

RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES A. BAUMGARTEN

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

WORLD WAR II * KOREAN WAR * VIETNAM WAR * COLD WAR

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

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TRANSCRIPT BY

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Greg Flynn: This begins an interview with Charles A. Baumgarten on May 2, 2008, in Manchester, New Jersey, with Greg Flynn and ...

Matthew Lawrence: ... Matt Lawrence.

GF: Mr. Baumgarten, could we start with where you were born?

Charles A. Baumgarten: I was born in Clifton, New Jersey.

ML: When was that?

CB: June 24, 1924.

ML: I would like to ask you a little bit about your family history. Can you tell us where your mother and father came from originally?

CG: They were both born in Passaic, New Jersey. My mother's parents came from, her mother came from England and her father came from up around Elmira, New York State, somewhere up [in] that area. My father's parents both came from Germany.

ML: Do you know how your parents met?

CB: I have no idea. [laughter]

GF: Can you tell us about some of your early memories of your parents, your father or your mother or both?

CB: Well, my father, I don't remember too much. He died when I was four, [in] 1928. My mother sold the house that we lived in and moved in with my grandfather, her father, in Clifton. ... Both houses were in Clifton. So, I was brought up in that house from the time I was a little over four.

ML: Did you have brothers and sisters?

CB: One sister.

GF: Was she older or younger?

CB: Older.

GF: How many years older?

CB: Oh, four years.

GF: Did she or your mother ever talk about your father?

CB: No, not that much, only [that] he was a; what do you call it?

GF: Merchant Marine?

CB: Well, he was in the Merchant Marine during World War I. [Editor's Note: The Merchant Marines are a fleet of US merchant ships responsible for transporting goods that, during wartime, serves as an auxiliary to the Navy, delivering supplies to the military.]

GF: That was on your pre-interview survey.

CB: Yes, but ... his job was in the Botany Mills in Passaic, Botany Worsted Mills, and he was ... an accountant, or took care of the books.

ML: Did your mother work?

CB: Yes. She retired from the Clifton School Board of Education. She was a secretary in the offices, and I don't remember how old she was when she retired, probably sixty-five, and she moved down here, where [we are], close by to where I am now. My sister, she also lived in here. Then, her husband died and she went to live with her daughter, and she just died, oh, less than a year ago.

ML: What do you remember about growing up in Clifton?

GF: Sports, hobbies or a first job?

ML: The neighborhood?

CB: Sports. We played a lot of stickball and baseball, when we could get a ball, and they were kind of costly, but stickball and a lot of games, oh, what did they call them? kick-the-can and stuff like that, hide-and-seek, and we used to play a lot of that. Well, we were pretty small then, but, growing up, we used to do a lot of fishing, and hunting. ... I was eighteen when I went in the service. So, I had quit high school and I went to work for a little while, and then, I went in the Navy. ...

GF: Had you always thought that you were going to wind up in the Navy, because of the climate at the time or because of something else?

CB: ... Yes, I was going to sign up before. Even before the war started, I was going to go in the Navy, and I had to wait, because I wasn't seventeen yet, and then, when you're seventeen, you had to have your parents' permission, you know, but, then, I got my driver's license and I didn't want to go. [laughter] So, then, I was working in a patternmaking shop in Nutley, and I really [did not want to go]. Well, I didn't need a car, but, you know, it was a lot easier. So, I got a car. It was a '32 Chevy, four-door, with the spare tires on the side, all that jazz, nice chrome vents on the hood, you know. [laughter] ... I bought it from Zabriskie Chevrolet, in Paterson, and I think it cost my mother forty-five dollars. It was a '32, and that would have been in, I guess, '40, 1940. So, that was my first adventure with a car. [laughter]

ML: What do you remember about the neighborhood? Were the areas ethnically separated? Was it a German neighborhood?

CB: No, it was everything, yes.

ML: It was mixed.

CB: Yes, oh, yes, very mixed, Catholics and Protestants. Of course, at that time, there was a lot of animosity between the Catholics and the Protestants. ... I can remember my grandfather, because across the street from us were a couple of Catholic families, and the Catholic church was right there, behind them, which is St. Paul's Church in Clifton, and the gal across the street, this is when I was small, she was always backing out of her driveway and into one of our cars. ... That didn't set too well with my grandfather, [laughter] ... but I got along with them all, pretty much. [laughter] So, we had no problem there, and I used to work in the A[&P]. There was a little A&P down on Main, Main Avenue, near Washington Avenue, in Clifton, and [I would] deliver stuff with a wagon and work in the store, you know, and then, there was an ice cream store. I worked in that. ... Then, I used to work in a drugstore, that was when I got a little older, when I was in high school. ... As a matter-of-fact, the druggist wanted to pay for some of my college, if I would do a good job in school, which I wasn't one for that. In fact, ... his son went to Rutgers, and he would have sent, or helped me along, anyway, to go there ... but I wasn't into that. I liked working in the store. You met a lot of interesting people.

ML: Were you kind of put to work or did you enjoy working?

CB: Oh, no, I enjoyed working, yes. No, I wasn't put to work. No, my mother always was pretty much able to take care of us. She was a hard worker, yes. ...

GF: How did the Depression affect your family in the 1930s?

CB: Well, at that time, my mother worked; she was the first relief investigator for the state and they had an office in the old Number Three School in Clifton, which is still there. ... I don't know if the Board of Health is still in there or not, but, in fact, I used to work for them, when they would get a load, because they got food [to distribute]. They stored potatoes there and dry food. They would get butter in for the relief people, and some clothing, ... but most of the people that were on relief at that time, they wanted the money. They didn't care about getting the food that much, you know, but my mother used to go to houses. She would have to, oh, I guess, interview the people, to see if they were qualified for relief at that time and, you know, all of that. So, she drove. When my father died, we had a 1928 Essex, and she drove it. I don't know how, but, yes, [laughter] and so, she was the first relief investigator for the state, ... when they started that program.

ML: Did she ever talk about the interviews she went on?

CB: Yes, well, people would, a lot of Italian people, ... invite her for dinner and, you know, things like that, and I don't remember her talking too much about them, not that I can remember anyway; maybe she did. ...

ML: Did you specifically feel any of the effects of the Depression?

CB: Well, I wanted to go to machinist's school. Of course, my sister, she went to nursing school, Mountainside, in Montclair, and my one grandmother paid for her, but she wouldn't pay for me to go to school. ... I finally did [find the money]. I got my father's brother, who lived up in Boston, and I think it cost him, like, 250 dollars to send me, it was a small machine shop school, but that was [it]. Clifton High School didn't have a shop at the time.

GF: Shop?

CB: For some reason, and I don't remember what the reason was, I wasn't qualified to go to the Paterson Vocational School. So, I didn't get what I wanted, really, until I got in the Navy, and then, I got it in the Navy. ...

GF: Was machinist's training a particular reason why you were going into the Navy, because you had this interest in that?

CB: No, no.

GF: What was the reason for your joining the Navy, specifically?

CB: Well, I always liked the Navy, ... and I joined before I would get drafted, so [that] I could get my pick of what I wanted. If you got drafted, you didn't, you know; then, you didn't get a pick. So, they would put you wherever they needed people. Of course, during the war, they had an over amount of people anyway, but I guess they had to have them in reserve, anyway.

GF: What did you think of World War II as you watched it develop stateside?

CB: What did I think of it, you mean?

GF: Yes. Were you keeping up with the reports?

CB: Well, yes, the different things that went on, the islands that were taken and things like that. ... You know, there was always something going on. I don't know that I thought much of it, not really, you know, only that there was a war going on. [laughter]

ML: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was attacked?

CB: Yes. I was in the cellar working on a project for my girlfriend. [laughter]

GF: What was the project?

CB: A bookcase, yes.

ML: How did you hear about it, over the radio?

CB: Yes, it was on the radio. It came over the radio.

ML: Were you scared when you heard about it?

CB: No, I ... probably didn't think much about it, now that I think of it. ... No one knew much about the Hawaiian Islands. They were the other side of the world.

GF: When did you realize that you were probably going to be drafted and that it was better to go enlist and have a choice then?

CB: Well, I don't remember how they drafted them, now that I think back. They had a draft board, and I don't know how they picked you. ... I don't know whether I knew it was coming, when it was coming or what. I really don't know the reason, no. All of a sudden, I know I went to sign [up]. I had to go over to New York, to 90 Church Street, I think it was. That's where the Navy Recruitment Center was, and then, they marched us from there. In fact, ... it was a holiday, October 24th, I think that was Navy Day, at that time, and they marched us all the way down the street, the whole bunch of us, down to get the ferry and took us over to Hoboken, I think, and got on a train. [Editor's Note: Between 1922 and the 1970s, Navy Day was on October 27th.] ... A couple of days later, and full of soot and everything, I think we got waylaid to every [siding], every train that came by we had to get pulled off and let them go by, because they were more important than we were, I think it took us, had to be two-and-a-half days to get to Chicago, where we went to boot camp, in Great Lakes [Great Lakes Naval Recruit Training Command], Company 1492--never forget that number.

ML: Were you active in any sports in high school?

CB: Yes, I played a little bit of football. That was about it, and, no, I was usually working. So, I didn't go for the sports too much. I also played golf.

GF: Did you know anybody who had enlisted, or was planning on enlisting, before you did?

CB: No. A friend of mine up the street was drafted, ... but that was before the war, and he was killed on that Bataan March. I don't remember exactly when that was, but it was after the war started. Other than that, nobody else that I know of went in before me, no. [Editor's Note: The Bataan Death March took place following the surrender of US and Filipino forces on the Bataan Peninsula in the Philippines in April 1942. Over seventy-eight thousand POWs were forced to march to Camp O'Donnell over six days with little to no food and water while enduring constant cruelty from their Japanese captors. Thousands died along the more than sixty-five mile route to the POW camp.]

GF: How did your mother and sister react when they heard you were going to enlist for naval duty?

CB: I don't know. My sister took over my car. [laughter]

GF: Was she in nursing school yet?

CB: Yes. She didn't graduate until, oh, I think it was in '43, something like that. Oh, I think my mother was happy for me, because she knew it's something that I really wanted, you know. It wasn't that I didn't want to go or anything. You know, I wanted to go in the Navy.

GF: What did you know about the Navy before enlisting that made you want to join the Navy?

CB: I don't know, [laughter] not much, no, not much. Well, we always had a bungalow up at Lake Hopatcong and, although we never had a boat or anything, I had an uncle that had a boat there that he kept ... down near the water, and I used to kind of "borrow" it, you know, once in awhile. It was just a rowboat, but I would just ... go out fishing. In fact, they'd be looking for me at night, would have the police out looking for me, [laughter] and I would just have a stick to get myself around with it, you know, ... because I didn't have the oars. He had them locked up. ... Once in awhile, somebody I knew had a sailboat, I'd go out on that with them, a small one, you know, nothing big.

ML: Was that where you did the hunting and fishing, at Lake Hopatcong?

CB: Yes, I used to go up there a lot, well, all over Jersey, but we used to go, yes, ... to the bungalow quite often, a bunch of us they'd take up and we'd stay in it for the weekend. ...

GF: Steal the boat? [laughter]

CB: No, not then, no, not when we were hunting, but, yes, we used to do a lot of hunting up in that area, yes.

ML: Did a lot of your friends feel the way you did about enlisting?

CB: I don't know. I don't think so. Most of them got drafted, I think, the ones that I know, yes. So, they weren't in any hurry to, you know, to go, which I don't blame them for, with the war, [laughter] but it turned out all right.

GF: What did a normal day consist of while you were in basic training at Great Lakes?

CB: Oh, I guess, we were one of the last [training groups to get hammocks]; I don't know how many more after us. I was in Company 1492, and we got in there about midnight, into Great Lakes. ... They threw us a hammock and a mattress and that was about it, I think, for the night, and nobody knew how to string up a hammock, so, most of them slept on the floor, I guess, for the night, but, yes, we were probably the last, close to the last ones, that got hammocks. Then, they changed to bunks, finally, because they didn't have any hammocks in the boats anymore. In the destroyers and that, they used to have hammocks, but, you know, that had been all changed. I don't know why they ever did that, but it was comfortable sleeping, once you got used to them,

if you did them right. So, you had to get up in the morning and fix your hammock, go do your toilet duties, whatever, and go out and exercise, what else? go to gory movies about the clap and syphilis [laughter] and all these happy looking things that you saw on the screen. They were big on that, and that's before penicillin came into the picture, maybe a year or so, couple years, because, at one time, ... if you got the clap, it was, what kind of a discharge? [Editor's Note: Mr. Baumgarten is referring to a dishonorable discharge.] ... Anyway, they would discharge you, but, once penicillin came into the picture, that went out of the picture. ... Then, you'd have lunch. Some people would have KP duty. They'd have to either do dishes or serve or peel potatoes, stuff like that. I never got any of that. Then, they'd have to go out on the parade ground, march, and then, go to small arms, stuff like that. You didn't have much time to yourself. I don't remember exactly; Friday was always, in the Navy, Friday was field day. That's when you had to clean. Even on a ship, Friday was [field day], even ... when you're out to sea, you know, whatever you were doing, field day was Friday, clean the engines, do this, do that, you know, all the brass, bright work, and all that kind of stuff. ... I forget what time the lights were out. Well, they gave you time to write a letter, I guess it was. They were big on writing letters home, and that was about it for a day. For basic training, it was pretty routine stuff, you know.

ML: Did you write letters often?

CB: Yes, I think I did. Yes, I wrote a lot of letters, yes.

ML: Was that something that kept you busy or were they just to keep in touch?

CB: No, just to keep in touch, yes. It wasn't something to keep me busy, no.

GF: Did you write letters to your mother or your sister or your girlfriend or your friends? Who were you writing to the most?

CB: A lot to [my] girlfriend and my mother. I didn't write to my sister, because she was right there. Anyway, once in awhile, to a; she was a schoolteacher, was a girlfriend of my mother's, very good friend of the family, and I'd write to her once in awhile. In fact, I have one of her letters. Then, I don't know how I got it back. ... I guess it was in my mother's stuff, I don't know. [laughter] ... No, my girlfriend's letters, all of hers were [destroyed]. My sister and her husband burned them up one day. I don't know. So, there's none of them left. [laughter]

GF: You went into both machinist's school and submarine school right in the Great Lakes area.

CB: Well, no, no.

GF: Okay.

CB: Machinist's school, I went right from boot camp. We got a week off. Fact is, we flew home, a couple of us. That time, it was only, like, what was it? a DC-3, two-engine, and I think it was American Airlines, from Chicago to New York. LaGuardia was the only field then. So, we'd go into LaGuardia and, ... if I remember, I think it was like ninety-eight dollars a round-

trip, but they were fun flights then, because all your stewardesses on the planes, they had to be registered nurses at that time. So, they were all a lot of fun, you know, and a lot of liquor on the planes, I guess because you didn't know whether you'd make it or not, [laughter] but they gave you a week off. ... Then, I went back to school, machinist's school, and I think that was for, I don't know, six or eight weeks, something like that. ... Then, you would get assigned from there, and I got assigned to some outfit, I don't know, a LION outfit, LION Three, I think it was called. ... In that, they had welders, machinists, plumbers, all kinds of stuff. ... I think they were mainly made up to take care of, like, a base, you know, all the repairs that would have to go on in a base. Then, we went to San Diego. ... Then, we get transferred to Virginia, and then, we went back to San Diego; no, we went to San Francisco, outside, San Bruno. ... Then, it was after that when I got assigned to submarine school.

ML: Were you chosen or were you selected?

CB: Submarine school is all voluntary, and I had a tough job. I wanted to get in there a long time, and they had my record stamped, "Not fit for submarine duty," but nobody knew why. So, finally, I got to a captain of the base down in Virginia, when we went to Virginia, and I got a séance with him. You know, you have to go through the proper channels to get [what you want], and he was very nice, and, you know, I told him what went on, that nobody knew why I'd been rejected for that. He said, "I'll look into it," and we got transferred out to California again. ... I was out there for a little while and the orders came through to go to submarine school. So, he did do something, I guess. ...

ML: Why did you want to be on a submarine?

CB: I don't know. [laughter] I have no idea why. Oh, well, in a way, I do. ... My mother moved [us] in with my grandfather when my father died. Then, my grandfather died in 1936, and my mother got the house from my grandmother. She was still living with us, but she had to have control, whatever. So, anyway, she was able to turn it into a two-family house. It was a great, big, one-family house. So, she made it into a two-family house, and the first couple that moved in there was an older couple. He had been on submarines back in World War I, and he used to talk to me about them, and I think that's where I kind of got the idea. ...

GF: What did you learn in submarine school? Was it just the basics of operating on the submarine, or, since you had the background in machinist's school; eventually, you became an engine man, correct?

CB: [Yes].

GF: Were you kind of already on that track?

CB: Well, no, at submarine school, you learned everything about the boat, all the valves, what water transfers to what tank, and so forth, and so on, you know, fuel oil lines, and, basically, you could, oh, pretty much do any job that would [fall to you], you know, torpedoman. ... Of course, you didn't; I'd never be able to do a radioman['s job] or something like that, you know, but the rest of the stuff is all [comprehensible]. ... You learned all of that, and then, after you got on a

boat, you had to qualify to get your "Dolphins," and that took as much time as you wanted it to take. [Editor's Note: The Submarine Warfare insignia, colloquially known as "Dolphins," are a uniform insignia worn by United States Navy enlisted men and officers who have qualified for service in submarines.] You had to make drawings of the different systems, and then, you would go with an officer with each compartment, ... but you had to learn all the different compartments, and then, they would test you on all the different things. ... Then, one of the officers would sign you off as "qualified," and you could wear your "Dolphins." Otherwise, you didn't wear "Dolphins." When they started out, they were on the left forearm, down here, sewn on. Then, they moved them up here, and they use a pin now. ...

ML: Was yours sewn on or a pin?

CB: Originally, they were sewn, but, now, they're pinned, but I don't have a uniform anymore, [laughter] got rid of that a long time ago. I don't know what happened to it.

ML: How long did you stay in submarine school?

CB: I think it was around six weeks. I'm not sure; must have been, yes, must have been about that, but I went to a submarine school out in San Diego, which wasn't a real submarine school. It was one that they, like, made up for the emergency. The main one was in New London, [Connecticut], and so, we didn't have a tower, [a submarine escape training tower]. They only had two towers; they had one in Pearl Harbor and one in New London. In fact, they're all gone now. They don't use them anymore. So, ... in San Diego, we just had classroom [work]. We had the old S-boats [World War I-era S-class submarines] out there, tied up to one of the tenders. I forget what tender was out there. I don't remember the name of it, ... and then, any of the swimming classes, with the Momsen lung and stuff like that, we did in a swimming pool. So, otherwise, it was pretty much the same, not nearly as strict as New London was, you know. That was called "(Spritz's?) Navy" up there. There was a chief up there by the name of (Spritz?) and he really kept that place in line. He was the king, but I'm glad I never got there. I might not have been there long, [laughter] but that school, I guess, is still going on up there, for the nukes now, the nuclear boats. Have you ever been to the one in Hackensack, the submarine? [Editor's Note: Mr. Baumgarten is referring to the USS *Ling* (SS-297), now on exhibit at the New Jersey Naval Museum in Hackensack.]

ML: No. I went out to San Diego, though, over the summer.

CB: Oh, were you?

ML: I saw one there.

CB: Because I was on a committee bringing the USS *Ling* in. Well, it was over [in Brooklyn]; it was a school boat. They were using it as a school boat, over in [the] Brooklyn Navy Yard. ... Then, the Navy wanted to get rid of it, but it's interesting. They got it fixed pretty nice for the public to go through. ... Like, the Sea Scouts ... and those organizations, we've got a couple of them that are taking care of it now. ... You know, they come in, young kids, and they clean it and paint and do all that kind of stuff.

ML: Did you find the submarine school difficult?

CB: No, not really, no. ... For me, it wasn't; you know, [for] some people, maybe, it would be, I don't know, that aren't too mechanically inclined, you know, like the yeoman, the guy that does the paperwork. He still had to qualify, ... or a cook, you know, but ... I didn't think it was that difficult, no.

GF: When did you complete training in submarine school?

CB: Oh, God, I don't know, some time in early 1944.

GF: Your first active duty assignment was on the USS *Sea Cat* [(SS-399)], right?

CB: Yes, during the war, 1944.

GF: Okay.

CB: Yes. After the war was over, I went on the *Archerfish* [(SS-311)] for, well, it wasn't for long, about five months. Then, we brought it back to the States, and then, I got off to go [get my] discharge, yes.

GF: Can you describe your experience on the *Sea Cat*?

CB: On the *Sea Cat*? Well, I left, where did I leave? San Francisco, on one of the tenders, submarine tender. We went out to Pearl Harbor, and that's where I got on the *Sea Cat*, and that had just been built, came out from the States. It was built in Portsmouth, [New Hampshire]. So, I went on, I was a machinist, second class, then, but I only went on as an oiler in the engine room, at that time, because I didn't [have any training on it]; the new boats, we didn't get training on the new boats. That was only on the old S-boats, and the new ones are entirely different, you know. So, I went on as an oiler. ...

ML: Did you kind of learn as you went along?

CB: Yes, yes, just from them, the other guys, telling you what you had to do, what had to be done, this, that and the other thing, you know, and then, you had to qualify, and that took awhile, maybe four months, something like that, but we went right out on [the boat]. I got on the *Sea Cat*, I don't remember when it was, but we made sea trials out there for awhile, a few weeks, I guess it was, and training on getting the dives down to where you're [diving in] less than a minute, you know, getting down. ... Then, we went out on patrol. We went to; where'd we go first? Let's see, I think the first stop was Midway, [where we] topped off the fuel tanks.

GF: Were there perhaps older crewmembers that had been through Midway?

CB: Oh, yes, transfers from other boats, because this was a new boat, came out of [the United States], you know. So, the crew that was on it started from scratch, from ... when they laid the

keel. They were going to school right there, in Portsmouth, and, as it was built, they could go and watch, see things, you know, how it was built and this and that. ... Not all of them, no, but a good majority of them came from other boats. They had been in the service for awhile, you know, and they knew the boats, and the same with the officers, same way. They had new ones, right out of submarine school, you know, and others that had been on submarines. ...

[TAPE PAUSED]

CB: So, anything else?

GF: Yes, we were talking about older crew members. Did they talk about the Battle of Midway? Did they go through that or did they share stories about being in the Pacific Theater?

CB: Oh, yes, ... they always did, I think, yes. Some of them had a lot of good stories, that these guys could tell stories, yes. [laughter] ... By the time we got out there, the war was kind of going down in the Pacific, and so, the pickings weren't that great, as far as the shipping goes, because we had them [pushed back]. You know, they had no more places to go that they didn't get sunk, ... but we had our times, even so. ... When you're that age, too, ... you don't really think about being scared or anything, you know, ... not [like] when you get older, where you would think about, "Hey, is this my last dive?" ... These guys all had [experience], the ones that were on the boats, you know, previously they had made runs on other boats; like, the *Archerfish*, that I got on after the *Sea Cat* there, she sunk the largest aircraft carrier that the Japanese had, and it wasn't even really outfitted yet. They were towing it into an inland, I don't know, waterway or a lake or something like that, to keep it safe, and it just happened that the *Archerfish* came along and was able to sink it. I think they fired six fish [torpedoes] at it, that they all [hit], and it went right down, but it had no planes on it, it wasn't ... even outfitted yet, but it was all set to go, but our experiences [were], we sunk a couple of small, I don't know what you'd call them, freighters or whatever.

ML: Commercial vessels?

CB: Yes, no military, no. [We sunk] one [that weighed] around ten thousand tons.

GF: What would be the role of somebody in the engine room during combat duty?

CB: Just sit there and pray, [laughter] unless you were on the surface. Then, see, you had diesel-electric [engines] and the enginemen would start and stop the engines. Well, in fact, they didn't have to stop them, because they could be stopped from the maneuvering room, where the electricians [were], but the electricians would handle everything at their cubicle. They had a cubicle, port and starboard, and, once the engines were started and put on line, they could operate the speed, or the RPMs of the engine and everything, from their cubicle. ... When you submerged, the cubicle just took over. The engines were stopped and the main motors would be used from the batteries, right. So, in the engine room, basically, you didn't have too much to do, just watch that nothing came apart. ... When you dove, you had to shut a big flapper valve, ... the main engine air induction valve is what it was, and, basically, open up a drain ... on the engines, and shut the throttles down, close that valve, and that were about your [duties], but you

had to take care of the engines, you know, oil. It had to be cleaned, ... and not much else on the engines, ... because we had Fairbanks-Morse [engines], which were almost like an outboard engine, heated compression. Of course, ... on a diesel, it's heated compression anyway, but the Fairbanks had opposed pistons, like this, and what did we have, nine cylinders, eight cylinders? Some were eight and some were nine, I think, but the pistons on them were, like, over eight inches in diameter. That's a lot of engine, a lot of weight with that, but you had no sparkplugs or anything, you know. It was just injectors, and you started them with air, six hundred pounds of air, but you never had any problem with [them], because you had no valves. It's like an outboard motor, really. You had just ports, and much nicer than the General Motors, where you're always pulling a cylinder head, you know, and either the valve spring or something would go or whatever, or a piston would go, because, if you didn't keep the water temperature for the engine quite at the temperature that you needed, you'd crack a liner on the thing. You'd have to pull that and put a new liner; very little of that on the Fairbanks engines. ... To me, they were terrific engines and they were sixteen hundred horsepower, each one. We had four of them, but, basically, in the engine room, that's all you did, was take care of the engines, during any kind of an attack or anything, just watch that, ... you know, no pipes broke or whatever. You also had an evaporator in the forward engine room. You made fresh water for everything on the boat, including battery water.

ML: Did you ever have any serious problems?

CB: Yes. We had one with one engine, ... because you have two crankshafts with those, an upper and a lower, and, in-between, there's like a, I forget now what they called it, but it was a drive, because your, what was it now? I forget which, whether it was the upper or the lower [that] drove the other one. So, it had a big bearing, about seven inches, maybe, in diameter, and, in fact, it was on my watch and I went to start the engine and it just made this awful noise, you know. So, I had to shut it right down. Well, when we took it apart, there were roller bearings in that and they were about a good inch-and-a-quarter, maybe, long and they actually melted. They were just smooth all the way around, I mean, like tear drops. ... [We came] to find out that we had the newer engines, the nine-cylinder, the older ones were eight, and they used the same bearing in that unit as was designed for the eight-cylinder, which had a steel race. The new ones should have been a bronze race in there. So, that took us, oh, a little over a day, and we had to do it at sea, to take that thing out. I mean, it's, like, about that tall.

ML: Three feet?

CB: ... A good two, two-and-a-half feet tall, and you have to take the whole side of the engine apart. There's a port to go in, I mean, it has maybe, probably, sixty bolts. You know, it's a cover, and then, you have to get in there and take this whole thing out of that port. ... So, we had to do that at sea and they had to submerge for us, because it was too rough to do it while they were on the surface. So, that was the only real thing that we had wrong.

ML: While you were down, could the ship move?

CB: Oh, yes, because we had the other three engines, yes. The engines were not running when submerged. You used the main motors, which operated from the batteries. That's why they called them diesel-electric boats.

ML: It was just the one.

CB: Yes, it was just the one engine, and you had an auxiliary engine, too, down below, in the after engine room, which we didn't use it too much, but it was there, mainly, to put the final charge on, a battery charge, but we had trouble with that little one, (Rose?). All of them were, like, they'd run away if the governor wouldn't [work properly]. For some reason or other, they couldn't get them to always work quite right and they'd, like, run away. So, you had to shut them down, and so, we didn't use it too much, but, on the nuclear boats, they have one of the same [engines], I think, on them. I don't know what they use that for on them, probably just for an emergency, I don't know.

ML: On the submarine itself, how did you keep yourself occupied?

GF: How did you take to submarine life, because there were people who did not like it?

CB: Oh, yes, right. Well, we had a lot of books. A lot of the guys would play cribbage. I never played it. I didn't know much about it. A lot of our guys would play cards, too. I never played cards, though. Come to think of it, I don't know what I did. I'd go up and, you know, move around, go up into the forward torpedo room, or something, and talk to the guys up there and that was about it. [laughter]

GF: Did the crew get along, for the most part?

CB: Pretty much, yes. Once in awhile, there'd be a little ...

GF: Scuffle?

CB: Scuffle, yes, [laughter] when you got near the end of the run, you know, ... after just about two months, and you're running out of food and everything, you know, because, when we left, like, for the crew, you had two showers, so, we'd have one filled up with potatoes and one filled up with canned milk. So, you didn't get a shower until one of them was empty, [laughter] but I always had something to do, I mean, even on your off-time, because you had four on and eight off. So, you had your three crews, actually, to cover you for, you know, your twenty-four hours, but, if you went to battle stations, everybody had a different spot to go to. ... In that eight hours, I don't know, you slept a lot, you had books to read, and that was about it. Well, once a week, we'd have a movie and that would be in the galley, which wasn't much bigger than this room. So, you get twenty guys or so in there, watching a movie on this screen that's [small], you know, and then, the movies would be so old, after awhile, you know, you showed them so many times. ... Once in awhile, you'd get to be able to meet up with another one of the boats out there and trade off the movies, but that didn't happen too often. Other than that, there wasn't [much], you know. You didn't have stuff like you have nowadays, nothing like that.

GF: Was there any nicknaming going on? Was there anybody on the crew that you remember in particular that you got along with or did not get along with?

CB: They had one guy that never liked to wash. [laughter] He was always pretty crummy looking all the time, [laughter] and they got a hold of him one day and they really used the scrubbing brush on him, [laughter] but they'd do things, once in awhile, like that, like our skipper, ... his name was [Robert R.] Rob Roy MacGregor, and, after the first run, he made full commander. Lieutenant commander was as far as they went with [submarine commanders]. Anyone who made a higher rate was thrown overboard, no matter who, but we got this new captain on by the name of [Richard H.] Bowers, [in February 1945], and nobody cared for him at all. I don't know, he was just [not friendly?], but, anyway, he was in the wardroom with "the Old Man," talking to him. I guess the Old Man was telling him about the boat and what, you know, to expect, and so forth. A bunch of the crew from the control room, the guys, the boatswain's mates and that, that worked up on the charts and that stuff, right, they went in there, while he was talking to this other captain, this new captain. ... They took him [Commander MacGregor?] and they hauled him up and they took him up to the topside and threw him overboard, [laughter] and this new captain, he was petrified. He didn't know what to say, because he had never seen anything like this happen, but that was one of the things, and that was in Guam. Yes, they threw him right overboard. He came right back, though. He was a great, great guy. In fact, he just died a year or so ago, I think, because they were all older and they were all Annapolis. There was only one or two, I think, that were not from Annapolis that became commanders, ... or skippers, of the boats, yes, but, by and large, I mean, there was no saluting, none of that, you know, on the boat. "Yes, sir," "No, sir," okay, but ... they didn't pull rank or anything like that, you know.

ML: You got along with your officers fairly well then.

CB: Pretty much, yes. You only had about seven, maybe, seven or eight, but the crews were overbooked, or over, what do you say? over-complemented during the war. So, you had, actually, more on than the boat was built to carry. So, then, a lot of them, oh, maybe about eight, I would say no more than eight, would have to "hot sack," in other words, [share beds], but we had ... zipper-cover mattresses. They had good mattresses and they had a cover on that was, well, like, I don't know what it's made of, but what would I say, like a linoleum? no, wouldn't be a linoleum. Something like what they [used for], remember the old tablecloths? a material like that, and it had a full zipper on it. So, the guy that was assigned to the bunk would use the mattress and he would zip [it] open and flip the cover off and he would use the mattress. Then, the guy, the "hot sack," would cover the mattress and zip it up and sleep on the top part. So, sleeping was not the greatest, but everybody managed, somehow or other.

ML: Did you rotate who had to "hot sack?"

CB: No, not really, usually the newer guys, yes. [laughter]

ML: Were you ever stuck doing that?

CB: Yes, I think I was, yes, yes.

GF: How many beds and mattresses were there?

CB: Oh, I don't know.

GF: A lot?

CB: Yes. ... In the crew's quarters, how many would you have? I think we had about, one, two, three, four high, in the middle, ... oh, isn't that a lot? and then, they went all the way down the sides, and then, the torpedo rooms had them, and any space that they could [fit one into], but it had to be able to be folded up, to get it out of the way, to get at [equipment], like, in the torpedo room especially, where they had to, you know, move around torpedoes and that. Today, they're all electric things, shift them all over the place, anywhere they want. [laughter]

GF: What was the food like?

CB: It was good. Yes, we always had good food, until the end [of the patrol]. Then, you know, we're out of potatoes and all the basics were getting pretty much down [to nothing]. I mean, meat, we always had, because it ... had a pretty good-sized freezer, ... but fresh vegetables and that, milk, you only had for maybe two days and that was done. You didn't have that for long.

GF: How often did you stop and resupply?

CB: After a run, probably about sixty days, average.

GF: Did you ever get R&R [rest and relaxation] or leave?

CB: Oh, yes, yes. After each run, you'd get two weeks in a rest camp, and then, you would have, like, two weeks of trials again, out to sea, because, while you were in the rest camp, the relief crew would be working on the boat. You would have made a list of all the things that needed to be done, and then, you'd be checking all of these out and getting all your training back, you know, gunnery training and stuff like that. ... That takes a couple of weeks, sometimes even more, depending on how much you had to do.

GF: When you were on leave or had R&R, where would that be?

CB: The first time, I think, where did we go? Oh, we had the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, in Hawaii, but, now, you've got to remember, they pulled everything out of the rooms [laughter] and you had two guys to a room. ... First thing, you'd go in to take a shower, but, of course, they didn't have showers then, they had a tub, you know, and a shower, but the tub would be full up with ice and beer. So, you wouldn't get a shower there, you had to go downstairs and take one outside, [laughter] ... and the elevators didn't work. You had to use the stairs. They basically stripped the place, and then, we had Camp Dealey, out in Guam, which was just, they had a Marine guard at one end and a Marine guard at the other end of the road and had all Quonset huts, and they had a baseball field and a big dining area, open, sort of. Then, they had, like, a swimming pool blasted out of the coral, down by the ocean. ... It was all right, but it wasn't [much]. There was

nothing, nothing there. In fact, when we went out on the way out from the States, they stopped in the Panama Canal, and the Old Man [MacGregor] let them, I think they took about thirty-some cases of liquor onboard, which was a no-no, but it was all stored, nobody ever touched it, and it was only when we got to the rest camps, after a run, and the Old Man would distribute, like, a bottle every three days to two guys, or something like that, you know. Chief of the boat would take care of that. So, anyway, we had a little liquor, instead of just this warm beer that they'd bring in, you know, and that lasted [until] ... when we got that new skipper, that guy Bowers. One night, we were in Midway, at the rest camp in Midway, and he said, "I want all this liquor off-loaded and drank tonight, and that's it. No more liquor onboard." So, the fact is, he wound up getting really stoned, [laughter] and ... he even got, I don't know where they got it, they got a pick-up truck and they brought a piano in the barracks. ... They brought the base band in and they got permission to keep the lights on until midnight, because it was a [war zone], you know. So, they had a big party that night and everything was gone. [laughter]

GF: When you came into port, were you greeted by bands?

CB: Yes, pretty much. They had a little band would come down and have fresh milk and some fruit, stuff like that. Yes, yes, they did that when a boat came in.

ML: When you were at these rest camps, did you ever interact with the locals?

CB: No, they weren't even around there. The only time [was], we took a hike one day and went all the way into, I think the name of the town was Agana [or Hagatna, in Guam], and it was all bombed out, but there were a few locals there, but we didn't say much to them, that I can remember. I can remember them washing clothes down by a brook, some of the women, but I don't know, I don't even remember seeing any of the houses. I remember going into the church, which was all bombed out. It was only a small building. I don't know what it was made out of, probably coral, but, no, when I was there, there wasn't too much. ... I understand Guam is pretty nice now, you know, as far as [tourist attractions]. Well, they've got the big airport there now, right?

ML: Right.

CB: That, what was it, B-29s that come out of there? No, there were Japanese still there when I was there, and you could go and relieve a Marine and go out on a patrol with them, if you wanted, which I never did. I'd probably get knifed or something with one of those gooks, that they actually ... got very brazen, I understand. They would even come into the chow line and you wouldn't know, because they had workers that, you know, they look just like Japanese, or maybe they were Japanese, ... because they were still living in caves and that, you know, in Guam, for quite a long while. ... They used to come in on the chow line, they said. Nobody would ever know. You know, they didn't wear badges like they do nowadays. Everybody's identified, pretty much. ... In fact, you guys didn't wear your badges today, did you?

GF: I am sorry, sir. [laughter] Onboard the submarine, was there a strict hierarchy? You have already kind of said not so much, although there was a respect between the officers and the men.

CB: Well, you didn't go and hang out in the officers' [area], like the officers' wardroom. They had a small room, maybe from here to the window and about so. They had a big table in it. That's where they ate. They had an officer's steward that took care of them. It was always, before; well, when we started out, it was a Filipino, and ... it was always Filipino until, I guess until Eleanor [Roosevelt] came into the picture and we started getting the blacks, and they started out as the stewards for the officers. [Editor's Note: First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt campaigned to have the US Navy open more opportunities to African-Americans before and during World War II.] Originally, that's what they started as, I guess, but you didn't go into the wardroom. You might go to ... call an officer to go somewhere, or something like that, you know, but you didn't sit and talk with them in there or anything like that, no.

ML: When you were on the ship, were there any, I guess, close calls that you had?

CB: Yes, we had [some]. Yes, we were depth-charged quite a number of times. ... When we left Pearl Harbor, everybody would get these, they called them steaming shirts, they were the flowered silk shirts from, you know, Hawaii. ... It was at night and we were going in, ... we were in a wolf pack, and we were lining up to fire torpedoes. We were on the surface and fired the torpedoes, and then, we heard, over the intercom, they had a fire in the maneuvering room, and it was a guy's shirt [laughter] fell off his, wherever he had it hung, and it fell down ... by the main motors and caught fire. So, that started a little scare, ... but it was put right out. I mean, it was no big problem, and then, oh, many, many times, I mean, you know, we'd have to dive because of a plane, because we had the radar, and we'd dive at anything about eight miles out. The one night, I was sitting in the crew's mess there and having a cup of coffee and we were on the surface, charging batteries, and, all of a sudden, ... you could hear the plane right through the [hull], as it dove, because the conning tower hatch was open, but it never dropped anything. ... This officer we had, in fact, he was a shoe salesman before he came in, you know, because the Captain wanted to know, "How come you ... didn't submerge?" and he says, "I wanted to identify the plane," you know. You don't identify things out there, [laughter] because, chances are, it was not your plane anyway, not where we were, you know. ... We had a lot of little incidents, you know, nothing [major]; oh, a couple of times on the depth charges, we had a couple of small leaks in some pipes, and always had, because the hull was lined with cork and a lot of that would flake off and fall down. ... Some light bulbs would go out and they had, supposedly, depth-charge-proof bulbs. They were, like, springy, but they'd go out anyway. [laughter] So, we had one, yes, we left Midway, from a rest camp, we were going out on a run, and I guess it was a Japanese submarine fired a torpedo at us, but we managed to steam away from that and put on flank speed from there on, because we were on the surface going out, you know. ... That was a little scary, but, other than that, a lot of rough weather. ... I can remember looking out the periscope and looking aft [towards the stern] and seeing the screw, screws, come out of the water, turning. So, you know you're in rough water then, [laughter] because the boat's, like, oh, they were 311 feet long. So, you were about in the center, roughly at center, ... but we were down a couple of times over two hundred feet and you were still not really smooth, you know.

ML: Yes.

CB: No, they have some rough weather out in that South Pacific, yes, and the North Atlantic, I guess, has [weather] just as bad, maybe even worse.

GF: Did you serve in any of the major battles during your tour, or was it mainly patrolling?

CB: Only the Philippines, when they were taking that back, but we were on the outskirts and, in fact, [during] that, we were lined up to sink, it was a big ship. ... That was about midnight and it had no lights and they had the tubes all flooded and everything ready to go. Then, all of a sudden, the lights on the ship went on and it was a hospital ship, Japanese hospital ship, but you know they were carrying something else. That's when they were taking the Philippines back, and so, we had to let it go, but that was about all as far as the major battles. That was the only one that I know of. ... No, well, I guess some of them were in some of these Luzon Straits and stuff like that, where the submarines were, you know, ... all over the place, really, because we lost fifty-two, during the war.

GF: Were you receiving information about developments around the Pacific?

CB: Yes. A lot of our information came out of, I think it came out of Canton, Canton, China, and then, I guess they would get it right from Pearl. ... You know, they'd have information that they [broadcast], a convoy was going so-and-so and so-and-so, but ... a lot of it didn't materialize, you know. I don't know where they got their information from. I have no idea.

GF: When you were on the *Sea Cat*, was there a turning point or did it seem like the Allied forces were going to win in the Pacific Theater ...

CB: Oh, yes, because we were out [far into the Pacific] then.

GF: From the start?

CB: Yes, yes, and then, the war, ... that was over in Germany while we were out there, or Europe, I would say, and, yes, you knew, pretty much, because ... we were up, like, in the Yellow Sea; the only thing running were little *sampans* [a Chinese wooden boat] or whatever and you couldn't hardly sink one of them. You'd go up on [the surface], sink some of them with gunfire, and they were running, well, not the *sampans*, a little larger than *sampans*, they were running from Korea to Japan. In fact, we sunk one and we took two prisoners we picked up and took with us, but they were Korean, but they were under the Japanese. I guess the Japanese had invaded over in Korea, right, at the time, China and Korea. [Editor's Note: Korea was annexed by Japan in 1910 and Japanese rule ended with its defeat in World War II in 1945.] ... So, they were forced to ship stuff from there over to Japan, but they were taking [routes], you know, in the shallowest part of the Yellow Sea that they could. So, we didn't have much water under us, like, maybe 150 feet, which wasn't too much, and that's where we took a lot of depth charges out there, because the only thing that was running were the PC [patrol craft] boats, which you couldn't hit with a torpedo, because there's not enough draft, and these guys that are shipping, I don't know, like, what they were shipping, if it was rice or whatever, but the one we sunk with gunfire and took those two prisoners.

GF: Did your boat partake in the rescue of downed aircrews?

CB: We were on that, but none of them ever went down on our [grid], while we were out. None of the planes went down by us.

GF: Was there anybody else that you guys picked up, besides the Korean prisoners?

CB: No, no, very uneventful war. [laughter]

GF: When did you make the switch from the *Sea Cat* to the *Archerfish*?

CB: I got off the *Sea Cat* after the third run and I went into a relief crew in Pearl, and then, ... the war was over and they had the signing on the *Missouri*, was it? [Editor's Note: The Japanese surrender took place aboard the USS *Missouri* (BB-63) in Tokyo Bay on September 2, 1945.]

GF: I believe.

CB: I think, ... and the *Archerfish* was at it, the *Sea Cat* was at it, I forget how many boats, something like eleven, I think, or something like that, and then, the *Archerfish* came back to Pearl and I got on it then. ...

ML: Where were you when you heard about the atomic bomb? Do you remember hearing about it?

CB: I was in Pearl, yes.

ML: What was your reaction to it?

CB: I had no reaction at all.

ML: Were you happy the war was over?

CB: Oh, yes, but didn't know what the atomic bomb was. [laughter] No, I can't remember having any reaction about that at all, except that it killed so many people and it ended the war, and that was fine with us, yes, because you never ... knew what was going to happen with [the war]. Well, whether you were in a foxhole or on a ship or whatever, you know, a war is war and not a very nice thing. [laughter]

GF: You were on the *Archerfish* for how long, less than a year?

CB: ... Oh, yes, only about five months.

GF: On the pre-interview survey, you wrote that you were discharged ...

CB: January 20, 1946 discharge.

GF: Yes; in 1946?

CB: '46.

GF: Okay.

CB: January 20th.

GF: You were on the *Archerfish* since, maybe, September 1945.

CB: From, when was the war over, in September?

GF: Yes.

CB: So, roughly from, well, September, say, to January; that's all.

ML: I wanted to ask you about Roosevelt's death; do you remember hearing about that?

CB: Oh, yes, oh, yes, definitely, yes.

ML: Was everyone on the crew ...

GF: Surprised?

ML: ... Saddened by it?

CB: I don't know. I can remember Roosevelt coming out to Pearl once. ... In fact, they had a whole new conning tower that they put on a boat that had been pretty badly damaged. So, it was one of the things, you know, publicity things, when he came out. I guess everyone was quite concerned, not knowing who Truman was, ... but you've got to remember, at that time, too, that you couldn't vote until you were twenty-one and a lot of us weren't twenty-one. Well, I was, but barely. I hadn't voted.

ML: Right.

CB: And so, you didn't have much concern about it, really. You didn't follow politics that much, I don't think, at least I didn't, and I don't remember many people talking about it.

GF: Had you kept in contact with your girlfriend or with your mom or with your sister? Were you still writing and everything on the submarines?

CB: [Yes]. Well, my girlfriend, we started going together when ... I was sixteen, she was fifteen, and then, during the war, the both of us kind of drifted apart, you know. [laughter] So, after the war, she got married and I got married, and she had three kids and I had three kids, and, after twenty-five years of marriage, both of us got a divorce and we got married, and she just died, oh, about a year-and-a-half ago. So, yes, we got together.

ML: Funny how that works out, twenty-five years later.

CB: Yes, we had a great time. So, that's her, with our other dog, with our lab that we had. She's buried with her. [laughter] So, I got this guy [a dog] when she died, right after she died. Just like I told her, "If anything ever happens to you, [the] first thing I'm going to do is get another dog," because she wouldn't get it. She said, "We're too old to have one," you know, ... and I take him, every morning, up to Colliers Mills. It's about, oh, it's fifteen miles, and it's a hunting ground up here, and I let him go, you know, and then, I walk. I walk about a mile. So, we get our exercise in, [laughter] but he's a great dog. ... I mean, I can leave him in the house for twenty-four hours and he's never bothered or anything, except my daughter taught him to get up on the couch. That's the only time he'll get up on the couch, is when I leave. ...

GF: You came back in January 1946. What was the attitude among the people when you got back?

CB: Nothing.

GF: Really? Were people still celebrating, kind of?

CB: I have no idea. I never saw any kind of celebration, nothing.

GF: That stinks.

ML: What did you do, just come straight home?

CB: Yes, I did, yes.

ML: Where did you come into?

CB: I came by train, yes, but I wouldn't fly in, [laughter] not in those days.

ML: Where were you discharged?

CB: Lido Beach, in Long Island. That's way out. I don't really even know where it is. [laughter] All I know is, they put you on a train and sent you back up to the city, and ... I think my mother and my sister and my brother-in-law met me there, and we went to eat, and then, came home, you know, no celebration, no nothing, no, go home. The next day, I think my uncle was there, wanting me to go to work with him. ...

ML: Did you think about going back to school?

CB: I did go back, yes.

ML: Okay.

CB: Yes, and I got my [diploma], and then, I went, on the GI Bill, to a drafting school in Newark and that's about it. I took a couple of correspondence courses with the Navy. They didn't work out too well. I took a mathematics course. ... In fact, this woman that was the teacher that's very friendly with the family, she was a mathematics specialist. ... I would send my stuff in and it would come back; it was wrong, you know. They'd never check it. We couldn't find anything wrong with it. [laughter] So, I quit those courses, [laughter] but, well, when I went to the phone company then, I got a lot of schooling there.

ML: Right.

CB: You know, because they were always sending you to some school, you know. They had plenty of schools, that's for sure; not now I guess, not like it was years ago.

GF: You went to work for Bell Telephone.

CB: New Jersey Bell, yes.

GF: Where was that?

CB: That was; actually, well, the headquarters is [in] Newark, yes, but that was in '47, '48, one of those [years], yes, but I've been retired now since 1980. ...

ML: I want to go back to the signing on the *Missouri*. You said you were there. Did you witness the Japanese surrender?

CB: No, I wasn't there. ...

ML: Your ship was there.

CB: Yes.

ML: You were in Pearl.

CB: ... Yes, I was in Pearl. *Sea Cat* was there, [and] the *Archerfish*, but they weren't right there. They were tied up to a tender, yes. They [the crews] weren't on the *Missouri* or anything, where they could see it, yes.

ML: You had three children.

CB: [Yes], three boys.

ML: Did they go into the military?

CB: No. My wife had three, a girl and two boys. The oldest boy was, I guess it was National Guard, but that was all. ... Of course, he's how old, fifty-seven, fifty-eight?

ML: Did you encourage your sons either way about the military?

CB: No. They were not cut out for military. I never pushed them, no. [laughter]

GF: Were there any commendations or awards that you received?

CB: Well, you got your battle [stars?]. ... If you made a successful run, you got a pin, and then, every run after that, they'd put a star in, a little star. [Editor's Note: The USS *Sea Cat* earned three Battle Stars in World War II.] So, then, aside, you had a lot of ribbons, you know, different [campaigns], for the Philippines, and, oh, what else? Oh, you got a bunch of them, but they had ribbons for everything, you know, ... but, as far as the battle stuff, that's what they gave you in the submarine. Well, some of them got; the *Archerfish* got the Silver Star. Now, when I was on the *Archerfish*, I had to wear the Silver Star, only because I was a crew member and they were required to wear it, even though I wasn't on at the time that ...

ML: They received it.

CB: I was there when they received it, [laughter] but I wasn't there when they did it, [laughter] yes, right.

GF: Did you make use of the GI Bill, aside from the drafting school and the other courses?

CB: No. Oh, maybe when I bought my first house, yes, I got a government loan, right, the four-percent loan, yes.

ML: Yes.

CB: That I did, twenty-five-year [mortgage].

GF: In what ways did your service affect your life afterwards? Were there skills that you learned? Was there an attitude that you liked or disliked that affected the way you looked at things?

CB: No. I never really used machine jobs. When I got out, there wasn't anything, really, that was [similar], you know, ... when I got in the phone company, but the mechanics, it all, you know, works into that, because, ... in the phone company, I wound up doing Teletype repair and that was all, like, precision machine work, sort of, or all the adjusting, and then, you had the electronics that went along with it, all that kind of stuff.

GF: Is there anything else you want to add? Do you have any questions?

ML: I do not think so.

GF: Is there anything else you want to add?

CB: I don't think so.

ML: Is there anything we missed from your war experience that you want to talk about?

CB: No. I had a lot of good times. [laughter] It's an experience I would never want to not have.

GF: When were the good times?

CB: When? Well, oh, I can say when the war was over, we were in Pearl, right, and we were getting ready to go back, to take the boat back to the States. ... Now, this was after the war; ... no, take that back, this was New Year's Eve, after the war, okay, and we were tied up in Pearl. Well, somehow, we acquired a little, like, a rowboat. I don't know where they got it from, but we used to use it for running around the bay, and from boat to boat like. So, I don't know whose it was, some guy gets the great [idea], the bright idea of filling it with a lot of junk and found all the lighter fluid we could find and pour it on it, you know, and, at midnight, lit it and pushed it out into the bay. [laughter] ... There was a hospital ship tied up across the bay from us and it started drifting that way. So, they called the base fire department, and we hadn't had a drop to drink, we had no liquor, but they called the base fire department, and they were kind of liquored up, I think, and they got to the end of the pier with their hoses and they're trying to squirt and they can't reach it. So, they're yelling at us, and then, they called the fireboat and the fireboat came out and put it out, and then, it came in. You know, you're tied up in slits, like you have a dock and a boat on either side, and then, another dock, right. Well, after the fireboat put the boat out, or the little rowboat fire out, he came in with a loudspeaker and he's looking for the ones that did this, you know, and he got in-between. ... We were loaded up to go back to the States and we had a lot of potatoes around. So, somebody starts throwing potatoes at him, right. [laughter] So, then, he starts with the fire hose. [laughter] So, anyway, it wound up [being] nothing. The Captain came aboard. He was out and he came back to the boat and he said, "What's going on?" "Nothing, Captain." [laughter] ... Before we went back to the States, we went to Hilo, Hawaii, and we were the first submarine in there since the start of the war. We docked at the sugar cane dock; there was nothing in Hilo at that time. Now, I guess, it's quite a place, because the only thing they grew over there, before the war, was sugar cane and orchids. That's all the island was, one little town, Hilo, and we tied up at where the sugar cane boat came into, I don't know, I don't think it was a refinery, it was just a shed, but there were two boats [that] went over, when we tied up, ... because that was for Navy Day. That's right, and then, they had the locals [who] could come aboard, you know, and they were a bunch of, you know, just local Hawaiians, and that was the [day]. I mean, they cleaned out the bar in town, but [laughter] that was about it. We had, a lot of drinking went on, yes, I mean, when you were in port, never out [at sea]. You know, they used to like "torpedo juice," [alcohol used to propel the torpedoes]. Then, you had to watch it, because the stuff that they were starting to use was poison alcohol, you know, it was not fit for [human consumption], but the other was, you know, great stuff. It was, like, a hundred proof or something like that, [laughter] two-hundred proof, I don't know, and we had medical alcohol.

ML: Right.

CB: And then, when you were out to sea, you had to change vents and, ... when you ran out of fuel in a tank, you'd make it into a ballast tank. So, you had to change the vents on it and that was done at night, on the surface, of course, with red flashlights, and it was voluntary that you go

up to do this, and this was a machinist's job to do it. ... Of course, I always volunteered for that, because you got a shot of medical brandy after you came [down], [laughter] because they would tell you, "You know, if we have to, we're going to dive with you down [there]," because you had to go down in under the decking to get at these things, you know, but I doubt if they'd leave you. [laughter] So, other than that, you didn't get up topside much, especially when you're out on patrol. ... You never went up topside, only the lookouts and the officer of the day, or whatever, yes, but I used to go [up], like, when we were coming back into port or something. ... You talk about the flying fish, they're really beautiful to watch them, at night, because they shine, and they'll go from wave to wave, and they say, "Oh, only twenty feet or so," but, boy, they go a lot further than that. [laughter] ... We'd have them get caught in the superstructure when we'd submerge a lot of times, when we'd come back up, and the cook would cook them up. Yes, oh, yes, he'd make them for the Captain or for anybody that wanted them, really, and I had, coming into Hawaii once, we were just out for the day, a marlin, it's about that long, caught in the ...

ML: Fourteen inches?

CB: Yes, the smallest one I ever saw. [laughter] I should have kept it and I threw it overboard, because it was dead. You know, they killed it coming up, I guess. ... After the war, I think [for] practice, we sunk about, oh, six or seven LSTs [landing ship, tanks] out there, just to get rid of them. We would use them for practice, and most all the submarines were either sold for razor blades or sunk for something or other, out [at sea], you know. So, the only World War II submarines around now are ...

ML: Museums?

CB: The museums, yes. I don't know if any of the other countries are still using any of them or not, because we did, you know, got rid of a lot of them to other countries, the South American countries, I guess, mainly, no more diesels.

ML: Are you glad you went into submarines?

CB: Yes, yes. I went back in after the war, for another four years, but just in the inactive [Naval Reserve], where I went away two weeks every year. So, I'd go on a [cruise] either out of New London or down at Key West. Key West was a sub base at that time, when, well, Truman, that was his "Second White House" down there, right, and, now, I don't know what's in there, because the base is gone, I think, but that was nice. You got away for two weeks and we'd just go out every day. Once in awhile, you'd stay out, maybe one night, or something like that. ... Then, they had made some of these into snorkels [submarines outfitted with ventilation snorkels], and that was the first time I went on a snorkel, was out of Key West, and that was a little scary, because they were all scared of it, and I didn't know what to expect, [laughter] because, when they use that, they can only use an engine, I think one engine, and they could only, like, use, oh, around half the RPMs of full speed. ...

ML: Is there anything else you would like to add?

CB: No, [it was] just a good experience, that I can say that, for anyone, I think.

ML: I definitely want to thank you again for talking to us today.

CB: I don't know, who was it I met, the girl? I met her in Wendy's. ...

GF: Mrs. [Sandra Stewart] Holyoak, yes.

CB: Her husband was in submarines.

GF: Yes. That is Mrs. Holyoak.

CB: That's how I [got involved]. I don't know, I think she saw the thing on my car.

ML: She is the director of the Rutgers Oral History Archives.

CB: Oh, okay, she's the one that [asked me to participate]. ...

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Reviewed by Christian Martinez 12/9/09

Reviewed by Victoria Raab 12/9/09

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 12/10/09

Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 1/13/10

Reviewed by Charles A. Baumgarten 1/18/10