RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY

NEW BRUNSWICK

AN INTERVIEW WITH WILLIAM GODFREY

FOR THE

RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES OF WORLD WAR II

INTERVIEW CONDUCTED BY

JAMES QUAKENBUSH

HOMOSASSA, FLORIDA
DECEMBER 2, 1995

TRANSCRIPT BY

JAMES QUAKENBUSH

James Quakenbush: This begins an interview with William Godfrey at his home in Homosassa, Florida, conducted by Jim Quakenbush. To begin with, I wanted to ask you about your parents. I just read that your father was from England.

William Godfrey: That is correct.

JQ: What prompted your grandparents to come to America? At what ages did they come over?

WG: Well, ... that's a good question. My grandmother came over first, and my dad had only been about a year old when he left England, and they settled, ... I believe, in Connecticut, where later my grandfather was a landscape gardener for a large estate, just outside of Middletown. And, shortly after that, my grandfather came over and he settled, ... first of all, in Connecticut, then, he went to Madison, New Jersey, where he was a grower in a large greenhouse establishment, growing cut flowers. ... The experience he had learned in England he brought to the United States and he became very successful in the greenhouse industry.

JQ: Where were you born?

WG: Bridgeport, Connecticut.

JQ: Bridgeport, Connecticut.

WG: I would like to say, Jim, that while my dad was overseas with the United Fruit Company as a marine refrigeration engineer, my mother and I went up to my ... grandmother's place in Connecticut. I was actually born in Bridgeport, stayed there a few days, came back to Middletown, and then, moved to some area [of] New Jersey. I believe it was around Teaneck, New Jersey. And, from that time on, until I moved to Florida, I was a resident of New Jersey.

JQ: So, you were almost born by accident in Bridgeport, Connecticut.

WG: [laughter]... Bridgeport was the nearest hospital, and, that's where I was born. Born in Connecticut, my early days in New Jersey, and, now, I've been in Florida so long, I feel like I'm a Florida cracker. [laughter]

JQ: How did your parents end up settling in North Brunswick?

WG: Well, it was a matter of my father's work. ... When he left the United Fruit Company, he was what they called a Chief Freezer. He was very familiar with refrigeration equipment and there was a plant in New Brunswick called Brunswick-Kroshell. ... For three or four years, my father worked out of that company on Jersey Avenue. B-K was taken over by Carrier Corporation, and, from then on, my dad was employed by Carrier, usually working out of the New York Marine Office.

JQ: Okay. Do you have any brothers or sisters?

WG: Yes, I have three sisters, all younger. June is the oldest, living in South Carolina. My other sister is living in Wilmington, North Carolina. And, I have one sister, Edith, quite a bit younger than me, who's married to a dentist in St. Petersburg, Florida.

JQ: What are your memories of your childhood, growing up in North Brunswick?

WG: Well, as I recall, we moved around a lot, and we lived in, ... I think, Piscataway for a while. We lived in Highland Park. Then, we lived in one part of North Brunswick. Finally, we settled out in Maple Meade, where we built a real fine, eight room house. And, I might add that my dad, being a refrigeration man, ... hooked ... [a] compressor in the cellar to a box in the pantry, and, I think, we were one of the first people to have automatic refrigeration out in the little town of Maple Meade. I liked to hunt, fish, and be out of doors, most of the time. And, I actually started school in a two-room school house in Maple Meade. One teacher taught grades one, two, and three, the other teacher taught grades four, five, and six. So, when I was in the fourth, I learned what they were doing in the fifth and the sixth. So, I think I got a fabulous education in the first six years. And then, I attended a new grammar school in Maple Meade and graduated from there in 1930.

JQ: Is it true that they had outhouses in the public schools in the 1930s?

WG: Yes, that's an interesting point, Jim. We actually had enclosures ... [with] no running water, and the school was warmed by a small, coal fired pot-stove. And, one of we students used to get a dollar a week for firing the boiler, the pot-stove, and taking the ashes out. We had very limited light from the few windows. And, the one teacher who taught the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades taught forty students. There was no discipline problem whatsoever. And, I cannot understand why they build the Taj Majals today ... to teach children when what a fine education we got, back in those days, in the old one, two-room grammar schools.

JQ: You attended high school in New Brunswick?

WG: Yes. First of all, I attended a junior high school in New Brunswick, as I recall, on Livingston Avenue, and we were bussed into school, because we were beyond the two mile limit. And then, from there, I went into New Brunswick Senior High School for my last three years. And, it was in New Brunswick High School ... [that] I was introduced to agriculture. We had a wonderful professor by the name of Lauren S. Archibald. In fact, three of his sons are graduates of Rutgers. And, I took two classes in agriculture during the week, and that, more or less, led me into entering Rutgers and the agricultural program.

JQ: You were, more or less, familiar with New Brunswick, being a resident of North Brunswick. What was New Brunswick like at that time?

WG: Well, New Brunswick was a ... rather small, ... I don't know how to say it. It was a friendly town. I mean, there were various areas. I think that certain ethnic people lived in a one area and some in another area. And, I can remember the old Strand Theater, right downtown, where movie shows were ten cents. I remember the State Theater, up on Livingston Avenue,

which was a real fancy theater that showed the latest films. I can remember the Raritan River, as I used to go down there and build rafts. And, what else? Then, shortly after that, Farrington Dam was built, and that provided me with a tremendous amount of recreation.

JQ: How did the Depression affect your family in the 1930s? Did it affect you and your family at all?

WG: No. ... I was most fortunate, our family was most fortunate. My dad never missed a day's work. He was so good and efficient at his job. ... The refrigeration and air conditioning field was just coming into phase, at that time, and he was there at the correct time, and he was a natural born mechanical engineer in refrigeration and air conditioning. And, we lived very well, out in the little town of Maple Meade.

JQ: Could you discuss the reasons why you came to Rutgers? You mentioned it was because of your high school teacher.

WG: I was encouraged by him. Plus, the fact, Jim, it was depressed times. There wasn't too much money. And, going to a land grant college, was what I could really afford, or I thought I could afford. And, through the help of Professor Archibald, I gained entrance to the university. My marks weren't the greatest, at that time, but, that was an entry. And, Professor Helyar, who was the dean of the Ag School, he was really of great help to me. And, between those two professors, I made it though the first semester, and, from then on, I did very, very well.

JQ: Did you receive any scholarships while you were at Rutgers?

WG: I believe Professor Helyar obtained a one hundred dollar scholarship for me during the four years. [laughter]

JQ: Did you play sports for Rutgers?

WG: Yes. First of all, I went out for cross country, but, after running the first two miles, I gave that up. I went out for freshman lacrosse and that was exciting. ... At that time, we had to buy our own stick. And, I ... received my numerals. I made one faux pas. I had a white sweater at home. I didn't have a black sweater, so, I told my mom, "How about sewing my numerals on the white sweater?" So, I went down to the campus, one day; somebody looked at me [and said], "What undefeated team are you on?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, the only time you put numerals or letters on a white sweater, you've been on a championship team or an undefeated team." [laughter] So, I junked the sweater and forgot about the numerals. And then, in my next three years, I participated in varsity lacrosse. And, I was kind of skinny, ... and I've been that way ever since, from getting beat up. I played midfield and did win my letter in two years of varsity lacrosse.

JQ: Do you remember some of the players on your varsity team, or that you played lacrosse with, during your years at Rutgers?

WG: Yes. ... There were some really fine athletes, because many of the football players loved to get in shape playing lacrosse. So, many of the players participated. Off hand, there was Joe Barile, there was Steve Hitchner, a great Ag student. He played. Oh, I can't come up with those names, but, I've got a list of them in my yearbook. [laughter]

JQ: Yeah. I found some of them for you. Do you remember Bill Evans?

WG: Oh, Bill Evans was a fine fellow.

JQ: What about Leon Temple?

WG: Temple, diminutive and quick.

JQ: Or, Ralph Russo?

WG: ... Russo was a top notch football player and he became a Phi Beta Kappa. And, I met Russo during my fiftieth anniversary reunion. You know more than I do. [laughter]

JQ: Another player, "Fuzzy" Bill Darby?

WG: Oh, Darby. Fuzzy. Boy, oh, boy, he was built like a little cannonball. He was a tough, little critter.

JQ: Why did they call him "Fuzzy"?

WG: I don't know why, really. But, he was one of these ball of fire; gents, full of tricks, and he raised a lot of Cain. [laughter]

JQ: During your senior year, what was the big game? Do you remember the big game of that year?

WG: Well, our biggest games were with Maryland, the top team in lacrosse. Johns Hopkins, we played Yale, we played Army, and I remember going up to Army. We had a small squad, about thirty people, and they come out there with about a hundred guys that were big and hungry. And, I remember, I got the hell beat out of me. And, I also remember going to Maryland and playing at the old College Park Field. And, there was a fellow on there who was an All-American guard. ... I can't think of his name, but, I was playing opposite him, and I got beat up again. But, Rutgers played some big, heavy lacrosse teams, and we had mediocre success. The greatest game in football occurred when I was a sophomore in 1938. Rutgers finally defeated Princeton for the second time in history, by a score of twenty to eighteen, when the new stadium was dedicated.

JQ: What position did you play?

WG: Midfield.

JQ: Midfield.

WG: So, I was running up and down, playing on offense and defense.

JQ: How was campus life around the Rutgers campus?

WG: Well, I thought there was a wonderful atmosphere. I was impressed. And, one thing I remember, the dress code. We always looked well dressed and many of the classes we attended in coats and ties. And, we respected the professors. We had some outstanding men, back in those days. And, I can remember Professor Reager, the speech instructor. I took speech and I think that's the greatest thing I ever did. And, Professor Reager, he wrote a book, Speech Is Easy, but, I understand he passed away much too early in life. I particularly remember Professor Reager. And, Professor Biekart, out at the college farm, he was a journeyman. ... I think he was just on a regular degree, but, he was a down-to-earth man. And, I can remember Professor Biekart telling our class one time, we used to get philosophical, ... "Boys, men, if you have a clear conscience, you're living a good life." And, I thought about that quite a bit and I do believe that. Wouldn't you agree, Jim?

JQ: Yeah. I do. A clear conscience to live with yourself. Were you in any fraternities while at Rutgers?

WG: No. I was a commuter. I couldn't quite afford it. I was approached one time about, but, I didn't think I could afford to live downtown. ... I was comfortable out of town and it was only five miles away. And, for the first two years, I used to hitch rides, or I'd go down with my father to the station at six o'clock in the morning, let him off, then, go to the library and study. Then, I'd stick around 'til he came in on the train, six o'clock at night and bring him home. But then, in my junior year, I bought a little ... 1930 Chevrolet Cabrolet for seventy bucks, and fixed it up. And, for the next two or three years, I had my own transportation. And, one thing I can remember, in '38 and '39, in New Jersey, in New Brunswick, you could purchase gasoline, eleven gallons, for a dollar. So, for a dollar a month, I could drive my little car back and forth to school. And, you can check that out. [laughter]

JQ: I commute to school myself. I commute from Woodbridge to New Brunswick. Did you become friends with a lot of people around campus? Did you feel like an insider or an outsider? How did you feel?

WG: No. Well, I'll tell you, most of my immediate friends were "Aggies." And, I think I forget, Jim, [there were] ... maybe, sixty in the course, or forty-seven? I can't remember exactly. But, see, we were together. And, as you know, the first two years in Rutgers was mostly academic. You didn't branch out. I can remember taking math, and trig, and ... algebra, chemistry, botany, biology. ... Some of those courses were real foreign to me. And, especially, chemistry, it gave me a fit. So, then, the last two years, we branched out into the agricultural field. So, we always were jogging between downtown and the campus out there. But then, I was in many of the Ag

organizations, ... and then, I became a member of Alpha Zeta. ... There must've been twenty or thirty of us who met frequently in that organization.

JQ: What was that, a club?

WG: No, that was the honorary agricultural society, Alpha Zeta. That was strictly an Ag club, and, it's one of the oldest honorary fraternities, I guess, in the country. It started ... out somewhere in Ohio, somewhere, years and years ago.

JQ: What made you go into agriculture as a major?

WG: Well, I figure I, maybe, could get through those courses more than I could the other ones. And, we lived ... out in the country there. We first lived there. My grandfather had a big floriculture business, two big greenhouses, and I used to work in the greenhouses when I was a young boy. And, that grew on me. And then, the tuition for going to the Ag College was considerably less than the other colleges. So, it was, more or less, ... expediency and finances. And, I enjoyed the outdoors. And, I think, no matter what I had gone into, I received a terrifically rounded education ... at Rutgers, regardless of what happened to me.

JQ: Today there are many more college graduates than there were back then. Was there a certain reason why you went to college, to obtain a certain job?

WG: Well, it was definitely the times and conditions in the country, because there were hardly any jobs. And, where would [be] a better place to go to college 'til things got better? And, I had the support of my family. And, as I told you, I worked every living hour of all my recesses, all my vacations. I hardly ever took a day off in the four years, and my folks helped me. And, what I saved, that is, good jobs during the summer, I got through without financial hardship on my parents. And, I figured, where could I find a better place to be in those times? And, I think, quite a few of the students made the same approach.

JQ: So, where did you work on your recesses, over the summers? What did you do? What type of work?

WG: Well, fortunately, through my dad, again, ... he had quite a few friends in the refrigeration field. And, one summer, I spent almost all summer in Baltimore working on three big, refrigerated cargo ships, as a helper, installing equipment, at a real good wage, a real good wage. And, I stayed at a boarding house in Baltimore which you wouldn't believe, room and board, a breakfast, packed my lunch, provided supper, and a place to sleep, for ten dollars a week. And, at that time, I was making between $40 and $45 a week. So, I really stashed the money away. Another summer, I spent the entire summer in the Newport News, Virginia shipyard, in the steam engineering department, as an apprentice, working with a mechanic. And, I spent the whole summer there. My dad had introduced me again. And then, we were working on destroyers and an aircraft carrier. And, I was an apprentice ... installing piping for the steam systems. And, for three solid months, I made a good wage there and socked it away.

JQ: While you were at Rutgers, you were a member of the first Civil Aeronautics Authority to graduate.

WG: Yes, I was. They offered it, and I just volunteered, and I was accepted. I passed the physical and some preliminary exams. And, that was a fantastic course. I think, it lasted over twenty weeks. And, at night, we had meteorology, navigation, and aircraft maintenance courses. And then, I would drive out to Hadley Airport, and we flew in little Aeronca Chiefs, little tail-dragging planes, with sixty-five horsepower Continental engines, top speed, maybe, ninety knots. And, after seven hours and thirty minutes, I soloed. Everyone was supposed to solo within eight or nine hours. And, that was quite a thrill, when the instructor said, "Get out," and says, "It's all yours, " take the little thing up, and go around the field, and make a landing. And, I still have my log. The instructor said I did a perfect job. I don't know whether I did or not, but, I got it down again. [laughter]

JQ: Did you ever pilot a plane after that?

WG: No. I went through the whole course, got forty-four hours of time, about twenty duel, about twenty-two solo. And, went up, and passed the CAA flight exam, and received a private pilot's license. And, from that day forward, I never did fly. But, later on, I thought I might apply for the Air Corps, which, at that time, was the Army Air Corps, not the Air Force.

JQ: What was the perception of the war going on in Europe around the campus at Rutgers while you were there?

WG: I don't think it was taken too seriously, Jim. I think we were so involved in our own little bailiwick there, and studying, and learning, and living, and contending with the Depression that, unfortunately, I don't think we did realize what was going on. I never read the newspapers much, because I was always studying and reading something in the library, reading books, magazines, and reference materials. But, I don't think there was a ... real feeling there. But, I did think, shortly after I left Rutgers, that the whole climate changed.

JQ: You enlisted in the Navy?

WG: Yes. As I told you, ... some quirk in the physical, I failed the examination for the Army Air Corps. And then, I took an exam for the Naval Air Corps down at Portsmouth, Virginia. And, some little quirk, I failed; nothing serious. And, at those particular times, they were not as anxious to recruit people as they were six months to a year later. So, as a last resort, I applied to Officer Candidate School, OCS, ... I guess it was in Washington, or somewhere. And, all of a sudden, I was accepted, so, I enlisted in the Navy in February of 1942. And then, I was ordered to Midshipman School at Columbia University. And, I was in the first class at Columbia. And, we were housed in a ten-story dormitory, Furnold Hall, which, you wouldn't believe, was right on Broadway. And, to think, we were going to learn how to become naval officers at Columbia University, right on Broadway, was really a puzzle. [laughter]

JQ: A lot of distractions?

WG: There were distractions, but, I tell you Navy curriculum was fantastic. Started out at six in the morning and ended at ten at night, with never an idle moment. It was very well structured and I liked routine. It didn't bother me at all. I didn't mind drilling, I didn't mind studying, going to class. And, I enjoyed every bit of it. I really applied myself. And, not to be boastful, I ended up pretty well in my class. I might tell you a little story that helped me in my aptitude and proficiency. Every night, we had to swab down the deck in ... the lobby of the dormitory. And, before that time, having been in the Merchant Marine, and having helped my mother scrub the floors, I knew how to handle a swab. There was a chief with about twenty-four years of gold on his sleeve, and he was in charge. So, there would be four of us out there in the lobby, and three of them were city slickers from Brooklyn, New York, and Yonkers. And, here was one guy, with a little experience, from the country. And, I could take the swab and throw a figure eight across the floor. And, this old chief used to beam at me, because I really could swab the decks. So, I think I got an excellent proficiency rating and that helped me over all. [laughter]

JQ: While you were at Columbia University, you had some contact with Herman Wouk?

WG: Yes, believe it or not, Herman Wouk was in my company. ... There was a battalion on the *Prairie State*, anchored on the Hudson River, an old ship, and, we were the second battalion at Furnold Hall, with three companies. ... Herman Wouk was a real quiet, serious guy. He was a little older than us. But, after reading his book, later on, ... I could tell that the day he entered OCS School, he started writing the Caine Mutiny. I really believe he was forming background material. And, all through his time at the Midshipman's School, and after he went on active duty, you could tell there was something about him. He was very serious person, quiet, very intelligent. But, somehow, after it all happened, I felt that he was up to something that the rest of us were not up to. [laughter]

JQ: What was the reaction to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor?

WG: Well, of course, that happened two months before ... I applied for OCS. And, I had been working, at that time, as a steam fitter at Fort Eustis, in Virginia. That's another story I won't go into, but, after being in Virginia for a short time, I became a journeyman steam fitter. Made pretty good wages and worked all through the Virginia area on camps, and I could see the build up of the military. And, of course, ... the Newport News shipyard was building carriers and destroyers, ... at that time. The *Indiana* battleship was launched while I was there. So, there was a slow ground-swell. But, at school, we would get information on how the war was going. But, we were really so tied up studying, and looking forward ... with trepidation, and so forth, where we were going to go and what was going to happen. So, we were very much involved in thinking about the whole problem, and when, and where, and how soon we were going to go.

JQ: Was it a surprise to you that the United States ended up entering the war with the Japanese and not being drawn into the European war first?

WG: Yes, I believe I was completely surprised by the attack on Pearl Harbor. I was, like most everyone else. I think the whole situation wasn't properly handled, but, that's another story. ...

----------END SIDE ONE TAPE ONE----------

JQ: This continues an interview with William Godfrey at his home in Homosassa, Florida. Did you find that working in the Merchant Marine helped you with your service in the Navy?

WG: Well, definitely, Jim. As I said, my dad, being in the air conditioning and refrigeration, when I was a kid, I used to go off on jobs with him, sometimes, on Saturdays. And, I worked right along with him. He taught me. ... I used to thread and cut pipe, and all my vacations were involved in something mechanical. And, since he had an entrée to all the ships that came into New York Harbor that used carrier equipment, he did get me that job, the first job, on the *Virginia* of the Panama Pacific Line. And, when I went aboard; this is a little off the side, ... I was supposed to be a wiper and that's a flunky that cleans up in the engine rooms. But, as I previously mentioned, the first assistant engineer's nephew came aboard, and the first assistant engineer … hired and fired the people in the engineering gang. So, he said, "Kid, Bill, we'll let you be a mess boy to the black gang, if you want to make this trip. And then, when we come back, maybe we can make you a wiper." So, needing the money, I took the job, and I traveled out through the Panama Canal, up to San Francisco, and back. It was a fantastic experience, having just gotten out of high school, just barely after my eighteen-year-old birthday. So, when I got back in port, my dad said, "I got a better job for you." And, I went over on the *Washington* of the US Lines and I was a wiper. And, I toiled in the engine room for four Atlantic crossings, to Cobh, Ireland, to France and up the Elbe River to Hamburg. After the fourth trip, out of the blue sky, he says, "Hey, Bill, we're gonna make you a fireman." And, all of a sudden, I was firing these huge boilers. And, I became a full-fledged fireman almost over night, with very little experience. But, I did learn ship-board experience. I knew port from starboard and … I got to know something about seamanship, especially the engineering part. Turbines, condensers, and reduction gears, and all those things that I'll become acquainted with when I get in the Navy in the submarine service. ... Besides giving me some great experience that I didn't realize at the time, I made a fairly good wage, considering the time.

JQ: Was there a fear at all of crossing the Atlantic on these ships?

WG: ... Don't forget Jim, this was in 1935 and 1936, and there was no threat whatsoever. The only threat was, … when you crossed from Europe to the United States, in the months of January, February, March, it's the most violent ocean in the world. People don't realize that. The North Atlantic, in the wintertime, in those months, the prevailing winds are blowing from west to east and, some days, we would be two days late getting into New York. The foghorn would be blowing for three or four days at a time. And, a ship could not make more than, maybe, eight or nine knots, when we usually cruised at twenty-two. So, it was quite harrowing, during the winter months, coming across the Atlantic Ocean.

JQ: Now, when you were in the Navy, you were on submarines. How was submarine life?

WG: Well, … before we get into that part, I'd like to tell you, ... when we were commissioned in … late August in '42, if you stood pretty well in your class, you had a choice of duties. And, for

some reason, I was footloose and fancy free. And, I thought, I'd like go into the submarine service and see some action. And, I also thought, I'd like to come home healthy and in one piece. So, I chose submarines. And, out of the blue sky, there were only seven or eight people, out of something like 700 commissioned ensigns, that chose submarines. I don't know why. My first duty orders were to the *S-27,* … up in Alaska, up around Attu and Kiska. The *S-27* was an old S-boat that should have been scuttled long before. So, one week before I was to depart the Midshipmen School, I got a modification of orders sending me direct to Manitowoc, Wisconsin, on Lake Michigan, where the Manitowoc Ship Building Company built twenty-eight fleet-type boats, … under license from Electric Boat Company in Groton, Connecticut. These were full-size, fleet-type submarines. I was ordered there for new construction, fitting out, and commissioning. I bypassed submarine school, which was rather unusual. I don't believe one percent of the officers that went to submarines, bypassed submarine school. So, I went to new construction. I watched the submarine being built. I was onboard during commissioning, went out, operated on Lake Michigan. Finally, [we went] down the [Mississippi] river, loaded up spares and torpedoes in New Orleans, down through the [Panama] Canal, and out to Pearl Harbor. I got acclimated real quick. I was a junior OD and an assistant ... engineer. So, the Captain says, "Bill, you're doing all right, but, after one patrol, we're going to send you back to Submarine School." One patrol, two patrols, at the end of two patrols, I qualified. He says, "Bill, you don't have to go back to submarine school." [laughter] Course, I was kind of looking forward to getting home and going to submarine school. So, I stayed on three, four, five, … 'cause the ship did well, and ... everyone did well. They detached two of us and sent us back to new construction in Manitowoc, which couldn't have been better duty for me. So, I came back to Manitowoc, stayed there a few months, went through the whole routine as engineer and diving officer, and commissioned the *Kraken.* That was my second submarine.

JQ: So, you enjoyed submarine life?

WG: Oh, I sure did. I sure did.

JQ: How was the food onboard? I heard it was the best food in the Navy. Is that true?

WG: The best food, but, not always the best cooks and bakers. … Our food was all pared down. … Everything was condensed, because our time on patrol was determined, … primarily, by how much food we had; believe it or not. We had tremendous amounts of fuel oil. We had plenty of ammunition. But, food, we had just limited quantities. There wasn't space. Food would be stored in the bilges, in the engine rooms, in the torpedo rooms, all over the place. But, if you could get hold of a good cook and a good baker, you had it made, because the ingredients were there, but, the preparation lacked.

JQ: What were the sleeping arrangements like on the submarine?

WG: Well, you brought out another point. See, I was the most junior of all officers on this *Pogy*, the first one I commissioned, and they only had six births on that submarine for officers. So, in the ward room, where we ate our meals, up forward, there was a transom bunk against the curve of the bulkhead. So, the shipyard rigged the bunk above this seating arrangement, right at

the ward room table where we ate. The ward room was very small. So, I'd come off watch at four o'clock in the morning. I'd have to climb up in that bunk and they rigged a curtain across. So, in the morning, at seven o'clock, when the officers come in for breakfast, I'm sleeping up in that bunk. [laughter] So, I'd have to scramble out of there, and then, push the bunk up against the wall. And, I never got too much sleep until we got out off the coast of Japan. It was so cold, I hot-bunked it with two other junior officers. When one of them went on watch, I'd get in his bunk. When he came back, the other officer went on watch; I'd get in his bunk. That's what you called "hot-bunking." So, that was a little better. And, when we came back in for overhaul, they added two additional bunks. And, from then on, I had a little more rank and had a regulation bunk.

JQ: You enjoyed submarine life. Did you find that some people couldn't handle it?

WG: Oh, yeah. Yes. We didn't have too many people that couldn't, because they were well screened in the beginning. Now, I don't remember being too well screened. I just applied for OCS, had good marks, and got out of there with my commission. But, you have to remember, at this particular stage, Jim, they needed people. They needed officers. They were building ships, submarines, airplanes, they were building everything all over the United States, and they needed people. ... That's why so many people, right in my area, ... were gone within a very short time, without too much examination after the fact. Now, I did have to take the lung training. I had to escape from a hundred foot tank out in Pearl Harbor, with the Momsen lung, but, we forgot about that, as far as escaping. That was … for the birds. [laughter]

JQ: That was part of your training?

WG: Yes.

JQ: When people would lose their head onboard, what would you do with them?

WG: Well, like I said, fortunately, I can only recall two or three times, and, normally, we put one other enlisted man [to] keep an eye on this [man], one man from each watch section. And, one fellow, we confined to his bunk. But then, we tolerated some people, but, when we got back into port, there was such a requirement for people to get back to man the on-coming submarines and new construction, we had to transfer almost a third of our crew after every patrol. And, any undesirables, we transferred them at the same time, and they got out of submarines, or went to tenders, or shore duty. But, overall, the enlisted ranks were pretty well screened.

JQ: Were peoples' records tarnished forever after that?

WG: … Well, they could never go into submarines again. We had one officer that was an extremely intelligent fellow, and we were coming into Fremantle, … I'll not mention his name. A real eminent person, who was so concerned with the radar and sonar gear, keeping it peaked up, that it just drove him crazy. He was just trying to be a perfectionist. And, one day, he got a little erratic, and we shipped him over to the tender. It was a real tragedy, a real fine man, but, he got over it, and I ran into him later in life. But, that was one thing where the fellow was so

dedicated, ... he just stood watch around the clock. He hardly ever slept, hardly ever ate, got real thin. But, overall, Jim, … people were pretty well screened, pretty well qualified.

JQ: What was the tender?

WG: ... Well, the tenders, they were stationed, first of all, in Pearl Harbor, of course. And, that was all we had, to begin with. And then, we established a base on Midway, and we put a tender on Midway. And, … we went in there for our first refit. We went from Pearl Harbor to Midway to off the coast of Honshu. And then, after completing a patrol of about fifty days, we come back to Midway, and they had a tender, and they overhauled us. And, that way, we were a thousand miles closer to the war zone, instead of coming all the way back to Pearl Harbor. And, I might say, the only thing on Midway that was worth observing were the gooney birds. I don't know if you ever heard of the gooney birds. They were large albatross. They nested on Midway and one other island, and they were very peculiar birds. There'd be a male and female, they would come up to one another and do some sort of a mating dance, and tuck their beak under their wing, and squawk and holler. And, we used to stand there and watch them for hours. And, the gooney bird was so big, it had a wing span of seven [or] eight feet. When he took off, he'd have to go down the runway, [and], finally, get in the air. But then, when he came back to land on Midway, he'd come in there, and he'd start pounding his feet, and he'd make a ground loop, just like you would if you tripped, back over tea kettle. … The bird would get up, turn his head, and look around, and wonder if anybody noticed. [laughter] … All our off duty time was spent with the gooney birds; usually two weeks.

JQ: He would not have passed the CAA, right? [laughter] Onboard the submarines, was there a strict hierarchy?

WG: ... Not really. Oh, the skipper was almighty. He was the man, regardless of what happened, or what he did, or how he acted. He was in supreme command. The executive officer, more or less, ran the ship, the nuts and the bolts, and assigning people to stations, and so forth. And then, you had a gunnery officer and you had what we called a TDC operator, (torpedo data computer operator). And, he might handle that job and be the first lieutenant. Usually, the third officer was assigned the billet of engineer, electrical and diving officer. For the first three war patrols, I was assistant to that officer. During five subsequent patrols, although junior in rank, I occupied the engineer, electrical and diving officer's billet.

JQ: Who was your most respected commander?

WG: Well, I had one, two, three, four, five. And, the most respected one, and the one we did all the damage with, he's now an admiral, Admiral Ralph Marion Metcalf, retired, who now lives in California, and I see him during reunions. … He was exec for two runs. I was with him, and then, I was his engineer, electrician, and diving officer, for two runs, when we scored all the heavy damage. He received two Navy Crosses, and a Legion of Merit, and many other citations. He was one of the hot shots out of the classes of '35 and '36, '37 and '38, out of the Naval Academy, fairly young. … We had some harrowing times. But, he was out there to do some damage. And, I still keep in touch with him, real close. I had another CO, … on my second

submarine, and I just didn't feel comfortable, after coming off the *Pogy*, which was a real gung-ho, a well trained, productive ship. So, when I got into Fremantle, Australia, after the first patrol on the *Kraken*, I asked to get in the relief crew. And then, the *Lamprey* came in from her first patrol, into Fremantle, after having patrolled in the South China Sea. The exec on *Lamprey* and I had been shipmates for five patrols; a year and a half, on the *Pogy*. The next thing I know, I was ordered aboard by the division commander to become the engineer, electrical and diving officer on the *Lamprey*. I felt it would be nice to end the war in Australia in the relief crew; no such luck! [laughter]

JQ: Was there a lot of nicknaming?

WG: Well, golly, everybody had a nickname, some grew beards, and wore non-regulation uniforms. When we were under way and had departed the base, we went into relaxed clothing. There was no strict protocol on uniform. We were on the bridge, sometimes, with a sport shirt and a golf cap. And, the men would run around in shorts; old dungarees, cut off shirts, and different, odd hats. We tried to keep things a little loose, except, when we went to battle stations. Then, it was all business. And, that evolution involved all seven officers and all eighty enlisted types. Everybody went to a station. Every man had something to do, because we were relatively small, plus, the maze of machinery, and mechanics, and armament onboard the submarine in a confined space, plus, maintaining depth and going deep. It required a well-trained crew. And, I might say, Jim, during the war, ... at least seventy-five percent of the time was spent in training. On the way to the patrol area, we had what we called "School of the Boat." I would take, maybe, sixteen engineers, throttle men, strikers, and electricians, and we'd form groups. And, we'd start from one end of the boat and go to the other and teach that group all the rudiments of the other ratings, like the sonar, the radar, the auxiliary men, how the torpedo men worked, etc. So, everybody had an understanding of the whole ship. ... We took two weeks to get from Midway to the Philippine Islands; we spent two weeks of intensive training, and then, examining people, and trying to get them advanced in rate and become more proficient in their specialty.

JQ: So, there was a constant training?

WG: ... Actually, I'd say, in battle, it might have been five percent of the time. And, I think that was true of all branches of the service. Train, train, train, especially in the submarine navy.

JQ: Before, you mentioned one of your commanders, who was an Annapolis graduate. Was there any animosity onboard between graduates of the Naval Academy and OCS graduates, and or reserves?

WG: Jim, at first, there was a little. But, after the war was half over, I would say that there were more ... reserve officers in submarines than there were Academy people. At first, there was some animosity, but, none of any great consequence. Only one time did I really get into a SNAFU with an Annapolis graduate who had been on a battleship, went to sub school, and came aboard. Strict protocol was practiced on most capital ships while a more relaxed atmosphere prevailed in the submarine branch on the Navy. Dick, the Annapolis officer, had the mistaken belief that rank took precedent over experience. He reported after I had commissioned the *Pogy* and had three

successful war patrols under my belt. In short order, the Captain, after listening to both sides of the story, issued an ultimatum; resolve your differences or risk detachment! And now for the rest of the story, which I became aware of at a Sub Vets national convention in San Antonio, Texas, thirty-seven years later. The Captain's final advice to Dick was as follows, "Quickly resolve your differences or one of you will depart the boat and it will not be Bill Godfrey." Did that ever belatedly inflate my ego!

JQ: Did you run into to any other Rutgers graduates during the war, on submarines?

WG: No, none in subs; it's a strange thing. I ran into a couple of Rutgers men, ... I can't recall their names, that were in other ships. One was on the *Iowa*. ... And, oh, yes, I ran into one of my best friends, Ernie Christ, a 1940 graduate, who became a real eminent pomologist with ... the extension service. And, we have been life-long friends and we keep in contact quite often. And, in the Columbia Battalion of the Midshipmen School, there were five Rutgers men. I think they're mentioned in the information I previously gave you. Baldwin, and Eisenberg, and three others. But, ... I never ran into another person that came from Rutgers in the submarine service, before or after, in all my travels, conventions, and so forth. Rather strange.

JQ: Yeah, it is strange. What was bachelor life like, being in foreign ports and being in exotic places?

WG: Well, as you know, Pearl Harbor was run over with military, and there were certain hours you could go to the club. … Well, let me say this, we were treated, I guess, better than a lot of the services, because we had been submerged, out of contact, for anywhere from forty to sixty days. We came back, walked up the dock, and suffered shin splints from being so inactive. We were allowed to go to the Royal Hawaiian Hotel for two weeks of rest and recuperation. We had rooms ... right on Waikiki Beach, and we'd have to go to the ship every once in a while, and check on our departments. But, we had two weeks of rest and recuperation, and then, went back and got ready to go on patrol again; the enlisted men, also. And, I remember staying in a room where the rate was forty dollars a night. [laughter] ... The Royal Hawaiian and the Moana were the only two major hotels in Pearl Harbor, at that time, and Midway was a sand pit. You could almost miss it if you didn't watch out. And, that was where we enjoyed the gooney birds, softball, and volleyball. Subic Bay, we got there, the first time, before it was really organized. The officer's club was a little Quonset hut. Very little beer, small ration of spirits, and not much recreation, because some of the Japs were still down, in the Manila area. ... I went to Saipan, we stopped in there to refuel, shortly after ... we took that over, and there was nothing doing there. We just refueled there. But, the best place of all was Fremantle, Australia. That was a Mecca. That was a great place. And, they received the Yanks with open arms. And, I enjoyed the relief crew for two weeks; no, about three weeks, all together. I hated to leave Fremantle.

JQ: Did you serve in any of the major battles during your tour?

WG: Yes. I wouldn't call them battles, I'd call them combat patrols. The *Pogy* made ten runs; ten war patrols. And, the first five were the most productive, because there were more targets. Towards the end of the war, Jim, there was nothing much left to shoot at.

JQ: Right.

WG: But, on our very first patrol, off of Honshu, near the city of Sendai, right along the coast, the first day on patrol, May 1, 1943, we knocked off a freighter. And, we were pretty severely depth-charged, and, to me, I said, "Well, this is routine, you get depth-charged." And, from then on, depth charges became commonplace. And then, we sunk a small patrol craft. And then, later, another small freighter. Then, we came back. And then, we departed Midway the second time. And, I don't know if I took some notes here. I think, on the second patrol, we were in the Truk area, way out in Japanese controlled water. We sunk a 7500-ton aircraft ferry. We damaged a few more freighters. And then, on the third patrol, we sunk a 700-ton freighter. And, in all these, we were normally depth-charged, because these convoys were escorted by destroyers. But, we managed to evade, go deep, cruise away silently. We always tried to [be] terribly silent. That was the main thing. Be quiet, maneuver at slow speed, and get away from the action. And then, ... the fourth patrol was really one of the best and the fifth was outstanding. En route to the Palaus Islands, in heavy seas, before we got to our op area, we came across a big sub tender, in the day time, and a large freighter. I believe it was 6000-tons, and a destroyer escort. Well, this was in about a force five sea. And, this was the first time I'm the diving officer, controlling the depth at the Captain's orders. And, we had heavy seas and big swells. … When you're … just in trim, where ... a little bit will let you go up, ... a little bit will let you go down. But, when you're in heavy sea, broaching is possible. …

----------END OF SIDE TWO TAPE ONE----------

JQ: This continues an interview with William Godfrey at his home in Homosassa, Florida.

WG: Yes, Jim, as I was mentioning, in route to the Palaus Islands, on our fourth patrol, I'd just become diving officer, responsible for maintaining the trim of the ship while the captain conned it, and we were in this very heavy sea. ... The periscope went under at sixty-five feet. So, the Captain never wanted to expose too much of the periscope. So, he would order "sixty-four feet," "sixty-three feet." And, I'm down there with the planesman and the blow manifold, and the fellow pumping, and blowing, and trying to maintain that depth, so, he could just have the periscope barely above the surface, 'cause we didn't want to disclose our location. And, it was quite hairy for me, the first time, although I had dived the boat on previous patrols. And, my main fear was broaching, ... but, we held it, and he got two torpedoes into this 7000-ton freighter. And, we sunk it, and we put one torpedo into another freighter, I think it was 6000-tons, and we stayed in the area. We didn't sink it. So, we moved down a little ways and stayed in the area. At night, we surfaced. And, we got the ship ... upstream in the moon, so, the moon wouldn't silhouette us. And, it was a fairly clear night. ... And then, during surface action, I would go up on the bridge and con the ship, while the captain, he would alternate between the conning tower and the bridge. He'd go down and watch the solution of the torpedo data computer, with the fire control party, and I would be ... up giving orders to the helm … whatever he said, "Bill, come right fifteen degrees of course this and that." And so, we stayed on the surface. And, the destroyer was circling this big freighter which [was] dead in the water. So, we waited 'til the freighter got over on the far side. We got into, I guess, less than about fifteen hundred yards, and

he's dead in the water. We fire two torpedoes to hit. It wasn't much of a solution. It was almost dead on. And, within ten or fifteen minutes, it sunk. And, while still on the surface, we turned tail and put four engines on the line, made about twenty knots on the surface, and we hauled out of there. We didn't get a chance to shoot at the destroyer, but, our main mission was to get out to the patrol area. But, right there, on our way out to the area, ... we sunk fifteen thousand tons of shipping, right there. From there, we continued on to the Palaus area. And, this was the real plum, Jim. We stayed right off the island of Palau, early in the morning, at periscope depth, within sight of the beach, and out comes this troop carrier, loaded with troops. We were at periscope depth. I'm holding the submarine at sixty-one, sixty-two, sixty-three feet. ... I don't think we were over fifteen hundred yards from the target. We fired two torpedoes; they both hit. The ship sunk within a minute, with, I don't know, a couple thousand troops aboard. So, after that, we submerged and tried to get into deep water. And, we were depth-charged all day, but, we laid close to the bottom, and just cruised very slow, very quiet. So, we had gotten out of the way from the beach that afternoon, and we start conducting a periscope patrol away from the beach. And, a little patrol craft, a Japanese patrol craft, was sighted. And, somehow, I don't know whether he saw our periscope or not, but, we were up and down and searching, and he came in, giving us big angles on the bow, back and forth. And, we're submerged about sixty-five feet. And, I'm laying in my bunk, I'm off watch. I got off at noon. And, all of a sudden, two depth charges were let go, and we were only at sixty-five feet. And, I think he only had two onboard, or he might have sunk us, or he might have sunk himself. I mean, if he had any more depth charges, … he had us cold. The control room was [in] a little bit of confusion. They hollered, "Mr. Godfrey to the control room." And, I dashed out, flooded the negative tank, and took us down deep, and got everything squared away. And, the Captain comes out of his bunk, and everybody, and we got everything under control. But, we were pretty badly damaged. We had lights broken, we had some machinery ... deranged. But, the worst thing of all, the depth charges were so close, and probably near the stern, they set off a torpedo in the torpedo tube, and it jumped the stops and allowed the engine in the torpedo to start. But, fortunately, it was in the after torpedo room, and, when a torpedo leaves a tube, it has to go so many yards [and] a little device in there, like a propeller, will arm it. So, it can't arm itself until, maybe, it's four hundred yards from us, so, we don't blow ourselves up. But, ... the engine in the torpedo is run by alcohol and makes steam, to run a little steam turbine to drive the propeller. So, we buttoned up the tubes. Our forward tubes and the outboard shutters on the tubes were damaged. So, we contacted Pearl Harbor. No, wait, let me digress. So, that night, when it got dark, the Captain says, "Bill, ... when we get on the surface, I want four engines on the line." So, we surfaced, and had the four engines on the line before we surfaced, and we headed back towards Midway. And, we sent a message to Commander of Submarines, Pacific Fleet, relaying what had happened, and explained the damage, and they recalled us. In twenty-eight days, we had sunk two big freighters and a big transport. We had a chief torpedoman who was the best in the Navy. Believe it or not, [he] ... was able to extract the torpedo into the torpedo room, and ... he routined it. He got it all ready so we could fire it again, charged it, filled it with alcohol, and compressed air. And, for that, he received a commendation and a medal. That was twenty-eight days of real intense activity.

JQ: Yeah, sounds like it.

WG: And then, I guess, the best patrol was the fifth patrol. We were, once again, just a little bit south of Formosa. And, on that patrol, our first contact was a six ship convoy with two destroyer escorts. And, we were on the surface, and they were hull down, but, with a high periscope and our small sub, they couldn't see us. We made an end around run on the convoy until it got dark. Somewhere along the line, one of the destroyers dropped off, and, at last, we tracked him. He was on the starboard quarter of the convoy, way back aft, away from us. So, we surfaced, it was just a little haze. And, we surfaced right on the track of the convoy. And, we were tracking them for six hours with our periscope and our radar. And then, here comes, out of this mist, instead of the freighter coming out, the first ship coming out is a destroyer, no more than two thousand yards away. Two thousand yards, at sea, isn't too far. So, this captain of mine, I'm on the bridge, conning the ship, he's climbing up and down the conning tower, and, when this destroyer comes out of the mist, we're all surprised. [laughter] And, he says, "Set torpedoes for six feet." We had them set for ten feet, for the freighters. So, we're cruising along, we're only fifteen hundred yards, and that destroyer comes out of the mist. The captain's up and down, and I'm on the target bearing transmitter, taking visual bearings on the main mast of the destroyer. So, he says, "Fire one, fire two." By God, they both hit. Lit up the sky. They blew the thing completely to pieces. In fifteen seconds, it was gone. There was so much fire, it lit up the conning tower. And, down the hatch, the people in the conning tower said, "What happened up there?" [laughter] So, then, we fired, again: we had six torpedoes forward, we fired two more. We sunk another freighter and we damaged another one. And, the *Pogy* is still on the surface. We're not going to dive. So, we turn and go away from the convoy. And, one of the freighters was fairly fast and turned towards us. And, the Captain wanted to fire the after torpedoes, and he thought better of this when the freighter started firing on us. They must have ... had some small guns up forward. So, then, the Captain says, "Dive." … We have four engines on line going twenty knots. I dived down into the control room and manned the diving station. And, boy, we go under water like a porpoise, [laughter] and went to two hundred feet and evaded. We weren't depth-charged. And then, we followed on up the coast. And then, we met two or three more convoys. And, on that one patrol, overall, we sunk something like thirty thousand tons and damaged another seven or eight thousand, plus, the destroyer.

JQ: That is incredible.

WG: And, that's when a lot of us received an award or decoration. That's when the Captain got his second Navy Cross. And then, we went back to Pearl Harbor, and that's when I was transferred and ordered back to the same shipyard to go through the same procedure with the *USS Kraken, SS-370*. So, that's a ... little bit of the action, Jim. [laughter]

We had some crazy things, too. We were patrolling off Wake Island, and observed no activity. We went up close, submerged, and then, we surfaced. ... It was just getting dark and Bill Rossell and I were on the bridge. And, I was a JO, at the time. And, all of a sudden, we hear, "Kaploom, kaploom." Sounded like gun fire. We were pushing one another from behind the periscope sheers, and then, dived the boat. We came up, the Captain says, "What happened? Was somebody shooting from shore or something?" We come up, we get under way, and it happens again. So, by this time, I said, "Something's fishy." So, Bill said, "Go back to the engine room." Well, back to the engine room; the exhaust valves on the engines are big large valves and they

accumulated carbon on the valve seats. So, the engineman says, "Well, to get that carbon off, we will just quickly open and close the valves; real quick." Well, when those big valves went down, they sounded like a cannon going off. [laughter] And, twice, we dived because of the noise of those valves, [laughter] because we were so, you know, rigid, and scary, and looking around. So, boy, did the engineers catch the devil for that. And, at one of my reunions, I reminded the guys. And, this one kid, who was in the engine room, he remembered it. He said, "I remember you, Mr. Godfrey, coming back to the after engine room." [laughter] And, he says, "We never did that again without asking permission from the bridge." Because, if the valves leaked a little, the water would flow back into the piping, and into the inboard valves, and possibly cause damage.

JQ: What was one of your scariest memories of the war?

WG: Well, I guess, … on that fifth patrol, after we had sunk the troop ship and we were depth-charged. That was the closest. I remember, one time, on the *Kraken*, after we had made an attack, we were severely depth-charged. The test depth of the submarine was, I can tell you that now, ... three hundred and twelve feet. We went down as deep as four twelve to avoid depth-charging. But, the ships built by the Manitowoc Ship Building Company were so beautifully built, so well welded, that we had no compunction, if necessary, to go so deep. … So, I've been a little below four hundred-twelve feet in a three hundred-twelve test-depth submarine.

JQ: How deep can they go? I mean, is that pushing the extremes of how deep a submarine can go?

WG: Oh, yes. We normally didn't want to go below three twelve. We could usually escape at that depth and sneak away. But, if you got a destroyer, or an ASW vessel, that really got a fix on you, then, you did everything possible, because ... the sonar men could hear it, and, without the sonar phones on, or the speaker on in the control room, you could hear the, "Chook-chook-chook," of the destroyer's propellers going over you. You could hear them right through the hull. But, the depth-charge you didn't hear was probably the one that got you. [laughter] But, as long as you kept hearing them, the situation was tolerable.

JQ: What was it like? Did it shake the submarine at all?

WG: Oh, yes. It was a horrible noise. It sounded like somebody throwing over a thousand ash cans. … Usually, they were six hundred pound depth-charges full of TNT, and ... they put a pattern down. They'd run over you and lay a pattern of charges. But, fortunately, the good Lord was with us. We survived. We had light bulbs broken, and cork and insulation flying off, and, maybe, a few valves would leak. But, really, other than that time after the attack on the troop ship, when the torpedo tubes were deranged, and we had to go back to base prematurely. And, addressing back to that attack, and what happened; the concussion from the depth-charges bounced the shallow depth gauge up to about twenty-one feet. And, one of the men in the control room says, "Oh, my gosh, we're on the surface." Well, I come out, I check the deep depth gauge, and I also check the pressure. Forty-four pounds of pressure on all the gauges we had would mean that we were at approximately a hundred feet. But, I flooded the negative tank, which helps you get down, and took charge, and took us deep. But, that time, I think, was the worst.

JQ: Once the tanks were flooded, how would you surface again? Would you fill them back up with air?

WG: Well, we just blow the ballast water out of the ballast tanks, become positively buoyant. And, go ahead, slowly on the battery and the motors, and, as soon as we popped to the surface, we'd start the diesel engines, and then, they'd drive generators, which would drive the motors. So, … from battery propulsion to diesel-electric propulsion, 'cause, I might say this, Jim, people … don't really know some of these intricacies. We can only cruise for forty-five minutes, with full power, submerged. It would exhaust the battery. Normally, submerged, we cruise at one-third, maybe two or three knots. That's all. Sometimes, during the day, we'd be going against the current submerged, we surface, and we'd be right where we submerged. We had to conserve the battery. We had two hundred-fifty-two big cells, weighed about a thousand pounds apiece. And, just to water the batteries took about six hundred gallons of water. And then, we'd have to go down in the battery wells, and, individually, fill those big thousand pound cells with water about every week or so, 'cause, when they discharged the battery, the water evaporated and the battery got hot. So, submerged, we had no speed. We'd kick it ahead full speed for maybe two or three minutes, to make a turn, or try to get on a track. … That's why we tried to conduct all our attacks during the evening, on the engines.

JQ: So, you would go whole patrols where you'd be submerged during the day and up top, at night, on the surface. So, you would not see the sunlight for a while?

WG: Early on, with the first skipper, and being the first patrol, we submerged most of the time during the day, and any time we were close to the beach. But, when I got this next hot-shot skipper of mine, we left Pearl Harbor and we cruised on the surface almost to the shores of the Japanese Islands, because we could make twenty-two knots on the surface, where we could only crawl submerged. But, we had a periscope watch, a radar watch, and, finally, we got aircraft radar. So, we were confident that we could always sight the enemy before they could sight us. So, we steamed, … we dived once a day, to get the trim on the boat, because, as [we] used stores, and oil, and everything on the boat, the trim changes. So, you flood water or pump it out. So, that was my job, to make sure every morning we made a trim dive. We'd go down and get the ship where we're at neutral buoyancy. Because, then, the rest of the day, if we were going to make an attack, and, at night, we knew if we had to dive, the ship was in trim. So, every submarine made a trim dive at least once a day.

JQ: In the Atlantic, the visibility was a lot less than it was in the Pacific, but, in the Pacific, you had to dive further, is that true? Because, if you are in clear water, and a plane flew over and spotted you, that could give away your location. Is that true?

WG: No, there's a lot of mystery about that. But, I've been up in an aircraft trying to spot a submarine, later on, during my reserve duty. And, Jim, you'd be surprised how difficult it is to search a large body of water and find anything. We were just a little pop on the vast Pacific. My gosh, millions of square miles. And, they only had limited range with their airplanes from some of their bases. When we were transiting from Midway to the Japanese controlled islands, there

were thousands of miles. There was nothing there. So, we wanted to get out there and spend as many days as possible in the patrol area.

JQ: Was that an advantage or a disadvantage? Were there orders that within five hundred miles of an island, or five hundred miles of a carrier, you would have to stay submerged in fear of planes?

WG: No, no. Like I say, the Japs didn't have good radar, thank goodness. And, up in an airplane, it was very difficult to spot us. … We were scattered all over and we were all moving. The only thing, when we were close to shore off of Honshu, during the first patrol, there were fishing boats out there. And, the fishing boat had a little radio set and he was on a coordinate. And, along islands, there, [the sea] was broken up into coordinates like alpha-one or alpha-two, and he would fish in that area. And, after that first attack, we surfaced, sunk the sampan; a fishing boat. He had a gun onboard, but, he never got to it. But, he got off a message ... to the coast. And, in about twenty minutes, we sighted an aircraft and we dived. They never saw us. But, these fishing boats acted as picket boats in all these particular areas, and they did a lot of reconnaissance for the Japs.

JQ: I read that submarine operations are very intricate, as far as adjustments having to be made for water salinity and water density. Would you elaborate on the difficulties of operating a submarine?

WG: Well, it wasn't much difficulty determining, primarily, the salinity of the water. At Wood's Hole Oceanographic Institute, up in Massachusetts, they developed what they called a bathythermograph. And, actually, the *Pogy* was one of the first ships to evaluate the bathythermograph out at the Perles Islands, off Panama, before we went to Pearl Harbor. This was a device that measured, on a little screen with a stylus, ... the depth of the water versus the temperature. So, when you looked at that, normally, you had a thermocline; a positive or negative thermocline. If you had a positive one, where the water got colder as you went deeper, ... and then, when they used their sonar, their return from the sonar would bounce off the thermal. So, we used the thermals when we dived, ... and we're being attacked; ... find a depth where we were protected by the thermal layers that would interfere with their ASW sonar. It was just a matter of studying and applying that information.

JQ: Did you readily receive information as to other war developments around the Pacific?

WG: Yes, I can tell this, now, Jim. ... We broke the Japanese code, that everyone now knows. We had broken it even before the Battle of Midway, but, we hadn't monitored it sufficiently. But, by the time most of the submarines got out there, we received a top secret message through one of our coding machines. And, that message, the junior officer would have to break down, and take it to one officer, and he would be the final decoding officer, 'cause this was so super secret. It was an electric coding machine. The communication officer would take it to the Captain, and we got information, believe it or not, telling the composition of a convoy, what port it was leaving, what was the composition, how many ships, what its track was; expected arrival points at certain points in the ocean. Now, that's hard to believe. But, our people back in Pearl

Harbor, they did such a fantastic job of breaking the code. And, many times, we would be on a track and some of those ships I mentioned would be coming by, or they would tell us they would be in a certain area. Now, it always didn't work out that way. But, many a day, many a time, we knew where the track was. We might not be perfectly on it. At that particular time, they might zig away from us and we couldn't overtake them. Sometimes, they'd zig towards us and put us in a more favorable firing position. But, we had to get into a fairly good firing position for a spread of torpedoes to hit a ship at two thousand, three thousand yards, especially one that was heavily convoyed with destroyers and that type of ship.

JQ: Was that why the United States was more successful towards the end of the war?

WG: Absolutely, absolutely. You know yourself when Yamamoto was shot down in his aircraft, down near Guadacanal. They had broken the code, knew what airplane he was in, and where it was flying. And, some of our naval aviators, off a carrier, went out and shot him down. Never would have done it without the codes. That's all history. You can read that in all the books. That's no secret. It was a secret all during the war, and a long time after the war, until this was all [revealed]. … But, I knew about it. Submarine force knew about it. And, the people, … navigators and communications people on the surface ships, knew about it. And, it was a godsend. Plus, we had good radar, and I don't think the Japs would get good radar until long towards the end of the war. And then, it was usually on their capital ships. So, we had a lot going for us.

JQ: Were you under orders to keep silent about breaking the codes?

WG: Oh, my gosh, yes. We … were sworn [by] an affidavit and everything. We were classified as top secret. And, absolutely, the communication officer, he had to take good care of all the communication equipment and the codes. And, they were kept under secure lock and key. And then, the coding machinery; we had to change the disks and all the guts of it every few days, on orders from headquarters. And, see, every night, we received what they called a fox schedule. And, all our communications from Com-Sub-PAC came to us over the radio at night, because we seldom broke radio silence. The only time we broke radio silence was when we were on the track of a convoy or wanted to advise a submarine in another area. ... The only other time we did it [was] when we became damaged. And, the other time was the day you left the area. That night, when you were heading home, you called up and advised them of your position, speed of advance, any problems, and ... the arrival time in Pearl Harbor, Midway, Subic, wherever it was. But, … very seldom did we have an outgoing message. We guarded, all night long, what they called a fox schedule. And, that's how we got all the messages. But, we ... hardly ever broke radio silence. It was right in the middle of the Jap areas, and, in our area, which was a confined area.

… As you talked about being confined, … the enlisted folks, other than the lookouts, some of those poor guys, torpedo-men and all, would be down below for forty, fifty days, never see the sun. Now, at night time, sometimes, we'd let a few men come up on the bridge to get a good breath of air. But, normally, it was the officer of the deck, the junior officer, the three lookouts,

and the captain popping up and down, and the navigator popping up and down to take sights and get our position, when we surfaced just before sundown.

JQ: What was morale like just after the defeat of the Japanese at Midway?

WG: Well, it sure picked up. I'll tell you that. But, we always had good morale.

----------END OF SIDE ONE TAPE TWO----------

JQ: Was it true that MacArthur was given a certain area of the Pacific that all orders were put under his control and that Admiral Nimitz was given another certain area of the Pacific?

WG: Yes, the Dugout Dog, he wasn't a favorite of the Navy, I'll tell you that right now. But, at one time, he petitioned to take over the entire warfare in the Pacific Theater. And, the people back in Washington, ... Admiral King, and the President, and some others, … "No way. You may have the ground forces, the Army, and so forth, but, the Navy will be under Fleet Admiral Nimitz." It would have been entirely too much for one man to handle. It was bad enough. … Admiral Nimitz was a fantastic gentleman. We all know that. And, our man, Commander of Submarines, Pacific Fleet, Admiral Charles Lockwood was an outstanding gentleman. And, between him and Nimitz, I think we couldn't have done better. …

JQ: Did you ever meet or serve under Admirals Nimitz or Halsey?

WG: Yes. … Several division commanders were pretty well up. And, when I received my decoration, it was presented to me by Admiral Nimitz himself, onboard a submarine in Pearl Harbor. And, I must say, that was one of the proudest days of my life. [laughter] He was a very imposing gentleman. And, he had a few kind words, and asked me how I was doing, and if I enjoyed the service, and I was shaking like a leaf. [laughter]

JQ: Were there any other commendations or awards that you received?

WG: Yes, for the fourth war patrol, I received the combat letter of commendation. There were two letters of commendation, one with a ribbon which you could wear, and I was presented with that in Fremantle, when I was in Australia, by a division commander, for my work as a diving officer on the fifth patrol of the *Pogy*. And, that's when the Admiral received his second Navy Cross. But, normally, I didn't get to mingle with the brass. [laughter]

JQ: You went into service in 1942, and then, you were married. When did you get married?

WG: Well, I got married unexpectedly. I had no intentions, but, I met my first and only wife, Karen Dean, up in the little town of Two Rivers and the other town of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. Karen's cousin lived in Manitowoc, her first cousin, her mother's brother's daughter. And, we were on a blind date, and Dorothy, Karen's cousin, introduced me to Karen indirectly, because she wasn't exactly my blind date. But, anyway, we got together, and I made a trip to Chicago, and she made a trip to Manitowoc, and, finally, after five or six visits, we decided to get married.

So, when the submarine was taken down the Mississippi River from Manitowoc to New Orleans, I asked the captain for permission to get off and get married. I asked, actually, 'cause, back in those days, you asked the captain for everything. And, I think, the captain liked all his officers to be married, because they were more concerned about coming back. [laughter] So, we were married in Chicago. And, while they were taking the submarine, on a dry dock, down the Mississippi River, we spent about ten days in New Orleans. That was our honeymoon, in New Orleans. And then, I left and didn't come back for about fifteen or sixteen months. [laughter] And, by that time, Karen had moved down to Miami, and she had a job with the *Miami News*. And, when she met me at the airport, there were about four Lieutenant JGs coming off the plane. Karen had rented a convertible automobile! And, ... coming off, ... I says, "Which one is she?" She saw the four JGs all dressed alike, and she says, "I wonder which one is he." [laughter]

JQ: She did not know which one was her husband. [laughter]

WG: So, then, we got together and went up the coast by train, after a week or so in Miami. She had a little apartment right on the beach. Of course, we had a great time being reunited. And, we went up the coast by train and met my folks. And, that's the first time they'd seen her. And, they were surprised as I was, … I'd been married such a short time. And then, we took the train, and we got an upper berth, and we shared an upper berth from there to Chicago, went to Manitowoc, and went through the same routine, new construction with the *Kraken*. And then, when the *Kraken* went down the river, Karen was pregnant with our first child. [laughter] And, I didn't know I had a daughter until I arrived in Fremantle, Australia, about two months after Anne was born. And, ... the division commander received a little message they tacked on to another message for (filler?). And, it says, "Advise Lieutenant Godfrey that daughter born, … wife and daughter doing very well." And, that's when I knew I was a father. [laughter] And, it so happened, when we arrived at Fremantle, they're changing the mail stations around, and our mail sat on the dock for one week before we found it. And, she didn't know where I was and what was going on. And, there I was, a father.

JQ: How tough was life being married while you were in service?

WG: Well, I think it was great, because Karen kept me in touch. And, the greatest thing, returning to port, … see, I was still out there for another full year. And, the greatest thing was receiving mail and some fresh milk. Everyone looked to that once you returned to port. You were all worn out, you were pale, you stunk, you stunk like a diesel engine. For months, I smelled like diesel. And, we'd receive our mail, and then, … the division officers would meet with the people on the base and give them all the problems. And, after two days, we would go to our rest and recuperation hotel. And, we had a little hotel ... out of Fremantle, in a mountainous area. It served good food, and, talking about something else we enjoyed was, we each received a case of beer and a couple of bottles of gin. I didn't like gin. But, a case of beer, in Fremantle, was forty-eight Imperial quarts. It came in a wooden crate. So, seven or eight of us from the boat, we went up to the recreation area in the hotel, and they had an icebox that must have been twenty feet long. So, we all took our ration and threw it in the icebox, and, for two weeks, we had all the beer we could drink. It was a community deal. The next boat would come in, and replenish the icebox. The Australia beer, called Emu Bitters, was the finest beer I ever drank.

The only time I could drink a lot of beer and not get a hangover. [laughter] So, between the mail, and the milk, and the beer, and the beautiful little hotel, we enjoyed our rest and recuperation period. It was wonderful.

JQ: Following the war, you turned down active service in the Navy. What led you to remain in the reserves?

WG: I come back to port after those last two patrols on the *Lamprey*, and, by golly, I was lucky enough to have the con coming up through the Golden Gate. And, I don't know if I mentioned this to you, Jim, before that time, when I went to California on the *Virginia*, the Golden Gate Bridge had not been spanned. So, I went … through the Gate, I should say, on this big passenger liner in and out of San Francisco. We came back from the war zone on the *Lamprey*, I had the twelve to four watch. And, I had the con, and I navigated the ship under the Golden Gate Bridge and up through the real strong currents in San Francisco Bay; up to Tiburon Bay, where we anchored the ship. And then, I was approached by the Captain, he says, "Bill, ... I'd like to think you might want to augment into the regular Navy." But, I was gung-ho. I wanted to get home. And, I didn't think I'd like the peacetime Navy. I don't know. I wanted to get home. So, I passed that up. And then, I was released from active duty in San Francisco, processed, and then, went back to Great Lakes, the big Navy base at the Great Lakes Training Center. I was released from there and went back to Manitowoc, where Karen and the baby were residing. I had about thirty days of terminal leave. So, I had thirty days, I was still in the Navy, and thirty days of pay, which came in real handy. And, that's when I looked for a job, in Wisconsin. And, I didn't think I liked the climate. I didn't think Karen would like living in such a cold climate for the rest of our lives. By then, my dad was in charge of refrigeration on all the ships being built in Wilmington, North Carolina for the Maritime Commission. And, this was another secret; there were about two hundred and fifty Victory and Liberty ships built there. And, my dad organized the department, recruited the people, and was in charge of installing all that equipment. The last sixteen ships, with more intricate ... machinery, required his full time supervision. He phoned, "Bill, come on down. You can work for me for a year. And then, we'll go down to Florida and start our own business." So, I went to Wilmington and gained a tremendous amount of experience. Very soon, I was his right hand man, conducting tests and taking the ships out for trial runs. Just like Manitowoc, people didn't know much about Wilmington, North Carolina. After completing all the contracts in about a year, we moved to St. Petersburg, Florida.

JQ: What was the transition like, going from being an officer in the Navy to civilian life? It would be like the President becoming an ordinary citizen again.

WG: [laughter] I was still an extremely junior officer. I had been promoted to lieutenant, Jim, even though I held down a more senior billet. I had just ... been promoted to lieutenant, I think, when getting back to Manitowoc. So, I had been lieutenant about a year. I held down a senior job, which I am very proud of, but, in rank, I wasn't very high. ... But, it was very uneasy, coming back to civilian life, after being on a routine, like a four to eight. ... And, I can remember getting off the train in Chicago. I didn't have a stitch of civilian clothing, and I stopped at Carson Pirie and Scott, one of the big department mens' stores, in Chicago. And, I tried on a … single breasted suit. The jacket was so long, and so full! And, I told the guy, "I can't wear this." My

uniform was a pretty tight fit. And, I felt so strange, getting back into civilian clothes. It was a little different. The routine was entirely different. And, I really didn't have a job until my dad called me. And, getting settled back was a little difficult. ... But, I was glad to be home, and certainly glad to see my wife. [laughter] And, from then on, everything worked out.

JQ: How has the experience of serving in the war affected your life since the war?

WG: ... Not seriously. I had ... more appreciation of the armed forces. I had somewhat less appreciation of our politicians. But, I really loved what I was doing. And, unlike the wars that followed, where there was so much resistance, I felt it was my duty. I was going to go to war if I had to go to war as a private or a seamen. I was going to go because I felt I was fighting for my family and my country. I was extremely patriotic. I had no compulsion whatsoever. And, I think that was the difference, Jim, between then and the succeeding wars and conflicts. But, I just took it as my duty. I honestly did.

JQ: How long did you remain in the reserves?

WG: Well, Jim, I joined the St. Petersburg, Florida, Naval Reserve as a lieutenant. And, they had a gung-ho division, and a training center right on Bayboro Harbor, right in downtown St. Petersburg, five miles from where I lived, and I heard about it. ... And, I went down there to join, and I didn't believe, honestly, that you were being paid as a reservist. But, I said I want to stay in the reserve. I loved it that much. So, I went down and I joined the surface division, for a short time. And then, there was another submariner, a lieutenant commander, and we talked to the district, through a liaison officer, a captain in St. Pete, who was liaison officer for the city and all, and we had the facilities. And, we actually bargained to start a submarine division. And, lo and behold, this other officer and I started this submarine division. And, they sent the *Blackfish,* a World War II submarine, to St. Petersburg and moored it in Bayboro Harbor. So, he was captain of the submarine division, he was lieutenant commander, and I was his executive officer. And, after a year or so, he was relieved and I become the captain, … the commanding officer, not a captain. By that time, I was promoted to lieutenant commander. So, we had the submarine in Bayboro Harbor. And, we recruited people from all over Tampa/St. Pete area. And, we got up to about sixty men and about six officers. And, the submarine, … we couldn't get it underway. It was too dangerous to get it underway. But, we simulated diving it. We could run the engines, we could run the periscopes, the radars. And, we gave some real good basic training and sent a lot of people off into the regular Navy with having some training. And, they migrated into the submarine service. And then, … whoever was the Secretary of Defense, I think was the man ... from General Motors, and, I believe, … they tried to downgrade the entire naval forces, especially the naval reserve. They didn't think we were doing enough to keep the submarines there. So, they abolished the submarine divisions. So, I went back into the surface divisions for a while. Jim, I failed to mention that prior to the ASW Program, for ten consecutive years, I participated in two weeks of active duty aboard WWII fleet type submarines in Key West, Florida, a former sub base. Then, they started the ASW program, and that was bringing ASW vessels into ports throughout the United States. And, with my experience, and my rank, by that time, I was just about to make commander. … I happened to be in the right place at the right time. So, I organized the crew and was the first commanding officer of the *USS Coolbaugh,* a

DE, a destroyer escort, based in St. Pete. Now, there, we built a boiler room, electrical facilities, and kept the ship in steaming condition, (port facilities). And then, one weekend a month, we'd come down on Friday nights, and get underway Friday night or early Saturday morning, go out in the Gulf [of Mexico] and conduct training exercises with the guns, sonar, simulating targets, simulating a lot of things, and training officers. My job was to train junior officers. We had twelve officers aboard, and a hundred and fifteen men, augmented by the crew that kept the ship during the week; the basic crew. And then, when the two weeks training cruises were scheduled, we took all our people aboard. It was mandatory you go on a two weeks training duty, or out you go. And then, we went to Guantanamo twice, and went under real severe exercises under the fleet command, just the way the regular ships did. And, you take a bunch of reservists drilling once a month, … it was quite an experience. So, then, we wore that ship out. It was getting real beat up and it was an old ship, and they thought it should be taken out of service. So, one weekend, a few of us reservists and the basic crew, steamed it all across the Gulf, up to Orange, Texas, and put it in mothballs. And, I came back. The ship up the coast wasn't so good, so, they brought in the DE *Greenwood*, which was in better shape. So, I took over as captain and … just took our crew and transferred them. So, I was in that billet for three years. And, during one of those years, I was responsible for the whole division, the ship up in Charleston, one in Jacksonville, and one in Pensacola. And, we wrote operation orders. And, with our crews that summer, four ships went to Key West. And, we operated with the submarines, and enhanced our submarine warfare, … dropping simulated depth-charges, hedgehogs. And, two of the ships had to go to Gitmo, but, I took the other ship, went over to Vera Cruz, Mexico, and had our three or four days liberty there instead of Jamaica, and then, steamed back across the Gulf, to St. Petersburg. I had that billet for three years. I had the billet … as CO of the *Greenwood* and the *Coolbaugh*. And then, I had the billet for the DE, the destroyer division command, for about a year and a half. And then, from there, I became what was known as the Group Commander, which is the head reservist in the training center, and looked over seven or eight different divisions. We had Seabees, surface divisions, all kind of divisions. And then, I finally continued, and went to officer school, and took about ten or twelve correspondence courses, piling up points. Each day, for each course, had so many points. And, as I mentioned to you previously, during all this time, I took two weeks of training duty at the Naval War College in Newport, the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, the National War College in Washington. And then, I applied for the selection board in Washington D.C., selecting officers from lieutenant commander to commander. So, many reserve officers were on the board and so many regular naval officers. And, I was there for five weeks, taking off from work; five weeks in Washington D.C. ... We went through thousands of records and then, we got together, and we recommended which reserve officers should be selected from Lieutenant Commander to Commander. This was rather a closed deal, rather quiet and secret, and none of the information got beyond the board. And, it so happened, the day I reported that was the day before Lyndon Johnson's inauguration. And, all of the accommodations in Washington, including all the Navy accommodations, were given to all the VIPs and all the people coming in for the inauguration. So, they billeted ten of we reserves in the WAVEs' quarters, … at the fort right next to the cemetery in Washington, … Fort Meyers. We were actually billeted; here we were captains and commanders, ... in what had been used as ... WAVEs' quarters, little cubby-holes. So, we all rebelled, and, about two days later, we were sent down to a fort down the Potomac; Fort Belvoir, where they had a real BOQ. And, they bussed us into Washington, where we were conducting

the examinations. And, at night, they bussed us back, [laughter] Fort Belvoir, twenty miles south. And, we had access to a beautiful BOQ and a club. So, for five weeks, we were well housed and well taken care of. But, those first two days in those WACs' barracks, we rebelled. I stood in the slush, watching Lyndon Johnson being driven up Constitution Avenue, at that particular time. [laughter]

JQ: You did not serve in the Korean War, or anything else?

WG: No, but, at the Korean War, I was skipper of the submarine division, and they didn't need submarines. There were only two submarines used in the Korean War, for reconnaissance. They needed people on tenders. They took a few people from my division and sent them to tenders and shore stations, and three officers went off and received some tremendous experience, and a couple of them really qualified as reservists. And, two got on submarines, one got on a tender. And then, of course, the Vietnam War, … when did that start? … I was still in the naval reserve then, I stayed in 'til ... I was sixty years old, 1970-something. But, I was ready to be recalled at any time. But, as I said, the submarines were hardly ever used in the Korean [War], and very seldom ... in Vietnam.

JQ: How extensive was the use of submarines in the build-up during the Cuban missile crisis?

WG: At that time, ... I was in the DE program, the ASW program, and we were in Guantanamo, Cuba, and also in Key West, undergoing two weeks of "refresher training." We were under the operational command of people in Guantanamo. One night, we were departing the harbor, and a Russian ship came right up near the entrance to Guantanamo Bay. We were sitting there and went to battle stations, but, the ship changed course and went on down to Cuba. So, they ... didn't use many reserves in the Cuban crisis, but, we were available. But, ... they had enough capital ships, and big ships, and good ships, and well-armed ships. It was a little exciting there for about sixty days, until the missiles were taken out.

JQ: Especially being so close, down here in St. Petersburg.

WG: Well, I might mention this, during the Berlin crisis, … I had just been relieved as skipper on the *Greenwood*, and the *Greenwood* was recalled to active duty. And, they spent one year in active duty, all the men I had trained and a lot of the fine officers I had with me. My exec was an outstanding man. He had been all through the war on destroyers. He relieved me as captain, as skipper of the reserve ship, two weeks before they were recalled. Other than that, I would have been on active duty for a year, on ASW duty, along the Atlantic Coast and in Key West. So, I missed recall by two weeks.

JQ: How many children do you have?

WG: I have three, two sons and a daughter. One boy who was in the Army, ... went through Fort Gordon as an MP, and they sent him over to Germany, seventeen-years-old, one of the last men drafted when (Truman?) put a moratorium on the draft. And, he went to an Army base in Germany. And, the only thing he did was break up family arguments, suicides, fights, alcohol,

dope, and had such a horrible experience. He came home and, within two weeks, he became born again. And, he went ... to Liberty Baptist College, and, now, he's ... pastor of the North Bristol Baptist Church in Bristol, Virginia. He's … really dedicated. That's his life and that's the way it is.

My other boy, Bill, III, six foot five, slender like myself, he ... followed me in the mechanical trades, and, now, he's working out of Miami as a manufacturer's representative.

----------END OF SIDE TWO TAPE TWO----------

JQ: This continues an interview with William Godfrey at his home in Homosassa, Florida.

WG: Jim, I should go back a little bit. My oldest boy, Bill, Bill, III, I actually shanghai-ed him into the Navy. He was only seventeen-years-old, and I thought it would be good experience for him, and he went in on a minority enlistment. If you go in on a minority enlistment at age seventeen, you serve for three years and you're credited with four. And, he was stationed aboard an LCI. He was over in the Vietnam area and he was working with an underwater demolition team. And, he saw some action, not an awful lot. He got in towards the end of the war. But, he got his three years in, and he came home, and he thanked me for the experience. ... He, more or less, followed my foot steps in the mechanical field. And, Annie, she went to a junior college in St. Petersburg for a couple of years. And then, she became, in a doctor's office, a medical assistant, not a certified one, but, she did real well there. And then, she married and had two boys. I have these two ... grandsons, and, recently, became, what am I? a great-grandfather. But, anyway, Annie now lives in St. Petersburg with her husband, and we see her, occasionally.

So, that's about the story, Jim. But, I think I should briefly mention my one year career in the Merchant Marine, which was quite exciting. [laughter] My dad gotten me the job, by having influence with engineers of ships in New York Harbors. And, I was supposed to go aboard as a wiper, but, they didn't have a job for me. They said, "You can take over as mess boy for the black gang." So, on a thirty-three day trip between here, and California, and back, I ... did everything but cook the food, place it on the tables, bring it down from the galleys, and feed twenty-four men, three times a day, and wash the dishes in a two compartment sink. And, during that cruise, a couple of the crew members broke into the cargo of spirits and got drunk. They came to my mess room one day and asked, "What's for dinner?" and, I said, "Rice and curry." Well, that was the thing they hated most. This one fellow became very inebriated. He threw the rice and curry out the port hole, threw the butter dish against the bulkhead. And, a little later, they told him that I had squealed to the chief engineer. I didn't tell anybody. I was afraid for my life. So, he chased me around the forecastle, and I thought I was going to be real seriously hurt. I scooted into a little bunk room, went under the bunk. Finally, the master of arms corralled this guy, put him on report, and he was fired when we got to 'Frisco. But, … other than having a little bit of fun in Havana, coming back to New York, and not being able to take care of my mess hall, terribly sick, meeting my father, and the first thing he said, "I got a better job for you." So, that's when I went aboard the *USS Washington* of the United States Line as a wiper in the engine room. After four trips to Ireland, France, England, and Hamburg, Germany, I was promoted to fireman. And, there, I had to fire a large B&W express-type boiler with very little experience,

but, I learned a lot. And, I stayed on there for another ... five voyages. And then, we arrived back in New York. At that time, in 1936, the biggest maritime strike ever was started in New York. Union representatives, I called them goons, came aboard and wanted to know if the crew on the *Washington* was going to strike. We said we didn't know, but, we'd them know by one o'clock that afternoon. One o'clock that afternoon, we struck, because we had been coerced. I was assigned a picket area, a little button to put on my shirt, and where I was to patrol along the docks. Well, noon time, I needed a pair of dungarees, so, I went out to one of the big piers on West Street to buy a pair of dungarees. I was walking up West Street, and I was accosted by two big, burly looking goons, and asked, "What ship you off of, kid?" I said, "The *Washington*," real proud. With that, this guy slugged me behind my right jaw, almost knocked me out. I ran up West Street to the Seamen's House, got my breath, and regained my composure. I, then, stealthily, returned to the head of the pier, went up the pier, got on the ship, packed my sea bag, snuck off the ship, got out to the head of the pier. And, I asked one of the custom guards, there's usually two or three custom guards at the head of the pier, right on West Street, ... I said, "Please, call me a taxi." He called me a taxi; I threw my bag in, got in the taxi, and laid down on the floor boards, and told the taxi driver, "Please, take me to the Pennsylvania Station as fast as you can." I got on a train at Pennsylvania Station; disembarked in New Brunswick, and that was the end of my Merchant Marine career. [laughter]

JQ: All this was before your service in the Navy?

WG: This was all before my college and before my service; an eighteen-year-old kid, just out of high school. I don't know if I mentioned to you Jim; when my class graduated from New Brunswick High School, I was in Havana, Cuba, en route [the] Panama Canal and California. And, oh, my goodness, I've to tell you one more thing about the Golden Gate. [laughter] When I retired, my wife says, "We're going to travel." So, I bought a twenty-two foot trailer, traveled around ... the entire perimeter of the United States, all the parks in the West, Las Vegas, the four western provinces of Canada, and, on the way from San Francisco to Canada, I pulled the trailer across the Golden Gate Bridge.

JQ: Under which you had sailed.

WG: I sailed through the Gate on a merchant ship, before the bridge was spanned. I brought a submarine under the bridge when the war was over. And, when I retired, on my trailer trip, I dragged the trailer across the Golden Gate Bridge. Now, how many people have done that? [laughter]

JQ: Not very many.

WG: I think we should end it there, Jim. [laughter] I could tell you a lot of other stories that happened in the Merchant Marine, but, I think you've got more than enough to edit.

JQ: No, that's fine. I wanted to thank you very much for your time and your hospitality here in your home.

WG: You're more than welcome and I wish you success in what you do. I hope it's as much fun as I've had in my life and many experiences. I mean, what more can a person do?

JQ: Maybe one day, if I am as important as you, they will do an interview of me, fifty years down the road. [laughter] This ends an interview with William Godfrey at his home in Homosassa, Florida on December 2, 1995.

----------END OF INTERVIEW----------

Reviewed by Shaun Illingworth 7/24/99
Reviewed by Sandra Stewart Holyoak 7/28/99
Reviewed by William Godfrey 8/99