

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
JOHN H. SHESKEY
Electrician, Navy, Korean War

2000

OH
276

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Sheskey, John H. (1929-2015). Oral History Interview, 2000.

User: sound recording : 1 sound cassette (ca. 50 min.) ; analog, 1 7/8 ips.

Master: videorecording : 1 videocassette (ca. 50 min.) ; sd., col. ; 1/2 in.

Abstract:

John Sheskey, born on a farm near Randolph, Wisconsin, discusses his experiences in the US Navy before and during the Korean War, and his post-Navy career and military service. Sheskey signed up in 1948 for a 3-year stint in the Navy. After boot camp, and subsequent training at Treasure Island (San Francisco) as an electrician, in 1950 Sheskey was assigned to the USS *De Haven* and sent to Japan. He recounts how he learned of the outbreak of hostilities in Korea. The *De Haven* arrived off of the coast of South Korea providing support for the Army ashore. He relates his ship's role in the September 1950 invasion of Inchon. He reflects on the reason for the invasion's success. Sent back to the US so that the *De Haven* could be fitted with new gun barrels, Sheskey went AWOL. He explains the reason for his action, and its consequence. Sheskey touches on his second trip to Korea in April 1951—this time signed on as a torpedo man and repairman on the destroyer tender *Piedmont*; and a return to the States the following spring, with, after an extension, another return to South Korea before being discharged in December 1952. He shares humorous stories of reconnecting with shipmates. Sheskey used the GI bill to attend college. He ascribes the course of his postwar life, which included ten years with the Coast Guard Reserve and fifteen years with the Army Reserves along with twenty-six years with the Madison Police Department, to the value of military service.

Biographical Sketch:

Sheskey (1929-2015) served in the US Navy from 1948-1952. Stationed in Japan, Sheskey's ship was sent to the Korean peninsula with the outbreak of the Korean War in June 1950. Participating in the invasion at Inchon, his service involved two additional rotations. He was discharged in December 1952, but served later in the Coast Guard Reserve and the Army Reserves.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000

Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein, 2011

Reviewed by Channing Welch, 2015

Abstract written by Jeff Javid, 2015

Interview Transcript

- McIntosh: This is the 20th of July year 2000, talking to John Sheskey. Where were you born John?
- Sheskey: On a farm near Randolph, Wisconsin, Dodge County.
- McIntosh: What year?
- Sheskey: April 24, 1929.
- McIntosh: And what year did you enter military service?
- Sheskey: December 2, 1948. I joined the Navy for three years.
- McIntosh: You joined as a three year hitch? Was that set up like that then?
- Sheskey: And they promised that I could get with my brother who was also in the Navy at the time.
- McIntosh: And did it?
- Sheskey: I never met my brother while he was in the Navy and while I was in the Navy.
- McIntosh: So that was not exactly true?
- Sheskey: Right.
- McIntosh: Where did they send you?
- Sheskey: I went to San Diego for basic training. They discovered I had a temperature after about three weeks in basic training. And they put me in a hospital, and it took them two or three weeks to find out that I had infection in my upper teeth on one side.
- McIntosh: Oh my goodness.
- Sheskey: They said they were going to discharge me, but they didn't. The next few days they discovered I had this infection in my upper teeth. So I was glad I got in the Navy. I came from a farm, and the Navy took care of my teeth.
- McIntosh: So they fixed your teeth problems and got rid of the infection, and so after boot camp where did you go?

Sheskey: I passed the test to go to Electronics School, forty-two weeks in Treasure Island in San Francisco area. So I went there for Electronics School.

McIntosh: To be a radioman?

Sheskey: Basically, yes.

McIntosh: I mean that's what you are dealing with most time was the radio?

Sheskey: Electronics, yes, repairing electronics.

McIntosh: Radar or just radio?

Sheskey: Everything.

McIntosh: Oh, all that stuff.

Sheskey: And electronics.

McIntosh: You had to be able to repair it, too?

Sheskey: Yes.

McIntosh: Oh, that's more complicated than just turning the button on and off then, wasn't it?

Sheskey: Right, and then after Electronics School, which was April 1950, they were discharging a lot of sailors, and the ships needed sailors. They were short of sailors so they transferred me to the USS *De Haven* in San Diego. It had about 280 men on this ship.

McIntosh: The [USS] *De Haven* was a DD [destroyer]?

Sheskey: Yes.

McIntosh: Number what?

Sheskey: 727.

McIntosh: And your duty was as the radioman on board or electronics expert, or how did they deploy [??]

Sheskey: They took off for Japan June 1st, so I didn't do too much in electronics until then. And then on the ship they said that we'd be in Japan—no, excuse me, the first of May 1950 we left for Japan. And we stopped in Hawaii for a few days and a couple of other islands, and we got to Japan

June 1st, 1950. And I was extremely seasick all the way, and they nicknamed me “Buckets”. That was my name even at ship reunions thirty years later.

McIntosh: [laughs] They haven't forgotten it; they're still teasing you.

Sheskey: They kept calling me “Buckets.” So we landed in Tokyo, Japan June 1st, 1950, and then we went to Sasebo, Japan and visited Nagasaki and Hiroshima on our weekends. And they had everything cleaned up in those cities but no repair. And then on June 25th 1950 I was in Sasebo, Japan. I was walking the street on Sunday, and the Military Army Police picked us up and said, “Get back to your ship immediately. War started in Korea.” And we said, “Where's Korea?” They said, “You'll be there tomorrow”. So two days later we were in shore of Korea, and we were shooting in, and they were shooting back at us.

McIntosh: Well, which side?

Sheskey: The southern tip and also then the east side.

McIntosh: I see. You're cruising along the shoreline and giving support to the Army that was struggling there?

Sheskey: Yes. I think our shells would go four or five miles.

McIntosh: These were, what, six-inchers?

Sheskey: Five-inch.

McIntosh: Five-inch.

Sheskey: That was our maximum, and then when they would shoot at us we'd go out so their shells won't hit us. Although one did, and I think we had one killed on the ship.

McIntosh: From an artillery shell from shore?

Sheskey: Yeah. And then we kept shooting in and patrolling back and forth. And I think there was four destroyers over there in that area [coughs].

McIntosh: In your squadron there were five of them?

Sheskey: Yeah.

McIntosh: Or four?

Sheskey: I think there was a maximum of four in the whole area. But the enemy would put those floating mines down the river, and they would go into the ocean. So two of our four destroyers got their bows blown off. Sometimes thirty, thirty-five men would get killed [coughs]. Then September 13th, 1950 we went to Inchon, and the tide there was thirty, thirty-two feet, and we went in about noon, and the tide would come in and turn our ship around because the water was so shallow. We couldn't turn around on our own. So we only stayed there about an hour and a half, September, 13th.

McIntosh: You were supporting the landing then.

Sheskey: Preparing for that. And then it was only five or six of our ships. And we was trying to find out how much enemy fire was going to hit us.

McIntosh: Oh, you were trying to draw their fire to—

Sheskey: We were only there like two hours on September 13th during the noon hour. The 14th the same thing; we'd go in at noon, water would come in and turn our ships around, and we'd leave.

McIntosh: Did they return fire?

Sheskey: Yes. They did return fire but not much. Then September 15th we went in at about 4:35 a.m., and that's when all of the ships were behind us landing all the troops. And we stayed there shooting for about five days until we ran out of ammunition in the Harbor of Inchon, but we didn't land. We just fired for five days.

McIntosh: Well, there was no pier there anyways so.

Sheskey: Right. At Wolmido—

McIntosh: Yeah, Wolmido Island.

Sheskey: Yeah, and so we got out of there because there was a battle ship there too at that time. And then we went, and we got loaded with ammunition in Japan again. And then went back and supported there, and at that time our government thought the war would be over in a few—two or three months. So our military did not send the winter clothes over there because they thought we'd be out of there in October or so. But in November the Chinese came across the border and killed a lot of our troops. But our five-inch gun barrels were worn out. So we went back to the U.S. about November 1st, but it was in October there was a shortage of our people on our ship. And we had torpedoes, several of those, and we also had depth charges. And the depth charges normally would roll down a track and fall off the back. And they were either set at fifty feet or a hundred feet that

they would go off. And we had a safety bar in there, and we had this one seaman, he was greasing the mechanism to release 'em. But in the States you have the safety bar, but he still greased it like he was supposed to. But he didn't realize over there somebody took the safety bar out. So we're backing up maybe four or five knots, shooting in, and the enemy shooting at us. We're shooting in, and he's—about 10:00 a.m. he's really greasing the mechanism to release them, and he didn't know the safety bar was missing. So all of a sudden he yells, "One of the depth charges rolled off the back," and we were backing over it. But luckily it was set at a hundred feet instead of fifty feet. But I was walking out on the back deck at the time, and I just stepped out of the door on the floor level, and two or three guys was running toward me from the fantail. I was maybe 150 feet from the end of the ship, and I was going to say "Whatever happened?" And all of a sudden the ship blew up, and I went up in the air, and I remember landing, and I think two sailors were thrown off the ship, but we were only going about four or five knots so they got back on the ship somehow. I didn't see it. But we all ran to our battle stations 'cause all of us didn't know what was happening. So then after that we had to go to Japan and get all of our compartments welded up again because it busted two or three compartments. And one guy I knew, he was a mess cook, and he was sleeping in his bunk, the only one in his compartment, and all of a sudden this blast woke him up, and here water was coming in the compartment, and we had two, three more injured on the ship. I got slightly injured but not that bad. So then we had to go to Japan get all those welded up and life jackets—

McIntosh: When was this now?

Sheskey: October 1950.

McIntosh: Oh, '50.

Sheskey: 19-

McIntosh: Oh, this is would be—you talked about going back to the United States, and then this happened before.

Sheskey: Yeah, goin' back we went back to the States in like November. Last November 1st to December we went –

McIntosh: But this incident with the mines happened before that?

Sheskey: Yes.

McIntosh: Oh, I see, okay.

Sheskey: So we get to Seattle, and we get new gun barrels and so forth, and my mother flew out to Spokane to visit her sister, and I was in Seattle. And of course I was seasick all the time on this destroyer so I asked my lieutenant, I says, "I'd like to have three days off to go visit my mother", 'cause I had thirty days on the books with a paycheck coming. And he wouldn't approve it so I went AWOL. I jumped the ship, went to Spokane, visited my mother, and three days later I was back on the ship, and prior to that I put in a request for a transfer on a bigger ship. And we were tied up against the [USS] *Piedmont* which was a destroyer tender [a ship that provides maintenance support to warships] in San Diego before we left for overseas. And a seaman came on our destroyer off of the *Piedmont*. He said that he was gonna kill his boatswain mate if he didn't get transferred off of a different ship, and I says, "Well, you put in for the *De Haven*, and I'll put in for the *Piedmont*, but I want a big ship so I won't get seasick." So we signed the papers with a transfer. This was in May before we left—June 1st—no this was before we left for Japan 'cause we got to Japan June 1st. Well anyway, up in Seattle, November or December we're getting new guns on our destroyer. So I went AWOL for three days, came back to the ship and reported in as AWOL, and I shouldn't have done that. And I went to the captain's mast [a disciplinary hearing for minor infractions by an enlisted person] the next day which was rare that you'd get to the captain's mast. It usually took months to get to a captain's mast, but the next day they went up to a captain's mast. And the captain says that he was in the Navy for twenty years and never had this happen where a man went AWOL when he requested a transfer, 'cause he said your transfer is here, physically on the ship. So he arrived, the seaman arrived on the ship a day or two after I left AWOL [laughs].

McIntosh: What a coincidence.

Sheskey: Yeah, but I said, "Well, the lieutenant wouldn't give me three days off". Well, that didn't make any difference. So they gave me Marine brig at hard labor for ten days.

McIntosh: Ten days?

Sheskey: For being AWOL but you could request an attorney so I requested an attorney on the ship, and he was a lieutenant, and he says, "If you ever do this again," he says, "don't report back to the ship. Come back and just say you must have missed musters. You must have been sleepin' for three days during muster". No, but I was fool enough to admit that I went AWOL. But I said I won't do it again [laughs].

McIntosh: So you got a transfer?

Sheskey: So yeah, I spent ten days in the Marine brig. Was taken to the Marine brig, and they said, “Do you smoke?” I says, “No,” and there is about twenty of us, and then the rest of the prisoners got there. They were out workin’. And one of the guys—I knew one off our ship, he says that he smokes and he requested me say that I smoke and then I could pass him cigarettes. You get three or four cigarettes a day if you smoke, but out of your own cabinet. So then I went to a Marine sergeant. I says, “Yeah, I smoke,” but I get my cigarettes from #10. We were all numbered, no names, put in [??] suit, and you worked six days a week. Sunday you were allowed out of your compartment. There were about twenty of us in one compartment and white painted lines on the floor. You had to request permission to cross the white lines, or you had to cross about three of ‘em if you wanted to go to the toilet at 3:00 a.m. you had to—

McIntosh: Get permission for—

Sheskey: Ask the Marine—yeah, and sometimes he was sleepin’. So when I requested that I smoke, and that I could get cigarettes from #10, the Marine sergeant was drunk off duty, and he had his arms around my neck, and he had about eight cigarettes in my mouth.

McIntosh: Oh my.

Sheskey: Battling with me [??]. So we’d go out and pick up dandelions, and we put ‘em in a wheelbarrel, and the sergeant Marine or corporal would tip it over, and we’d have to count all the dandelions. They kept you busy for ten hours a day. It was the best food I ever had is because in a Marine brig for those ten days you could request anything you wanted for breakfast or diner or evening meal. You could say I wanted three eggs, you’d get ‘em.

But you had to eat with one hand on one knee, but I never ate so good in the military as when I was in a Marine brig at hard labor ‘cause you could request one or two eggs or pancakes or whatever.

McIntosh: Did you have to finish everything?

Sheskey: Yes, but I really enjoyed those ten days because I wasn’t seasick [both laugh]. So after the ten days then they flew me—it was April, yeah April, I must have been in the Brig in March.

McIntosh: This must be ‘51 now.

Sheskey: ‘51, oh yes, I went home for Christmas 1950. I’m sorry, 1950, Christmas I was home. ‘Cause our ship was getting fixed up, and then I went back to Seattle and got on a ship February 9th because, yeah, I went AWOL First of April ‘51. So then my transfer came through. So then, right after I got

out of the Marine brig the next day, they flew me to San Francisco 'cause I—

McIntosh: From Seattle?

Sheskey: From Seattle.

McIntosh: That's where the *Piedmont* was?

Sheskey: The *Piedmont* was in San Francisco. So I flew down there and landed at the airport, and they had the band out, and all the military was there, and I thought, "Oh, you know, I'm not a hero. What the hell is this all for at the public airport?" I said I couldn't figure it out. So I went up town and took out a hotel room for one night. [General] MacArthur landed [??] with his wife, and his son—was the first time in the US on April 10th or something like that in '51, and that evening before sunset I got pictures of MacArthur in my hotel in San Francisco. The next day I got on the *Piedmont*, and I wasn't so seasick after that when we went back to [inaudible].

McIntosh: The *Piedmont*, how big a ship was that?

Sheskey: It's a destroyer tender, and it's probably half again as long as a destroyer.

McIntosh: A destroyer was about 350, 380 feet long?

Sheskey: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: So this was about 500 hundred, 600 hundred feet?

Sheskey: Yeah, and it's a slow ship.

McIntosh: Is that an LSD?

Sheskey: No.

McIntosh: Not that big.

Sheskey: No. But they needed torpedo men, so I was a torpedo man after that. And we went to Korea with the *Piedmont*, and destroyers would come aside of us, as many as four or five aside of us at a one time, and we would repair them.

McIntosh: So the second time in Korea was a little nicer for you.

Sheskey: Yeah, and we didn't see the battle.

McIntosh: Nobody was shooting at ya.

Sheskey: Right.

McIntosh: That's an improvement right there.

Sheskey: So then in '52, the spring, we got to the US. I took twenty, thirty days off on vacation.

McIntosh: Well, your hitch was up.

Sheskey: Extended a year. Everybody was extended a year. So then I went back to the ship in probably July of '52, and they said you gotta go back to Korea again because the ship is going, and your discharge date is December 2. So then I went, got on the ship again. I was a little seasick. Got to the Japan area, Korea area, Piedmont [ital?]-

McIntosh: Third time?

Sheskey: Third time and then I was at Sasebo, Puson, Korea, and my time was up so they put me on a ship to Sasebo, and then they put me on a train from Sasebo to Tokyo, and then they put me on a military transport from Tokyo to go to Seattle. God, I was seasick there. I slept on the upper deck. These high military people, they had private dogs, and the dogs and I slept on the top and near the hot air vents, not everyone went down. I think it took nine or ten days on a ship to get to Seattle [coughs]. So, I got to Seattle in a couple days. I was discharged, and I came home to Beaver Dam, where my parents lived. My dad was sick so I took care of him. January '53 I started at college here.

McIntosh: Using your GI Bill?

Sheskey: Usin' my GI Bill, and I was working at a filling station. They had one on State Street [Madison, WI] then, and all of a sudden a guy pulls up, and he says, "Are you seventeen?" I says, "You're fifteen." That was our prisoner's numbers. So here's a few people around watching us, and we are calling each other a number [both laugh].

McIntosh: Well, there he had a pretty good eye for him to remember that. That was only—

Sheskey: Yeah.

McIntosh: Two days he saw you.

Sheskey: Yeah.

McIntosh: That's pretty good.

Sheskey: Yeah.

McIntosh: Where does he live?

Sheskey: He lived up north, I don't know, forty, fifty miles. I should have got his name, but I didn't.

McIntosh: Oh my.

Sheskey: Another thing, I enlisted in the Navy, and was traveling though Missouri. And November '48 Truman was elected to be President. I got a picture of him the next day when he went to Jefferson City on the back end of a train with his wife and his daughter. So I got a picture of them.

McIntosh: How nice.

Sheskey: That was a few days before I enlisted. Another thing when I was on the USS *Piedmont*, I bought a book on how to hypnotize people, and this other kid and I, we read it, and we started hypnotizing guys on the ship. In the end he was much better than I was, but we did hypnotize a few people on the ship and put the guy's feet on a chair and his shoulders on another chair, and I'd, I say, you know, "Stiffen." It'd take me about ten minutes. And I'd set him in the middle, and he wouldn't [inaudible]. I was talking all the time, keep repeating a few things, just [??] what you gotta say. I'd sit on his middle, and somebody would sit on my lap, and somebody would sit on his lap so about 500 pounds in the middle, and he wouldn't bend.

McIntosh: Amazing.

Sheskey: So, I was [laughs]—yeah, it went real good. And then I'd put one guy's feet on a bunk and another one on another bunk and then poke the bunk. But it worked out pretty good. Then thirty-three years later, I was out of the Navy. Thirty-three years later I get a phone call. I'm in my backyard, I get a phone call, and the guy says, "You hypnotized me, and you never unhypnotized me." [laughs] I said, "Where you livin'?" He said southern Illinois, so I went down there to southern Illinois.

McIntosh: Oh, my goodness.

Sheskey: And met him.

McIntosh: Was he a friend from the *Piedmont*?

Sheskey: Yeah, and we talked. He never mentioned after I went down there and bought him dinner. He never mentioned it, about hypnotism when we talked about old times, but thirty-three years and he remembered it. And this other kid in St. Louis that read the book with me, he became a professor. And another thing, I don't know if I should mention it, but anyway, before I got in the Navy I worked for this farmer who had a milk route, 120 milk cans on the truck. And once in awhile he didn't want to take the milk route, and I would take the milk route, hauled milk to Beaver Dam for Kraft [Foods]. And I thought I was really strong, lifting those milk cans off the truck, and of course I was nineteen when I got in the Navy. When I got in the Navy I thought I might as well take up boxing because I'm really strong. So I started taking up boxing, you know, just spare time, and [laughs] I'd get beat up every time because those kids boxed in high school and I didn't. I just thought I was strong, but so this was about probably thirty years after I got out of the Navy, I remember the guy's name, and I remember the town in Texas where he lived. So I stopped and saw him. I had dinner with him, and he admitted he was sixteen years old when he was in the Navy.

McIntosh: Incredible.

Sheskey: Yeah, and I said, "You're the last one I ever boxed with [laughs]. That's why I remember you." I was nineteen, and he was sixteen, but he was bigger. But I enjoyed the military except that lieutenant should have let off for three days when I had three days on the books. Why—but I think he punished me was maybe he thought I was seasick on purpose. I don't know because I don't know what else. So when I got out of the Navy I went to college here and got on the police department.

McIntosh: What did you take in college?

Sheskey: I took up graphic arts 'cause that was the only opening that they had at that time, and I thought I would expand, but one guy in class, he says, said "Hell, you can get on the police department, work nights and go to college in the daytime." I thought, well hell, that sounds pretty good. So then I got on the police department, and then in 1964 I got in the Coast Guard Reserve, and I had no complaints about that, and I stayed there until 1974, and then they transferred to Milwaukee and I didn't want to drive that far so then I got in the Army Reserves in '74, and I retired in '89. So I got to very close to twenty-five years in the Military.

McIntosh: On Military Reserve did you have to spend some time at camps or onboard ship?

Sheskey: On the Coast Guard Reserve we never went on a ship, no.

McIntosh: And the Army? You spent two weeks in the summer somewhere?

Sheskey: Yeah.

McIntosh: Camp McCoy, Fort McCoy?

Sheskey: Yeah. I had no complaints about the Reserve. Coast Guard I had no complaints, but it's not under the Department of Defense those years.

McIntosh: Tell me about the food difference between the *Piedmont* and the destroyer, about the same?

Sheskey: The destroyer we didn't have milk, you know; they didn't have fresh milk. But, yeah, maybe the *Piedmont* was a little better, but at the time because I vomited so much, I wasn't concentrating on how [laughs] good the food was because it wasn't with me that long. So then I joined the US Navy League [a support organization for the Navy]. So the last day the Battleship *Wisconsin* was out at sea my wife and I was on it off the East Coast. So, I can say I was on the Battleship *Wisconsin*, but I didn't get seasick there, but we didn't get out too far. So on my fortieth wedding anniversary I asked my wife to go through the Panama Canal with me, and I was the only one who was seasick on the [laughs] ship going through the Panama Canal, and that was two years ago, which was a real good trip with the boys. But I'm getting a monthly check retirement now, and I would encourage these young people to check and see what the military has to offer.

McIntosh: Right,

Sheskey: A Reserve, Guard, or whatever because it certainly can increase your education (**END OF Tape 1, SIDE A**) if your plan went right.

McIntosh: Well, they give you a skill. I think that's the best thing.

Sheskey: Yeah, right, and check 'em all, you know. The Air Force has a higher rate of people re-enlisting than the other branches.

McIntosh: Did you join any veterans organizations?

Sheskey: Yeah, I belong to the VFW 1311.

McIntosh: Did your ship get any decorations when you were in Korea that you know of, just unit citations?

Sheskey: Can't remember, yeah, some citations, yeah.

McIntosh: So how long were you in college?

Sheskey: All totaled close to four years at UW.

McIntosh: Yeah, you got a degree in what?

Sheskey: Police science of course. I was a detective supervisor when I retired, which was a good position because you could get overtime, whereas a lieutenant you don't get any overtime or very little as a lieutenant or a captain.

McIntosh: You spent all this time in Madison after you got out of the Navy, didn't ya?

Sheskey: Yes. And I spent two years working in jail after I got out of the police department which was very interesting talking to prisoners for two years.

McIntosh: You were in the police department how long?

Sheskey: Twenty-six years. I got out in '53, and on my day off I got into a real bad car accident. So, I was off for a few years, and then I came back in '58, and I went to see the chief, and he says, "No problem." He says, "You can start any time you want."

McIntosh: Hey, terrific. That was nice.

Sheskey: He said, "You can start next week, or," he says, "you can start as a recruit and get six months of free school." So I says, "I'll take the six months of free school."

McIntosh: Tell me about the *Piedmont*. I don't know much about submarine tenders. What was your occupation?

Sheskey: It was a destroyer tender.

McIntosh: I mean destroyer, I don't mean—I misspoke. You had supplies for them—food supplies or all kinds of supplies, ammunition supplies, too or?

Sheskey: Mostly repair, mechanics.

McIntosh: I see.

Sheskey: We would repair the destroyers.

McIntosh: You'd put your men aboard their destroyer to repair 'em?

Sheskey: Yup, yes.

McIntosh: Yeah, 'cause you didn't have way of puttin' 'em in dry dock there.

Sheskey: Right.

McIntosh: You'd just come alongside?

Sheskey: They would come and tie up against us. Sometimes you'd have four destroyers tied aside of us or destroyer escorts which is a smaller destroyer.

McIntosh: So you just had a bunch of machinist mates?

Sheskey: Yup, right.

McIntosh: That's what the other ship was.

Sheskey: Right, and of course as a torpedoman the Navy didn't use many torpedoes in the Korean War, probably none or very few. I think they used a few to bust open some enemy dams, but see we didn't have much conflict with their ships 'cause they didn't have the ships. But, I should say the Korean War started June 25th, 1950. We were at the southern tip of Korea, and we were considered a communication ship, and we went on the land. And the enemy was so close, maybe five or ten miles from pushing us off the country. And we had to figure out should our troops land, that just arrived from the US. This is maybe ten days or twelve days after the Korean War started, because the enemy was so close, and I met a lot of American soldiers that were really drunk. And you could hear the shells from the enemy which was maybe four, five miles away. So our captain and the other captains of the destroyers and other ships they decided, "Yes we should land our troops". Because, you know, then our troops landed that arrived from the US, you know, in great number, and I think maybe this is ten or twelve days after the Korean War started. So when our troops landed we stayed there for a week or two and landed all—thousands of our troops there, and then they pushed the enemy back real fast because Inchon Invasion was like a hundred miles from Pusan. So we did real good the latter part of July and August. We pushed the enemy back real fast. And that's why Inchon Invasion went over pretty good because the enemy was north of there already or almost north. But then the Chinese came across, you know, November '50 which—

McIntosh: Switched situations.

Sheskey: Oh, which screwed up everything—of course MacArthur got fired because he insisted to go into China and push them back. I kind of respect Truman. I think he did right.

McIntosh: Were your quarters larger in the *Piedmont* than they were on the DD?

Sheskey: Slightly, yes. Yeah, on the *Piedmont*, you know, you'd have two feet from one bunk to the other, you know, I mean three, high. Of course, I spent a lot of time not in my bunk because I was seasick.

McIntosh: You'd go up on deck?

Sheskey: Yeah. I was probably the most seasick one on the ship. I just couldn't help myself.

McIntosh: Now that they have drugs for this when you take an airplane you can—

Sheskey: Yeah. They gave me pills, but I don't know if they did help.

McIntosh: Well they didn't have the right pills then.

Sheskey: Yeah, right.

McIntosh: They do now though. Have you flown an airplane and had any problems with that?

Sheskey: No, never in an airplane. But I'm happy that I got in the Reserves, I'm drawing retirement. And my brother he got out of the Navy in about nine years, but I never met him while he was in the Navy when I was in the military. But it would be a different world if all of our young men would get into basic training and what they learn there.

McIntosh: Did you keep in contact with any of your crew members?

Sheskey: Yeah, I go to ship reunions.

McIntosh: Which ship?

Sheskey: USS *Piedmont*.

McIntosh: Oh, not the destroyer?

Sheskey: No, they don't meet that often. I was only on it a year so I didn't recognize, couldn't recognize many.

McIntosh: Sure. Well, I think that about does it.

Sheskey: Okay, fine.

[End of Interview]