

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
PHILIP SAWIN
PT boat commander, Navy, World War II

2000

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Sawin, Philip Q., (1908-). Oral History Interview, 2000.

User Copy: 2 sound cassettes (ca. 76 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 76 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Video Recording: 1 videorecording (ca. 76 min.); ½ inch, color.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Philip Sawin, a Wilmington, Delaware native, describes his Navy service as a PT boat commander and as a chief of overhaul and equipment during World War II. Commissioned in 1942, Sawin talks about entering service as a Lieutenant, Junior Grade and mentions training in Chicago. He explains that his experience with racing boat engines led him to be picked for Patrol Torpedo Boat duty. He speaks of PT school in Melville (Rhode Island), his assignment as boat captain, and teaching boat handling. He details PT boat engines, fuel, handling, armaments, standard crew, and procedures for firing torpedoes and shooting at barges. Sawin reveals how the boats got rid of unnecessary weight by doubling up on jobs to reduce crew and getting rid of unneeded equipment, and he highlights how they increased the horse-power of their engines. He describes scavenging parts such as P-39 aircraft guns. He relates a story about John F. Kennedy swimming with sharks while his boat was being repaired, and Sawin recalls helping Kennedy sneak a plywood board into the base to sleep on after he hurt his back playing football. He describes being senior officer for Squadron 12 while running oil to and from Aruba. He recalls offloading fifty ton Elco boats at Brisbane using a thirty ton crane and being towed across the Coral Sea. Sawin describes promotion to chief of parts, overhaul, and equipment and being based at Fort Moresby in Milne Bay (New Guinea). He relates an anecdote about the building site of MacArthur's house being bombed. He criticizes dispatches he would get telling him to fabricate things in the field and describes having half the boats in dry dock all the time and the difficulty of finding good parts. He tells of being promoted to commander in the Navy Reserve and being sent to Washington for the Bureau of Ships to consult about boat parts. Sawin mentions after the war coaching at Sanford School, a boarding school run by his family, using the GI bill to get his PhD at the University of Wisconsin Education Department, and buying a marina. He mentions men drinking the Grade A alcohol used to fuel torpedoes at parties, and he describes eating well and the extra kitchens aboard the tenders. Sawin relates anecdotes about his commander waking him up in the middle of the night to deliver a strange dispatch, telling a joke to Bob Hope, and mediating between his commander and the ship cooks about amounts of garlic used.

Biographical Sketch:

Philip Q. Sawin (b. 1908) was commissioned in the Navy from Wilmington, Delaware and served as an officer in charge of PT boats in World War II. After honorable discharge at rank of Commander, he and his wife ran their own businesses and settled in Waunakee, Wisconsin.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000.

Transcribed by Katy Marty, 2008.

Transcript edited by Channing Welch, 2008.

Abstract by Susan Krueger, 2009.

Interview Transcript:

Jim: It's running. Let's ignore that one.

Phil: I see a red light. It's workin'.

Jim: I believe it. Speaking to Philip Sawin, 14 May, Year 2000. Sir, when were you born?

Phil: November 8th 1908.

Jim: 11/08?

Phil: Yup.

Jim: Where?

Phil: Wilmington, Delaware.

Jim: I missed the name.

Phil: What?

Jim: I missed the name of the town.

Phil: Wilmington, Delaware. The only big city.

Jim: Right. And what year did you enter military service?

Phil: What were you doing?

Jim: When did you go in the service?

Phil: June of '51. No, June of – when'd the war start, '41?

Jim: '41 December.

Phil: Yeah, I started in June of '42.

Jim: 6/'42.

Phil: Active duty.

Jim: And you were a volunteer, I assume.

Phil: Yes.

Jim: (unintelligible)

Phil: Lieutenant JG.

Jim: Right from the beginning?

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: You must have had some ROTC training then.

Phil: Well, they, when they took you in that way if you were eligible they put you in by age and rank. If I'd have been three years younger I'd have been an ensign, if I'd of four years older I'd of been a full lieutenant.

Jim: What type of training did you have before the service, entering service at rank?

Phil: I think they were saying (??) I coached, I taught, I --

Jim: You must have been in the ROTC program or some reserve program.

Phil: No, not at all. Not at all.

Jim: None?

Phil: Thousands of 'em came in. My first job, for three months, was getting more officers in and you enrolled them by age.

Jim: But you hadn't had any Navy training before they put you in uniform?

Phil: No, no. Red (unintelligible) had a cousin that went in, a rank above me. He was a dance instructor. I at least (laughs) was a teacher and a coach.

Jim: You had to have some. You were a teacher. You had a degree?

Phil: Pardon?

Jim: You had a degree?

Phil: Oh yeah. Syracuse University 1930.

Jim: That's the reason you got a Commission right off --

Phil: And I was a championship cross country runner.

- Jim: Oh. What'd ya run?
- Phil: Six miles. Used to be six miles (unintelligible). Our freshmen team won in New York City.
- Jim: And what was your race? What was your event?
- Phil: The event that I won? I didn't win. My team did, but I was sixth out of 350.
- Jim: And what was the race? That's what I can't find out.
- Phil: Well, it was cross country.
- Jim: Okay. All right.
- Phil: In New York City. They came from all over the country, 350 runners.
- Jim: When you went in the service where did you go?
- Phil: Philadelphia to get other officers in, but I didn't stay long because I didn't want to. (laughs) They put me there and as soon as I got there I applied for active service and I got a sent to Chicago for training about six weeks after I went into the Navy.
- Jim: What kind of training?
- Phil: We had three courses: Navigation, Battery/Armament and Navy Regulations and you got marked on them. I was interviewed then by a whole bunch of people to be assigned, and I was picked for PT's because I pleaded with them to let me. (laughs)
- Jim: Well, nobody had any experience with the PT boats before the war, so -
- Phil: No, but I had experience with racing speedboats.
- Jim: Ah! Tell me about that.
- Phil: I just helped put the engine, double the horsepower.
- Jim: What did you do on the racing speedboats?
- Phil: I over horse powered the engines.
- Jim: Oh. You didn't race 'em?

Phil: No, I –

Jim: You just built ‘em.

Phil: Yes, I built the engines.

Jim: Is that what you did in college, learned mechanical engineering of some kind?

Phil: No. Political Science.

Jim: Ah ha. So you got your boat expertise on the side then?

Phil: Yeah, well, I, we lived on a farm. I overhauled the tractors and all the - and the reason I was supposedly too old for PT boats, but when they found out (laughs) that I could take an engine apart and put it back together I was picked.

Jim: How did they find that out? Did you -

Phil: When they asked me one of the question “What have you ever done about engines?” and –

Jim: Oh.

Phil: Two people interviewed me, Bulkeley, and Harley. They were the top PT people.

Jim: Who was the first one?

Phil: Bulkely, he just died recently.

Jim: Yeah. Right.

Phil: He was big. Both of them were Academy men, and so then I was promoted again, twice again in the Navy.

Jim: When you finished your course in Chicago then where did you go?

Phil: PT school.

Jim: Where was that?

Phil: In Melville, Rhode Island, --

- Jim: Okay.
- Phil: And then I was put on as the captain of a boat, then the captain of a bigger boat and then I was picked for a Squadron with that made me wait. . So I was an instructor for awhile.
- Jim: Well, don't get too far ahead here. I like all the details. So you went to this in Rhode Island and you went to a boat right away or did you have some more instruction first?
- Phil: We went to class everyday, but then we were taken out in turn to go on the boats and at night duty, supposedly for submariners, but we (laughs) never knew what to do if we saw a submarine, but anyway we (unintelligible) on the boats, but having had experience on the boat I could handle 'em. Nobody else (laughs) in my class, I'll show you the class down there. Jack Kennedy was in it, the President, was in my class.
- Jim: He was.
- Phil: And I was in the quonset hut with him. And then they assigned me to a boat and all I did was teach boat handling. Everybody that came through was on my boat for awhile.
- Jim: You had no experience at sea before, with a boat?
- Phil: Yeah, on a speedboat on the Delaware River. I owned the speedboat on the Delaware River.
- Jim: So you had some experience there.
- Phil: At handling boats.
- Jim: Oh, and running the motor so you had two areas of expertise.
- Phil: It helped, too. Right away as soon as I finished class I was assigned to a boat as the captain and then I took the new people around. Every morning four to learn to dock the boat, and every afternoon another four. For a couple of months I was doin' nothin' but teaching boat handling.
- Jim: Was it hard to drive a PT boat?
- Phil: It had three 1,400 horsepower engines and you only make one mistake. It's either the boat or the pier. (laughs)
- Jim: I see. Well there's lots of ways to make a mistake on a boat besides run into the pier, though.

Phil: (laughs) Yeah. We had, once in awhile threw an anchor over without the end (unintelligible) things like that.

Jim: Right. Tell me about, Let's talk about the boat now. How long?

Phil: Eighty-one feet.

Jim: Eighty-one feet.

Phil: Twenty foot wide, beam they call it.

Jim: Yes, I know and then four engines, is that - ?

Phil: Three.

Jim: Three engines.

Phil: We had a little generator engine, but we never even paid any attention, but we kept the three engines running.

Jim: These are gasoline?

Phil: These were high test gasoline, 100 octane and above.

Jim: 100 octane? That's pretty hot stuff. And how fast could you get that eighty-one footer goin'?

Phil: Oh, forty, forty-one -

Jim: Knots or miles?

Phil: What?

Jim: Knots or miles?

Phil: M.P.H., miles per hour.

Jim: Okay, that's quite a difference then.

Phil: One and an eighth, yeah.

Jim: Yeah, one and an eighth, yeah, and but you say it was an easy boat to handle or not?

- Phil: No, it was a very difficult boat to handle because there wasn't much of it in the water.
- Jim: Yeah, and at those speeds I presume that you were subject to different wave action that might upset ya --
- Phil: Yeah, they started to do everything to overload us and we fought 'em off. They wanted us to have armament on 'em. Those of us on the boat said "We're going to start takin' things off."
- Jim: How many torpedoes did you normally carry?
- Phil: Four.
- Jim: Okay.
- Phil: But it ended up when we got to where we were going we took two off.
- Jim: Okay.
- Phil: They were too much weight.
- Jim: They were.
- Phil: And we very seldom got in, where I was in New Guinea and the Philippines, we very seldom got in close enough to a large boat to fire more than one torpedo. We missed -
- Jim: You fired one and then start running.
- Phil: (laughs) Yeah. You better believe it. Took awhile for it to get there but we worked our way through.
- Jim: Then you're long gone, right? I imagine the turning radius was very acute there once that thing got away --
- Phil: Yeah, we had a problem of guiding 'em but we got it down. We changed the unit that loaded the torpedo and unloaded the torpedo and we did get better action from them. The original ones were the old World War I torpedoes off destroyers.
- Jim: Those were terrible.
- Phil: Yeah, terrible. We had Mark 13's, aircraft torpedoes.
- Jim: Because those first ones, they wouldn't explode.

Phil: (laughs) Well, it wouldn't go where you wanted either. .

Jim: Two slight problems, right? Yeah, I understand. Now tell me about your armaments. What'd you have?

Phil: None. We had - oh, you're talking about medal armament?

Jim: Well, normally you carried how many .50's?

Phil: We carried 20 Oerlikons, 20 caliber Oerlikons, one in the bow, one on the stern. When before --

Jim: Single gun?

Phil: Yeah, well, and four .50 caliber machine guns

Jim: Yeah. Right.

Phil: And two turrets. We (unintelligible).

Jim: Yeah.

Phil: We took over some B-39 like caliber P-39s through the 35 caliber through the propeller. They used to power --

Jim: That's those Cobras.

Phil: We took those and built 'em into another gun on the bow with motorcycle handlebars like this for shooting down.

Jim: Oh, really?

Phil: Yeah, and we used them more then we used any of the other guns on there. It had, they had a curve deal like this with the ammunition in it and they were about like so. The P-39 none of the Air Force people liked 'em.

Jim: No, they didn't. They were inadequate airplanes.

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: Where'd you find those?

Phil: Over there.

- Jim: You just heard about 'em or you heard they were sitting around and might've had a gun on 'em?
- Phil: Oh, you know everything that's around ya dispatches.
- Jim: And these airplanes were just sittin' there being unused, right?
- Phil: P-39's just were abandoned and we took the guns off. They had two. See they had two.
- Jim: In the nose, had two cannons.
- Phil: And then we got from the artillery 40's. That took four men to operate so we had to get 'em (unintelligible). So we would have two men forward, four men on the machine gun, four men on the 40's. So we had to take your navigator off (laughs) and make him into a gunner, (unintelligible).
- Jim: Everybody onboard had two duties or more.
- Phil: Everybody had a one job, that was shoot a gun and we did do a lot of firing.
- Jim: You talk about shooting down. Down?
- Phil: Yeah, down into the water.
- Jim: What was your objective shooting down in the water?
- Phil: The 24, 26 foot Sampan small barge of the Japanese.
- Jim: Oh, they were at lower levels.
- Phil: Yeah, and when we went to the first place, we stopped over there after the gulf was our home deal. It was Buna, and Buna where it had three or four old Navy barges and that's where we saw these sticks, and the identification medal all from Wisconsin. I was from Delaware then and --
- Jim: You saw 'em on Buna.
- Phil: Yeah.
- Jim: That's a --
- Phil: What happened is they come over the Owen Stanley Range.

- Jim: Yeah, I know about that. I talked to the Colonel up in northern Wisconsin who lead that raid.
- Phil: And that was Wisconsin people. The general came over without any Atabrine. They never thought of malaria. When they got over there they were getting yellow and dyin'. So we had a mess on our hands. But I never took any Atabrine. I never got malaria.
- Jim: That's pretty risky.
- Phil: (laughs) I didn't want to be yellow.
- Jim: Yeah, but it's not permanent.
- Phil: No, (laughs) but it was permanent for us until we got way north of the malaria area.
- Jim: Well, when you stop taking the pills the yellow goes away, you know.
- Phil: Almost to the Philippines.
- Jim: That's not a permanent discoloration but the –
- Phil: Oh no.
- Jim: But the ear ringing in ten percent was. Did you know that? Ten percent of the people who took that Atabrine got permanent ear ringing. Well, that's another story.
- Phil: We didn't. But the reason they came over the Owen Stanley Range was because of all the enemy were far out of - built deals out of ground and everything and they could only face the once at the sea.
- Jim: I know all that stuff. Let's not get into the Army business now. I've got all that done. I want to see more about your boat.
- Phil: Yeah, okay. We ended up with 40's and 25 --
- Jim: You took the 50's off and used the 40's. --.
- Phil: No. We had two turrets of 50's.
- Jim: Kept all those.
- Phil: That's what we used most and the 35 on the forward. The Oerlikon, mostly for aircraft. It was pretty difficult to get. What we had to worry

about is shooting our own boat. You're going, swinging around like this and you go down, you go down.

Jim: Take out the navigator. (laughs)

Phil: Yeah (laughs). Your guns have to have pipes around 'em so that

Jim: Couldn't swing too far.

Phil: The would never go to your own deck.

Jim: So how long did you train in Rhode Island before they sent ya into the Pacific?

Phil: I was up there about six to eight weeks, but I had finished the course. The courses were just about twenty days, but I was picked out of my class by the man that was about to head Squadron 12. Kept up there with boat handling until we moved to Brooklyn and started taking delivery of our boats.

Jim: When did you bunk with John Kennedy?

Phil: That was the whole time almost to the end of the school. Then he had special orders, but not to be delayed. We had some Huckins boats, four PT boats.

Jim: Not Higgins huh?

Phil: No, Higgins we had plenty of. They almost all went to Europe.

Jim: Oh, I see.

Phil: We were almost all Elco but the Huckins boats were fast, but they were too light. We were getting transom breaking loose from the freeboard, breaking loose from the bottom. So we sent 'em all back to Florida and Jack Kennedy took one of 'em.

Jim: I see.

Phil: Had one messy deal with - they got into sharks like that and then tied up the propeller around one of the wheels. Jack was the one that went in to keep the sharks out of the way while they unwound the anchor.

Jim: This is when he went down to New Orleans?

- Phil: This is when they went down to Huckins. He never came back to PT. He shipped out in Squadron Six, in the south Pacific. I was in the southwest Pacific. He was in Sixth Fleet and I was in Seventh Fleet.
- Jim: Was Jack Kennedy a friendly guy?
- Phil: What?
- Jim: Was he a friendly guy?
- Phil: I tell ya a cute story. We were co-captain of our touch football team. He came down on a rock and twisted that back that he had done at Harvard and he called the doctor and said you've got to get some plywood. I was the only one with a car. I had a Packard 110 convertible. So we went down to Hyannis Port and got a piece of plywood sawed to just the shape of the bed.
- Jim: You and Jack?
- Phil: Yeah. It was a cold day. We came back and to put that size piece of plywood in the convertible we had to put the top down. So we came up to the guard cage at the top of the hill of the base with this red convertible with the plywood. They called the senior sergeant Marine and he asked us what we were going to do with it. Jack said we were going to make a ping-pong table. (laughs) He was afraid if they knew we were putting it under his bed that the doctors on the base would probably --
- Jim: Sure, it wasn't regulation, right?
- Phil: (laughs) so we did have it, and he said he did sleep on it.
- Jim: Okay. All right.
- Phil: I saw him several times afterwards in Washington.
- Jim: You mean after the war?
- Phil: Yes. I had to go with our senior class to visit Washington. So while they were visiting Washington I had lunch with Jack.
- Jim: Oh. This is after he was President?
- Phil: What?
- Jim: After he was President?

- Phil: No, when he was a Representative.
- Jim: Okay and so how did you get to the Pacific? How did you, and your boat and all that get there?
- Phil: How did we?
- Jim: How did you get to the Pacific?
- Phil: Oh. I was in Squadron 12 and I was senior officer that ran the boats. There were two above me, Squadron commander and assistant commander, Farley and Harley. Farley just died recently. Anyway, Harley (unintelligible) when we got most of the boats and we had 'em all. I had them picked to take every one of the boats out and test it and try it and I had my own crew. And then when the first four boats were ready to go, I was picked to be in command of the four boats and we went on a landing tanker down to, first to Aruba in fleet with the guard boats all the way.
- Jim: Did you go through the Panama Canal or did you go the other way?
- Phil: Yeah. Then from Aruba they delivered a certain type of oil to Aruba and then we took heavy duty oil to Panama in the same boat, an Atlantic tanker we went through the canal to Taboga an island that was a testing area for PT boats. We drove our boats through the canal –
- Jim: Oh, you took them off the tanker.
- Phil: We took 'em off the - the Atlantic tanker was going to go back to get 'em all. So we went over, it was fine because to go across the Pacific we got an enormous gulf tanker, it was like a battleship, but Taboga we had to do night practice. We had only one time in Melville where we went out at night.
- Jim: I'm not sure what countries these ports are in, Australia?
- Phil: No. No. We're not in Panama yet.
- Jim: Oh, we're still in Panama.
- Phil: Aruba's in –
- Jim: Oh, okay, oh,
- Phil: That oil place. Yeah. You know Curacao?
- Jim: Yes.

- Phil: Well, Aruba's is right alongside.
- Jim: Okay.
- Phil: And then we went from there to Panama on the Atlantic side. Had to wait to get through the canal with our four boats, got through the canal, went to Taboga. I had gone out before that to try to get more horsepower out of the engines, at Packard Detroit. I was out two weeks, and we did. We went from 1,200 to 1,500 horsepower.
- Jim: How?
- Phil: But we, that's a long story. (laughs) Raised the rate on the superchargers put formica sparkplugs in, domed the valves, (sighs) Oh we advanced the spark and put a larger vent in the carburetor.
- Jim: Your mileage per gallon would drop considerably after all those changes. Used up that gas pretty fast.
- Phil: (laughs) We'd have to do one of it and then put 'em in the testing and then do one and go on testing. And for our boats as we were ready to go we got we got kits with all this stuff in 'em. So when we were in Taboga we changed all twelve engines with these kits to the extra horsepower and we went across the Pacific in this great, enormous deal. We stopped at Aruba. That's how it went, but we went into Brisbane.
- Jim: Brisbane, huh.
- Phil: Yeah, and we --
- Jim: You offloaded your boats at Brisbane?
- Phil: We offloaded them at Brisbane and there we made the pads for the different torpedo launching, the wood pads we didn't have time to get in the States so we were in there little Navy yard and we did get 'em. We had the racks, but we didn't have the planks to put 'em on. So we got 'em all on, then some idiot in Washington said to save the hours on the engine, we've hired minesweepers to tow you cross the Coral Sea. Craziest damn thing that was ever put into existence and I think it was -- well, I better not say.
- Jim: Don't say it (laughs).
- Phil: (laughs) No, I might sometime run into him.

Jim: I'll promise. You won't run into whoever it is.

Phil: (laughs) He, anyway, we in the middle of the night had to cut our cables. We just couldn't take it. I mean we were yanking the cabins and everything else. We were there four hours. The four days that we were and we were still not in Milne.

Jim: Without the minesweepers.

Phil: That was the other half way. But we were behind the guards, what's the name, coral reef?

Jim: Yeah.

Phil: And then we got out in the Coral Sea, it wasn't nearly as rough as it, but anyway we got there and our war started.

Jim: How fast did this boat go, now that you've juiced it up?

Phil: About forty-one, forty-two.

Jim: Oh, I thought you were going to be a lot – that's what it was beforehand.

Phil: No, but in that area, the moist, the tough area we were only gettin' thirty-six. So we got back up to the forty knots.

Jim: And this was not a Higgins boat but it was a –

Phil: We were in Elco, all Elco. I had --

Jim: Elco? E-l-c-o?

Phil: Yeah. Electric Boat Company built all the submarines.

Jim: Oh, that's in Philadelphia.

Phil: No. We have one in Philadelphia, but Electric Boat Company is up in New England. They built all the submarines.

Jim: Yeah. Not all of 'em. The built twenty-two of 'em or twenty-three of 'em in Manitowoc, Wisconsin.

Phil: Oh, yeah, but -

Jim: Now, go ahead.

- Phil: Yeah. I never heard of 'em, Manitowoc, (laughs) until I got out here. I had a big boat on the lake.
- Jim: Ah. So okay, here we go now we're into the real stuff. Who directed your activities there? Who said where you're gonna go and this and that? Picked your targets and --
- Phil: A man named Moonmaw (??) was in charge of pass group 741 was where we end up, 7th fleet 00.1 _____
- Jim: Okay.
- Phil: and when we got there Matt Moonmaw (??) took me out on the boat. He bet me that I couldn't get forty-one knots out of any of 'em because he had just been getting' thirty. He was a full Navy, fourth Moonmaw (??) to go through the academy.
- Jim: And his rank? `
- Phil: He was three striper, commander. He had been taken --
- Jim: And you?
- Phil: I was just a JG.
- Jim: Okay.
- Phil: He talked to me about it and the next thing I knew I'd been taken out of Squadron 12 and put on his staff. So (laughs)
- Jim: 'Cause you knew somethin' about boats.
- Phil: But he was a lonely guy. They, I went in to see him when I got back. They had taken him off a submarine. He was too nervous so they gave him this 70.1, and it only had five boats. We added four and then we brought ten, six more and we came out. So I didn't have much to do about the boats except we had two engine overhaul places. I was put - moved up as chief of parts of overhaul and equipment. The biggest job (laughs) on the whole fleet so I had quite a few working for me, but --
- Jim: That took you out of active combat then?
- Phil: Yeah, the only time I went up, when I up and to where they were, I'd go out on the boats with 'em. I had I'd say roughly 120 men that were responsible to me and two overhauls, engine overhauls. I had to go back

and forth. Lots of times they would be up in front and not know what to do with the engine. I'd be sent up.

Jim: What base was this? Where was this?

Phil: I was on a tender. Oh, base was down in Milne Bay.

Jim: Milne Bay.

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: Okay.

Phil: Very point end of New Guinea.

Jim: Yeah, I know where that is.

Phil: Across the mountains from, what's its name, the big cities, where the Army started to go across the mountains. It's a -- I know --

Jim: Fort Moresby is what you're thinking of?

Phil: Fort Moresby, yeah.

Jim: Yes sir. Okay, so that's where you spent the war at that base then?

Phil: Yeah. And I, then when we moved up to the Philippines I had all the stuff to get ready. I had - I did a lot of favors for Mc Arthur's Colonels and staff and everything. I'll tell ya another quick story.

Jim: No hurry.

Phil: We were up at Port Moresby in Alandia, [**End of tape 1, side A; ca. 30 min.**] and we'd gone in there. We lost, the only boat we lost from the 12th in Alandia we lost, and it was our own fault. He blew his own boat up. In Willie's (??) destructive system. Anyway, I was back there doing something about a base for us on a dry dock. A big bomber came across with a whole bunch of fighters around it and somebody said that Mc Arthur was leaving his hotel in Brisbane and building a house up on the hill. And that probably was Mac Arthur coming up. A little while another bomber came across with a whole bunch of fighters, and somebody yelled "There goes the flush toilet". (Both laugh)

Jim: That's cute.

Phil: But there was a lot of falderal. He put a four way paved road up to his house in Alandia. That next move was in the Philippines, the other. We had, I'll show you some. I had to provide hoses to all the boats to take fuel from the standards because the tanks we had three tanks, 1,000 on the middle and two 400's on the (unintelligible), but we burned about twenty-eight an hour, each engine. Every time it went "pht", there was a dollar mark on the water in the back. Well, they had twelve cylinders at this time, then when we got up to the Philippines my job was to build a base that would hold 300 PT's. So I had it all drawn up and everything else, thought that it had been built and I would have been moved ahead again. I came home from there and I was put, send down, I went to Melville first to tell them things about the boat that they needed and write a long paper of what could be done to do, and I was sent to Washington I got ordered out of several offices.

Jim: When was this that you went to Washington?

Phil: Oh, when we had such things as our exhaust pipes were double and then when you went through a panel it'd stop bein' double and had to put a jumper hose through the panel.

Jim: So this is about when?

Phil: When we went to get new ones from the States I got a dispatch, a very nasty dispatch. It said "Have these fabricated in the field." Now, where were we going to get copper pipes and jump pipes? I had to go down to Australia and to see if we had porter propellers down there and see where they were and they finally showed them to me and they just were terrible. They weren't smooth. They weren't in balance and our generators went almost the minute we got there, and so I did get that taken care of. I went to the Army and the big Frigidaire's, big deals like this had a unit on the compressor that had both the diesel and electric power. So I got the engines off of those and put 'em on our generators, and we were back in the generator field, but not out of Washington.

Jim: Right.

Phil: And then our parts, which were very, I was in charge of all parts out of Aruba. And they sent a General Motors man out instead of having a section from PT battery PT (unintelligible), keep ya. They sorted everything by sizes. Little ones were in the building ---

Jim: (laughs)

Phil: Yes they did. (laughs) Two General Motors pedestrians were sent out to redesign that whole parts base. Fortunately I had gotten four freighters

from the Army. The Army had all the freight boats, and I got two 250 ton, 250 ton all manned by Coast Guard, American Coast guard and assigned to me the by Colonel O'Connor's. So I was able to get people down there sorting that stuff out and getting it out, and those boats just ran back and forth, and back and forth or we'd never made the Philippines (??).

Jim: When did they send you back to Washington to discuss the problems.

Phil: Right after Melville. I had to write a paper on Melville.

Jim: I don't know what time this is, what year is this?

Phil: That's the end, the very - I had applied, but I applied the minute I got back to get out of the Navy.

Jim: Oh, this is after the war you went to Washington?

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: Oh, okay. Well, I'll save that then.

Phil: Oh, no, this I got out of the war. The Philippines came after me. I was still in on the Philippines but in the United States. From the minute they moved into the Philippines I went with them and designed the new base and got ahold of ten dry docks and twenty-five ton cranes and fuel tanks. There's a list somewhere. I've never been able to find it. I think over eighty units, twenty dry docks. See those people were going to send 300 and some PT boats out there. Half of them were in the dry dock all the time, propellers wiped out and the shafts bent. We were operating 'em, we had three different ones Paton, dry docks we had about four or five in our base. We had LST's with arms out the side that would pull 'em up, like this. You had to go two at a time.

Jim: Otherwise they took the LST with it.

Phil: All the doors slammed when you let go. (laughs) So we would design another one ourselves and put it in. The we got the Sirene, big bugger.

Jim: What's that?

Phil: It's a big freighter. C3, do you know what a C3 is?

Jim: Yes, called the C3 hulls, yes.

Phil: The C3 hull had - we had quarters with toilets and things like this on it, - and we had four heavy cranes --

Jim: Cosco (??) shipped those C3 hulls.

Phil: We lifted the boats on the decks. Then of course it was delightful, but we'd only had that about six months when I came home and then when I got here I thought I'd done my share and I applied and the end of the war was coming and they were letting people out of the Navy. So they needed me back at the school, which my family then.

Jim: When did you get out of the Navy?

Phil: August of '45.

Jim: Right at the end of the war.

Phil: Yeah. Just - I was out diggin' potatoes when the war was over. (laughs)

Jim: Oh, you got out a few days earlier then.

Phil: Yeah, they were letting 'em out.

Jim: Where was your release?

Phil: At Philadelphia.

Jim: In Philadelphia.

Phil: With an immediate promotion. I was a full lieutenant and then I went to commander in two (unintelligible) That's all so you get a little extra pay.

Jim: They made you a commander and discharged you at the same time?

Phil: No, the commander was after I was out. They called me back and I got a raise in reserve.

Jim: Oh, the commander bit was when you were in the Navy Reserve?

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: Was this in active or inactive reserve?

Phil: Well, they told ya that you were on immediate call if you didn't go to any of meetings --

Jim: Oh, they just wanted to keep tabs on ya.

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: Was this was when you got into Washington?

Phil: I still have – I still have the card.

Jim: No, don't go away.

Phil: I'm not. I'll move right back. I'm in my pocket is why I'm in this (laughs) position.

Jim: I know.

Phil: It'll be the last one to come out.

Jim: Now I can't see it. "Indefinite."

Phil: You know, the deal with the cards any of your stores where you can go in and buy your wife a candle or I'm sorry. You can go in yourself and buy at military rates, but your wife has to sit in the waiting room outside and wait.

Jim: Sounds good to me. (Phil laughs). Thought those days were over. Well, anyway, just removed that 'til we're through here.

Phil: Pardon?

Jim: Let's get back to you here.

Phil: Yeah, okay.

Jim: Don't worry about your cards there. That doesn't help our story here. Now, so, tell me about getting called back to Washington. What was that about?

Phil: I asked for it. I asked so I could go down and find out who these idiots were that were sending us all these messages.

Jim: Right.

Phil: Of "Do it in the field" and that sort of thing, and I -

Jim: You have to tell me about when you did this though.

- Phil: That was, it would be in the spring of '45, right after I got out. I was ten days in Melville, roughly, and then I went to Washington. I was down there about two months.
- Jim: And then the war then --
- Phil: I was sent on the Bureau of Ships to get to be in touch with anybody that wanted information about whether the Monel Shafts were good enough and that sort of thing.
- Jim: So you requested this interview with the Bureau of Ships?
- Phil: No, they sent me. I didn't ask for any. I asked to get out, but they wanted me first to go to Melville and talk to them about the (unintelligible), and then go to -- because I had to do with taking --, lots of times we almost rebuilt the boat. Preston Sutphen executive vice-president officer, Elco, in charge of PT's, came out and stayed a week with me in the Philippines to ask what they could do to make the PT a better boat. I took him out and showed him what it would do and what it wouldn't do and a very nice, nice guy, tall, and when I got back he got me to, but he's not Navy, civilian, and he had me help him organize a PT officers association, which is still in existence, PT I incorporated.
- Jim: Tell me about going to Washington now.
- Phil: I went to Washington, don't worry about it. There were, I can't remember, 36 80 I think, Bureau of Ships. I was assigned to Bureau of ships and I was on call at all time and I did get called. I went up to Doylestown I think, wherever the great big Navy parts and everything, about seven miles long, to try to find some parts that had just disappeared, you know, like mufflers and that sort of thing. I did, I found quite a few. I was there about a week, but then it wasn't long after that, the word came out that the officers were being let out, and I was. Once in awhile I would get a call from some friends I'd made at Bureau of Ships asking about what shape mufflers were in and that sort of thing.
- Jim: Did you talk to anybody in the Bureau of Ships or?
- Phil: Yeah, they'd call me.
- Jim: You talked to them?
- Phil: Oh, yeah.
- Jim: When you got there or this on the phone?

Phil: No, by telephone.

Jim: So you didn't have any eyeball to eyeball meetings with any of these guys?

Phil: No, no, no I was diggin' potatoes. I was out and we had eighty acres, where the school is now. My family has a private school.

Jim: So what did you do after the war?

Phil: I went (unintelligible) (laughs); They'd been waiting for me for three years. I had charge of the boys, I was head coach of the -

Jim: Coaching what?

Phil: Football, basketball, Lacrosse.

Jim: At what school?

Phil: Sanford School.

Jim: Sanford?

Phil: Sanford.

Jim: S-a-n-f-o-r-d?

Phil: That was my father's first name. It's still there. It's a big school now. We had -- we were a boarding school. It's now not. We were getting \$900/year, boarding school. They're now getting \$10,000 for day school.

Jim: Is this a high school? Or a college?

Phil: No. Kindergarten through high school.

Jim: Oh, oh okay.

Phil: It's a big school, going well. I was headmaster when I left.

Jim: And then what did - Did you use the GI bill?

Phil: Did I what?

Jim: Did you use the GI Bill?

Phil: What's that? Oh, I guess I didn't.

- Jim: No, I guess not, but the GI bill after, we all could get after the war. You could get free education or --
- Phil: Oh yes. I used it when I got a Ph. D. out here,
- Jim: Right.
- Phil: I used it.
- Jim: See.
- Phil: That's pretty cheap.
- Phil: It's, and they even take it for the qualification.
- Jim: I understand. How did you get here?
- Phil: Oh, we'd had our master's degree before I went in. My wife and I, we'd always said we're going to get a Ph D. someday. So we applied, and my sister and brother – in – law, he was also using his GI. Came out here, but he hadn't graduated from college. So we applied and my wife was accepted into graduate school and I wasn't, (laughs) but they said a conditional, I could come and if I got good marks in the first sessions that I could -
- Jim: Right.
- Phil: So Dotty started off with six hours ahead of me.
- Jim: In what college here, at Wisconsin?
- Phil: Here?
- Jim: Yes.
- Phil: The University of Wisconsin Education Department.
- Jim: Oh, in the Education Department.
- Phil: Yeah, but you see, you definitely aren't in there, you're in graduate school, if you're accepted by graduate school you can take anything. Then the Education Department will tell you what it wants. We had to do languages, duck soup nowadays in those days --
- Jim: So what was your thesis?

- Phil: Ahhh, *Philophy of Education and Germany, Post-war*. That's what tells about what the classes did; how they taught nationalism, and where and when. They're sittin' on a shelf downstairs.
- Jim: Probably never be read.
- Phil: (laughs) Used to be I'd get letters asking about information for --
- Jim: And armed with your Ph D., now what did you do?
- Phil: What would I do?
- Jim: No, what did you do? Now that you're a doctor of philosophy.
- Phil: Oh, we ran our own businesses for one thing.
- Jim: Which was?
- Phil: Well, [Approx 15 sec. pause in tape] a counseling company, counseling organization. Ahh, we dabbled in a little bit of everything.
- Jim: Well you didn't need any mechanics on your farm because you could do it all.
- Phil: Yeah, (laughs) we gotta have a big English diesels, that's up at Coloma.
- Jim: Ah ha.
- Phil: Yeah, and eventually we sold out, just did counseling and getting companies their presidents and the last few years of our life we didn't work. We've been boating all the way along.
- Jim: Oh really?
- Phil: Yeah, we had -- I bought, I wanted, it was a \$70,000 boat. I wanted it up on the lakes, fifty-one foot twin engine diesel, and so this marina was for sale. It had a 30% discount, so I bought it for \$20,000, got a 30% discount on the boat, and a marina thrown in. (laughs)
- Jim: Right, two for one.
- Phil: Yeah, but we did everything. We cleaned it up and that sort of thing. Whenever we'd get our statement at the end of the year about the marina it came to Dotty. Let me get it straight. What's the name when you do good things for everybody?

Jim: (unintelligible) Oh, um charity works.

Phil: What are all the things like that? Dale-dale,-dale, it's a big name, provisional or something.

Jim: Okay.

Phil: But it means that you've lost money.

Jim: Oh. I see. (laughs)

Phil: (laughs), I can't even, let's say provisional. Dotty and Phil's provisional statement, and all it showed us was how much money we'd lost.

Jim: You had lost --

Phil: We'd lost on the marina.

Jim: That was a losing proposition?

Phil: Yeah,(laughs) it sure was, but we kept building it up for (unintelligible) Now, they just spent \$3,500,000 on --

Jim: I was going to say those two marinas are pretty big over there.

Phil: Oh yeah, I went down there when that --

Jim: That guy from Milwaukee bought the big one.

Phil: Yeah, there a, when we sold this it was a going outfit. We built some buildings. We moved our private offices, but we just did our very best to get rid of responsibility. At the time we were sixty-two or sixty-three.

Jim: My experience with friends who've had boats is it's a losing proposition all the way.

Phil: (laughs) Benevolence Society!

Jim: Benevolence --

Phil: Phil and Dottie's Benevolence Society, that's the way Santa --

Jim: That's a euphemism for having the losses.

Phil: That's the way it was getting, our annual statement for us.

- Jim: (laughs) Right. I've got a friend who buys boats down in Florida and he made the mistake of, he went to sell it because he got tired of it and bought another one. So he ran into a doctor in Miami, a physician who wanted to buy this boat and he bought it from him in cash.
- Phil: Oh dear.
- Jim: And so, wouldn't you know he couldn't sleep that night because this guy brought all this money up. He couldn't until he got to the bank, you know and shoved the bank. And of course the people at the bank got very excited over \$400,000 in cash being brought in. (Phil laughs) So, as you might surmise, about a year and a half later the feds caught up with him and wanted him to testify. They had the doctor in the jail for drug smuggling.
- Phil: (laughs) We had a lien on a boat down there that I'd been taken in for the deal in Miami, but the only was, that they had used our slip supposedly to pay us for it then. They didn't, and the government took the boat and then our lien was in the water.
- Jim: Right, that was gone.
- Phil: That was gone.
- Jim: Well. I guess more about the boat now. Did you get off at night maneuvers with that? You said you went down a couple times, on your PT boat.
- Phil: Oh we, I, let me go to the bathroom, I'll come right back.
- Jim: I'll stop.
- Phil: You can get all kinds of information about the PT's from the computer.
- Jim: Oh, I know that, yeah.
- Phil: Yeah, I think it's seven different units.
- Jim: Now you said you had a post-war organization that the fella at the Electric Boat Company organized. Is that right?
- Phil: (unintelligible) that somebody?
- Jim: The fella at the Electric Boat.
- Phil: Oh yes, there's three of them in existence now.

Jim: Three organizations.

Phil: Yeah, one big one that has enlisted men, everybody in it and one that has just officers in it.

Jim: Oh, snotty group.

Phil: Well, (laughs) right after I made headmaster of the boat like this came out "PT officers buy race horse." (laughs) It didn't last long, they went through the money but then there's now one where, it's everybody, but it's a -. I've never been to one. I'm not a convention person.

Jim: I forgot to ask you about your personnel. Tell me about the standard personnel on a PT boat.

Phil: Oh, ah –

Jim: A lieutenant JG and a (unintelligible) captain?

Phil: We had a skipper and then an assistant skipper and then you had to --

Jim: Two officers.

Phil: Yeah, two officers and you could have a chief but we, very few people did, but we'd have pretty much first class mechanics, you know what --

Jim: Well, it would be a 1st class seaman of some kind.

Phil: He would be a 1st Class enlisted man.

Jim: Yeah.

Phil: And then your navigator was technically, see we had radars and he ran the radio system too, and then we had gunner's mates and I think four, a torpedo two. We trained 'em all for, you know, all the different ones in training. We were supposed to have two officers and fourteen enlisted men.

Jim: That's a standard crew?

Phil: But we very seldom had fourteen men. They got in each others way. We had people that would do two things. The navigator would man the 40 ammunition and that sort of thing. We just shifted around compared to what armament we were using. Anything that we hadn't used in two to three months we didn't have anybody on.

Jim: You tried to get rid of all excess equipment, because of the speed?

Phil: Yeah, the very few things that we got rid of, once in awhile your anchor for example. (laughs)

Jim: Yeah, well you got rid of the extra torpedoes.

Phil: (laughs) Oh, the torpedoes were terrible things.

Jim: Right, you said they wanted you to have six but you only wanted four.

Phil: No, the other way, the four. You only wanted two, torpedoes.

Jim: Oh, you only wanted two.

Phil: Yeah, but what are you talking about men or torpedoes?

Jim: Torpedoes.

Phil: Yeah, we had two normally. Now over in England, those areas where they were firing a lot of torpedoes they still carried four. All of the boats were equipped with four racks for Mark – 13's.

Jim: How did you put those in the water?

Phil: Dropped 'em.

Jim: Did you have to get up to speed to do this?

Phil: Ahhh --

Jim: Tell me about a typical attack. I guess that's -

Phil: You went up to, I think it was thirty-one knots. You had it all marked and everything, and you had speaker deals on the men that were arming the torpedoes and the skipper and they did the, they had a little box. They just lifted the lid and this would, they would get the torpedo ready and when he said, "Fire," he just pushed two buttons. One bottom released it and the other button started the gyros. The gyros you could set that at whatever depth you wanted. If you wanted to run eight, nine, ten, twelve, it's all done in this little box so when you went to push it like this when he said "Fire," the torpedo dropped in the water but the information that was in there, the gyro you can't change. I mean it held the level, the ailerons and whatnot and the rudder on a course and the engine inside set to the speed, but it was --

Jim: The engine was powered with what?

Phil: Ether, no, alcohol and water.

Jim: Alcohol?

Phil: Yeah, grade A. Oh, we had to watch our supplies of fuel.

Jim: Yeah. Just, those are alcohol burning engines?

Phil: Yeah. Alcohol with water.

Jim: Water?

Phil: Yeah. You get more power out of pure --, light weight --

Jim: What ignited them?

Phil: A spark, electric spark.

Jim: When you pushed the pin to go off the boat it set them off right at that moment?

Phil: Well, they had spring deals down like this, down cables --

Jim: Yes.

Phil: And they would snap 'em right back like this. The torpedo would slide right in the water.

Jim: What made the torpedo get live? I mean what was --

Phil: Everything on those --

Jim: That set it off.

Phil: That's it.

Jim: Then of course the direction was just the direction that your PT boat was going.

Phil: That's right, and the speed.

Jim: You couldn't change the speed of a torpedo, is that right?

Phil: Not after you push the button.

Jim: But I mean you couldn't adjust the speed of the torpedo?

Phil: No, not - After you press the button the torpedo would continue on your course at your speed.

Jim: Whatever that was.

Phil: Yes.

Jim: So, when you had something --

Phil: Way you hoped. (laughs)

Jim: When you had something that you were attacking then you would go as fast as you could?

Phil: I would have to be, speed of the other ship would definitely be in it, so I don't know. The torpedo men used to have parties, Grade A alcohol.

Jim: Is that true?

Phil: They'd sneak it (laughs). They'd go in with a canteen and say "I need a little grade A for my torpedoes." They'd put some in each torpedo, the rest they would go into the --

Jim: Stomach. (Phil laughs) And now when you're attacking these barges, when you attacked, the barge, then it was a different deal.

Phil: It what?

Jim: It was a different deal [**End of tape 1, side B; ca. 30 min.**] when you were attacking the barge.

Phil: Oh, yeah, that was with gunfire.

Jim: And that was at night generally?

Phil: Night, yeah.

Jim: Because that's when they got those barges going.

Phil: Well, if you saw what went on the barge - they had two 30 caliber guns on 'em, the big ones. They're called "big barges".

- Jim: Yeah. So --
- Phil: We could stay off of their range you see and shoot 'em with 50's and 40's and 37's.
- Jim: Stay away, yeah, and then when you knocked the gun out then you'd get in closer and take some personnel out.
- Phil: Yeah, we did, well, the 40's on the back were very destructive. Now that thing has rockets. Rockets got on 'em after I left. The boxes upfront, twelve and you have a dial like that that'll get clocked up to twelve and let go, and they come out, "Bang, bang, bang, bang, bang, bang," twelve of 'em. You could already put it - that's just for dumping.
- Jim: But you didn't have those when you were there?
- Phil: No. We didn't have 40's when I went out there. We put the 40's on. We got 'em from the aircraft carrier, aircraft forces of the Army.
- Jim: Oh, from the Air Force.
- Phil: Yeah.
- Jim: How would you talk 'em into giving up those guns?
- Phil: (laughs) They ended lying all over the field.
- Jim: Oh, they did.
- Phil: They're on wheels. Almost all that stuff you wanted, when we wanted these, I forget what they call them, great big refrigerators and freezers with a gasoline engine and the diesel and an electric engine all on 'em. They were good meat for us whatever was --
- Jim: How about, how was your food out there?
- Phil: According to rumor Mac Arthur had given, when he got down into the headquarters, had given orders that submarines got first choice on the supply ships, PT boats got second choice from the supply ships, and then the leftovers went to the leftover. So we did, we did eat well.
- Jim: You went to a supply ship and you got enough food for say a week or something like that.
- Phil: You see, again, that was all my stuff. I had to have a fleet of people that would do -- Everything that supply was in my title, but I --

- Jim: How much food would you carry aboard one of those PT boats?
- Phil: Oh, unlimited number. Even when we were on the – we had two LST's that had been converted, a 201 and a (unintelligible). The 201 couldn't dock anybody, but the Fortuna could two decks, all the big freighter type boats, one deck until the Cyrene came. It was for (unintelligible). We had officers' quarters.
- Jim: Did you do cooking on the PT boat?
- Phil: Well, you're supposed to. But the tenders also had extra kitchens and extra cooks and they had these big deals a pan and then another one sat in it and then another one sat in it , and another one sat in it, and strapped metal arms or aluminum straps came up, clamps went over and pushed down so and then a big handle. So they could come on board . The heavy supply ships, but sometimes they were moored up in Buna and places like that where there wasn't a supply ship more than twenty miles to it. So they did have their own cook, and they had alcohol stoves and gasoline stoves.
- Jim: So they cooked hot food then on (unintelligible).
- Phil: Yes. But it came tough, and we always tried to get a kitchen up to 'em somehow, like a military kitchen.
- Jim: Yeah. For one group or a Squadron.
- Phil: No, but toward the end of the war they all worked from tenders and that. One time I (unintelligible) a suicide plane flew in and hit while eight cooks from eight boats were waiting for their meal. Killed all of 'em. So we had a bunch of boats over there with no cooks. My boss Biff Bowling, I was in bed one night and, "Lieutenant Sawin report to Commander Bowling on the double." About midnight, I jumped out of bed and up I go. He's sitting in there drinking a cup of coffee. We all had to read dispatches, morning and night, to see what everybody else was doing. I don't know about other ships, but Bowling's ship, everybody read, all of his staff read them. He said, "Sit down." So I sat down. "Did you read the dispatches?" And I said, "Yes." Over on Indaw we were building a base and a lieutenant who'd been a World War I white stripe, he had been with Byrd to the South Pacific --
- Jim: Oh, my.
- Phil: And he was a academy man. This dispatch came,"Commander Bowling(??)can not proceed with building a base, have run out of piles." He said, "You read that?" And I said, "Yes". He said, "Take a dispatch to

him. 'Received your dispatch "Out of piles." I wish you had mine.' Now beat it." So (laughs) I disappeared down, went to bed. I was just getting up, getting my shirt on "Lieutenant Sawin, report to Commander Bowling's office *immediately*." So I go running up (laughs) and he's got his cup of coffee. He drank about twenty cups of coffee a day. Good guy though, oh, one of the few and I won't --. "Sit down. Coffee?" I said, "No." He said, "You read the dispatches last night?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Did I send an answer to one of 'em?" And I said, "No." I said, "You wrote it but I didn't send it." "I'll get you promotions yet, now get out of here."

Jim: (laughs) He was worried about ya. He clearly had second thoughts about his dispatch.

Phil: (laughs) There were a few funny things.

Jim: I take it you weren't thrilled with the Academy boys. The "trade school boys" seem to bother you.

Phil: Well, they're clannish.

Jim: Sure.

Phil: They're definitely competent. There's no question about that and mostly nice people, that sort of thing, but if there's everybody there that can do things and an Academy man that can do 'em half way, the Academy man is still going to get it.

Jim: He's gonna get the job.

Phil: We used to call Annapolis "Trade school on the Severn."

Jim: Right.

Phil: Oh, do you want funny?

Jim: Sure.

Phil: Bob Hope and Colonna, was that his name?

Jim: Colonna.

Phil: Corona? Okay, and a beautiful girl came out on our tender for dinner on a Sunday, just sitting there and then Bob Hope and, I'm over here where I usually sit. Right at his left hand. And they were talking about how long the war was and that sort of thing (laughs), and one them said, "What do

you think about it Lieutenant Sawin?" I said, "I think if you turn the war over to General Motors we'd have it over in two weeks." (both laugh) You should have seen Biff. I waited until the red went off his face and dismissed myself. I said I had to go to the bathroom. I never got back. I never came back.

Jim: Bob Hope didn't say anything?

Phil: No, but they all laughed. A big joke, you know like this. I didn't mean for it to be *sincere*.

Jim: Your commander was surprised, right?

Phil: (laughs) The other thing, we used to get roast beef out of Australia and he just loved grade beef so about every third or fourth Sunday dinner we'd have roast beef. I don't know whether the enlisted men got it, but the officers did. So, Biff said to me after this, he said, "Do you like garlic in your roast beef?" And I said, "Yeah." He said, "Ya know they don't put any in this roast beef. Can you arrange for me to get garlic in the roast beef?" (laughs) I said, "Yes." The next time it came up and I'd been down to see the chef and made sure. Well, apparently there wasn't enough so Biff said, "Did you taste the garlic in your roast beef?" and I said, "Yeah." Okay, he says, "Can I have a piece?" I said, "Yeah." "Oh,- I don't call that enough, yeash." He said, "Could you talk to the chef for me?" So I went down the next time, before they cooked 'em. I went down early morning and I told him and he said, "Okay." So we and then (laughs) Biff complained again so I said, "Well, I'll go down and I'll have the chef come up and you can talk to him all that you want." And he, big white hat, the whole deal like this, and he comes up and, a big tall man, white and he said, "Yes sir." Biff says, "Well, you know about the garlic?" And he says, "Yeah, I just came up myself to find out how much beef you want in your garlic." Well, this is a three striper, this guy sitting here. (laughs)

Jim: (unintelligible) He's a Striper.

Phil: I sort of got sort of ready to see a chair go through the air or something but Biff said quietly, "You are dismissed." The end –

Jim: Never heard about it again after that.

Phil: All we ever heard about the garlic. (laughs)

Jim: Oh, that's terrific. What else have you got?

Phil: Oh, it was a long time. It was only two and a half, three years, but I was away from, we had four children then.

Jim: Before you went overseas?

Phil: Yeah. Dotty and I were married when she was twenty and I was twenty-three. I had a job in New York city. At that time public relations was new and I was a political science graduate so my, the company that I worked for put me over in the top public relations firm for six weeks. Then I went back to them in copper and brass research. They were also public relations for copper, brass, and bronze. So Dotty and I wanted to get married, but it was, I'd been there for a year, year and a half. She was Smith College. My mother was Smith; my sister was Smith; my (unintelligible) was Smith. I said I should have (laughs) a Smith diploma here somewhere. Anyway, we decided to get married, and Dotty would finish later, and that's what we did. She did finish, not only that, but I got a master's degree.

Jim: You said that. She came out here with you.

Phil: Yeah. So she was twenty and I was twenty-three when we were married. We had our first child at the end of the first year. Only we wanted a boy, girl, boy, girl two years apart 'cause we knew at one time we'd go back to our school and teach so we had a boy, two years later we had a girl, two years later we had a boy on the other boy's birthday.

Jim: Boy, that's planning.

Phil: We were going to write a book, here's how ya do it. (laughs)

Jim: Right.

Phil: Then the other one, was a girl instead of a girl a boy. But he was the same birthday as the first born. See by that time we were teaching and we couldn't, we had to have them in the summer time. So they're June, July and August. Now, do you want to go down and see some pictures of the PT boats?

Jim: Yeah. We're through here if you've run out of stories.

Phil: Oh, yeah, I could go on forever, but when I read some of those deals that are in the computer, a whole bunch of stuff that wasn't so. It was just -- One thing that bothered me, I designed -- we were getting PT boats by the dozen. They were bringing 'em over on the freighters and dropping 'em off. It worked but, when we took ours off in Brisbane we were lifting fifty ton boats with a thirty ton crane. The old man at random ordered me out of the way. He said, "Come on in here." He had a bottle of brandy. By the time we had the four boats in the water we killed a quart of brandy.

(laughs). First boat it was “little bit”, “little bit.” Last boat was “Take ‘er off!” (laughs)

Jim: He was worried about his ship.

Phil: He wasn't as worried about the ship; he was worried his crane.

Jim: Oh, his crane.

Phil: Yeah, he could see that crane bucklin' into the water. And the only one they had in the harbor. I never saw him again, just that one exposure. Yeah, well.

Jim: Do you think the esprit de corps in the PT boat country was very high?

Phil: Ah, I would say it was just normal. I think an engineer was just as happy with his as gasoline twelve cylinders. You should see those things, great big cylinders. When they change the sparkplug you have to reach down in the middle. Had to be warm or you'd never get 'em out. You reach down here, about this long, you go in from an engine here and you get six plugs in here. They were messes. The Allison engine that was in production then, right across the street in Pittsburgh. Those engines were three-fifths of a pound per horsepower. Ours I between three and five pounds per horsepower. The (unintelligible). It was just – they were Gar Woods old racing engines.

Jim: I see.

Phil: They doctored 'em. I had, as I told ya, about six different things that were easy to do. Just the changing of the sparkplugs got us horsepower –

Jim: Like the head.

Phil: Yeah.

Jim: But they were, would you say, difficult to maintain?

Phil: Ah, they didn't last long. We had two, (laughs) I said somebody that had been in the boats and everything, Goff Beach, used to be President of Oscar Meyer.

Jim: I know.

Phil: We moved out here the same time he did. We didn't know, he came up from Chicago. I came out from Delaware and we met at the country club. We hadn't seen each other since the war was over. (laughs) We were very

good friends. I said to Joyce – and we were immediately friends out here. Because I said when were good friends out there, I was the one that gave him new engines (laughs) for his PT boat. They had to come to me to get permission and the slip.

Jim: I see. How many did hours did those motors generally last?

Phil: Ah, 400 to 500, and they would last longer but fighting to maintain speed we had –

Jim: Wear ‘em out faster.

Phil: Yeah, we didn’t run ‘em down when they got weak. We shoved ‘em right in the factory. We had two overhaul factories. One going out there before we got there. He was waiting for engines to do.

Jim: All right, that’ll do it.

Phil: Pardon?

Jim: That will do it here.

Phil: Okay. Can you hear it?

Jim: Just want to be sure it’s rewinding.

[End of interview total time ca. 76 min.]