and I think it is hurting Israel but it is hurting us also and I think that may come home this time. There is another world out there and we the radicals that caused this problem for us on September 11<sup>th</sup> are, they are vying for those people out there too and they are going to go either way and we are very handicapped about in doing a lot about that because our public in general is interested in flag waving but it is not looking at why and until that happens I think we are very vulnerable. This thing we are doing now is just a little piece of the puzzle and if they have cells in 60 countries then we have to we have to search real deeply and the answer is not militarism, so I'm patriotic, very patriotic, but I see the limits of militarism and I think with the world coming together in communication and transportation is doing two things. The poor people now know how the rich live is one thing it does and the other thing it does is through international trade it brings the whole economies together so we can't we have to understand that our life and welfare belongs with other people on this planet to the extent that we have to find out how to use the United Nations even as frustrating as it is to use it, that's what the world is and it is a communication device to communicate with them. The president is doing something about that now I think. He seems to say well I'll take care of the militarism but then there is another role to be played later with the United Nations but I hope the American people will understand that. I don't know if that helps explain, but I'm not just a simple flag waver I feel very deeply about some of these basic issues.

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**Question:** It is a more complex issue than some want to make it. It's a complex world out there.

**Answer:** Yea.

**Question:** You kind of answered my second question.

**Answer:** I will say though, the positive thing is that there is now an awful lot of education taking place. The people now realize there are a billion and a half or more or less Muslims in the world for example and that they live various places from Indonesia to....

**Question:** And that Osama Bin Laden doesn't really represent Muslim. I mean he is a different, totally different. Yea, I think that is one of the positive things that's happened, the education to the opening of the eyes to some of the things you talked about, the global world.

**Answer:** Yea, yea.

**Question:** Did, you sort of answered my second question so I'm going to change my last question a little bit. I'm making an assumption you were involved in the church when you were young, I assume you are still involved in the church now?

**Answer:** Not so much.

**Question:** Oh is that right?

**Answer:** It is just that I'm involved in a lot of different activities and organizations and things and I'm I think I probably need the church to bury me someday but I feel very comfortable in dealing with the society and my fellow man and I'm not non religious I just haven't attended for awhile, but I do sometimes. One church I go to where I grew up in Rochester and there is a little Methodist church down there. We go down there about every two months because it is the one place I can go where the culture is the same as my childhood culture. It hasn't changed a lot. There are bedroom communities coming in and so on but still there is the when I first went down there about nine years ago when I first moved here I found people that were very elderly I guess they've passed on now but they knew my parents and they knew me when I lived there so

**Question:** The reason I asked that was I wondered if being in a war caused any religious conflict for you if that was something you had to struggle with.

**Answer:** You mean like a pacifist?

**Question:** No, not like a pacifist, but like the Bible says thou shall not kill.

**Answer:** I, always interpret that to mean, thou shall not kill unless your wife is being raped, I mean you shouldn't reach out and initiate killing but I don't think the Pope is real (inaudible) and I certainly listen to Billy Graham he doesn't rule it out.

**Question:** My friend just sent me a great one from Billy Graham and I can't even remember what was in it now from Billy Graham but it's on the internet now so.

**Answer:** Well he conducted a service at the national cathedral just after the bombing at the trade center. He had to be helped up there but boy when he finally got going he is still pretty good.

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**Question:** He is a dynamic and charismatic person but so well balanced it seems, human.

**Answer:** Yea he is, but well I want to thank you for this opportunity to sit here and kind of reminisce a little bit. As I say 50 million people died in World War II and relatively few from the United States so that we really haven't except for the Trade Center thing, we haven't had, and Pearl Harbor, since the Capitol burned in 1912 we haven't experienced what most countries have experienced and I don't know what that means but it must give us a little different viewpoint. Now we've found out how to go to war without casualties, that's a little bit, I hate to think that war has become that clean and sanitized.

**Question:** Again we lose a little perspective in the fact that yes it is very controlled casualties and all that but yet what they are facing over there and what we are facing over here is very different. We don't have to worry about jets flying over or bombs whether they are coming for us or for the Taliban out there. For the people that wake up every morning and face that fear.

**Answer:** I was trying to account for why Britain just grabbed it so embraced it so much after 9/11, I think it was because of the bombing of London during World War II. I think they immediately connected of course it had been a long time ago but still they experienced something their (inaudible) speeches there were just magnificent. Bush is being credited now for that kind of leadership, but his words aren't quite the same and so if he had the same problem as Churchill I hope he could rise to that because some great words Churchill used to keep morale up under some very dismal conditions. We haven't faced that.

**Question:** He sure grew up fast.

**Answer:** What's that?

**Question:** GW this has aged him fairly quickly.

**Answer:** Yea.

**Question:** He looks more like his dad, when his dad was in office, versus when you look at him a year ago, I'd like to see side by side pictures but.

**Answer:** Well, the thing is he's very good at cheering us on and giving us a feeling of this is serious folks and we're going to have to do something about this, but the problem we have and he has expressed it is this is only the beginning so while he has done something here at the beginning that is very popular, whether anybody or he particularly can devise all the policies and explain it to the American people the complexity of which we are going to have to and the risks we are going to have to take to solve this problem it's, we're going to have to. I don't think the American people if this would shock them the way World War II did it would make everybody search deeply for answers but we have a responsibility for searching within ourselves how to deal with this problem and not just rely on the President. And it is going to be very hard for the President to lead unless we do that and I certainly think we have to listen to the so called "peaceniks" terrible fight for freedom and then have us close the door on freedom. I'm very disturbed with people that are upset with people who exercise their freedom of speech. Wow. Somebody, some French philosopher I forgot which it was said, I disagree with what you say, but I'll defend to the death your right to say it. It always stuck with me.

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**Question:** I've just been interviewing the makah and dealing with the whaling issue and the gentlemen was telling me about the protestors and what they were doing and all that but you know what he said I understand that they are exercising their right to freedom of speech and I was exercising my right to freedom of speech but we both (inaudible) exactly the same thing.

**Answer:** Yea you have a right to criticize the people who criticize, but when it comes to the point where it starts to influence public policy on destroying the avenues of expression then it's getting pretty dangerous. We are close to that right now.

**Question:** It's, we are right on the brink.