

Interview with Marion L. Shinn [8/30/2002]

Margaret M. Powell:

Today is Friday, August 30th, 2002, and this is the beginning of an interview with Marion L. Shinn at the Adams Mark Hotel in Buffalo, New York, the site of this year's annual World War II Submarine Veterans Convention. Dr. Shinn is 81 years old, having been born on March 11th, 1921. My name is Margaret M. Powell, and I will be the interviewer. Marion Shinn is an acquaintance of mine and a former shipmate of my father, William McKay, on the World War II submarine Guavina, USS 362.

Margaret M. Powell:

Dr. Shinn, could you please state your -- for the recording, what war and branch of service you served in?

Marion L. Shinn:

I served in World War II in the U.S. Navy with the submarines.

Margaret M. Powell:

And what was your rank?

Marion L. Shinn:

My rank was Radio Technician Second Class.

Margaret M. Powell:

And where did you serve?

Marion L. Shinn:

I served in many schools, but the wartime service was on the Guavina in the South Pacific from Australia to the area around Vietnam, primarily.

Margaret M. Powell:

Were you drafted or did you enlist?

Marion L. Shinn:

I enlisted.

Margaret M. Powell:

Where were you living at the time?

Marion L. Shinn:

I was living in Idaho, actually Lewiston, Idaho.

Margaret M. Powell:

Okay. Why did you join?

Marion L. Shinn:

It was the time. Everyone needed to be somewhere. I had just finished teaching a year of school, and I had to make a decision; it was time to join.

Margaret M. Powell:

Was this during wartime? Had the war begun?

Marion L. Shinn:

The war had begun in 19 -- in December of '41 when I was teaching school. I finished my contract in May; and, before the next term started, I enlisted rather than go back to teaching school another year.

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you remember the date of your enlistment?

Marion L. Shinn:

About September 3rd, 1942.

Margaret M. Powell:

Why did you pick the branch of the service that you joined?

Marion L. Shinn:

I guess I didn't want to walk in the Army. The Coast Guard I really didn't know much about. And I certainly am not a Marine. The Navy was what I -- I preferred the Navy.

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you recall the first days of your service?

Marion L. Shinn:

Well, the first days of my service, probably I should say where did I -- I recruited with a recruiter. I went down to see the recruiter in Lewiston, Idaho, and I said, "What kind of a project do you have that I can enlist?" And he says, "You know, radar is a great thing." And I said, "What's that?" "Well," he said, "RADAR means range and direction." He says, "I don't know much about it; you have to pass the Eddie test." I said, "I'll do it." Sounded like a good deal. And so I signed up, and away -- away I went. When I passed the Eddie test, which is really nothing but an intelligence test, it had no electronics in it, then I was ready to be sent to the service. They had to send me to Boise. So we got on a rickety old train and went to Boise, and I was sworn in. After I was sworn in they said, "Oh, we haven't any place for you; what we'll do is put you on inactive duty and send you to the NYA for three months to, send you to the NYA for a time, (to) take radio classes." The sub -- the radar pool was so full with people that they were amassing that there was no room in the schools. And so I sat there for three months.

Margaret M. Powell:

Tell us, briefly, what the NYA is.

Marion L. Shinn:

NYA was National Youth Administration. This was one of the New Deal's make-work projects for young people. [Interview interrupted by a telephone call.]

Marion L. Shinn:

About 1934, or thereabout, when President Roosevelt was trying to find work for everyone, the young people, they tried to do a training-employment thing for people, say, 14 to 18, 14 to 19, that was what it was aimed at, and it was still operational. But when they had to put me on individualized duty, I mean, inactive duty, that was a place to stick me to keep me in the Navy and keep me under tow and yet they didn't have to find a place for me.

Margaret M. Powell:

What did it feel like, your first days of service?

Marion L. Shinn:

Confusing. When you think of this particular time, we were -- we were country folks. We hadn't traveled very far. We were not well adjusted to the world around us as the youth are today. Communication was -- yes, it was very confusing. I found myself alone in a big city, and I didn't really know what to do.

Margaret M. Powell:

The big city of ---

Marion L. Shinn:

Boise.

Margaret M. Powell:

--- Boise.

Marion L. Shinn:

It was -- the big city of Boise was, oh, I expect it was 30,000 then.

Margaret M. Powell:

Whoa.

Marion L. Shinn:

But they had lots of cars, from my point of view.

Margaret M. Powell:

Tell me a little bit about your boot camp or training experiences.

Marion L. Shinn:

Again, as I told you before, I was in radar pool. This was a place where they were storing those of us that they wanted to send to a very specialized school, and they didn't want to do anything that would lose us. And so we sat for a time. Finally, they sent me to Bremerton, and there was no boot camp in Bremerton. And I sat there for a little while. And then they made me an assistant to the absentee yeoman, and I sat for two months in that position. And finally they said, "You need to go to boot camp." So they opened up a little, one of the side rooms and, oh, probably two dozen of us went down to boot camp. And they taught us to tie knots. And it snowed about that time, so they sent the seamen down from the barracks to shovel the snow so we could get out. Frankly, we were treated with a very -- very kindly, because they didn't want to lose us.

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you remember some of your instructors?

Marion L. Shinn:

I really don't remember any -- I went to school for almost ten months. I do not remember my instructors. I do -- I guess I remember one vividly when I was in Colorado A&M when they sent us down to a math department. He had the skill of writing with one hand and erasing it with the other. And it was a very distressing for those of us who had not been used to that kind of

instruction. They tried to push, they said, four years of technical instruction into six weeks.

Margaret M. Powell:

How did you get through it?

Marion L. Shinn:

With difficulty.

Margaret M. Powell:

I bet.

Margaret M. Powell:

We're going to move on to some of your experiences, and I'd like to ask you which wars you served in. I think you said World War II.

Marion L. Shinn:

That's right.

Margaret M. Powell:

Any other wars ---

Marion L. Shinn:

No.

Margaret M. Powell:

--- beyond that?

Marion L. Shinn:

No.

Margaret M. Powell:

Where, exactly, did you go?

Marion L. Shinn:

After finishing school, the last week of my school they said to me -- they came in and said, "Where do you want to go?" And they gave us a lot of choices. They had this or this or this. All of the battleships and the destroyers, they were pretty well filled. Radar people were very, very scarce, and they went down through that you could go to these little groups that were going to be landing on an island some place. And they said, "What about submarines?" I raised my hand, because I thought that submarines were where I wanted to go. Now, you said where did I want to serve, where did I serve?

Margaret M. Powell:

Yes. Where, exactly, did you go? And you went into submarines, obviously.

Marion L. Shinn:

All right. The first thing after I had selected submarines, that I would go there, they then sent me to Subvet School at the sub base in New London, Connecticut. I was there to learn the SJ radar, which was the one that went on the submarine. Down, way in the distance, I could see that Thames Tower, which was the tower that they sent people up and down to see whether or

not they could stand the pressures. However, they did not let us go down onto that base because they were afraid they were going to lose us, and so they kept us up on the upper base and sent us to school for about eight hours a day learning about the SJ. And, from there, I went back to Mare Island for a time waiting for shipment down to Fort Humeye, California, and they put me on a troop ship. My first experience on a troop ship, and I'm happy to say it was my last. We were stacked, I believe, five or six high; and when you turned over, my hip would hit the hip of the fellow above. This was compounded a little bit by the fact that the fellow above was coming in on his own and he had stopped at the bar too many times on the way in with his papers, and he became very sick the first day out. And, of course, he heaved over the side. And here I was 16 inches below. It was not a -- a -- I spent most of my time on the way to Pearl Harbor topside. There were six of us in the submarine contingent in this. Kind of an interesting sideline: They had all these young recruits and young ensigns and first lieutenants and lieutenants that were ordering the people around and doing all kinds of things. We had a Chief that was in charge of our party of 20-some people heading to the sub base. He stood up in front of us and he lined us all up. He had eleven hash marks, all gold, which said that he was an old-timer that knew his way around and had kept his nose clean. He'd been all right. He said, "You'll be here," and he took us down to our spaces. We never saw him again; he just disappeared. Also disappearing with him was the list of our names. Therefore, they could not put us on the work detail because they did not know who we were.

Margaret M. Powell:

They didn't know you were there.

Marion L. Shinn:

They didn't even know we were there. So we -- we, the submariners, the radio tech folks, we lounged on the top and watched the florescence in the sea, and it was a beautiful trip across. And, suddenly as we landed just out of -- we had just gone by Malachi pulling into Pearl Harbor. And, suddenly, here the Chief appeared in his splendor and all of his hash marks. He said, "We go this way." And in 30 minutes after the boat docked we were sitting over there waiting for the bus. Nobody had known we were on, nobody had known we got off, or that he had his contingent there. He was probably the most efficient operator that I had ever seen. He'd been around.

Margaret M. Powell:

He knew where you were.

Marion L. Shinn:

Oh, he knew where we were, he knew where we were.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, once you arrived what was your -- I assume that your job assignment was radarman.

Marion L. Shinn:

Radar Tech.

Margaret M. Powell:

Radar Tech.

Marion L. Shinn:

Well, one more thing. As we left Pearl Harbor, we sat there a little bit, and then they took

the six of us and they decided to spread us out all over the south Pacific. Three of them went to Australia, and we were -- I was just a little disappointed that I was not one of the three that got to go to Australia. One of them got to go to Midway, and I was very glad that I didn't, wasn't one of those. I didn't know at the time where he was going. Two of us were put on the Submarine Tender Bushnell, and we went out across the International Date Line to the Island of Majora in the Marshall Islands. Majora was an atoll, and I remember seeing the island ahead. We'd been on the sea, we had flying fish and whales, and it was an exciting time for a young, green kid like me. And, suddenly, out in the distance I saw palm trees and this kind of thing. A fantastic feeling. They do know where they're going. We pulled up and the sub tender, our little boat, pulled back the nets over the opening. Now, an atoll is a round circle of islands, and there is a channel that the -- the Catlan Channel was wide enough that ships could go in. They pulled the net back, and we went in. There were actually four boats in the contingent of which the Bushnell was one. And the first thing that bothered me was as we went in, suddenly the other four boats took off to the left, and we went to the right all by ourselves. We were suddenly just split from the others. And we went over with the submarine over by the Sperry, which was clear on the other side of the atoll. I realized then that submariners and surface craft did not always see eye to eye, even in the little old atoll where there were hundreds of ships of all kinds spread over. We were off beside because surface folks didn't like submariners. They -- we pulled alongside the -- well, when we pulled along over there, pretty quick I looked down over and there was a little long boat, and they said, "Throw down your bags," and so we threw down our seabags down into the launch and climbed down over the side of the Bushnell and went speeding across a stretch of water, and we came to the Sperry, which was my next stop. My heart just kind of almost stopped as we pulled -- I -- I had never been aboard a submarine, I'd never actually seen a submarine.

Margaret M. Powell:

Oh, you mean your first -- you had signed up for submarines ---

Marion L. Shinn:

I had never seen one. And when we were in New London where we should have gone down and gone up and down and done all that work, they wouldn't even let us down on that part of the base. And so here I stood in a launch with a coxswain going through with our bags. And we wheeled alongside an outboard submarine. There were six submarines sitting alongside the Tender Sperry, and we pulled alongside the outboard submarine, hoisted our bags up the steel ladder on the side of the submarine, and onto the deck. And I looked out across and I said, "My gosh," there was -- there was -- it was like six little logs laying attached to this huge tender that was there.

Margaret M. Powell:

You must have wondered what you'd gotten yourself into.

Marion L. Shinn:

What had I gotten my -- my -- my heart just was -- I felt, "What have I done?" So, I threw my seabag on my back and walked across the next plank and the next plank, and the next plank, and the next plank, and up into the bowels of the tender [sic].

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, this moves right along from your first days into combat.

Marion L. Shinn:

All right.

Margaret M. Powell:

And we want to know if you saw combat.

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes. Should I say one more thing? When we went to the Sperry, of course we were -- we were comings and goings. They rolled out a -- a -- we had our sack, and they said, "Your place is there." And they had a steel deck, and we just rolled our mattress, which was, oh, two-and-a-half inches thick, onto the steel deck to sleep. Then the next morning we had to be out by 7:30 and have it rolled up and put away because the people started walking up and down the deck.

Margaret M. Powell:

Oh, yeah. So you slept on the deck the first night.

Marion L. Shinn:

We slept on -- well, all the time I was on the tender.

Margaret M. Powell:

Oh, okay.

Marion L. Shinn:

All the time I was on the tender.

Margaret M. Powell:

And you were waiting to be assigned to your submarine.

Marion L. Shinn:

That's right. They then assigned me to radio shack, and I went down and they said, "This is your job." The man that was actually in charge, they -- I can't remember his name; they called him "Pouch," that was because he had such a big pouch in front. And he did the assignment. My first assignment was to take carbon tetrachloride, which is now considered a very dangerous poison, and go down and scrub the antenna trunks in the back of the submarine. And each morning we went down and we got a job, and we went down and we were assigned a specific task in one of the six submarines that were sitting alongside.

Margaret M. Powell:

Inside?

Marion L. Shinn:

Oh, inside. Whatever, whatever he -- whether it was on the antennas on top or down inside, we were assigned a task. And we were -- we were at a -- the crew, of course, had made one run. The crew of the submarines that were there were over on the island of Myrna, which was a little tiny spot of an island probably a quarter of a mile from the tender. There was a sign on the dock that said, "Myrna Island elevation 11 feet." And it was a flat, sandy place with palm trees leaning out over the island. And the next thing that we did was to go over. We would go over on leave occasionally and snorkel and pick up shells and that sort of thing in the water. It was beautiful warm water. And the island was so narrow that third base on the baseball field, if they hit it over third base, it would land in the ocean. So that's how big a place it was.

Margaret M. Powell:

Aqua baseball.

Marion L. Shinn:

And suddenly when I got a call and the radioman, my boss Pouch said to me, "Personnel man wants to see you." And I went down and I discovered that I had been assigned to the USS Guavina, and that was it. I went down on my first assignment. Of course the crew was all over in the shed--actually, it was nothing but a quonset hut--over on Myrna Island. And I was assigned probably three days, two days at least, before they had returned. The officers were there enough to see that was, coming back and forth. Anyway, my first assignment was deck watch. I had never stood deck watch, been in nothing but school. And here I was running the deck watch. A 45 on my hip and walking back and forth. It wasn't what I had in mind at all. Anyway, as I was standing there, there was suddenly a flash of light in the sky. It looked like -- it looked like the whole sky lighted up more than lightning. And there was a loud tinkle, vrew, vrew, vrew-vrew. And I grabbed my gun and didn't know which way to look, it was really quite a confusing thing. And then suddenly it was dark and quiet. What had happened was that a crew on the tender had decided that they were going to distill the alcohol that is used in the torpedoes, which was red, it had the lead in it that would make you very sick if you drank it. But if you distilled it off, the lead would remain; and if you got the temperature right, it would go -- they had a whole series of a half a dozen Silexes that they had gotten out of the coffee, and they were actually siphoning off alcohol. And the last one, of course, you put it into cooling water to get it cool. But the one of the unfortunate things that happened to these people is that you have to sample it to see if it's good. And finally they got too drunk and somebody lit a cigarette, and suddenly that whole operation went to the sky, and there was a flash against the sky. Anyway, that was my first and only day as a deck watch. The next day the crew came back and immediately we started to check out the submarine to see whether or not all the parts worked, and we were ready to go to sea. Our first job when we went to sea, we had to trim the boat. And this -- think of -- here, I had never been on a submarine before. The first thing they have to do is to learn to trim the boat. And so we went out and with all the supplies on they had to flood water and flood water. And we'd be up one way and down the other. And finally they got the submarine the same weight as the water we were in, and we were finally in what they called trim, and we were ready to go to sea.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, the next questions concern your combat experience, and they want to know if there were many casualties in your unit.

Marion L. Shinn:

No. Combat experience started almost immediately. As soon as we left port, we started the dives, and of course that's kind of a scary thing for a person that had never been there before. The old alarm sounds, ugh-ugh, and up and down you go. We chased the escort for probably three hours. The escort took us away from the island. We would make a race, a run, on him, and then we'd dive. It was quite an experience for a green like me. But as soon as the escort left us, then we were off. We went due west, and we went to the island of Palau, and the island of Palau -- there's three, there's three groups of islands. We were up by Babeldaob, which is the northern of the three series of islands. This is the northern one. The real bloody battle of the Palau was on Southern Island of Peleliu, which is where that Bloody Nose Ridge battle was. Anyways, we sat out there. I was beginning to learn. I had to learn how to run the radar and everything as far as -- I would be supervising the watch that was going on. Every half hour we would relieve the watch on the submarine man, and I would check it and see that it was all

ready, and then a new man would come. And then half an hour later -- I was on 12 and off 12. Our first task was to explore the area, and we actually went inside the Barrier Reef on (Babeldaob) Island and looked at the docks to see if there were any ships there. Probably we were in less than 150 feet of water inside the Barrier Reef, which is a particularly -- I was scared, and I didn't even know enough to be scared. We went outside, and our first real casualty, of course -- our first real attack was suddenly one day we saw smoke on the horizon. They spotted what it was, and we raced to get ahead of it. We pulled off quite a distance and raced quite a ways ahead. What came to us was four destroyers and one merchantman. And these four destroyers, it was like a figure -- a five on a domino. The merchantman was in the middle, and the four destroyers on the outside corners. The merchantman was the last of a series of a number of boats that undoubtedly started toward Palau.

Margaret M. Powell:

Now, were these Japanese?

Marion L. Shinn:

These were Japanese ships. And they were -- they were -- you see, they had started with a whole convoy, and one by one they had been picked off, and there was one left. We went under the outside destroyer, came up and took a periscope reading between the destroyer and the merchantman. He fired his -- the Captain fired the torpedoes. We went under the sinking ship, out on the other side, and by the -- we could hear the ship's breaking apart as we went under it --

Margaret M. Powell:

You're giving me goose bumps.

Margaret M. Powell:

--- and going out the other side. And of course there were great numbers of explosions. Just -- it was -- the whole sea was a ferment. As soon as that stopped, the Captain ordered silent running, which meant they even turned off the fans, everything, and we just sat. The destroyers, of course, were quite unhappy, and they started dropping depth charges and -- and - of course, they didn't know where we were. They certainly didn't look for us on the other side of where we hit. And so we were way over there, and they were dropping depth charges over where we came from, not where we were. And as soon as they really started filling the place with depth charges again, we started off and away we went. And for two days we heard nothing but depth charges falling all the way around us. They probably were getting whales or something out there because we were far gone.

Margaret M. Powell:

Have I got this right, you were just three days out?

Marion L. Shinn:

Yeah. Oh, maybe a week out.

Margaret M. Powell:

Three or four days.

Marion L. Shinn:

We were maybe a week out. We had gone from Majora past Midway over to Palau. I expect we were a week. And, well, it wasn't very long.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, do you feel like you had been prepared for this kind of thing? I mean, I know you can't really prepare, but ---

Marion L. Shinn:

No, I wasn't prepared. I wasn't prepared, not at all. Yes, I can fix the radar. Was I prepared emotionally for the stresses of battle? No, I was not. One of the very important things on submarines is that you have to -- they had to have those people who were emotionally stable or -- I won't go into detail, but we had those who came aboard who were not emotionally stable who had had more preparation, and they needed to be cared for after they got aboard. They -- they were not able to perform.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, I went on a submarine yesterday, and I was in the area where you served in the radio shack area ---

Marion L. Shinn:

Yeah.

Margaret M. Powell:

--- which is about what I would call amidships.

Marion L. Shinn:

Yeah. Right amidships.

Margaret M. Powell:

And there were people behind me, and I couldn't get out quick; and there were people ahead of me, and I couldn't get out quick. And I had this little claustrophobia sort of feeling.

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes.

Margaret M. Powell:

I mean, were you at all prepared for something like that?

Marion L. Shinn:

No; but it didn't bother me. That didn't bother me.

Margaret M. Powell:

So you had had psychological tests that -- that ---

Marion L. Shinn:

No, I'd had no tests. They gave me no tests, no nothing. I was a radar tech, they needed me, they took me. And, fortunately, I had the attributes they needed. However, if I did not have those, they would not have detected them. One of the things that bothered me at first was how do you get from here to there. Getting through the hatches where you take your head down and your leg up at the same time to go through a three-foot hatch on a six- or seven-foot wall, it takes a little practice, and you get little lumps on the head a time or two.

Margaret M. Powell:

I got a little headache yesterday afternoon. Well, let's move along, if we can, since we only have a brief time. Tell me about a couple of your most memorable experiences.

Marion L. Shinn:

Certainly the one I just told about was a memorable experience because it was -- it was my first, and a very colorful one. What you're wanting in here is probably some of the experiences during the combat battles.

Margaret M. Powell:

Most likely.

Marion L. Shinn:

Probably one of the more colorful ones that we had--and we're not going to go chronologically at this point--was the ship down off the coast of Singapore. This was quite a bit later, this was a lot later. I, by that time, felt myself to be a seasoned old hand and it didn't bother me at all. We were operating with the Pompinito, and the Pompinito had a senior captain. And we were told that we needed to join in this wolfpack attack on a ship that they located out there somewhere heading toward Singapore. Pompinito said, "You go out and shoot fairy stars,"--in other words, little cap pistols that sent out little flares, "You go out and shoot these in the air and draw the escorts." Well, we did that. And I remember so vividly traveling at top speed all ahead full on the surface getting as close to 20 knots as we could, not quite, we couldn't quite make that, but we were really going. And here were these two little tiny escort sub chasers chasing us shooting little three-inch shells, and you could hear the "whing-whing" overhead, and they were racing after us.

Margaret M. Powell:

Because you were on the surface.

Marion L. Shinn:

We were on the surface. And the Pompinito, while they were off chasing us, came up on the back and shot the ship. So, while we were running, they came in and did the job. Incidentally, they missed it the first time and had to reload and take the second shot. And we said we could have done better, but that's neither here nor there. It was an ammunition ship. And probably one of the more colorful things that happened was that the flames -- some of the estimates were that the flames went 100 feet high. The whole sea rocked. We were suddenly in waves high enough that it almost capsized the little sub chaser that was chasing us. And it -- they turned very quickly and left us because suddenly they realized they were on a false lead. And, beside that, they were fighting for their own. There was enough concussion that it actually set some of the depth charges on their stern afire. So you see there was a lot of impact at that particular -- that was probably one of the colorful ones that I remember. I don't know, I can't tell you all these colorful ones, but another one that was ---

Margaret M. Powell:

Before we leave the Pompinito, the Pompinito is the ship that's moored at Fisherman's Wharf in San Francisco.

Marion L. Shinn:

That's right.

Margaret M. Powell:

--- still?

Marion L. Shinn:

That's right. That's the one.

Margaret M. Powell:

Okay.

Marion L. Shinn:

Another one that we did that was very, very interesting was going through Lombok Straits. Lombok Straits is that piece of water that lays between Lombok and Bali in the archipelago of islands, which is now Indonesia, which extends from Singapore to Australia. The Japanese had, of course, captured Singapore, and they took many of the guns from Singapore and moved them over to the south Pacific where they wanted them. We knew there were those in Timor way to the east, and they also had guns along the shore in Lombok. There was a rocky ledge, and these guns were actually sitting down near the water in Timor. Now, the Lombok Straits is a part of what is now called the Wallace Line, which is the location of the tectonic plates that bumped together millions of years ago so you have you Asian plate and your Australian plate. The animals on Lombok are totally different than the animals on Bali, on the other side of the 11-mile-wide strait. And this is because they came from a different place. Lombok is very, very deep, and the reason it's deep is because it is a bumping place. The other little passages through this archipelago are very shallow, and they would be mined. They could not mine Lombok because of the riptides between the Java Sea and the Indian Ocean. So, therefore, we did not have to worry about mines. However, they had sub chasers based top and bottom, and they had gun emplacements in the middle. Now, we could not go through under the water because of the same thing I talked about, riptides, and the second is the difference in the salinity of the water. Submarines displace the water that they -- Archimedes' principle, if you will, if you remember our physics. And as the great amounts of fresh water came off of both Java and Lombok, you found that there were fresh water and salt water stringers into the sea. And as we were going through -- if we would have been under the water, we would have bounced up and down like a cork because of the difference in the weight of the water. Therefore, we went through on the surface, which made us very vulnerable. Now, as we were going through -- we were heading toward Perth, Australia. As we were going through, all of a sudden there was a gun fire from the shore. We kicked on all four engines, all ahead full, and even put the dinky engine on and tried to -- all the speed we could get. And two big guns, two big shells, from the Singapore guns actually straddled our wake. You know what I mean? As we were traveling, where we had been two seconds before, one shell hit one side and the other side of the wake of our submarine. And that was a very scary experience. It was one of the most frightening, one of the most frightening ones, that we had. We had only cleared them a little bit, and all of a sudden we were again shaken because something appeared on the radar, on the SJ radar, which gave low, surface-mount stuff. The SD, which was the one that did the high, aircraft, had nothing. And yet here came something at an enormous speed, faster than any boat we had ever seen, coming straight at us on the SJ radar. We didn't know what happened. And suddenly -- well, we were petrified, we didn't know what to do. We didn't know what was coming at us. And suddenly we saw overhead a big, black PBY aircraft. And they flew so low that the people on the bridge said they could almost reach up and touch them. They were making a survey to locate this -- this -- this was late in the war, and they were locating that gun. And when we returned back up that way three weeks later, there was no gun there to shoot at us. But not only one of them did that, there were two PBM's. We just got over the fright of one when the second -- we were not as scared the second time.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, did you manage to stay with your ship the whole war or ---

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes. Let's tell you one more that's kind of an interesting one.

Margaret M. Powell:

Okay.

Marion L. Shinn:

Probably the most deadly one that we had and the thing that, when we get together, we talk about is our stop on the south China coast. This was in the fifth run. We were based right against the shore. There were about 11 submarines across the south China Sea. The reason that they were there was Japanese were getting all of their oil and all of their food out of that part of the world because there was not enough to keep them alive in their own island. So our job was to knock off the ships as they came by. Well, we were -- unfortunately or fortunately, we were on the inboard, we were next to the beach. The Japanese found that sending ships out into the open ocean, just like the one I talked about in Palau, they are pretty vulnerable, so they would come up the coast. And we, suddenly, one morning about 8:00 o'clock -- we'd been having threats all the time. Every day, every morning, it seemed like, at breakfast time, just as I was going to breakfast, they would suddenly say, "Battle stations." Well, suddenly we had battle stations, and I wound up grumbling, I missed my breakfast. Anyway, suddenly the torpedoes, the Captain said, "Fire one, fire two." And I was heading to my sound gear, which was my battle station. And, all of a sudden, he said, "Hard left rudder." So what we did, we went -- there were destroyers or merchant man o'war, and two cargo ships. And they were coming up the coast, right almost right on the coast, so the ships were very close to the beach, and the warships were around them so we could only get on one side. That's the way you could protect them. So we went under the forward ship, came up, shot the front merchantman, made a hard rudder, and we hit bottom at about 130 feet. And I can remember so vividly the sanding sound, sh-h-h-h-h, as the bottom of the boat slid along the sandy bottom. And then the depth charges started. The three destroyers, two of them would get off and they would send their pinging devices to try to find us. And you could hear ping-ping-ping with their sound gear. Then the third one would come through with these depth charges and lay down a bunch of depth charges. Then he would take the position and the next one would come through. I think I was the only man that had a job at that time. Almost everybody was laying perfectly quiet on the bottom. We were on the bottom, and they were laying quietly on the deck. I was on the sound gear in the forward torpedo room; and, by hand, I would crank the sound gear around and back and whisper into the speaker phone the fact that the bearing is such-and-such so that the captain knew which direction the destroyer was coming from. This was about 7:30 in the morning. And when we finally got out, when the depth charges finally stopped was about 2:00 in the afternoon. We had taken over 100 depth charges. And we started to get up, and the depth gauge said 138 feet instead of 130. In other words, we had been vibrated down in to the sand a distance of eight feet. Now, how do you get out? In a submarine the thing we do is we blew the forward -- here we're trying to keep from making any bubbles, you understand, because somebody is up there. Up the first time and it didn't go; then we did the rear, then we'd blow the front, then we'd blow the -- and, pretty quick, we broke loose out of the sand and slowly eased away. When we got out far enough, we finally went topside. The radar mast, which was my concern, which is a round tube about four inches in diameter, was bent so that it would not rotate. We had to go up and loosen the bearings on the -- so that there was enough room for the wobble in the mast. Of course the antenna section and all, a lot of the stuff topside. And it's a very devastating thing to be hanging

in the middle of the night with a red light looking down trying to fix things in the top of a mast that's 20 feet up in the air in a rough sea.

Margaret M. Powell:

I can't imagine, I just can't imagine.

Marion L. Shinn:

Okay. That's three of the probably most interesting ones that we've done.

Margaret M. Powell:

I know you -- I feel like you deserved a whole lot of medals and citations, but I know sometimes you don't get them.

Marion L. Shinn:

Oh, that's right.

Margaret M. Powell:

Did you?

Marion L. Shinn:

No. We got the ones that everybody else got, and that was the south Pacific and these kinds of things. The captains and those people that were significant -- I was a paean, and I did what needed to be done. I was not one that received medals because I did not stand out.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, I feel like you deserve lots of them. Well, let's move on. Let's see, I need to flip my tape over ---

Marion L. Shinn:

All right.

Margaret M. Powell:

--- and let you catch your breath a minute. END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE. (The tape should be reversed to 000 on side two. There is only one tape in this interview.)

Margaret M. Powell:

This is side two of Dr. Shinn's interview on August 30th, 2002, in Buffalo, New York.
Segment 4: Life

Margaret M. Powell:

Tell us a little bit about your life in the service. Things like how did you stay in touch with your family, what was the food like? Those are the kinds of things we'd like to cover.

Marion L. Shinn:

First of all, communication with family. Very seldom. After all, we were out for two months and then we would come in for two weeks of leave and another two weeks that we would be shaking down the boat. We could not write at all during the time we were at sea; and when we got to port, lots of us had other ideas of what we wanted to do rather than write, but we always wrote home. My girlfriend, who later became my wife, wrote every day that I was overseas. And

over these many times she put a number on the back. And so when I came into port, sometimes I -- one time I had 87 letters, which was a stack almost a foot high, from her and from other members of my family. When we'd pull into port, generally at almost all except the very out ones, they would have a band. Usually it was a pretty rag-tag band, but they did play a little bit of music and they welcomed us ashore. Next, the captain came aboard or the ranking man of the area came aboard and shook hands with the captain. Immediately following him was somebody with apples or fruit or something of whatever they had ---

Margaret M. Powell:
Something fresh.

Marion L. Shinn:

Something fresh, which was passed around. And the man right behind him was the mailman, which was of course very, very good. Mailmen out in many of the places, the mailman was awfully important. Probably one of the saddest things, of course, were the ones that didn't want to see the mailman who got no letters at all or, even sadder, were the ones that got the "Dear John" letters. And I can quote some of them, and the fellow would go around showing the "Dear John" letter he got, which was heart-rending for the people. When we were in Perth, finally, the parcel post caught up with us. And when I was in Pearl Harbor I had written to my mother and said, "You know, I would like to keep my whites cleaner, why don't you send me some Purex?" Well, she did. It got to me in Perth six months later. It had been broken, and of course a lot of things were pretty well bleached along the way. I never told them whose Purex it was, but that's neither here nor there. Lots of people, lots of the fellows had been sent cookies. You can imagine how tasty the cookies were after they had been to sea for, actually, 180 days. But the magazines, we would take magazines, we had lots of magazines that would come. I think I was getting Readers' Digest at the time. You stuffed those over on the side to read after you got to port; and, as soon as we could clear the docks, they gave us leave papers and sent us to the beach. And we, many of us, sat around that first day and read, munched apples and read our mail. And sometime that week we began to write back to our loved ones.

Margaret M. Powell:

I can see that you probably craved fresh fruit and fresh food. What was the food like, in general, on the ship?

Marion L. Shinn:

The food was very good. We -- at that time I was told that -- inflation has come since then, but the appropriation for food was 63 cents a day for most servicemen over there, and ours was \$1.25, which says that we got pretty good stuff. We were well fed. When you went out, when you first went out, you lived like a king. You had fried eggs and you had all those kind of things. Excellent food. The eggs, of course, got old as the time passed, and the yolk of the egg settled slowly down, and pretty quick they would get very, very flat. An old cook, who had been Asiatic, he had been at Singchow in China before the war, when he began to yell to the mess cooks to come to pick up the eggs and he said, "Baloots," we quit eating eggs. Now, a baloot, as you know probably, are the over-ripe eggs that are very popular in the Orient. We had lots of beef, lots of these kinds of things. As we got into the south Pacific into some of those places, Perth was a good example, our food out of there was not that great because they could not bring food in from anywhere else. Perth is around the world halfway, and they were living off the land, if you will. We had lots of mutton. You read of lamb; well, we didn't get lamb, we got more ram than we got lamb. And if you take an old sheep and you cook it down under water where there's no air getting off, the atmosphere would begin to steam like mutton. I didn't eat mutton for 40

years. And we also got chicken in Perth, which -- we got lots of chicken, we can't complain, but the processing was very different. This was New York cut. That means that they froze them with all the innards in them, which the cooks had to remove after they -- and it tended to create some problems. As we were going into Perth in December, we had a Christmas dinner, which we have a record of what it was. It was beautiful, it had all the trimmings. They put out a menu and everything. But most of us weren't very hungry because the stuff was, the turkey was a little bit rank. The sea was rough, and most of us spent our time trying to keep down what we had. But the food was fantastic, considering.

Margaret M. Powell:

Were you well supplied otherwise?

Marion L. Shinn:

Supplied with what?

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, I think that they would probably be interested in knowing if you had plenty of personal items like soap and, you know, things that you need, creature comfort sort of things, those sort of supplies.

Marion L. Shinn:

We didn't have creature comforts. We showered, oh, I expect a couple of times during the run. There wasn't any water.

Margaret M. Powell:

Yeah.

Marion L. Shinn:

And when you showered, you got wet and then you soaped and soaped, whatever you got, and then you in a moment washed it off. The water that we got was very, very -- had to be produced by evaporating out the salt. Sometimes the salt was not all taken out. If it was, when they filled the batteries they usually ran it through a second time because they didn't want any salt in the water because, if you remember you chemistry, sulfuric acid and chlorine do not fit, it sends of hydrochloric acid. So there was a little murkiness in the water. This is why most of us drank coffee. We -- the coffee pot, we would have probably 80 gallons a day. We would average up to a gallon of coffee a day. The temperatures would get very hot, and you had lots of perspiration, but there had to be lots of liquids.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, I know the answer to this next question. Did you feel pressure or stress?

Marion L. Shinn:

Once. All the time we were aboard we felt pressure and stress. Undue pressure and stress? Probably not. We were young, we were vigorous, the world could not -- we were beyond being anything else. We would survive. Our captain was great. We would survive. Yes, we had people -- we had people that broke down. For me, we lived day by day, we did all right.

Margaret M. Powell:

Did you do anything special for good luck?

Marion L. Shinn:

No. No. I had good luck, why should I do something special?

Margaret M. Powell:

I didn't know if you, like, wore your lucky socks every day or ---

Marion L. Shinn:

No. I had no -- I had no doubt in my mind that I had a good captain, and I was going to come back. I had no doubts in my mind at any time, even under -- even when we were under the depth charges at the time that we were talking about did I ever feel that I would not return home.

Margaret M. Powell:

Wow.

Marion L. Shinn:

I had -- I had faith in us

Margaret M. Powell:

Let's move on to, if there was ever any entertainment, how did people entertain themselves?

Marion L. Shinn:

I played crib a lot. And of course there were those who played poker. I was not a poker player. There was a little torpedoman who would come up to the mess hall, and we would play crib. Crib is a wonderful game because I could go change the watch, which I had to do every half hour, I came back and I knew exactly where I had left it. Fifty years later I saw him at a reunion and he said, "You know, I was ahead of you on that crib tournament." I can't remember after 50 years. I played a little chess, but it was much harder to find people. There was a record, and the records went over and over. Sometimes this was a sensitive thing. I remember that we had Roy Aycuff and the Smokey Mountain Boys and Tweedle O'Twill. And, after you've heard it about 20 times and one right after the other, sometimes those things get a little irritating. I have to admit after all this time I was the one that dropped the record, and it fell into the bilge and broke.

Margaret M. Powell:

Darn. They should have given you a medal for that. Did you have any entertainers that came to visit you when you were in port, besides the band?

Marion L. Shinn:

That was the only entertain -- when we got to port, we just -- when they sent us to rest camp or -- I went down to Sydney a couple of times. And, frankly, we had an awful lot of people entertain themselves by looking into a glass.

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual events?

Marion L. Shinn:

Humorous or unusual events.

Margaret M. Powell:

I know the whole experience was unusual ---

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes, it ---

Margaret M. Powell:

--- but anything particularly humorous that sticks out in your mind?

Marion L. Shinn:

I suppose, in looking back in retrospect, one of the most humorous things--and this may be entertainment too--was when we pulled in to Brisbane the first time the officer in charge of recreation decided that to get some of the people, kind of get that tenseness out of our soul, that we should have a picnic. And so they took us out by truck a great distance to a place where there was a stable. And they -- and the people rented horses. And they set up kegs of beer, Australian beer, out in this meadow. And they were at the elevation where the people would ride by on their horses and reach down and turn the spigot and go on with their fresh cup of beer. It was really quite a place. And there were some of those that wanted to ride horses and some that wanted to play baseball. And the people would ride the horses through the baseball field, and it was really quite a -- your father and I, not being particularly drinking folks, were among those that were laying in the shade over there out of the way watching the parade go by. And, as the thing ended, we had lots of food, we had lots of beer. I think there were four, 50-gallon kegs, whatever those kegs are, great big ones. And Australian beer is five times as strong as U.S. beer. Anyway, pretty quick, people were laying on their back. I remember well this one fellow that we rescued him because this horse -- it was just an old common horse that he had fallen off and was laying on the ground, and the horse was standing there with a front foot on his chest. No weight, just had his foot on his chest. And we had to pull him out from under the horse. Going home, of course we had some beer left over, and so these good beer drinkers put it into a dishpan and were carrying the dishpans of beer home. We were in the back of a truck, and here were the people balancing dishpans of beer. And they would pound on the truck, and we would stop, and everybody would jump off with their -- I mean, real antagonistic ones would jump off, and then they'd poke everybody in the eye as they jumped down. All the frustrations of the world suddenly broke out. That night, many had -- many with black eyes. And they were nursing and making up, and they were all friends again, even though they all had black eyes. I suppose this could be humorous. It wasn't at the time for those who were getting the black eyes. It was for us, those of us who were watching.

Margaret M. Powell:

Did you ever pull pranks on each other?

Marion L. Shinn:

Very seldom. Oh, I suspect on leave time the answer is yes. When we were all on leave there were all kinds of pranks. I did not participate. I went down in Sydney and did not go out. But at sea, no, we did not pull any pranks. This is one of the reasons that we came back, there was no monkey business.

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you have photographs of your experiences?

Marion L. Shinn:

I have very few photographs. Some of the friends -- some of the people over the years have sent me pictures; and I look at them and I see all these little kids that are in there, and I can't identify them, because 50 years have passed. I had a fellow the other day, a year ago, in Arizona that came that I hadn't seen before since 50 years and gave me a whole bundle of pictures. I cannot identify one out of 20 because we have all changed.

Margaret M. Powell:

What did you think of your officers or fellow soldiers?

Marion L. Shinn:

Our officers were good officers. Of course they were individualistic, just like all the rest of us. Captain Tiedeman (Carl Tiedeman) was an old German who was very, very strict and very formal. We accepted him for being competent in his right. He did not make a mistake, he was competent. However, he was as unpersonable as anybody I ever knew. Lockwood, our next officer, was much more personable and yet a good officer. Tiedeman, I watched Tiedeman as he went through the same thing that Captain Quigg went through in *Mutiny on the Bounty*. I was standing in the SJ radar with our backs almost together as he was going around on the periscope; and he raised the periscope up and looked, and he said, "There's an airplane, it's diving." And just at that moment the bomb went off and shook the periscope out of his hand. He had the blankest look, just like in the movie of Captain Quigg. And he turned and said in a voice that was hollow, "Take over, Mr. Lockwood." Mr. Lockwood was the exec. He went down to his room, and I never saw him again that run.

Margaret M. Powell:

That whole run?

Marion L. Shinn:

We were going back, probably two weeks I did not see him. All our way back. He may have been out, but he cracked just like that. I saw him crack.

Margaret M. Powell:

Wow.

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes, we had good officers.

Margaret M. Powell:

Who were your other captains?

Marion L. Shinn:

We had two captains.

Margaret M. Powell:

Two captains.

Marion L. Shinn:

We had Tiedeman and Lockwood (Ralph Lockwood).

Margaret M. Powell:

Okay, okay. Lockwood.

Marion L. Shinn:

And Lockwood, of course -- Tiedeman is dead; Lockwood still lives in California. I'm the newsletter editor for the Guavina, and every once in a while I get a letter and a few dollars from Lockwood.

Margaret M. Powell:

No kidding. Did you keep a personal diary?

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes, I did. This was kind of illegal. I had a little -- kept the thing in my back pocket and made little notes. I came home and sat down after I had been discharged and sat down at the typewriter of my new mother-in-law and typed them all into a narrative. I had about 50, over 50 pages, singled spaced of eight-and-a-half by fourteen from those. And, from that, I -- 40 years later, from that, I wrote the book. I put those things in my father-in-law's safe and left them there for 40 years. And when 40 years passed and he went to the nursing home, I said, "What am I going to do with it?" And, from that, I wrote the book Pacific_Patrol of which I still have a few copies.

Margaret M. Powell:

Okay. We would like to move along to after the service.

Marion L. Shinn:

All right.

Margaret M. Powell:

After you got out. Segment 5: After Service

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you recall the day your service ended?

Marion L. Shinn:

Oh, indeed I do. I remember very well. I was in Bremerton, Washington, which was the place that I actually -- logical starting place. They gave us \$200 and a wounded duck. Do you know what a wounded duck was?

Margaret M. Powell:

No, I don't.

Marion L. Shinn:

It was a little pin, a little emblem that they put on you saying that you were discharged. And it was a picture of an eagle, only it was in an odd -- and we called it the wounded duck. As we walked down to get our signatures, get all the signatures, there was a Naval Reserve table there wanting for you to sign up with the Reserve. I remember vividly stepping back a step and walking around that table before I continued down the line because I had had enough. Then they gave us our \$200 for discharge plus our back pay. I got on the bus and headed for home. And we got home quite late at night. I knew that my new wife I had just married when we had come in for overhaul, and I had been married a month before I went back to sea again, and I knew she was home in Bonner's Ferry. And so I -- the bus arrived in Bonner's Ferry about midnight. I walked across from the bus station over to the house and knocked, I walked in. The door wasn't locked, we didn't lock things in those days. And so my wife suddenly found that

there was somebody there. At midnight I just walked in.

Margaret M. Powell:

Wow. She recognized you, did she?

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes, she did.

Margaret M. Powell:

Tell us a little bit about what you did the few days after you first got back, the first assimilating back in.

Marion L. Shinn:

Well, the first thing I had to do was get a suit of clothes, get some civilian clothes. I had no civilian clothes. When I went in the service--maybe this was a degree of finality--I even gave my suit to my brother, and of course I didn't have that many other clothes. But he wore my suit. He wore my suit to my wedding, incidentally, earlier in the year. But, since we could wear nothing but military, I had no clothes. So I went down to the -- we went down to the store--this was not true of under-things, of course we had lots of those, but for outer clothes--and bought myself a shirt and a pair of pants. And as I walked down the street, my new wife was quite, quite -- she kept saying to me, "Get your arms down." You know, as you went down the street, here I would be rolling along with my arms out to keep me from -- I hadn't gotten my sea legs back. And so eventually I got so my arms went straight down, and I walked along, and nobody could tell that I was really a sailor.

Margaret M. Powell:

What was your discharge date exactly? Or, if you know the month.

Marion L. Shinn:

October. October 22nd, 1945.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, after you got your new clothes, what did you do? Did you go back to school or ---

Marion L. Shinn:

Of course the first thing you do is you go and visit all you relatives and all your friends. And in many cases, introduced them to my new wife, which some of them really didn't know yet. I had married her in June when we were. She was my long-term girlfriend, and many knew her. Anyway, then we decided, where do you go from here? I didn't really want -- there weren't many jobs because the civilian -- the wartime thing was done, the military, and the civilian jobs hadn't opened up. So I applied to Washington State University, Washington State College in those days, to go to school. And this was in the end of October, so the first of January I was enrolled in Washington State. Of course the problem with going to school at Washington State was there were a lot of other people that got discharged too. There were thousands, even millions, that were just getting dumped out as fast as they could sign the papers. There were about 3500 students at Washington State University; and on January 1946, 1300 of us arrived as new students. So you can imagine the utter chaos of lines and everything. The GI Bill had just been passed, which made it possible for us to go to school, and we got \$200. If we were married, we got \$200 a month and \$500 to buy tuition and books. The GI Bill was probably one of the greatest pieces of legislation passed by the Federal Government in that it turned around the

lives of literally millions of young people.

Margaret M. Powell:

So your entire education was supported by the GI Bill.

Marion L. Shinn:

I went ahead -- of course, I had two years in and had been a school teacher, but with a two-year certificate. And I went back and got two more years. I said I was not going to go back to teach. I had had my experiences; however, my heart is there. I got a job in what they call -- a major in what they call Production Management, which was actually industry production type of thing. I wanted to get a job teaching adults in industry. There was no particular chance to do that because all the companies were cutting out their training departments because they had been cost-plus. In September -- I graduated in June. I rented a car and went around and looked at some -- I bought a car and went around and looked at some of the -- frankly, I had a little money. I had a little money because I had saved it all during the war, and my wife and I both worked while I was in college. We had money, so I bought a car. Anyway, we couldn't find a job that we wanted. So I left her up at her home in Bonner's Ferry, and I had gone down to Lewiston. And my old friend, the Superintendent of Schools, said -- I went on a social visit to see him. He said, "I've got a chemistry job and a 7th grade job; which one do you want?" And I thought a minute, and I thought that I needed -- I had a wife and a son by that time, and I needed to have a job, and I said, "I'll take the chemistry." So he reached into his desk and pulled out a contract and a key and handed them both to me, and I was a teacher again. Just like that. And I never filled out an application for the job until almost ten years later when they said, "You know, you don't have an application on file." I had been teaching chemistry about a month, and the Assistant Superintendent, who was in charge of Adult Vocational Training in the Community as a special side job, said, "I'm looking for somebody who can teach apprentice electricians. I was broke, I was going broke. I said, "Oh, I can teach apprentice electricians." And so in one month after I had gone to Lewiston I was doing part time the things that I had wanted to do, teaching adults in industry. I did those jobs for 17 years, carried chemistry in the daytime and vocational education. I began to supervise the programs, and I ran that for 17 years, at which time I -- my Boise boss, the one with the State Vocational people said, "It's time to start a vocational school." And I was hired and put at an old institution, Lewiston State Normal School at that time, and -- actually, I should say Lewis Clark Normal School at that time. And I was given the direction to, quote, "Start a vocational school." That was my only instructions. The man was somewhat vulgar and he used a lot stronger words than that to tell me what to do, but that was my instructions, "Start a vocational school." And for the next 16 years -- I started with nothing, and I had 100,000 square feet of floor space, I had 100,000 square feet of floor space; I had 60 full-time employees and probably 200 part-time employees; I had training programs that ran for 100 miles in three directions. And, finally, it was time to retire.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, sometime during this work time you must have been going to school too because I know that you eventually received your doctorate.

Marion L. Shinn:

Got a doctorate. Yes. When I was in high school I went back to Colorado A&M and got a Master's, and I got it in Vocational Education because of the fact that I saw that that's the direction I wanted to go. Now, the thing that made vocational education possible in 1965 when I started was the broadening of the concept of vocational education that came about under Johnson's Great Society. Before -- vocational education started in 1917, and it was very

restrictive. And in 1965, by that time, it had broadened out so we could do something beside teach mechanics and agriculture.

Margaret M. Powell:

Okay.

Marion L. Shinn:

Is that the end of it?

Margaret M. Powell:

No, that's not the end of it. I'm sorry, I had to kind of look back. Tell us about your friendships in the service that perhaps you've kept to this day.

Marion L. Shinn:

We really didn't have any friendships for the first 40 years because one of the things that happened to us, of course, was we had to make a living. The family came along, and the dollar and the month had to come out, and we were struggling, as all young families. It was about 1985, '84, before there was a real attempt to bring together those who -- and it was done by a fellow by the name of Sal Reyna, who was a Hispanic Quartermaster down in Texas. And he set up our first reunion in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. I didn't go to that one because I was involved in too many things at home at that moment. But the next year I did get involved. And, in fact, at that particular time I was on City Council and at one time I was Mayor of Lewiston. And I was also highly involved in Kiwanis. And so it took myself a little while to get myself organized. The next reunion we had, I went down to Portland to the National. And the next year in Baltimore a fellow by the name of Jerry Burke and others decided that we ought to have a newsletter, and so that began to bring us back together. He said, "I'll do it for two years." In two years we met again in Manitowoc, which is where the submarine was actually made, and Jerry said, "I'm getting through being a newsletter editor, I'm going to get out of that." And so they pointed their finger at me, and I said, "Oh, no, I've got -- I'm the Mayor, I'm doing all these, I can't do it." And they put more pressure. My wife said, "Uh-uh-uh-uh." But when it was all over I was assigned the job of being the newsletter editor for the USS Guavina.

Margaret M. Powell:

What year was that?

Marion L. Shinn:

It would have been, let's see, 1988. 1988.

Margaret M. Powell:

And you've been the editor ever since?

Marion L. Shinn:

And I have been doing that for 14 years. And I started putting out about five a year, then about four a year, and now I'm putting out about three a year. I'm finding that the people are becoming much less articulate. They still are appreciative. I'm telling them don't send me money, because when some of them write I'll have a \$20 bill stuck in, which shows me that they're interested. But our people are getting old and do not have anything to write to me about. And it becomes very difficult to write one of these things. I jokingly say I have become a fiction writer.

Margaret M. Powell:

Tell me about the organizations that you have joined since your service, specifically veterans' organizations.

Marion L. Shinn:

I joined American Legion. I joined the VFW very early, but I did not follow through. I belonged to the American Legion for years. I never go to the meetings. I haven't gone to the meetings at all. They said that they needed numbers, and I said, "I'll send you my money." I didn't go to the meetings because of the fact that it was a drinking and smoking outfit. And I didn't drink and I didn't smoke, and I didn't want to go down and stand around in there with stale tobacco smoke. They have since given up the smoking and they've made it a no-smoking operation, but I have never joined in. I, of course, have been in the Submarine Veterans of World War II since 1976. And I have been the Commander of the Idaho SubVets, this will be the beginning of my ninth year. And, again, it looks like I'm in the same position with this that I am with the newsletter; there is nobody that wants to replace me. Segment 6: Later Years and Closing

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, let's move on to the next segment. This is later years. And you've told us about what you did in your work, your life's work, after the war and after you mustered out. Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes, it influenced me. Probably, I would have to say, I hadn't even thought about the military before I went into the service. I guess I knew they existed, but until Pearl Harbor they were they were the farthest thing from my mind. I was a little, rural school teacher teaching kids to read and write, and I was not particularly concerned with the military. I could -- yes, you read the newspapers and that sort of thing. But I did not see me as a part of the military. I was not a militant person. As we went into the military, the scope of our position in the world, position of the military, where I fit, began to make sense instead of just being something out there. In the beginning of World War II we were a very pacifying nation, we did not want to go to war. In fact, if it had not been for Pearl Harbor, it would have been very difficult for President Roosevelt to have created the interest in going to war. Yes, my attitudes have changed.

Margaret M. Powell:

Do you want to expand on that?

Marion L. Shinn:

I am not a militant at this time, but I recognize that in this world today a strong military is necessary. Because we would like to have a peaceful and wonderful world in which there is no, uh, but it isn't that way. And I have traveled the world; and if we are to maintain the kind of living that we would like to do, you have to protect yourself.

Margaret M. Powell:

How do you feel that your service and experiences in the service have affected your life?

Marion L. Shinn:

It turned my life around totally. Going back to where I was, here I was -- I started teaching school when I was just past 18, I was actually 19, and that's what I knew. I knew farming and teaching because that's the breadth of the occupational base that I had in my life. Suddenly, as I

went in the military I began to travel around the world, I began to see the breadth and scope of the world around us. The only reason that I became a part of vocational education was because I got into the radar. That was my -- to be a vocational educator, you had to have a kind of vocational experience. Had I not done that, I would not have done it, and I would have been teaching English or history or something instead of the exciting experience of creating a whole new educational system for a community. I was the first and only employee of VoEd, and my job was to go out and do it.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, it's an incredible career, and we've kind of come to the end of the questions that are specifically asked for in the Project. Is there anything that you would like to add? While you're thinking about that, I do want to make sure we've got the name of your book, when you completed it, and any kind of pertinent information so that a researcher in the future could look it up.

Marion L. Shinn:

Okay. The book's name is Pacific Patrol. I wrote it in 1990, and I self-published it. In fact, I set the type. I actually typed it and sent it to the printer for them to run through, as I have self-typed much. And I had it especially because I wanted to take it to the reunion at Manitowoc when all the people got together. I still have a few on hand, and I have people that write to me. I sell a half a dozen a year, probably, to different people that just write in and ask. I guess I hope that the book supply lasts as long as I do. It was a fascinating thing to do. My wife did all the proofreading. One of the things that she did in proofreading was she'd come back and she'd say, "I don't understand that," if I got too technical in some area. And so I would go back and rewrite it so that she understood what I was talking about. And it's a very readable text.

Margaret M. Powell:

It is indeed.

Marion L. Shinn:

People could -- without any technical background. And I think the book clearly illustrates how a young, green kid that really knew nothing beyond the borders of the rural communities in which we lived -- I say "rural," we thought Lewiston was a big city, we were 12,000 people, you know? But we were provincial. And it shows how we moved from that provincial thing into a person who senses the feeling of the world. Of course, since I've retired--I've been retired for 20 years--my wife and I have traveled all over the world. I told her when I got back and married her just as we came back for overhaul, I said, "Australia is a wonderful place, I'll take you back sometime." Well, we have been restless always, I guess. We've traveled a great deal. I was a ranger in Glacier Park for ten years, ten summers. When school was out in the spring, I would go up and I would be a ranger. I raised my kids in Glacier Park. They were actually raised hiking on the trails. Then we would come back with a renewed attitude in the fall, an exciting attitude in the fall. But this same feeling of travel-go has stayed with us. And when I retired I told my wife we're not going to just sit here like old fuddy-duddies, we're going to get up and go some place every month. We're going to lock the door on the house and get out at least once a month. It's been about 22 years, and we have still continued to go some place every month.

Margaret M. Powell:

Wow.

Marion L. Shinn:

That doesn't mean that we do some exotic thing, but we close the door. We go to Spokane, we go some place in which we leave the valley where Lewiston is and go somewhere. Now, we try to do something rather extensive three to five times a year.

Margaret M. Powell:

You're just back from a trip, a month, in Portugal.

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes. For the last 20 years we have just about every year gone overseas. And in the last -- as we began to get older and older, then we began to say, "Well, let's do two because we haven't got very much longer." And so for a number of years we went two times a year for three weeks somewhere. We have traveled on all of the continents, except Antarctica, and in 50 or more countries. We've trekked in the high country of Nepal, stayed and ridden elephants in India, we have traveled in the Serengetti, and done Turkey a number of times. And we're going to continue. We're ready to go, we're scheduled for the next one, we're ready to go again. And as long as our body continues to allow us, it is our intention that we shall continue to see the world. One of the greatest things that that does is it makes you realize how little we are in relation to the total scheme of things. And it also makes you even more aware of how important it is that we maintain stability and strength within our own country and our community. I am still very active in the community. I belong to ten different organizations. I am the head carpenter for the Historical Society. In fact, I whip out all kinds of cupboards, whatever they need. I write six newsletters for different organizations, one of them being the Journal of the Historical Society, which has -- twice a year I put out a 25,000 word historical journal. I have both manual skills, which I got starting in vocational education, and the writing skills that come from many years of being an academic.

Margaret M. Powell:

And I bet you read the directions.

Marion L. Shinn:

Yes.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, this has been fascinating. Unfortunately, our time is about up. So.

Marion L. Shinn:

I still own rental property, which I maintain. And some day I'll turn it over to somebody else. But, until that time, until the time I can't fix it anymore, I'll continue to do it.

Margaret M. Powell:

Well, it's an incredible career, and I don't see you slowing down anytime soon.

Marion L. Shinn:

I hope not, I hope not.

Margaret M. Powell:

You're in great shape, great health. That's good.

Marion L. Shinn:

And a lot of the great health you're talking about comes from one thing that's important,

well, strong stock, but also the fact that we live our lives with a smile on our face instead of a frown.

Margaret M. Powell:

Oh, absolutely. I believe in that. Well, thank you very much. I'm going to turn off the tape recorder now. [INTERVIEW CONCLUDED]