

**Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center**

Transcript of an

Oral History Interview with

MAX THURNER

Machinist, Navy, World War II and Korean War

2003

OH
760

OH 760

Thurner, Max (b. 1926). Oral History Interview, 2003.

User: 1 audio cassette (ca. 60 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono

Master: 1 audio cassette (ca. 60 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Abstract:

Max Thurner, a Milwaukee, Wisconsin native, discusses his service as a machinist mate and motor machinist first class in the US Navy aboard ship in the Pacific during World War II, and in the Naval Reserves during the Korean War. Thurner enlisted in the Navy in July 1944 just shy of his eighteenth birthday, with the goal of becoming a submariner. He discourses on his familial heritage and covers his basic training at Great Lakes Naval Station where he also played in the Drum & Bugle Corps. He recounts what a typical workday was for him aboard his first assignment, USS *Hanover*. The *Hanover* transported troops to Okinawa, Korea, and China; Thurner found one trip especially problematic. He also shares a humorous incident from his time as a bugler aboard ship. He explains the use of a fog screen. *Hanover* was decommissioned in May 1946. Thurner was next stationed on a minesweeper working off the Atlantic seaboard. He left service end of July 1947 but joined the Reserves, resumed a prewar apprenticeship, and was called back into active service with the outbreak of the Korean conflict.

Biographical Sketch:

Thurner (b. 1926) served in the US Navy during World War II. He was involved in ship maintenance in the Pacific Theatre. As a member of the Naval Reserves he was called up for the Korean conflict.

Interviewed by Laurie Arendt 2003

Transcribed by Joshua Goldstein 2013

Reviewed by Channing Welch 2015

Abstract written by Jeff Javid 2015

Interview Transcript:

Arendt: This is an interview with—state your name.

Thurner: Max Thurner.

Arendt: Who served with the Navy, correct?

Thurner: In the United States Navy.

Arendt: During what years?

Thurner: 1945 through 1947 and then 1950 through 1952. So I had five years of active duty in the Navy and three years as a Reserve. Between 1947 and 1950 I was in the Naval Reserves.

Arendt: The interview is being conducted at his home at the following address—what is your address?

Thurner: 1711 West Fiesta Lane, Mequon, Wisconsin 53092.

Arendt: And today is July 25, 2003, and the interviewer is Laurie Arendt who is the coordinator for the Ozaukee Veterans Book Project. Mrs. Thurner is also here, too.

Agnes: Agnes Thurner.

Arendt: Agnes Thurner. So, first of all tell me a little bit—

Thurner: Can I tell you a little bit about my name?

Arendt: Sure.

Thurner: Can I put a little bit of humor in this?

Arendt: Sure. You can say whatever you want.

Thurner: Okay. I was born July 23, 1926, and I have a twin sister. Our names have long titles so my real name which went on all the Navy records and all the papers I had to sign, it was Maximilian Franz Josef Thurner.

Arendt: Wow.

Thurner: So there was never enough room on any—they called them chits, you know, C-H-I-T, to sign, and there was another shipmate, he was Italian.

He had the same problem. His parents came from Italy, and we kidded with him down there because his name was Eugenio Miguelo Pietro Zondazeus.

Arendt: Oh! Good God.

Thurner: So he had the same problem I did [both laugh].

Arendt: So why did you have such a long name? Was it just the tradition?

Thurner: Well, my real name is Maximilian, but the two grandfathers, Franz-Frank and Josef-Joseph, so those are given names, but I generally go by Max.

Agnes: His sister had it worse. She was Maximiliana Odilia Thekla Thurner.

Arendt: Oh, my!

Thurner: I have a twin sister Maxine.

Arendt: Oh, so you call her Maxine for short?

Thurner: Yeah.

Arendt: So why did you share that same similar first name? Is it for a reason?

Agnes: It's a European tradition I think.

Arendt: Oh, really? Okay.

Thurner: Well, when you entered the Navy you needed what was on your birth record, you know.

Arendt: So what did you do? Did you squeeze it all in?

Thurner: Squeeze in as much as I could [both laugh].

Agnes: He used to tease people that he was able to get around because he shortened his name. It used be Von Thurner and he took he Von out.

Arendt: Oh, really? Is it true?

Agnes: No, it wasn't.

Thurner: That was the humor about this [unintelligible]. It may be taking too much of the tape.

Arendt: Oh, no, no, that's fine because someone in my family dropped a Von when they came over. They were like Von Arnold or something like that. Okay, so my question for you is you went in in '45, were you drafted? Did you enlist?

Thurner: No, I enlisted.

Arendt: Why?

Thurner: Well, I knew I would be going in sooner or later. This was July of 1944 so I enlisted in the Navy before my eighteenth birthday which was July 23rd. I was eighteen in 1944, and I wanted to go into the submarines. But as I went into the submarine I reported to Great Lakes [Naval Station, Great Lakes, IL] they had their quota. Then I was actually assigned to the amphibious group, and I was in the amphibious throughout the five years.

Arendt: Why did you want to go into submarines?

Thurner: I don't know. It looked—

Arendt: Looked fun?

Thurner: Yeah.

Arendt: Okay, how did your family feel about you enlisting?

Thurner: Oh, my dad, he was a soldier, too. He was a soldier, and he was always proud of being a soldier, but he was a soldier in World War I but with the German Army, and my both parents are from Germany so he felt very strongly that a person should serve his country. My mother didn't like it too well. You know, she missed me very much.

Arendt: But that was typical.

Thurner: Yeah.

Arendt: Your father was a prisoner of war?

Thurner: Over during World War I.

Agnes: He was a prisoner of war in France, wasn't he?

Thurner: Yeah, he was a prisoner of France for two years.

Arendt: So when you went in, and I have heard this from some of the other World War II era veterans, were you sent to the South Pacific because of your heritage? Did they address that at all?

Turner: I don't think so. I don't think so, but I thought about that a lot because my cousin was over in the Battle of the Bulge, and he died on his twenty-first birthday, January 20th 1945. And when I was in the service I said, "I hope I don't go to Germany, you know, you're fighting your own."

Arendt: Was he an American soldier or a German soldier?

Turner: American. He was born here, and he was my cousin. He was my dad's sister's boy. They had one son only. They took it so hard.

Arendt: What was his name? That way we can remember him.

Turner: Eugene Fallier.

Arendt: How do you spell that?

Turner: F-A-L-L-I-E-R.

Arendt: I always try and do that so that people will remember beyond you.

Agnes: I never met my grandfather, but he was in the Austrian Army also. I have a picture of him in uniform.

Arendt: Oh, how neat.

Turner: This is only his—he was in the 75th Infantry Division.

Arendt: So that happened before you enlisted, correct?

Turner: Yes, he was older than I was.

Arendt: So that was something that had gone through their minds? Okay, fine.

Turner: Later on I thought I just wonder how Eugene felt, you know, being at the battlefield there against his—he might have shot his own cousins because we had cousins—our both sides of the family had a lot of relation.

Arendt: Okay, are you from here?

Turner: Yes, I was born here in Milwaukee. And Eugene took me out of the house on Easter Day, 1941. He took me out of the house to go at 8:00 o'clock at night to go to Mercy Hospital for emergency ruptured appendicitis and

that was a good thing otherwise the doctor said it would have been over before the night was over.

Arendt: My brother-in-law ruptured his appendix on Christmas, and he was just sitting at the table, and we didn't know what was wrong with him so they took him to the hospital. So, okay, you got to Great Lakes, and you ended up in the amphibious group. Were you disappointed? Were you indifferent?

Turner: No, I thought—well, we took twelve weeks of basic boot camp at Great Lakes. Then in October our group went down to Fort Pierce, Florida where they had an amphibious base for training, and we trained there for two months. You know, making landings with the boats I showed you with the landing craft.

Arendt: Tell me about your job again because we don't have it on tape. You were an engineer, correct?

Turner: No, I was called the engineer of that boat. I took care of the engine of this small landing craft.

Arendt: Were you mechanically inclined at all?

Turner: Right.

Arendt: So you enjoyed what you did?

Turner: I became a diesel mechanic.

Arendt: What did you think of your training? Was it adequate? Was it good?

Turner: It was good, and we stayed down there in Fort Pierce, Florida for basically the landing, and then when we went up to Newport, Rhode Island to the base there where the ship's company was assembled. All the people that were ready ranked to go on the USS *Hanover*, a brand new ship that was being built, commissioned in Pascagoula, Mississippi. So we stayed up two months at Newport, and basically there we took other training, firefighting and duties that do you would have normal, you know, in battle.

Arendt: Did anything interesting, do you have any good stories from your training? Any humorous stories? You had mentioned those two guys—had you met them at that point?

Thurner: No, I met them at the second time when I was called back in for the Korean War. That's when I met them. They were both from Jersey, and they were both clam lovers.

Arendt: Oh, yuck! [Max and Agnes laugh].

Thurner: We could not pass a stand out in New Jersey without them stopping.

Agnes: Was that Stan?

Thurner: Stan and John Bundschuh(??).

Arendt: So when you were in the first time were the people you served with from all over the country, or did you find that they were people from the Midwest?

Thurner: No, they were from all over the country the first time. The second time, here now the 1950 to 1952 Korean War, they were mostly from the East Coast, but when I first went in now they were basically from all over the country.

Agnes: Had you ever been exposed to people from other parts of the country?

Thurner: No, not really. Actually, that was the first time I ever probably when I went from Great Lakes to Fort Pierce, Florida it was the first time probably out of the, no, not the—

Agnes: Out of the Midwest?

Thurner: No, really out of Wisconsin. The only place I was to was Michigan when I was four years old.

Arendt: Oh, okay.

Thurner: And now in the service I've been in every state but two.

Arendt: Really?

Thurner: Yeah. Alaska and Oklahoma, and it's funny that I never hit Oklahoma, always skirted around it.

Agnes: Well, we have to do something about that [Max and Agnes laugh].

Arendt: My dad was in the Navy and he got his tattoos in Oklahoma City, and he has no memory of it at all.

Agnes: No?

Thurner: No [all laugh]. That happens. Well, that goes back a while, and I think of some of some of things I don't remember certain parts of the Navy portion. I wish I would have paid more attention to it.

Arendt: Well, he has bluebirds on his chest, and he has a skunk on his arm because he has a gaseous problem, but anyway he woke up the next morning, and he went, "Oh". His chest was burning, and he—you know, he did— [Agnes and Arendt laugh].

Thurner: Well, I saw many, many [Laurie laughs] sailors that got tattooed, and you know—you saw those scabs that developed down there, aww!

Arendt: Oh, it feels like a rug burn, too, for a while. It's just oww!

Agnes: When did you get into the drum?

Thurner: I was in the Drum & Bugle Corps at Great Lakes. Well, I played the trumpet so I joined there and played the bugle. One day they needed—this was a funny story, though. One day they needed somebody—we were going down to Northwestern [University, Evanston, IL]. The Drum & Bugle Corps was invited to march there. So they needed a bass drummer. I never did that in my life [both laugh]. I volunteered, but I think we walked about four miles in that parade, and I played that bass drum. I had it out in front of me—boom, boom, boom, you know, just to keep cadence [laughs].

Arendt: And then you went back to bugle after that?

Thurner: Well, I was there, but later on—when I'll tell you about the *Hanover* episode happened there that it's still in my mind.

Arendt: Did you just join the Drum & Bugle Corps because you played the trumpet?

Thurner: Right.

Arendt: Or did it get you out of anything else, or it was just part of your day?

Thurner: It was just part of the day, yeah.

Arendt: What was your role? Did you play every day? Were you part of a parade?

Thurner: We had parades right on base, you know, and practice marching and that so that in case they did want somebody in exhibition or something, you know, they would be available.

Arendt: But you did have like a daily parade around the base—

Thurner: No.

Arendt: Or anything 'cause they have like that quad area down there.

Thurner: Right.

Agnes: Then it was later you became the ship's bugler.

Thurner: I'm getting to that, Aggie [Max and Agnes laugh].

Arendt: No, that's fine, that's good 'cause then I know to ask him about it.

Agnes: I just want to be sure he doesn't forget [laughs].

Arendt: Okay, good. And you just did that at Great Lakes, you didn't do that at Fort Pierce, did you?

Thurner: No.

Arendt: Or at Rhode Island or anything like that?

Thurner: No.

Arendt: When you were in training like this did you just have a normal day? You know, train during the day, have your nights off? Or how did that work for you? Do you remember?

Thurner: Well, at Fort Pierce, Florida I remember we had some night maneuvers to do because doing things at night is certainly different than the daytime., and the amphibious group might be called at anytime to deploy and hit the beach. So we did have some night training. But basically you had reveille was generally at 6:00 o'clock or so and then knock off free time at 4:30 or so.

Arendt: Did you live in barracks?

Thurner: In barracks at Fort Pierce.

Arendt: The open bay barracks?

Thurner: They were enclosed except they were screened in Florida 'cause it never got that cold but we used blankets it, you know, sometimes dropped to about forty degrees, and you had your blanket, but they were open sides. Then at Newport, Rhode Island that was during December, January, and February, and there was a lot of snow up there, but we were in regular barracks, you know, enclosed with heat.

Arendt: So when you were up there did you do actual training on the boats?

Thurner: No, we did more of the—like I was in diesel—

Arendt: More classroom stuff.

Thurner: More specific classroom things, yeah, and again firefighting type things.

Arendt: When you finished training where were you sent? You mentioned you were going to the USS *Hanover*?

Thurner: Yeah, from Newport our group that had assembled, a ship's company, the whole ship's company went to Pascagoula, Mississippi where we got on to a brand new ship the USS *Hanover*.

Arendt: Was there any special ceremony or anything because you were the first group on the ship?

Thurner: No. They had the commissioning ceremony prior to when we got down there, but when we got on there we were all bunked.

Arendt: Was that your first time on one of those ships?

Thurner: No, I was on one, the same type of ship, during training in Newport for a week. I wish I knew that—would have written the name of that ship down. To this day, what ship would I have been on?

Agnes: Are you sure it is not amongst your letters?

Thurner: No, I don't know.

Arendt: Okay.

Thurner: Well, I don't know if I would have written it down.

Arendt: What did you think about life aboard ship? Quality of life, did you like it?

Thurner: No, I liked it.

Arendt: You did?

Thurner: I liked it, yeah.

Arendt: What was daily life like on the ship? I mean, you were done with training, but what did you do when you weren't out on the amphibious boats? Did you have a job to do? Did you take time off?

Thurner: Our boat crew took care of making sure that all the engines and the diesel engines on the landing craft were kept in perfect shape because when they were lowered from the davits [small cranes] into the water they had to start immediately. And then we had engines to repair, we had a boat shop, and we had machine shop equipment, drill press, a grinder, milling machine, things like that. Another big part of the job was when we had exercises on the beach. Invariably the boat's propeller would get nicked up, and they'd have to be brazed and straightened out. You know, they'd hit rocks and that so was all part of our job.

Arendt: It's like mowing your lawn.

Thurner: Yeah, right. [Agnes and Laurie laugh] And then the other part was taking care of auxiliary equipment, the refrigeration onboard ship, the fresh water system.

Arendt: Did your fresh water system ever shut down on you?

Thurner: No. Well, the fresh water, what I was talking about before, that was on a landing craft, the fresh water, but this was the ship's fresh water system. The boat group or the "A Group" they call it took care of maintaining that refrigeration aboard the ship and the water plant and pumps and the generators because they were diesel driven. So there was always some mechanical thing.

Arendt: What was your biggest problem or maintenance issue that you dealt with? Was it just routine maintenance, or was there something that was more of a priority? Did anything keep breaking down on you?

Thurner: I am trying to think back, you know, that was a long time, but—

Arendt: Sure, I know, and you're gonna remember this after I leave 'cause that's what's been happening.

Thurner: A funny thing happened one time aboard the ship where I was doing some work on the diesel engine of one of these landing craft. The engine cover was off, and it was right under the bridge, and I remember this so plainly, right under the bridge. And something had happened to engine that it

didn't run so they called me and another mechanic to get it fixed to get it running. And then the captain was on the bridge, and he was so angry that that boat didn't get off into the water. "When are you gonna have it done? Why wasn't this done before?" Well, it happened spontaneously that we didn't know, but then I [laughs] probably could have been reprimanded because I said, "Well, I don't know, Sir, do you change your tire before it gets flat?"

Arendt: Oh, that's good [all laugh].

Turner: Then he didn't come back again till the job was done [Agnes laughs].

Arendt: Did you stay on the *Hanover* for that entire tour of duty?

Turner: No.

Arendt: How long were you on that, roughly?

Turner: Well, I was roughly on there from 19—oh, let's see. That would have been March of 1945 until May of 1946 when it was decommissioned.

Arendt: That was quick.

Turner: That was quick, and then I went on another—I went on a—

Arendt: Why was it decommissioned?

Turner: Well, after the war a lot of ships were decommissioned, you know, that was—the war was over.

Arendt: You were on the *Hanover*, but where were—were you in the Gulf of Mexico? Were you in the South Atlantic?

Turner: Oh, I was in the Pacific, and like I said, I was on Okinawa.

Arendt: Did you get a chance to go to Japan? Did you have any time?

Turner: Yes, I was in Tokyo, Yokohama.

Arendt: What did you think of it?

Turner: Well, being shortly after the war, I mean, the people were very courteous. There was no—like you hear now like with Iraq and that. I mean, you walked freely on the street, and they were very courteous.

Arendt: Did you see any damage? Any of the big—

Thurner: There was no damage in Tokyo, you know. Most of the damage was—

Arendt: Hiroshima—

Thurner: Yeah.

Arendt: Yeah, but you didn't see any?

Thurner: Not there, no. The damage I saw was on Okinawa when we were there during the war or during the actual fighting.

Arendt: Okay, and you picked up those binoculars on Yokohama?

Thurner: I picked those up on Ie Shima. I-E, and then Shima, S-H-I-M-A. [Mr. Thurner pronounces as "I-E," but it was known as Ie-Shima during WWII and as Iejima now.] That's an island north of Okinawa. And that's the island that Ernie Pyle [Pulitzer Prize winning journalist] was killed.

Arendt: You know you can buy an Ernie Pyle GI Joe doll?

Agnes: Can you really?

Arendt: Did you know that?

Thurner: Is that right?

Arendt: Uh-huh.

Thurner: Uh-huh. But the incident—I wanted to tell you about the *Hanover*. I must have been on the *Hanover* fourteen months or something like that, but this was actually during the fighting time. The captain was very—he wasn't well-liked. He was a commander. And the *Hanover* was a 75,000 ton ship. I believe it was a 494 feet long, but it had twenty-nine small landing craft on it. So he was a real navy man. He came out of Annapolis [Maryland, US Naval Academy], and he wanted—the other parts of duties like I told you we would take care of the mechanical part—he wanted a bugler. He didn't have a bugler aboard ship. So not knowing, I volunteered.

Arendt: Oh, you never volunteer [laughs].

Thurner: I thought that would be great, you know, but I'd have to get up at 4:30 in the morning and do reveille and then mess call and then go back and do my regular part, and he'd call me when he wanted the bugle with a certain call put over the loudspeaker, you know, in the evening at 9:00 o'clock. Certain times of the day I'd have to go up and do certain calls, but every

day for sure was reveille and taps at night. At 9:00 o'clock I'd have to go up on the bridge and play taps. But that was the only time I was really the bugler. Otherwise I was an engineman, you know.

Agnes: Tell the best part [laughs].

Turner: Oh, yeah, the best part the bugler came under the captain's jurisdiction. So the chaplain gave me just a beautiful brass bugle.

Agnes: Was it anything like that one?

Turner: Yeah, similar to this here.

Arendt: Oh, that's a teeny tiny one.

Turner: It's similar to this. You know, the bugle didn't have any valves, and, so I did the bugling, and all of a sudden it disappeared because I would always leave it hanging up on the bridge so when he called me it would be at a special hook up there. One day I got up, it was gone, and I said, "Oh, I'm going to get out of bugling now." [Arendt laughs] Oh, the chaplain says, "Never mind, I got another one like it." So he got another brass bugle up there, you know, and it wasn't long that that bugle disappeared. And he says, "Never fear," he says, I got some more." Here he showed me a whole carton like twenty-four, but they were plastic. There were no more brass bugles, they were all plastic [laughs].

Arendt: Oh, ick. Do you ever know what happened to 'em?

Turner: No, never found out.

Arendt: Hiding 'em? Throwing 'em out? Pitchin' 'em out?

Turner: They probably, you know what, deep six.

Agnes: Assumed that they were thrown overboard [laughs].

Turner: That's the terminology, deep six, you know when something disappears over the side.

Agnes: Oh, we used to use that in the restaurant business, too, because I waitressed in college. "Deep six the prime rib it." It was just all old and dried up.

Turner: Yeah.

Agnes: Oh, no, Maxine would like that [Agnes and Laurie laugh].

Arendt: Okay. So?

Turner: So then, well, the *Hanover* was decommissioned in May.

Arendt: Do you know what happened to it?

Turner: It was put in mothballs and tied up in the St. James River in Virginia along with a lot of ships up there. Like in—can't of the place in San Francisco. There's a bay that goes Sacramento River or something [**End of Tape 1, Side A**] [resumes with Turner in mid-sentence] ships and that in mothballs, you know.

Arendt: Okay. So that was about 1947?

Turner: 1946.

Arendt: Then what did you do—

Turner: Then I was reassigned. I went on to a minesweeper.

Arendt: Do you remember the name of it?

Turner: Well, it had only a—

Arendt: A number?

Turner: A number, AMCU10, which is Auxiliary Mine Coastal—parenthesis, “U” is Underwater.

Arendt: Wow. And where—

Turner: Most of our duty was along the Atlantic seaboard. After the war there were still mines floatin' around so—the type of ship that it was converted from was an LCI which was sort of a landing craft but converted to mine-sweeping equipment. LCI referring to is Land Craft Infantry.

Arendt: Oh, okay. And your original amphibious boats, were those LC-something? Were they LST or—

Turner: Well, the small one was LCVP, that's Landing Craft Vehicle Personnel, and the bigger ones were LCM. They would put tanks on those.

Arendt: Wow.

Turner: But they were landing craft, and they were Landing Craft, Mechanized.

Arendt: All right. Was it—I don't want to say disappointing 'cause I don't think it would have been, but what was it like being post World War II? Was it boring? Do you know what I'm trying to get at? Or didn't it matter what was going on?

Turner: No, we always had somethin' to do, you know, like that minesweeping was really great on the East Coast, you know.

Arendt: Did you find mines?

Turner: We found mines. Once we found 'em—you have cable cutters, you know, where they get cut loose, and then they would float, and then they would be blown up by machine gun.

Arendt: Oh, wow.

Agnes: When did you leave the fog thing?

Turner: That was in Okinawa.

Arendt: What's a fog thing? [Agnes laughs]

Turner: Well, on the handle—basically when we were in Naha Bay in Okinawa there was daily Japanese planes flying over, you know, come in there, and everybody had an assignment on the ship, and my assignment was to provide a fog screen so that the Japanese flyers could not find the ship. And there were like four of 'em. There were two on boats. The boats would circle around the ship, and a fog generator they call 'em—fog generator, one was at the bow, and one was at the stern. And I had to—my duty all the time was when it was the battle—the battle stations were called. I'd go up on the one on the fantail and generate smoke so that it would engulf the ship, you know, so the kamikazes or other type of aircraft wouldn't see 'em.

Arendt: And it was effective?

Turner: It was effective, yeah. So that was the handle when that was during the latter part of the Okinawa campaign. But on the *Hanover* we had a lot of assignments. We took two trips carrying Chinese soldiers. I don't know if you can spell Chiang Kai-shek?

Arendt: Yeah, I know who—yeah, uh-huh.

Turner: It's the emperor of China at the time. His topnotch soldiers were down in Hong Kong, and then the—there was the uprising up in Manchuria where

the Communists were forming. And we took 2,000 of the Chinese troops up there, up through Tsing Wan To (??). Now you can't find it on a map anymore because they changed all their names, you know, to like "X," "sie"—they would—

Arendt: Yeah, the "X" is "Ch" now.

Turner: And always "X"—Xing Tao we were in, probably couldn't remember 'em all, but, anyways we made two or three trips to Hong Kong to pick up Chinese troops and then transport 'em to Northern China. And look in such a short time how the Communists fought, you know, and overtook all of China.

Agnes: Is that the ones that you said you had a problem with the Chinese troops?

Turner: Oh, yeah. Well, they were very diseased.

Arendt: Oh, really?

Turner: And it took us two-three days to disinfect the whole ship because they, I don't know, did they wash themselves in the scuttlebutt, the drinking fountain, you know, scuttlebutt. They weren't used to modern things. And the big part, too, is that they weren't allowed in the crew's quarters. They had their own quarters, and when they ate they had to come up on deck to eat. They did not have a mess hall, but we did. But their daily diet was like tomato juice, rice, and fish scales.

Arendt: Ugh.

Agnes: Fish scales.

Turner: Fish scales for whatever—

Agnes: Roughage [laughs].

Turner: It must have been some kind of a protein or something in there.

Arendt: So who decided on that diet? Was that from the US or—

Turner: No, they had their own—

Arendt: Oh, they had their own.

Turner: Yeah.

Agnes: They had their own cook along, too?

Thurner: But, you know, they all got on topside to eat, and then the weather got rough, and it all came up again on 'em.

Arendt: Oh, back up [laughs].

Thurner: The deckhands were constantly cleaning the deck, and we had to fuel our small boats up there, too, and that stuff all stuck to the fueling hoses. Oh! That I remember [laughs].

Agnes: Before I met Max when I thought about the Navy I always about swabbing the deck [laughs].

Arendt: Sure. Wow.

Thurner: That was on the *Hanover*.

Arendt: Okay. So then when you were on the minesweeper that was until 1947. Did you sign up for two—

Thurner: Three Years. I took a “minority cruise” which meant till I was twenty-one.

Arendt: Oh, okay.

Thurner: I signed up for a “minority cruise.”

Arendt: Was there any benefit in doing that? I mean, did you get an extra bonus or anything like that?

Thurner: No.

Arendt: Okay. So then when you got out at twenty-one you went in the Reserves?

Thurner: Mm-hmm.

Arendt: Was that mandated that you?

Thurner: No.

Arendt: No.

Agnes: Wasn't the “minority cruise” because you joined when you were seventeen? You weren't eighteen yet?

Thurner: Well, that could have been, yeah.

Arendt: Okay. So why did you decide to stay in your Reserves?

Turner: I liked it [laughs].

Arendt: Okay.

Turner: Generally you'd go once a month to a meeting and then—

Arendt: Where did you go for the meeting? Were you back home?

Turner: Yeah, they had a place on North Milwaukee Street, and then one year I was on—two weeks on the USS *Kearsarge* aircraft carrier.

Arendt: How do you spell that?

Turner: K-E-A-R-S-A-[R]-G-E, *Kearsarge*. CV 33 was the number of that. And we had maneuvers off of—out of Philadelphia, and we had maneuvers—no, it wasn't—I'm sorry. It was out of Quonset Point, Rhode Island. That's where we went out to sea, and that was an experience in itself. We watched the planes come in and land, help them take off, and one come over on a side, and it was hanging there. And the "Jimmy," what they called a "Jimmy," that goes over there to try to lift the plane up, couldn't get it off. So the captain from the bridge yelled down to somebody that operated a piece of equipment, "Push it over." And they pushed it right over the side.

Arendt: Wow.

Turner: And that was about at that time \$750,000 for a plane.

Agnes: I suppose, though, that if it was in the way that no more planes could land.

Turner: Yeah, it'd have been in the way with the others.

Arendt: "Cause that's where my Dad was stationed, and when he wasn't on duty he liked to just watch the planes come in. He said he saw a couple go over. Something happened where there was somebody behind the jet, and the jet fired up, and, you know, the guy was right behind it. So—wow.

Turner: And then I had two weeks on a destroyer one year.

Arendt: Yeah, that's one of my favorite stories—do you have the first book [*Back From Duty*, edited by Laurie Arendt]? Have you read it?

Turner: I don't have the book, but I read all the stories 'cause I—

Arendt: At the library?

Turner: No, at Mel's (??) [Mel's "Great Times for Great Causes," an annual event in Cedarburg, Wisconsin to support Ozaukee County non-profit organizations].

Arendt: Oh, okay.

Agnes: The book is still available, isn't it?

Arendt: Oh, yeah, but one of my favorite stories in there was a guy named Gene Cebulski. He was in the Navy, and he showed up, and he couldn't find his ship. He said there were all these gray walls in the shipyard, and finally a guy—I think he was a lieutenant or somebody who was walking by—and he said, "Sir, I'm supposed to be—and he said," "Sir, I'm supposed to report to the—" you know, he gave him a name, and the guy kind of looked at him and smirked, and he pointed up. Well, he was under the destroyer—[Agnes and Arendt laugh]. He said, "Oh, I was so green. I didn't know what I was doing."

Turner: That was nice, too. I was down in the engine room—they didn't have—well, at the time I was a machinist mate and not a motor machinist so you were down in the engine room and doing with the throttles and all that. But that was a different assignment anyways.

Arendt: So you started out as a motor machinist mate?

Turner: No, years ago they had the machinist mate only, and then they changed it over to motor machinist.

Arendt: Oh, okay, "Cause I'm wondering I should put for your title.

Agnes [?]: Well, I was—when I got out of the Navy I was a first class motor machinist, first class petty officer.

Arendt: Wow.

Agnes: But they called you "motor mac," didn't they?

Turner: Motor macs, yeah.

Arendt: Motor mac, okay.

Agnes: Here's one—Max is in the Navy. He wasn't married yet. He got married later.

Thurner: Here's—I brought this one [laughs] back from Japan.

Arendt: Oh, wow.

Thurner: That's the Japanese flag, and this is "Land, Sea, and Ground." It was our patch that we wore on the shoulder.

Arendt: Oh, let me take a picture of that.

Thurner: Here's my two dog tags.

Arendt: Oh, hey!

Thurner: I have two of 'em, you know, the first time and the second time. One was round. See, here they couldn't get the—

Arendt: Those are the older one, right?

Thurner: F-J-T [laughs], they couldn't get— [Arendt laughs] See, this one here they had the—there they had the full name on, see.

Arendt: Wow. [Thurner laughs] See, whoever made that was probably just scratchin' his head.

Thurner: Now, this was the ranks through the—the rank of the first class petty officer. Well, these are stripes.

Arendt: [two beep sounds] It's a digital camera.

Agnes: Haven't figured out how to use mine yet. [two beeps] But yours looks like it's a lot more expensive than the ones I've got [laughs].

Thurner: These are the service bars I got, you know, occupation, American waters, Korean zone—and this is a letter that I had here sent to me. Well, that's the group I belong to, this here. My mother saved every letter I have. IU have a whole—

Arendt: Oh, that's nice.

Thurner: And my sister compiled it all in one book.

Arendt: That's very nice.

Thurner: All the letters. That was her.

Arendt: "Merry Christmas." [Max laughs]

Thurner: And this is some more memorabilia—not memorabilia, but I don't what—
Arendt: Souvenirs.

Thurner: If it was an officer—belonged to—that was his log over there.

Arendt: Oh, wow.

Thurner: I don't know if that was his identification. I've never taken—

Arendt: Did you find this like on the ground?

Thurner: Oh, sure. When we went ashore, you know, it had been abandoned. Most of this came off of Ie Shima. This packet here, too.

Agnes: A better surface—

Arendt: Oh, I was getting all my papers.

Thurner: See, now I don't know what this would been here.

Arendt: Could that have been a Bible? Or their equivalent of—

Thurner:: Well, I don't know. Maybe an equivalent to that, yeah.

Arendt: Wow.

Thurner: But it was neatly—

Arendt: That's very neat.

Thurner: Right here, all this coloring.

Arendt: Oh, wow, I'm gonna take a picture of this. 'Cause these all—the pictures I'll forward on to the [Wisconsin] Veterans Museum.

Thurner: Well, let's see how—I'll put this on top.

Arendt: That'll work.

Agnes: Is that the museum in Madison?

Arendt: Yup.

Thurner: I lost a page.

Arendt: Maybe some sort of calendar or something.

Turner: Yeah.

Arendt: Let's take a picture of both the outside and inside.

Turner: That was neatly—

Arendt: That looks like maybe a signature.

Turner: I should go to the Japanese historical—

Arendt: Yeah.

Turner: Maybe once and see what—

Arendt: I'm thinking maybe they have somebody who can translate this. [two beeps] There, that's a good picture.

Agnes: Yeah, we should probably go to the museum at some point.

Arendt: Yeah, if you're ever interested, they take really good care of the stuff, and they'll make you copies of everything—

Turner: And this is stuff that—

Arendt: Money.

Turner: I collected over there.

Arendt: Okay. Wow. Do you know Henry Ahrenholz?

Turner: Arnhold [Probably means Ahrenholz. Both men are in Ms. Arendt's book on Ozaukee County veterans.]

Arendt: Yeah. He picked—

Turner: Yeah.

Arendt: He picked up a silk scarf when he was over there, and I took a picture of it, and it's like somebody doodled on it in Japanese, you know. They drew pictures, and they wrote—like you or I—

Turner: I have a silk scarf, but it's US Navy [Turner and Arendt laugh]. I got it—

Agnes: Do you find anybody that had some of those pillows that they used to send home?

Arendt: Oh, yeah, my dad collects those.

Turner: The what?

Arendt: Those silk pillows.

Turner: Oh, yeah.

Agnes: Would you like something to drink?

Arendt: Oh, no thank you.

Agnes: You're sure?

Arendt: I'm fine. Yeah, because if I do that then I never finish it.

Agnes: Okay [Turner laughs].

Arendt: Wow.

Turner: You know, this is the—the other ship I was on, the [USS] *Muliphen*. I'll tell you about that—

Arendt: Okay.

Turner: But this off from the maneuvers off of Little Creek, or Norfolk [Virginia] actually.

Agnes: When Max and I got married—

Turner: I don't know if that'll—this is the same picture.

Arendt: Oh, sure, that's better.

Max: See, this is the Hanover here.

Agnes: We took our honeymoon at the [USS] *Hanover* reunion.

Arendt: Oh, okay.

Turner: You see all these—there's two LCMs on each of these. There's five—no, there's four of these holes where the put the supplies down. But then

there's a hatch cover on it, and the LCM is placed on top, and then one of those little LCVPs is set inside.

Arendt: Oh, okay.

Turner: And then there's four LCVPs on each of these davits. And so we had twenty-nine landing craft on that boat, or ship.

Arendt: Wow. [Two beeps] Oop, I got a big schmear on that one [laughs].

Turner: Oh, that flashback, huh?

Arendt: [Two beeps.] There we go.

Agnes: What I wanted to tell you about—

Turner: And this the—

Agnes: The reunion. Everybody would ask us, "Well, where did you go on your honeymoon?"

Arendt: Uh-huh.

Agnes: And I said, "Oh, we went to a Navy reunion, and I had such a great time."
[Max and Laurie laugh]

Max: Now, that's the *Muliphen*. It's strange. I had all ones and sixes in the ships—

Arendt: Oh, wow.

Turner: These two ships, you know.

Arendt: Uh-huh.

Turner: But the *Muliphen* played a role in the making of *The Longest Day* with John Wayne.

Arendt: Oh, yeah sure. What did it do in the—

Turner: Well, it wasn't at war then. It was at the time, you know, this film was made much later. Here's a duplicate of the—what I showed you downstairs.

Arendt: Uh-huh. And where are you on here?

Thurner: I'm in the front row right here.

Arendt: One of the few guys actually looking at the camera [Thurner and Arendt laugh].

Thurner: Right in the—I don't know how we got in the center of that. You know, we couldn't take many pictures during World War II. You could take more in the Korean War, but you couldn't—but this is a map—

Agnes: And now it's all over—

Arendt: Yeah, I know.

Thurner: It's been beat up already.

Arendt: Oh, my husband was in "Desert Storm," and I could—he called like twice—and I could tell him exactly what was going on before he did.

Thurner: This is the—

Arendt: This is on—

Thurner: All the—

Arendt: Wow.

Thurner: Over here to Crete, you know, Naples, Morocco, Casablanca—

Agnes: Maybe you could talk to the school when you get it all mapped out.

Arendt: Oh, how neat. So I see you're a—

Thurner: Guantanamo Bay [Cuba]

Arendt: Yeah.

Thurner: And Vieques [Puerto Rico].

Arendt: Ah.

Thurner: And they're making so much news nowadays. You know, Vieques when I was there was just Vieques, you know.

Arendt: Yeah, sure. So you're a shellback [a sailor who has crossed the equator] I see. Wow. We haven't finished—'cause you got—were you called up again to active duty?

Turner: Yeah.

Arendt: What were doing at that point in your life? I mean were you working?

Turner: To start with, April Fools' Day, 1943 I started my apprenticeship with Allis-Chalmers. I was sixteen years, and then I only—I was in apprenticeship for a year and three months or so. 1944 I went in the service. So when I got out of the service July 31st, 1947—and then I went back to finish my apprenticeship.

Arendt: Oh, they let you do that?

Turner: Oh, yeah, went back and finished tool and die apprenticeship. And when I finished that was another memorial day [laughs], Valentine's Day, 1950.

Arendt: Wow.

Turner: Started April Fools' Day and finished [Agnes laughs] Valentine's Day. And then I stayed with Allis-Chalmers about six months. Then September 6th of 1950 I started at AC Spark Plug, and I was there only three weeks, and they called me back in the Reserve for the Korean Conflict. And that's when I was on the USS *Muliphen*.

Arendt: How do you spell that?

Turner: M-U-L-I-P-H-E-N.

Arendt: Two n's?

Turner: One n.

Arendt: Okay. Were you surprised to get reactivated?

Turner: I was. I remember the day because, you know, when I started at AC Spark Plug during the start on the second shift 'cause you had to go to seniority—

Arendt: Sure.

Turner: And being there three weeks, all of a sudden I heard—it was during the day, there was a knock on the door at the house, you know, and the fella pulls up and says, "We got a letter from President Truman."

Arendt: Oh, no [all laugh].

Agnes: Ever need our e-mail address, it's on here.

Arendt: Oh, okay. Thank you.

Turner: Ironically, well, I was discharged on the same day from both conflicts, July 31st.

Arendt: Wow [Max laughs]. So back then, back in 1950, were you aware of what was going on in Korea? I mean, just as an American citizen?

Turner: Not too much, because you know that conflict started June 27th of 1950, the Korean War, and, okay, by October we were calling the reserves already.

Arendt: Yeah. Well, I mean it had been simmering since World War II.

Turner: Yeah, right.

Arendt: Okay.

Turner: To get back to another experience was after we were in Tokyo Bay where the signing of the armistice on the *Missouri*—from there we went to Korea. Now that was September 6th of 1945. We made a full scale invasion of Korea 'cause we didn' know if the Japanese were gonna surrender there, you know, in Korea 'cause they had occupied Korea.

Arendt: Yeah.

Turner: And—well, we got all the supplies ashore. So it was a full-scale invasion, and then, you know, there was no resistance.

Arendt: Yeah.

Turner: I think that I just saw that the other day recorded in one of these books.

Arendt: Good. All right.

Turner: So when you say I as in Korea, I was in Korea, but the second time I was—duty, takin' supplies over where you saw the Mediterranean. We took—we had aircraft—

Arendt: So you were in the opposite direction.

Thurner: Yeah. So I didn't see any actual—

Arendt: Any combat or anything.

Thurner: Combat during the Korean War. I was in the Korean War, I want to say, but not—I was takin' supplies over to Europe.

Arendt: Okay. Good. Now were you married at the time?

Thurner: No.

Arendt: Were you living at home?

Thurner: Mm-hmm.

Arendt: Okay.

Agnes: You had met Lore [short for Hannelore] before you went in for the second time then, right?

Thurner: Yeah, I met my wife to be—I met—

Arendt: Was she from here, or did you meet her while you were in the service?

Thurner: No, she—actually was born in Germany.

Arendt: Oh, wow.

Thurner: And then I met her at a German doing at the old Heidelberg House.

Arendt: Okay.

Agnes: What year did she come over here?

Thurner: 1949 she came over here.

Arendt: Okay, good. So you were in until—

Thurner: We got married then May—actually a day of infamy—June 6th [laughs].

Arendt: Oh [laughs].

Thurner: June 6th, 1953.

Arendt: So after you were out.

Thurner: Right. But June 6th was the D-Day, you know.

Arendt: So you were in for another three years?

Thurner: Well, two years.

Arendt: Two years. Okay, and when you were called up were you called up for two years or an indefinite amount of time?

Thurner: An indefinite amount.

Arendt: Okay. And at the time that you were released from duty were you given the option to stay in, or were you just done, or how did they work that?

Thurner: Oh, I had the option [ends in mid-sentence]

[End of Interview]

