

## Virtus Ray Welch

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**Question:** Now, first thing I need to get is your -- your full -- your real name. It's VR Welch.

**Answer:** Yeah, Virtus, V-I-R-T-U-S, Ray -- that's the middle initial.

**Question:** And Welch.

**Answer:** W-E-L-C-H.

**Question:** And you're known now as Stub.

**Answer:** Stub, that's --

**Question:** And in the Navy you were known as --

**Answer:** Skip.

**Question:** As Skip. OCF: Not so much in all the clubs -- they didn't call him Stub --

**Answer:** Yeah, well, the old car club, most of them, because I -- that -- I belong to the old car club here in Cashmere before I lived here, so -- well, Ralph called me Virtus and he's the guy that got it in there -- got me in there, so they all learned Virtus. But they -- they knew Stub, too, so.

**Question:** That keeps everybody confused, too, so --

**Answer:** It does, that it does.

**Question:** Now you were in the Navy.

**Answer:** Yes, I was.

**Question:** And when did you go into the Navy?

**Answer:** I went in November the 1st, 1943.

**Question:** '43, so --

**Answer:** And I went in with my brother, and I went in with another guy from -- we come -- we were in Arlington area, and all of those, came to Eastern Washington, Jack Snyder was the other guy. My brother, then Jack Snyder. Jack Snyder lived just on Squilchuck up above Wenatchee. And the day he was being prepared to move over here, died of a heart attack up here at Squilchuck, at their house. But we all got back together over here but it didn't last very long. We were looking forward to hunting together and stuff but that didn't happen.

**Question:** What -- so '43. So after Pearl Harbor. Well, let's -- let me back up a little bit. Where were you when you heard that we were at war? Do you remember that?

**Answer:** Oh, I remember the day of November the 7th, 1941. I was on the way over to see that girl, there, and I suppose we talked about it. And I didn't really know at that time where Pearl Harbor was. I didn't know it was Hawaii, but I had heard it on the radio and I remember when I drove into Arlington -- well I didn't hear it until I got into Arlington, I lived outside of the town. And when I got gas, the guy told me that the Japs had bombed Pearl

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Harbor. Well, this was probably three or 4 o'clock in the afternoon that day -- that Sunday, December the 7th. And then I thought from there on, well, fun and games are over, because I'm sure that we're all going to -- I was not old enough at that time. I was still 16. And so -- and I suppose we talked about it. And I remember the next day in school and Vi should remember too -- we were in school -- went to high school together. That they had a thing there and they had also President Roosevelt's speech on the loudspeaker there so we all listened to it when he addressed the nation and declared war on Japan. And I remember that. I suppose you remember too, don't you Vi? She doesn't hear very well sometimes. OCF. I should have brought my hearing aid.

**Question:** That's okay, that's okay. I'll speak loudly when I get in front of you.

**Answer:** But she might tell you the same thing when she gets up here.

**Question:** Oh, that's fine, cause it's good to have the juxtaposition. So you were 16 years old when the war started.

**Answer:** Yes, I was.

**Question:** So you were like a sophomore, junior in high school or something.

**Answer:** Junior.

**Question:** Junior.

**Answer:** Yeah, I was a junior.

**Question:** Did you realize what that meant?

**Answer:** Oh, well, I was -- my dad had been in World War I and I'd had some tales from him and knew that a war was a supreme effort. But not ever experienced it, I can't say I really realized what it was all about, but I recognized that we were going to do whatever we had to do to win a war. And I was pretty impressed about the things that happened. Because I know that probably the next -- well, that was a Sunday. And probably the Monday when I went to school, it was said you ain't going to get any more new cars. They were all froze. Nobody was going to get anything -- that it all was going to go to the war. Well, it wasn't really that -- that solid because I, and later on, I was aware of. Well, one guy I worked for, he got a brand new '42 Chev. And I thought, well, you're pretty lucky to get one of those. But he was a farmer and went through what the procedures were to get that. But you couldn't no longer just go down there and buy a car. And it was -- and I don't know the dates after it, but it was very soon after the -- Pearl Harbor.

**Question:** So you had two years stateside to deal with rationing and things --

**Answer:** Yes, I did, yes, I did.

**Question:** So did that change your -- your high school a lot at that time?

**Answer:** Well, I didn't -- I didn't suffer very much on that. We lived on a -- well, it wasn't really much of a farm, but at least they had the wherewithal to put in for farm fuel supply and we got some, kind of to our surprise. But we did have adequate gas with that farm supply of fuel. And well, I don't remember much of it but I do remember the fact that we had to keep our shades turned -- we didn't have any outside lights. And I think at that time they

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used to put those blinders over the headlights, if I remember correctly, so that the lights didn't shine up in the air. But they were a godsend in the fog we had over there anyway. That made them work pretty good if you -- if you had those masks over the top of the lights. That kept it from shining up and the fog in front of you. So it even operated better when you were in a fog over there. And we had a lot of news about it on the radio and that kind of thing. In that day all we had was radios. And I remember that my brother and I and some other, young kids like we are did a lot of salvaging tires. They were tires that had gone -- people rolled them over a bank or done something else, and we did -- they were collecting the old tires because rubber was a primary product at that time, right early. Because our rubber came from some of those islands in the South Seas or somewhere -- I never really understand what all of it was about, but the supply of raw rubber was very limited so they were trying to recycle old tires and stuff like that to get things going. And I know it wasn't very long after that that you couldn't buy tires, and that there were -- well, I know we had told, oh, a couple of times there were cars that just got abandoned someplace cause somebody -- and they had good tires on them so we did what we could to procure some good tires. And also I remember we told the rationing board a few times that there were good tires. And I don't think they really said anything to discourage us about getting them. Said if you can get them, get them. So you will be -- you'll be better fixed than you are without, so.

**Question:** So when you got the tires, where did you take them? What, could you trade --

**Answer:** Well, they would have been some we could have used on the vehicles we had.

**Question:** Oh, okay, so you procured them for your own --

**Answer:** Yeah, at that time in high school I had a vehicle, my brother had a vehicle, and Vi's brother had a vehicle and a number of the other high school kids we knew had vehicles at that time. They weren't new -- they were just something we could buy, but we were able to. At that, see, after about 1940, finding a job and getting some income was not very difficult for me anyway. I remember I'm going to guess, it might have been '41, early in '41 -- I thought it was -- I think it was in the summer of '40, that for awhile I was making \$10 a day and that was, man, I was floating in dough. I didn't make that very much but I made it during the summer. And then I worked on farms the other time, for some -- some kind of income.

**Question:** So when the war started and you were too young to go in, a lot of the men left.

**Answer:** A number did, yes. Even out of our high school class. Those that were 18 that in our senior year, that was '44. And most of those left. Not '44, '43.

**Question:** Forty-three.

**Answer:** Yeah, and some of them late in '42, sometime, there might have been -- if they were a little older kids when they were juniors in high school, they probably went in the service.

**Question:** And I hear a few of them lied about their age.

**Answer:** Well, I'm sure a few did, yeah. We were in -- now, see, my brother and I are only ten months apart, so then we had to choose the time. We never got -- we had never registered with the draft board. When he turned -- he turned 17 on the 13th of September in '43 and we went in the service the first of November and I was still 17, hadn't turned 18 yet, so we all went in for what they called the kiddy cruise, that was regular Navy. We weren't in the reserves. We were regular Navy. And the same with Jack Snyder. He -- his, fact is his

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birthday is December the 7th, so then he would have been 18. See, he was a little behind me. So he was still 17 on November the 1st so we all went in and went in to -- signed up for regular Navy from 17 till the day before you're 21.

**Question:** So when did you decide to -- when or how did you decide to join the Navy -- to enlist?

**Answer:** Well, I'm sure we all talked about that and said, well they're going to get us. We can fiddle around till we're 18. And those, well, Jack and I, we were -- we were pretty vulnerable. But my brother had just turned 17, he had another year, anyway. But I said soon as we turn 18, we're going to have to go register, and if we don't do something, we're going to end up in the Army and I didn't really want to go in the Army, so I said we better go in the Navy, so that's where we went.

**Question:** So do you remember what you were doing the day before you actually went into the service?

**Answer:** Well, I know that very near that time that I terminated my employment in the shipyard. I had worked in the shipyard from the time the school -- school was out, say May of '43 till very near November the 1st. And then maybe two or three days just fooling around. And we had already enlisted earlier but our day to report was November the 1st.

**Question:** So which -- which shipyard were you in?

**Answer:** I was in the Everett Pacific Company -- same one Vi was -- worked in. It was in Everett, Washington.

**Question:** Oh, okay. And what was your duty there? What were you --

**Answer:** I was a -- I was a Marine electrician. That was during the war and you could get to be a journeyman pretty fast because when I -- well, I had had electricity and science courses when I was in high school and had a little knowledge on electricity anyway. And so I went into the shipyard and was able to do fairly decent on their electrical test for a young kid, and I got put in the electrical crew. And then there was an opportunity to get in the apprenticeship and that was only a 90 day apprenticeship. And I said, well, I'm working for 65 cents an hour and it goes up to about a dollar and a quarter. I'm not that dumb. If I can do her 90 days, I'm available. So that's what I did. And I don't know if I learned very much, but at least I was called a journeymen marine electrician at that time. Pipe bender, basically, wire puller is what you were, and I had made up a few of the panels, the ship's panels and stuff before I got in.

**Question:** So here's a 17-year-old-kid --

**Answer:** Yes, that's correct.

**Question:** And all of a sudden you're in this adult world of building ships to send them off to --

**Answer:** Right.

**Question:** Do you know any of the specific ships you worked on or were you working on --

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**Answer:** Well, no, they were -- they were a couple different types. One, they built dry docks at the Everett Pacific, so they were sections of things, so I recall working on the dry dock. Then I worked on -- I think they were mine sweepers -- I think they were wooden -- wooden boats that they built there. And I worked some on those but mainly I worked on the dry docks, and that had to all be waterproof stuff so it was a little different thing, but I learned a lot anyway, I thought for the -- through the little time that I was there.

**Question:** So you were still kind of for lack of a better description, a snot-nosed young kid.

**Answer:** Well, I'm sure that's a good description.

**Question:** And now you're going on and get your hair trimmed and get the shots and get the uniform. Where did you go now?

**Answer:** Well, I went to Farragut -- we all three then and I was one, went to Farragut, Idaho and went through the -- well, we went to Seattle first and then there we had some of the indoctrination. I'm sure we had shots and everything. Didn't get any uniform. We were still in our civilian clothes. Then they put us on a bus or train, I can't remember now which it was, and we went to Farragut, Idaho. Then the rest of the indoctrination, the hair cut and the uniform and that stuff all was there and we were in boot camp then for -- from then until -- Christmas. I got home for Christmas that year. So from November the 1st until -- and they may have cut it short a few weeks just to get you out of there for Christmas vacation. But we were home for Christmas in '43.

**Question:** So where did you first see active duty then -- where did you go?

**Answer:** Well I was very fortunate that I went to school and so when I went -- we were here for Christmas vacation, then I returned to Farragut and I was in what they called OGU, outgoing unit. And I remember seeing Jack in there. And my brother, as soon as I got back there, if I remember correctly, he was off to sonar school. So then I was waiting in there and I wasn't really sure what I was waiting for, but I found out later that I was to go to pre-radio school, which is in Chicago. So I was shipped up there, I'm going to say late January, cause I was in that OGU for three or four -- two or three weeks, anyway. Everybody else come and went and I was still there feeding the furnace, I remember, and all of a sudden I went to Chicago. And when I got there the school hadn't been built yet. It was a high school they were converting to a Navy school, so then I spent two or three weeks moving desks and whatever else there was that they told you to do to get the school ready. And that was the first time I ever had anything -- association with Marines. Cause that school, see, Marines went to a Navy school. And we had Marines and they had a -- a group of Marines along with sailors in there. And that's when I first found out that you -- agitate the Marines all you can. You were encouraged to do that and they were encouraged to agitate the sailors all they could. So there was fun and games a few times.

**Question:** A little horseplay going on?

**Answer:** A little horseplay. Sometimes fist fights and stuff; all that -- just camp fever.

**Question:** So were there -- can you remember any -- did you play practical jokes or how did you --

**Answer:** Oh, sure. We used to -- I remember -- well, we would be. Well, the Marines had to do more work than we did. I began to appreciate Marines because they were out drilling when we were just sitting around there shooting the bull, and kind of resting up,

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maybe chow time. And they would be out there drilling back and forth and then we'd holler the commands out the window. Or something. And the Marines would all do something different. And the sergeant down there, he was going bananas. But -- and the Marines themselves were not -- figured if we ever get you guys out here, we're going to educate you.

**Question:** (laughs)

**Answer:** But we had a little of that fun and games. And if we were out in liberty or something, once in awhile we'd have a -- a little altercation with the Marines. It wasn't anything serious, just fun and games type thing. But we agitated each other. They did their share, too. I've got to take my hat off to the Marines -- they -- they did their share. They'd break ranks and try to run up to the windows or something to get to us but we'd figure out a way to escape, too.

**Question:** So where did you go after --

**Answer:** After I was in pre-radio school I went to Del Monte -- that's in Del Monte -- that's in -- well, it was a pretty fancy resort, I think, once upon a time. It might still be again now. It was a large hotel in Monterey, California.

**Question:** Oh, yeah, yeah.

**Answer:** Del Monte is still something that people know down there. I think there's still a Del Monte. It was a -- very nice golf course they had, they had a riding stable and they had a, a horse race track maybe or some kind of a riding track. And they had a nurse's school there and that was always kind of neat to see all them young girls go around there. And it had been an officers school before we were -- I was enlisted, and I was in -- that was what they called advanced radio school. And I was there for three months. And it was nice weather. I went down there I think probably in -- I don't think January -- probably was February or maybe March and got out of Chicago where it was colder than a bugger and went to Del Monte, California or to --

**Question:** Monterey?

**Answer:** Monterey. And it was pretty nice weather down there, you know. We had a nice summer. And it was hard work, now. Being in the radio -- or being in the Navy school was not easy. And it taxed me pretty hard. I was, I'm sure 100% employed anyway, and they pushed it through you pretty fast. And if you didn't get it you were washed out. And the Marines even had a tougher show than I did because I said, if I had been a Marine, I'd been washed out. But being I was in the Navy, why they took a little bit more care and pulled you through and got you. And I had some -- some tough, tough days. But it started like six in the morning and you were still burning books at 10:30, 11 o'clock at night to get things done that needed to be done. So it wasn't -- school was not. You had some time and weekends were pretty much to yourself. The weekends were deals, but the -- Monday, probably Sunday night until Friday, well, until Saturday, noon, you were pretty busy.

**Question:** So then did you ship out from there?

**Answer:** No, I went -- from there I went to Treasure Island. And that was to ... well, they called that, well really it was radar, and it was radio and sound, sonar and everything that you got all this preparation for. You had had, well, I would guess two years of college in probably about four months -- what -- just really the practical things you needed to know. And then you went into the systems, themselves. The radars and the sonars and the rest of

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that. Then when I got out of that, why then I went to Orange, Texas. And that -- was a place they were building destroyers. I think they called it the Consolidated Shipbuilding Company or something like that. And there was -- well, when I went there the ship was just being built, two of them. There was the 874 which was the Duncan and the 875 which was the Tucker. And I was in the Duncan crew for awhile and then I thought that's where I was going to go. Well, found out that when -- I got put that -- went with that ship when it went in commission, but when I got back to the beach they said you aren't going with these guys. You're going on the next ship. So then I was reassigned to the Tucker. And then I -- of course I was an old salt by that time. I'd been down there three or four weeks. So -- then I went -- then when the Tucker went into -- well, they commissioned it there and went on a shakedown cruise to Cuba, Guantanamo Bay. And I was on that and then when that shakedown was over, you always go back in the shipyard for a little whatever repairs you need to do -- done, and nothing serious. And I'm sure we weren't back in the yard over a week or ten days. And then I went through the Panama Canal. And we were headed out for the war area and I was at Pearl Harbor, well not Pearl Harbor, I went to Pearl -- it was Pearl Harbor but I went to Pearl. And we were there three or four days. And I think there were -- I think probably the Duncan and I think the Buckley, and probably four destroyers went out of there to I don't know where. We didn't cross the equator cause if we had, we'd all got initiation for crossing the equator. So we didn't cross the equator. I don't know where we went. But then we went out of there and somewhere and I suspect, in between some islands out there in Japan. And there was a - - and I was on the bridge and heard quite a bit of this beings I was a radioman. And there was -- and I don't know all of the other things -- but just kind of the sketchy things about it. But there was a Japanese gun boat out there and there were several ships around there. They were one -- I don't think there's any battle wagons but there were cruisers and some bigger ships. They were shooting at it. And I'm not -- can't tell you now whether it was manned or unmanned, I don't know. Might have been a target -- I do not know, I can't recall. But anyway I remember our skipper saying, "Let me take a shot at that". And the admiral says, "You're a destroyer. Shore bombardment is not your thing." And I -- and the skipper says "I didn't tell you anything about that. I asked you a request. Can I take a shot at it?" And the admiral said "If you feel that way, take a shot at it." So we took one shot at it and that was the end of that boat. And we were up -- I wasn't -- I wasn't up in the gun directory then the gunnery was -- I was a radar man, and gunnery was our thing. And old Mumb Jar Myers, we called him, he says when you shoot from the main directory, you could see the projectiles go out. And we gave them one salvo and we had six rounds. He said you could see six little blips went right out there where that target was sitting up there, he said there was a lot of chatter, and it was clean. He said they -- the scope was clean. That was right on. And there was a little more stuff behind that. One of our enlisted guys -- and our skipper was a pretty nice guy, too. One of our enlisted guys was an electronic engineer. And he was kind of a mental upset guy, I think. I probably could tell you his name now but I suspect he was -- he's expired, because he was probably ten years older than us kids at that time. And he was a mature man. And he was an electronic engineer. And he was the one that set this destroyer up so you could shore bombard. Because we all -- I remember a meeting we all got in and old Ezra was talking up there and he says what do you need for shore bombardment? And he says, well I don't know if you figure it out but you need two things, he says. You need precision bearings and precision rings. And he says we got it. And it's gyro stabilized. Everything's cut into radar. He says it's all in there. All we got to do is cut it into the guns and match it up. And we can aim the guns right where the radar's looking, and there you've got shore bombardment. He says you can even see what's going on on the radar. But we had done -- this wasn't the first time because we had done some playing around. The skipper says, well I'm sure our chief went up and told the radar officer and they all went to the skipper and said we can do this with this ship if you will let us do it. And he says do it. It isn't going to hurt any of the capability he already got. There was a big rotary switch and it had a lot of blank spots in it. Said we'll just put this in on one of them blank spots, and he said if you ever

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want to use it, just turn the switch over to there and you got it. So we did and of course we had done some little shooting here and there. We put -- whatever you could put overboard out there and steam away so you could still see it with the radar and take a shot at it and we were hitting them pretty consistently, see. And I guess that's when the skipper decided he'd like to try it at something really good. And it worked. And I suspect that that's the reason -- but it wasn't, I don't think, three days after that gun boat incident that we were headed back for Portland, Maine for radar evaluation.

Oh, I forgot something in between. When we were in that first trip to -- I was at Guantanamo Bay and we went back to the shipyard, and we were to go through -- I got messed up on something because before we went through the Canal, we were to be converted and I think we went to Boston. And we were converted from Newport News, that's where we went to the shipyard back from Guantanamo, we steamed up to Boston and we were in the Boston Navy Yard and they converted us to a picket ship -- a radar picket ship. That was something new that was just coming out. Cause fighter direct was supposed to be our thing and they took one mount of the torpedos off. We had two torpedo mounts. So they took one off and put a - a radar, a second radar on that and a mast in there and stuff where that mount had been. So then we went back to Guantanamo again and then this operation is when we got the idea that we would convert everything so we could cut our radars into the guns. And then we got pretty chummy with the gun guys. Cause they didn't -- some of them didn't understand their guns very good. They weren't educated, maybe in hydraulics and electrical. And we had a little more training in that area so the electronic technician guys were down there with them so we could get this thing together. Well, we said, we better do this cause it's our ass if we get hit here. So let's kind of get everything so those guns can do something for us cause that's our only salvation. So we all got pretty chummy and got that altogether and checked out. And then that was after we made -- we made a second trip to Guantanamo Bay before we went to Pearl. And then the rest of the story is the same. We went through -- not Pearl, we went through the Canal and then to Pearl and then departed from there. And then -- then we got through all this other chatter. Then we turned around and came back to Pearl and back through the Canal and went up to Portland, Maine. And that's where we spent the remainder of the war was Portland, Maine. And we were -- there were four tin cans up there. And I know that Bucky was back there -- it might not have been on the first trip but it was one of them I remember, up there. And we were towing the Navy or Air Force, somebody, was towing sleeves across there and then they'd fly drones, unmanned airplanes up there, for target practice. That's what we were there for. To evaluate the -- the -- our ability to knock down airplanes. No, well, it wasn't really airplanes. And I remember they used to -- well, we had another thing. If you shot your sleeve down, or your target down that day, when the four destroyers -- and then we all went back to the beach and had liberty. So it was kind of a little incentive to get your -- your act together. And the other three ships, I remember they used to tell them now you make three passes over those destroyers before you make one pass over that last one and that was the Tucker. And I can remember several occasions they make three passes over the others and they filled the air full of -- full of shells and they made one pass over the Tucker and we'd have that sucker, and that made you feel pretty good. And I think it made the old skipper feel pretty good because he said, well, I remember, he told all of us electronic, you know, lot of stuff happened there too, but he told all of us electronic guys, if you keep this record good, you get liberty every night. So that was pretty good. But he says, there's another thing. If there's a piece of equipment on here that ain't working, you ain't going on liberty or nowhere else till that works again. So that was a little incentive to keep things working right and like it when we could get the target down and get -- get liberty every night. And that worked most of the time we were there. But it wasn't very long that we were there that the war was over.



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**Question:** When you first fired that at the one ship, when the admiral said you guys aren't supposed to do that and you said, well, if you like, did the admiral come back with a response when you took that ship out?

**Answer:** Well, I don't remember much more about what was happened there. Probably was pretty quiet. Because I don't remember much of any response. I imagine the skipper said something cause he was usually pretty good. He probably said does everybody operate left-handed around here or something. Cause he was -- he was a good skipper. Cause I remember we used to come into -- to tie it up and a number of the guys, the skipper'd say, he didn't do it too good. They were having a lot of fumbling around and monkeying around with winches. And he used to bring his in and tie it up and throw a couple lines overboard and let the duty crew tie her up. The rest of you guys can go on liberty, he says. And he could do it - he could handle a ship pretty good. He knew how to handle it.

**Question:** Now Dale wrote, and you'll have to explain this to me because I didn't fully understand it -- about the Kamikaze one man torpedo.

**Answer:** , Oh, okay. Well, that was after all of this now. And when the war was over, we were still playing fun and games up at Portland, Maine and it wasn't, like I say, a very few days after that that our buns got shipped back through the Canal again and over to Pearl and on to Japan for police duty. And that's where that happened. When we were in Japan on this police duty, just one ship out there, and some of the places where we went -- I remember there was a lot of trucks and junk on the beach there and they were all Jap stuff, and oh, some of us guys would go over there. We had a little fuel or could steal enough out of the rest of the trucks, we'd pour it into one and get it fired up, tear around up and down the beach with it. Nobody bothered you, we're just opening Japan. And we got in this one harbor and it had several Kamikaze boats in there. And they were just -- the Japs just left them. So we just - got in the head like a regular old Chev 600 engine in it, no in and out. They just fired them up and went. And they'd go, I guess, 25, 50 miles an hour, and several of those -- not just me but different guys in the crew, get them a little fuel, fire them up and go out and tear around till they fell apart or did whatever. And the skipper, he was pretty good, he used to send (inaudible) out too cause he knew the crew was just having fun. And there was nobody there but us. He says let you have a little fun, just don't get yourself in trouble. We'd wear life jackets and all that stuff so if the bopper blew up or hit a wave and they couldn't take it cause they were flimsy craft, well they didn't have any armament on them, (inaudible) just nothing but just a boat. There was a place where you could put a bomb, torpedo and all that, but none of that was on them. Just the motor and the boat.

**Question:** So that's what they had been used for, though, they carry -

**Answer:** Well, that's what they were designed and built for. They were Jap Kamikaze boats. And of course none of that was there. I'm sure that somebody ahead of us took care of all the armament and sunk it or exploded it or did something, I don't know what happened. But the boats were still there, and that's what we were playing in.

**Question:** So similar to the -- the Kamikaze pilots, these were --

**Answer:** But these were boats -- torpedo boats, yeah.

**Question:** They'd go out and --

**Answer:** And run right into the side of a ship and blow themselves up and do what damage they could to the craft they hit, anyway.

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**Question:** At like 50 miles an hour.

**Answer:** Well, around -- it seemed like you were going like the wind but I would imagine they went 40, 50 miles an hour, 45 maybe. Cause they -- they had a Chev engine in them, 6 cylinder engine, just a straight shaft from a prop. And drive, you could drive them, but you had to -- if you were going to stop you had to shut the engine off. Then of course that's -- you start er up again and took off. And you could change the speed, but of course when you're a young guy like that, there's only one speed, wide open.

**Question:** So you ended up in Japan doing police duty you said, after the war?

**Answer:** That was after the war, yes.

**Question:** So what was that like? Do you remember where you were in Japan?

**Answer:** Well I remember we were in one place was a Miyako Shima I remember that. And there was several shimas -- the little islands as best I can remember they called shimas, and we were in two or three or four. And I remember, main thing we did was deliver mail, I think. We would go out and go alongside of a tender or something that had carried the mail and pick up the mail cause we were a smaller ship. And there were army bases on these little islands, and we'd take the mail to them. And the skipper brought back a jeep, I remember that. A brand new jeep. And he put her on the back of the ship and brought her back.

**Question:** Little personal souvenir home there?

**Answer:** Well, little personal souvenir there. And we were in a number of -- well, they were Japanese caches. My brother and I had six brand new rifles, Japanese rifles, when we came back. We weren't supposed to take it, but that was another thing, if you didn't get caught with it aboard ship, why the skipper didn't go in to... I still have over here a brand new Japanese trans-World War II transceiver, radio, transmitter, the little generator that went with it. Instruction book and the whole shebang over here. And I thought well, maybe some day somebody will just have to have that and I would sell it, but it's brand new. I mean batteries, they're still dry, the whole mess is over here. I have that right here in Cashmere.

**Question:** Are they Y2K compliant, you think?

**Answer:** I doubt it.

**Question:** So when they announced the war was over, where were you then?

**Answer:** I was in Portland, Maine.

**Question:** And do you remember what that was like?

**Answer:** Yes. I was a shore patrol. I had shore patrol duty that night. And there was, three or four of us did. And the war was over. And we said that will only happen once in a lifetime, so we just took our shore patrol leggings and tossed them in a garbage can and joined the rest of the fun when the war was over. Nobody ever said a war so -- so -- that's just kind of passed over. Everybody else was celebrating the same as we were. Didn't go back and report in. There wasn't any -- any -- everybody was just having fun. There wasn't any trouble anywhere. And I guess maybe that was part of it. But best I remember, all of us that were on shore patrol in the gang I was, took our leggings and threw them in the garbage

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and said, the stick and the whole works, the belt, said we're going to just enjoy the evening, and we did.

**Question:** So then I assume a day or so went by and then -- then people were pretty lenient about, hey, we just won a war, and there was back to work eventually?

**Answer:** Well, it wasn't like you say, but a few days, and we were out of Portland, Maine and headed to Japan for this police duty. And it probably took us, well, that was what, September 13th, September 15th, somewhere in there, in '45 when that was over. So I'd say by October, somewhere in there, we were in Japan by that time.

**Question:** Did you end up transporting POW's or anything like that?

**Answer:** Not POW's. We did have some Army folks that had been on the beach over in Japan that we came back -- came back with us when we came to the states. That's -- they weren't POW's, they were our US soldiers.

**Question:** What was the hardest part of your time in the service?

**Answer:** Well, I remember one difficult time. Going to school was pretty difficult, now that was a difficult time but you were there to learn something and you could take advantage of what you could do and we all gave it a hundred percent for that. And the other thing I remember, when I had general quarters aboard ship, I was in emergency radio room -- the emergency radio room. And that -- that's right on the first deck -- the deck of the ship. And you have others that go up from there. So I walked right down on the deck and opened up an iron hatch and walked into the emergency radio room. Which was my general quarters station. And that sucker was right over the top of the boiler. And if you were down like, well, on the shakedown cruise right down in Cuba, it was hot. And the sun was shining on the side of the ship and I was right there inside of that. It had insulation there. And that floor deck was so hot from that boiler down there that you could -- I took my shoes off but you couldn't stand on the deck, it was too hot. I had to stand on my shoes. And I'll tell you the sweat run off of you when you were sitting in there. And everything had to be closed up and there was no blowers in it. Well, I decided after awhile that was enough of this crap. So I cracked the hatch open. The hatch was there, I was the only guy in there, cracked it open and stuck a shoe or something in it and got a little crack of air that I could stand up in, get some air in there. Cause I think you could have died and suffocated in that sucker. I didn't have a stitch of clothes on but my shorts, water was running off of me in puddles. But it was. And I told them later I cracked the hatch and nobody hollered. And there never was any bullets flying. Oh, there were some -- they had their drill things, some of their airplanes would come by and strafe rounds to see if they could hit the ship. That was just on the shakedown cruise and stuff like that. We never actually got into a battle where somebody was shooting back at us that I can recall.

**Question:** What do you think the major message for generations to come -- that World War II would have?

**Answer:** Well, the generations -- we talk about the one today. I don't think generally, that's not saying that's a complete thing, but generally speaking, the generation recognizes the efforts that gone into World War II, World War I, the Revolution, everything else that was. We got our country to where it is. And I have some doubts that if we got back to that, hopefully we're going to get a percentage of them that would do what ever -- and I guess I have to say whatever, it is to keep our country together. And I don't know if we can muster all that. We can start out even with our president, politicians and stuff. They don't have to go

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but whether they can muster what it takes. And I've been overwhelmed every time that this country ever got in some kind of trouble, that even the people I had serious doubts about, came to time. And we've done all right. So I guess down in my heart I have to believe that still the wherewithal is there. But I got my -- and we didn't have a hundred percent people because I didn't -- I wasn't in the service in the Army or the Marines, but I have talked to people, good friends of mine that were. And they said if you had a guy that was in the way, he wasn't doing his part, he got out there on the line of fire, he was out of the way; you didn't have that problem anymore. And that's part of the hard things that you had to go through. I didn't have to do it, but we had, oh, I, we had a couple of guys on the ship that weren't worth their salt. And the rest of us all knew that. But we just worked around that problem. We had one guy as a carpenter and that's all -- he just wasn't -- he was a zero. So if we had to build something, somebody who was -- had some skill, went and did it. Covered up for that guy. He was a -- he was just -- just not there. But most of the people were there. And my message, like the question you asked, is hopefully we can muster the wherewithal it takes if we have a need. And that's probably my message to the rest. Keep in mind that we didn't get on top of this ball easily. All of us, this generation was placed there. But if they don't keep in mind that that's a slippery place to be, you could fall off of that ball awfully fast. And once you fall off it's a lot harder to get back up than it is if you stay up there on top.

**Question:** When you see a color guard go by, what's your feeling?

**Answer:** Well, I'm appreciative of that. I love this America and the flag stands for that. And I, of course I was brought up that way, too, I suppose. My dad was a veteran from World War II -- World War I, so I got a lot of admiration and I think about all the efforts that got the United States where it is. It's still, in my opinion, the top of any nation in this world. And I certainly hope it stays there, but I got reservations on the way we're going about it, whether we'll stay there. But those all come to mind when I see a color guard go by.

**Question:** Were you -- and this one's been an interesting one -- the response that I've got today. Were you proud to serve?

**Answer:** You bet. Yeah, I'm a little old, but if they needed me again and they asked me to be there, I'd do my darndest.

**Question:** That's interesting. Everybody I've talked to today, there's not one hesitation in that answer and that was exactly it.

**Answer:** Yeah. I think everyone of us would say that.

**Question:** It's interesting because the idea of a world war is a very foreign concept to -- I mean, I -- you know, I was around for Viet Nam and understood Viet Nam and all that, but even today there's a generation that's in high school now. One of the people that we talked to is a scholar and he speaks to high schools and he said he talked to this class, and it was a half hour into his presentation before he realized they didn't have the faintest idea what he was talking about.. They thought he was talking about the Viet Nam war. And he said you know I am talking about World War II.

**Answer:** It's not taught in the schools, I don't believe, very, very emphatically anyway. And the last war we had was Viet Nam, and I certainly appreciate those veterans. I don't think, well it was -- it was in my opinion a problem -- we had a son that was in the Viet Nam war, Vi and I do. And he, of course we all think the same of our sons. He was a top ten percenter, as far as I was concerned. I did some checking when he was in the service to find out -- I made some calls and, well, I recall a couple of times trying to get ahold of him, I got

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ahold of somebody that said he was his sergeant, and I asked if he would talk to me for a minute. I'm the boy's dad. I'd like to know, is he worth his salt? Is he a problem? Is he a troublemaker? Yeah, I got good reports, every time, and that made me feel really good, you know. And I think that's true; they're all doing fine. And then you are not, I was going to bring up, too. Interviewing here. Anybody who was a dud in the service, if we could get some of those in here, it would be interesting to hear what they had to say. But we got lots of strike against us. A guy that was a dud, and I recall some -- they were pretty much alcoholics. And they probably have expired by now cause they didn't take care of themselves. So your likelihood of getting one of those is pretty remote. And everybody else would be somebody who did his part. Or this late in life he wouldn't be around, probably. Took care of himself or wasn't a guy that was prone to be, oh, I'm sure if there was drugs, they would have been on drugs. They were on alcohol then or whatever all the problems and just were a mess-type guys.

**Question:** One thing we have tried to focus -- well, not purposefully, kind of purposefully but not so purposefully, we aren't out seeking officers and we aren't -- rank is irrelevant in the interviews that we're doing because we aren't looking at World War II in relation to rank, we're looking at it as who really were these people who protected our country and fought for us and part of it is, I mean I guess I have a little bit of an agenda. I want to tie -- and that's why I asked you, you know, if you knew what you were doing just before you sent in. So a kid in high school sees this and realizes you were just a high school kid. And you had to grow up pretty fast, all of a sudden.

**Answer:** Well, yeah, the growing up happens, quite a lot of in boot camp. Of course my dad had informed us before we left that this is not going to be easy and you're going to be a piece of crap when you go there. He says don't fight it. Just listen to the crap you're going to get and put up with it and said you'll -- you'll learn something before you get out. But he says don't go in there and fight it because he says you ain't going to win, he said. So it -- and you won't be nobody when you go in the service. And that's turned out to be that way. That was pretty good guidance.

**Question:** So that have saved you a lot of frustration and probably a lot of --

**Answer:** Well, it was a real good way to look at it cause it's going to get over. It as much different after you got out of boot camp than it was when you were in there. When you got out you were expected to do something and you were complimented if you did it, you got your butt kicked if you didn't, and it was kind of like every other bit of life. And you know, you learned enough in there that if somebody told you to do something, even if you didn't like it, you figured well, he's telling everybody else, I guess I better do it too. So you could get with it.

**Question:** So I guess -- and that's part of the purpose of boot camp, isn't it?

**Answer:** Oh, I think so. It's to take your independence away and learn to take orders and then you, if you climb back up through the ranks again, you'll get some of that back again. But I never -- I never was -- I made second class petty officer, far as I got. I was treated, oh, I'd say as good as a chief or an officer before I got out because it was -- it was -- well, when we came back to San Diego, there were three electronic technicians in that whole harbor, and there probably was 10,000 ships. And that was another thing. Well, you got treated like a king. When I mustered out of the Navy, I wasn't doing -- my main job was to go aboard destroyers similar to the one I had that I was acquainted with, check out everything and write up, not complete work orders, but write up information that work orders needed to be initiated to get the work done in the shipyard. That was on Mare Island, I was there for

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probably two or three months. And in fact I stayed a little while after my enlistment was over because the skipper asked me to stay. He says we haven't got any other technicians, says, and if we're going to get any of this work done, if you'll stay and do the work, we just won't muster you out. My time was up. I stayed until January the 1st in '47, I think that was the day, and I -- my enlistment was over November 14, 1946, so I stayed, what three, four, five, six weeks later. And then they changed the skipper on the ship. And when he come in, he didn't know me. He says he either ships over or he goes out. And I said, well, I got hell for you, I'm going out. (laughs) That's where I went.

**Question:** How big an impact do you think that your time in the service had on your life?

**Answer:** Well, it was the initiation to get the rest of my life together, I guess. I learned a trade, electronics, when I was in there, and I was in a position to where opportunity to learn it pretty well and I think I did pretty well. And I went from that to work for the Boeing Company as an electronic technician, and progressed through that to management in electronics and then I drifted away from that later as the steps went off and went in just plain manufacturing because it was a little broader thing. But always had a thirst to go back to just being electronics.

**Question:** Now when and I'll wait just a second for the toots of this train going by, getting the schedule down pretty good. Now one thing you talked about growing up, was so here you were 16, the war started and you kind of had this little sweetie up in Arlington there. So when did the two of you get married? During the war, before the war, after the war?

**Answer:** After the war, '47.

**Question:** So did you keep in touch during the war?

**Answer:** Oh, yeah.

**Question:** And you got out of the service, came home and then --

**Answer:** Well yeah, we had had a falling out in this amount of time. She had some other friends and I had some other friends, and after I got back home, why the fire started again.

**Question:** Got the home fires burning, huh?

**Answer:** Well, the fires got started again.

**Question:** And so all that happened in World War II allowed you to venture on after the American dream?

**Answer:** Well, and that gave us both a chance to grow up. We had already decided when we were in high school we was too young to get married. We knew if I went in the service, that was going to last three or four years, I might -- if we still was -- interested, we'd talk that over when we got back. Well, there was a falling out for awhile and then we got back together, the fires got rekindled then.

**Question:** Well I'll get the other side of that here in a second.