

**John D. Alden**  
**Narrator**

**Mike Russert**  
**Wayne Clark**  
**New York State Military Museum**  
**Interviewers**

**Interviewed on June 6, 2006 at 1 P.M.**  
**Bethlehem Public Library**  
**Delmar, New York**

WC: This is an interview at the Bethlehem Public Library, Delmar, New York. It is the second of June, 2006, approximately 1 P.M. Interviewers are Wayne Clark and Mike Russert. Could you give me your full name, date of birth and place of birth please?

JA: My name's John Dardy Alden, branch of service was the US Navy.

WC: When and where were you born?

JA: Born in San Diego, 1921.

WC: What was your educational background prior to entering the service?

JA: I was in college at the time I signed up, at Cornell University. I signed up immediately after Pearl Harbor, when they established the V-7 unit at the school. I did finish up and graduate. They called us in about a month ahead of normal graduation, but my group all got their degrees.

MR: What was the V-7 unit?

JA: V-7 was a program where you signed up as an apprentice Seaman in the Naval Reserve, unpaid, and you were allowed to finish your degree. Then you would go on to active duty.

WC: Why did you pick the Navy?

JA: Well I was in a Navy family. My father had been in the Navy. I was just interested in the Navy.

WC: I'm going to go back a bit. Where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

JA: I was right at the University [Cornell]. I guess we were studying or loafing on Sunday afternoon and I heard the news on the radio. It was hard to believe.

WC: Did you know where Pearl Harbor was at all?

JA: Oh sure, I had lived in Hawaii.

WC: Oh, because a lot of people had never even heard of it. So when you left Cornell you immediately went into the Navy?

JA: They immediately sent us to Midshipman School, which was three months. I was sent down to Columbia University in New York City. My brother was there. After the first month you were an apprentice Seaman. Then if you passed that part you became a Midshipman through the next two months.

Just about the time I'd become a Midshipman I got sick, and they sent me to the hospital. I was there so long I fell behind the rest of the class, so I got sent to Notre Dame, another Midshipman School. That's where I finished and got commissioned.

WC: Where did you go after Midshipman School?

JA: [Laughs] I kept applying for submarine duty but when I got out of Notre Dame they sent me back to Cornell to diesel school, which was the last place in the world I wanted to go. I was back there for about five months and went through the course of diesel engineering, then finally got to submarine school. It'd just been one school after another.

I got to New London [Connecticut] about a month before the next sub school class was going to start, so they put me right on a submarine where I got some good experience. Then I went into sub school for three months and I stood high enough that I got my first choice of duty, which was to a new submarine out in Manitowoc, Wisconsin. That boat was not going to be commissioned for another month or so, so they put me on another school boat out in New London. So I got very good initial training. It happened to be a boat that was training prospective commanding officers, so I met a lot of people back from the Pacific that had plenty of experience.

While I was at sub school my wife and I got married. We drove out to Manitowoc and joined the crew of the submarine out there, the *Lamprey*. We finally went into commission and trained on the Great Lakes. Then they sent the boat down through the Chicago drainage canal to the Mississippi River down to New Orleans. From there we went through the Panama Canal, did some more advanced training, then to Pearl Harbor, and got a little more training. Then we went out to Saipan, stopped and topped off our fuel, then finally got off into the war zone.

MR: When was that approximately?

JA: By then it was early 1945. It was about March before we got into the real war zone.

MR: What were your duties on the submarine?

JA: I was a communications officer, I worked with communications and electronics.

MR: Were there any problems with the *Lamprey* at all with it being a new boat?

JA: No it was very a well-built sub. I don't remember any problems at all, other than the normal problems you always have. There's a story. We did our initial deep dive on Lake Michigan, which is deep enough to dive down 600 feet. The inspecting team had come from New London on the East Coast. When you get down that deep there's always some leakage around. We had a little seepage coming around the periscope mask. The commander from Groton<sup>1</sup> reached up and said "Fresh water...it's condensation."  
[Reaches up and licks his finger]

[all laugh]

That's what it probably was anyway. It's a little different diving in fresh water, you have to rebalance the boat when you're diving in salt water.

MR: What was your first patrol like?

JA: On our first patrol our skipper was an experienced, older man that'd had a previous boat. By this time in the war they did this deliberately on the initial patrol. They brought in an experienced, more conservative officer to break in the crew. We went from Saipan to just north of the Philippines, between the Philippine Islands and Formosa,<sup>2</sup> and did primarily lifeguard duty at first.

MR: What do you mean by lifeguard duty?

JA: That's when the bombers were flying from Saipan and Guam up to Japan. If they had to ditch they had submarines stationed all around [To pick them up]. At that time in the war that was the main duty for subs because they pretty much wiped off the Japanese merchant ships.

WC: Did you ever have to pick up downed flyers?

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<sup>1</sup> The town in Connecticut where New London is located

<sup>2</sup> Now Taiwan

JA: No, they didn't ditch near us. We would talk to them on the radio when they went over. I think we heard one that went down, but it wasn't in our area. That's where George Bush got picked up when he went down.<sup>3</sup>

So from there we went down to the South China Sea, close to Hong Kong. We never spotted anything except a bunch of fishing junks.<sup>4</sup> Then we were ordered down through the Java Sea to Fremantle<sup>5</sup>, Western Australia.

When we were there we had a two-week rest period. We got our new captain, a younger, more aggressive fellow. We got some new equipment. We were constantly getting new equipment during the war, getting better deck guns or improved electronics.

We went back up through the Cabramatta Strait [phonetically spelled]. But we went through the Lombok Strait first, which was between the islands of Bali and Lombok. It's a very narrow strait and there's quite a current. A tidal current was always coming down through it, and there were Japanese on both sides. As we came down from the north we just coasted through underwater, but coming from the south we had to be on surface to have enough power and speed to overcome that current. So that was a tricky place. A little after we went through it another boat got lost there to a Japanese airplane.

Then we went up into the Java Sea, which was our patrol area. One of the first things we encountered was off of Batavia. They don't call it Batavia anymore but that's where it was.<sup>6</sup> We encountered a small Japanese ship, which turned out to be a submarine chaser but we chased *it*. As we were shooting at it another one of our subs popped up right next to us. Turned out it was the *Blue Fish*. We exchanged calls with them and we were both firing at this Japanese sub chaser and both claimed to have hit it, but he turned tail and went away.

While we were shooting at him-this is another one of the more interesting occasions I had. Our captain was up on the bridge where the deck gun was. The executive officer was in the conning tower and I was in the conning tower by the radar. My actual battle station was the assistant torpedo data computer operator, which controlled the torpedoes. I had nothing to do with the guns. Anyway, we were watching. You could see the shells fall on

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<sup>3</sup> George H.W. Bush was shot down on September 2, 1944 near the Bonin Islands

<sup>4</sup> A type of Chinese boat

<sup>5</sup> The port for the city of Perth

<sup>6</sup> Now the city of Jakarta in Indonesia

the radar and track them. Our exec was getting [excited], he said, "What are we doing captain? Are we hitting them?" The captain says, "Well Bill he's shooting back, some of them are going over us and some are falling short." The exec said, "Let's the hell out of here!" [Laughs] That was not a very good position to be in really. That was the sole gun experience I had.

On that same patrol we followed some kind of Japanese ship, we weren't sure what it was. Might have been a DE [Destroyer Escort] or a landing ship of some sort, but anyway we kept chasing it and he went up a river in Borneo and we finally went in backwards and fired three torpedoes out of the stern tubes but we missed him. That's all we did, we were chasing anti- submarine ships instead of the other way around.

The only other activity we had was we stopped a number of junks and small, mostly native craft. If they had anything that looked like Japanese goods on them we took the people off and sunk them. We did sink a couple. They were just tiny little ships.

Now we had to get rid of the crew of course. We'd either put them into an empty boat we stopped, one that had room. Or in the case of one we did shoot we took the natives, who were probably all Chinese not Japanese, but they were hauling stuff that was considered contraband, and got them as close to the shore of Borneo as we could. Then we just put lifejackets on them and sent them in.

MR: How long would a patrol last?

JA: Well the first one lasted a little over sixty days; that would be about a normal patrol. By then you began to run out of food. That was the main limitation. If you hadn't run across any targets and shot off your torpedoes there was really no reason to go back.

WC: What about refueling? How often did you have to do that?

JA: We never ran low on fuel. I read our patrol reports and saw we burned an awful lot of gallons, but we could easily stay out ninety days. That would be normal kind of running, not a lot of high speed running.

MR: How long could you stay under? You had snorkels by this time right?

JA: No we didn't have snorkels. The US didn't bother putting snorkels in until after the war, there was no need for them. We'd be down all during the day, so maybe fourteen hours or so, in the Tropics. Then the air would begin to get a little stale. But that was nowhere near the endurance. Submarines that got held down by depth charges stayed down longer than that, they could stay down until it got pretty bad. We'd notice the air getting foul and the pressure would build up inside the sub because of air leakage. We'd

open the hatch and the air would go *whoosh*. The fresh air to me would smell like ozone, almost a sick-ish smell until you got used to it again.

MR: What kind of depths would you cruise at?

JA: Normally just at periscope depth, which would be 62 feet. We'd go down to a hundred feet or so. There was no need to go deep, we never ran across any big Japanese warships or were never bombed, so we never had to go deep to escape. We'd go down to make a test dive.

We had an instrument called the bathythermograph, which would make a trace of the temperature versus depth, so you'd know if you had a layer of cold water underneath you. That was a desirable thing.

MR: Why?

JA: If you were attacked, you'd get down in the layer and it'd protect you. The layer would reflect the surface ship's sonar and you'd be much harder to find if you were trying to escape. So we'd make a deep dive everyday, probably down to about 400 feet, just to get that bathythermograph trace. But other than that, normal cruising was periscope depth or a little bit below during the day. At night we'd come up on the surface and search with the radar.

WC: Were you on the *Lamprey* until the end of the war?

JA: Right. I was on her when she was commissioned until she was decommissioned. At the end of the second patrol we didn't go back to Australia, we went into Subic Bay in the Philippines, which had recently been captured. The so-called rest camp was just a couple of huts off in the swamps. You could rest but that was about it [Laughs]. So a lot of the fellows would hitch-hike into Manila, or some of them would try to get rides on some of the patrol planes going out and looking for Japanese. They'd do just about anything. When we were in Australia they'd go off into the desert or try to get around the countryside.

There wasn't that much to do in the Philippines. I did get down to Manila. My brother-in-law happened to be down there with the Army. He was with the Army Engineers clearing the port at Manila. So I got a hold of him and invited him to come up to Subic Bay and took him out for a ride on the submarine. They were pretty liberal about those things. People could bring their friends. When we were in Australia one of the crew picked up a dog and we had him with us for the last two patrols and brought him back to the States. The sailors taught him to urinate on some of the officers' shoes [All laugh]. He never

bothered me any. He was a little Australian dingo dog. We brought him back to the States and I guess the fellow who owned him got him in all right. Some of the other boats had kangaroos, parrots and monkeys. I don't know whether any had cats but they could have had anything. Most anything went when we were out there.

MR: Now you said one of the most inspiring events was the end of the war. Where were you when you heard that?

JA: We were on our third patrol. From Subic Bay we went back to the Java Sea. We were lined up to go into a place that was so narrow and crowded they called it "The Bird Bath." We were going to go in there because there was supposedly a Japanese convoy. There were hardly any big ships left but this was supposed to be something. By that time we'd gotten word that the bomb had been dropped, so everybody knew the war was over.

MR: What'd you think when you heard about that?

JA: I thought it was great, wonderful. People nowadays forget that there was still plenty of war going on elsewhere. The Japanese still held the whole Dutch East Indies and people were getting killed all the time down there. A submarine that had been built before us, the *Legardo*-we had all been on it for training up in the Great Lakes-she was lost up in the Siam Gulf just about the time we came out. Many of our crew knew people on that boat. So it was still dangerous and even though we weren't encountering much we were going into places that nobody would have thought of going into in the early part of the war. The idea of chasing sub chasers and going into places called the Bird Bath.

Anyway we were making an approach on a three-masted schooner when I received word to cease hostilities. So we had to let him go. I, being the communications officer, got the radio message and took it right over to the captain.

MR: Were you on patrol when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt?

JA: I guess so, when did he die?

MR: Prior to the bombs.

JA: I'm thinking. We may not have even been out in the war zone. I don't recall too much about the reaction at the time. Everyone of course was sorry to hear, though not everybody was that crazy about Roosevelt.

MR: When the hostilities ended you were sent back to the States?

JA: Ultimately. We were sent back to Subic Bay. We had been scheduled to go back to Perth [Australia]. Everyone loved Australia. A lot of the sailors actually married girls in Australia. But we were sent back to Subic. There must've been twenty subs all tied up together. We waited there for word what to do. We finally decided some would go up to Tokyo and some would go back to the States. We went back to Pearl Harbor, then to San Francisco. We were due for an overhaul, which we waited quite a while for in San Francisco Bay. Finally we went into Hunter's Point Shipyard for the overhaul. It was uncertain what would happen ultimately. After we overhauled and had the battery changed and got some modifications they decided to put us out of commission. So we took the boat up to Mare Island [North of San Francisco] and put her in moth balls. I was there from the beginning to the end.

WC: Do you know what the fate of the sub was? Was it eventually scrapped?

JA: Well the *Lamprey* and a number of the Manitowoc boats were taken back into service in the 50s. The *Lamprey* was given to Argentina, I believe it became the *Santa Fe*. It was interesting because at that time I had become an engineering-duty officer and had been ordered back to Hunter's Point. I was in charge of what they called the sub base, the submarine overhaul activities. Darned if they didn't bring the *Lamprey* in to be converted and reactivated and turned over to Argentina. So I briefly got back aboard just before I left the shipyard.

MR: After you returned to the States what happened?

JA: After the war we had a points system for being discharged, as you probably know. I didn't have that many points but I had an awful lot of leave-time accumulated because you couldn't take any leave while you were out [On patrol]. So I was just ordered back home to take the leave, which was back here in my wife's home in Claverack, New York, across the river. I think I had about three months of accumulated leave and while we were there our daughter was born.

At the end of that I was wondering what to do. I thought, "I want to get out" but then I thought, "Well I like the Navy" and then, "No I want to get out." I had contacted a couple of colleges and took some tests to see what I might be interested in. I put in for post-graduate and said if I get post-graduate courses from the Navy I will stay in. At the end of my leave I was ordered just to report down to Church St. in New York City and await further orders. So I remember just doing busy work.

I got orders to a new submarine up in Portsmouth [New Hampshire], the *Spinax*. I hadn't heard anything about the post-graduate so we went up to Portsmouth and found a place to



live. We put the new boat into commission. The *Spinax* was a radar picket, something they developed at the end of the war to warn against kamikazes. These radar picket subs were supposed to be out in front. We had a lot of radar pedestals up on deck, they were monstrous looking things. There were electronics everywhere in the boat, every corner they could find they'd cram something into it. They called it Program Migraine. This was one of the first ones.

A couple days after it was commissioned I got orders to MIT. I'd finally gotten one of my post-graduate choices. Actually it was the one I wanted the least, an electronics course. The captain was mad as a hornet. I didn't blame him. They'd ordered me to the boat and he'd gotten no use out of me at all, I was just one her for a couple days after she went into commission. So I then went to MIT. The Navy sent me to the electronics course there. That lasted something like two years, I got out in 1949. I got a second Bachelor's degree, it was not a Master's degree course.

When I got out of that I was ordered to another submarine, the *Sea Cat*, which was down in Panama. So we packed up and ultimately were flown down in a cargo plane- by then we had two little children. They put us in this plane with bucket seats along the side. All the transports were tied up in the Berlin Airlift. And of course during all of this time the Navy had been cutting way back.

I was ordered down to the squadron that was based in Balboa, on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal. We flew down in this cargo plane and in the morning we signed up for a breakfast meal and they came by and just kicked K-rations to everyone, including the babies. I was still wearing my Blue's because that was the uniform up in Massachusetts where we'd left from. We got down there and it was hot as blazes. We got a lift over to the submarine base and darned if the *Sea Cat* was not pulling out. The captain yells "Jump aboard, jump aboard!" and I said, "I can't we just got here! I haven't even got new clothes!" They were short-handed and really needed another officer. The squadron commander said you stay here long enough to get your household affects and we'll put you on the next boat going up.

There was an anomalous situation, they were based on the Pacific side of the Panama Canal but their operations were all up in Guantanamo and Key West. So you'd have to go all the way through the canal up there and you'd have to be away from your family for two or three weeks, then you'd come back for a couple of weeks for upkeep. So I went up on another sub, *Diablo*, and met the *Sea Cat* up in Key West and went aboard her. I again became communications officer with electronics and a whole bunch of subsidiary duties. We were simply acting as a training boat for destroyers and their sonar school. We'd go out and they'd come out and track us, very simple stuff. Very routine and dull.

Before we even got back to Panama we got word that they were going to close the base at Balboa, which was the logical thing to do frankly. The boats were all going to be scattered. They were not going to have us go back. Well, here we are, everybody had their family there, and as far as my family was concerned we never did get out household affects unpacked-we did get the car-I guess I went back for one upkeep and then went back to Key West and got word that we would not go back because the base would be closed. Everybody protested, including the commanding officer, so they let the boats swap crews, and one of the boats that was going to stay took the single men and the married men went back on the *Sea Cat* to Balboa. We had to conduct our own upkeep because the tender had already left. We were able to get our families on board an attack transport that they diverted.

MR: So what did your wife think of all this?

JA: Well she had never been away from New York and she liked it. While she was in Panama and I was in Key West- her college roommate had married a Spanish fellow from Columbia- and so she took the kids and flew down from Panama to Columbia and saw her roommate and had an exciting time. We saw a little bit of Panama but not enough to amount to anything. She and the kids came back to Key West on this attack transport. We got there at the worst time of the year, it was hot as blazes. This was before you had air conditioning much in the houses. We were there almost a year.

While we were there I would operate either out of Key West or Gitmo [Guantanamo]. The boat visited Havana, the Bahamas, Nassau, Santiago, and of course Guantanamo itself. But the family back in Key West just sweltered. We got orders that the boat was to go to Philadelphia and be overhauled and converted into an experimental submarine. So we packed up and moved up to Philadelphia. We had a ship-wide overhaul and they put an experimental sonar on board. The whole torpedo room was simply gutted- the torpedo tubes were there but you couldn't get to them from inside. We loaded them from outside because we were supposed to still be able to fire them. It was just full of electronics.

During this time I had decided to apply for engineering duty. While waiting for that to happen we went through this overhaul and went back to Key West. My wife and kids stayed up in New York because it was pretty certain that I was not going to stay on there much longer, and indeed that's what happened. I got transferred to an escort carrier, the *Palau*, this was during Korea. Just before the Korean War broke out they were cutting the submarine force about in half and that's when I decided I wanted to get into engineering duty, which was what I'd always hoped for and where my interests lied.

When the war broke out of course they fired the Secretary of Defense that was cutting everything back and everything changed. The carrier that I got onto, the *Palau*, was doing training out of Norfolk [Virginia]. We did not get into the Pacific at all. But we would go out for a couple of weeks and train aviators.

MR: It must've been quite different to go from a submarine to a carrier.

JA: It was because I'd never been on a surface ship, I had no particular knowledge. But fortunately they put me as electronic officer, which I did know something about. In fact it turned out that on submarines we were a lot more interested in keeping things going and things were a little more run down and sloppy on the carrier. I was able to get things straightened out and made some improvements. I made some boo-boo's but finally got my feet on the deck.

I was on the *Palau* for a year and it took that long for an opening to come up on the engineering duties side. While I was on the *Palau* we were based out of Norfolk so the family moved there. I got an offer in New York. We were on the way to Boston for an overhaul. They let me off at New York, which was handy for me because I always kept my home address in New York. I'd grown up in Beacon up in Dutchess County and my wife in Claverack a little further up and we used that as our home address while I was in service.

I got off the *Palau* and had orders out in the Great Lakes to the electronics supply office. So there was another complete change, something I had never worked in. It turned out to be pretty interesting. It was during the Korean War. We were one a six and a half day week; worked all but Saturday mornings. I learned a lot about logistics and supply. I did a lot of traveling to companies that were building new electronics equipment where the group I was in charge of would decide what kind of spare parts to buy. So we were out there for two years.

I finally got the orders I had been hoping for all along, which was to the Electric Boat Company in Groton, where they were building the *Nautilus*. So we moved to Groton and I was stationed as the supervisor of shipbuilding there. I was stationed there for almost four years. *Nautilus* was just getting started really. We were overhauling and converting. They were building new submarines and converting old ones. I got a lot of experience on all different kinds of subs. My duties were in the inspection department, particularly the electronics inspection. I was supposed to keep an eye on the Electric Boat Company people, they were doing all the real work. The Navy people were there to observe and direct. We weren't the "hands on" people, we were inspectors not workers.

MR: How much had electronics on these submarines changed from the *Lamprey* to the *Nautilus*?

JA: By the time of the *Nautilus* things had changed. The basic radar sets were still pretty much the same, although they were improved models. They were beginning to get some new sonar equipment which they copied from German models. A couple of the boats we were working on with the Electric Boat Company were what we called hunter-killer submarines. They were basically WWII boats that were modified with a big sonar up in the bow, a great big eight-foot thing. It was a long-range detection sonar, so that of course was all new. We still had some of the old sonar, it was simply an improved model of the wartime [Model].

WC: Did you have more transistorized units and less tubes?

JA: No they hadn't gotten into transistors yet. They were beginning to get into encapsulated circuits, which were still vacuum tubes, but they were miniature instead of the full-size ones. They'd make up a little circuit and then encapsulate it in plastic. You'd replace the whole circuit. That was the latest stuff, transistors hadn't really taken over. *Nautilus* of course was one of a kind, and her skipper wanted everything new. He wanted anything he'd heard about and he had enough "oomph" with [Admiral Hyman G.] Rickover and he could get anything he wanted. He'd say, "We want this equipment" and we'd say, "Well you don't really need it," and he'd say "Well, we want it." Then they'd put it on and since it was this experimental thing it would flood out.

I was there when the *Nautilus* was commissioned and went on one of her sea trials. Not the first one but I think I was out on the second one, it was a deep dive. I was on a number of other subs, I must've gone on six or eight of the trial dives. So I got a lot of experience on a lot of different types of submarines.

From there I was ordered to San Francisco, the old shipyard on the other side of the country again. This was what had been the Hunter's Point dry docks during the war, it was now a full-fledged shipyard. They sent me there to be production analysis officer. Here was another, "Well, what's that?" It was a completely new field. I had to find out what it was about and what my duties were. Turned out part of production analysis was controlling the work. You'd estimate the work before a ship got in there, break it down into job orders, decide how many people in the shop you needed. You had to balance the work load against the work force basically. You'd tell the shops how many people they'd be able to have for the next couple of months. You had to keep the work flowing and orderly, in balance. We were not trying to make a profit, we were just trying to make sure we didn't spend more than we needed to. It was another complete change.

After a couple of years on that I was one of the ship superintendents on the aircraft carrier *Oriskany*, which was in the papers last week, I don't know if you read. They sank her as a reef off of Florida. I don't know if you noticed, there was a picture of it in the paper going down. When I was on we converted her, put the angled deck on it. Put all new equipment and completely modernized her into a first-line carrier.

There was another complete change of experience. My whole career had been like that. From there I was ordered to Washington to the Bureau of Ships. They were having a big reorganization and I got into anti-submarine work. Then I got back into submarines, from anti-subs back to what they called the submarine desk. I had to organize what they called the submarine antenna improvement program. All the things we had been complaining about when I was on the subs were still problems, and we set up a special organization to try to keep the electronics antennas from flooding out and keep them reliable.

I was in Washington for four years and was then ordered back to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard where I became quality assurance superintendant. I said, "What's that?" Quality assurance is something we'd never heard of. What we would do was test everything, and that was considered quality control. Mostly we said, "We're confident we did a good job, we'll take the boat on out." A friend of mine was a skipper on *Thresher*.<sup>7</sup> I'd known him when we put the *Nautilus* into commission, he was one of the other offices. I wrote to him asking to take me out on *Thresher*. I wanted to see what it was like on one of these brand new boats. Well, he never answered me and he never came back. That's how I happened to get to Portsmouth, because I'd already been ordered out to Newport [Rhode Island] to a destroyer squadron. I was supposed to be an electronic officer on the staff. Instead they shifted me up to Portsmouth to replace the guy that went down on the *Thresher*. And so I became quality assurance superintendent at Portsmouth. This was when we were going through all the big sub-safe ramifications and trying to figure out what had gone wrong on the *Thresher*, making all the improvements. I got into a lot of stuff, x-rays and ultra-sonics. All kinds of new things. But that's when my career ended.

MR: Now is that the section in here where you said it's classified?

JA: Most of the detailed stuff is either confidential or secret, but the general type of duty was well-known enough. At Portsmouth it was more of the same. We'd go out on sea trials with the boats once the overhaul was completed. They were still building new subs there. This was before they took the shipyards out of the construction business. By the time I left things were beginning to go downhill from my point of view.

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<sup>7</sup> USS *Thresher* sunk at sea on April 10, 1963 with the loss of her whole crew

MR: In what ways?

JA: Well for one thing they were starting to close down shipyards in a big way. Good duties were getting scarce. The Navy had built up during Korea and now it was going down again so there was always a lot of attrition whenever I came up for promotion. I was considering myself mighty lucky to have gotten where I did. I was not an Annapolis man; I had come in through the reserves. I had seen an awful lot of my contemporaries fail promotion. I was up for captain at that time, 1965, and I had considerable doubts about whether I'd make it. I think I probably came in just below the line. I said as soon as I get passed over I'm going to get out of the service. You could stay and wait for a couple more times for promotion, but I said if they don't want me anymore that's fine. I'll go and find a civilian job. So that's what I did. I have no regrets about my time in the service. I had a wide variety of experience, both afloat and ashore.

MR: How do you think your time affected your life?

JA: It enabled my family to travel back and forth and see an awful lot of the country. I think all my kids got the travel bug. They're now spread out all over. We enjoyed it. We would look forward to it. When I got orders somewhere else we'd talk it up in a positive way and say "Hey great, we're going to go someplace else." Then when we got there we'd immediately see the place. We were only going to be there for two to three years because that was the normal tour of duty. So when we got out to California, every chance we got we'd go see a national park. We saw more of the country than the native people did. That was true in all of our duty stations. It was a positive experience.

MR: Did you join any veterans' organizations when you retired?

JA: Not right away. I finally joined the sub vets. I'm not that much of a joiner. But they only have two sub vets organizations, I belong to both of them. One is the Submarine Veterans of WWII. That does not accept anyone but WWII veterans, so it's a dying organization. They're pretty well-combined with the other, which is US Sub Vets, Inc. They take sub vets from any and every place and period. Now the two organizations work pretty much hand in hand. The one I'm with meets down in Kingston. Both of them meet at the same time together. The WWII Sub Vets are already talking about closing up and merging into the other.

MR: Do you stay in contact with anyone you served with?

JA: I still write to several of them. Back 10 or 12 years ago we would have submarine reunions. I went back to four reunions for the *Lamprey*. By then the two skippers had died and the fellow that was the chief organizer died. At the last reunion I went to there

were no more than half a dozen of us so I no longer do that. They do still have reunions. Now all of the boats together will have a reunion at Manitowoc, all the boats that were built out there. I got back to a couple of the Manitowoc reunions but I haven't been back for at least five years. But I keep in touch with a couple of people but that's about it.

MR: Well thank you very much for the interview.