

**Emerson Andrew
Veteran**

**Interviewer
Philip Leonard**

**Interviewed by Philip Leonard
Hoosick Falls Historical Society
Hoosick Falls, New York**

Q: Could you state your full name?

EA: Emerson Andrew. Also known as Emy Andrew.

Q: And where do you live Emy?

EA: At the present time, I lived over by the central school on Route 22.

Q: Would you tell us--before you went into the service--a little bit about your life in Hoosick Falls?

EA: Well, I played an awful lot of football at the time, and even before I went to high school. In fact, we had a team here, we were all under fourteen or fifteen years old--The Alligators. We played Hoosick School and all around.

Q: Bill Coonradt was on that team. He talked about it when he was here.

EA: Yep, Bill Coonradt. There was an awful lot of us on that, and we had a great time.

Q: Where did you live?

EA: Church Street.

Q: Where did you go to school?

EA: I went to Center Street School, it has been torn down now, it's where the American Legion used to be. I went to the high school down there, and in fact I was a class officer in my freshman year, which was very gratifying at that time. Then the war come along, Pearl Harbor, and uh everybody most of the guys my age were getting out of school and enlisting, which I did. In fact, I had to have my mother sign for me. I was only seventeen actually. The first couple of weeks when I was in boot camp, I was sorry she did sign for me, but as time went on...cause we're all about the same age in the service. We're all seventeen and eighteen years old, most of us, ninety-five percent of us. So our wants were all the same. From there I went to Gunner's Mate school in Newport, Rhode Island. McGruger's Navy, they called it because he run the ship aground in Pearl Harbor. [unclear] He was head of the Gunnery's School in Newport, Rhode Island. From there I went to a San Pedro, California. My ship was commissioned there. In fact, it was commissioned on my birthday.

Q: What was the name of the ship?

EA: USS Weaver. Yep it was commissioned on my birthday, which was something out of the ordinary. In fact, at the time I have they relay from there that they sent.

Q: What kind of ship was it?

EA: It was a destroyer escort. In fact, they have a sister ship of it now in Albany, New York, the USS Slater. In fact, I was down there, our Weaver reunion was held in Albany six weeks ago. And due to the fact that I was local, I was more or less controlling the reigns, so to speak, but we had a great time. There was sixty of us there and our wives. We go every year and this was the thirteenth consecutive year that we've had reunions. Next year it's in Tennessee, it's has been all over the country. We've had great times.

Q: Okay now, you were on the Weaver, and where did you ship out of?

EA: St Pedro. We shipped out of there and we went to Hawaii, saw the ships get sunk in Pearl Harbor. USS Arizona was still, uh, still there. Still is to my knowledge. From there we went to the Marshall Islands, [unclear] Guam, [unclear] to all the islands. In fact, we were in the Philippines when we got word that they dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, I believe the first one was, Nagasaki was the second. Of course, I say, we were so young and we didn't pay much attention. We weren't afraid of nothin.

Q: Didn't know any better.

EA: That's right. You hit that one right on the nose. We went through the biggest, the largest typhoon that's ever been recorded in US Naval history at that time and it was off the coast of the Philippines and we went through it and three destroyers got sunk in that [unclear] except one guy got off. In fact there was another local guy, he was on a tanker in front of us and nobody knows the name of that ship and I was talking to him when I come home. We conversed and it was his ship. We were in Japan two weeks before and...

Q: Ok let's go back and then I'll talk to you...I just finished reading a book on the Belleau Wood aircraft carrier and Norm Scott was on it.

EA: Yes. He was. Yeah.

Q: That's what you did was destroyer escort of carrier anything that they...and during all the bombardments and all the landings and that and the Gilbert de Marshall and so forth. That was your job.

EA: In fact, a lot of Japanese suicide missions on destroyer escorts. Bill [unclear] I believe his ship was struck by a kamikaze.

Q: Yeah and the Belleau Wood also. How about your ship, your ship was lucky and then went through all that?

EA: We were lucky. I guess we got credited for sinking a couple of submarines, but we were lucky as far as one man jumped over to the side or he come up missing and they figured he was so despondent that he jumped over the side. That's when everybody figured obviously because he was well liked. But we had never seen a lady or a woman for two years.

Q: Right. Now I cut you off, but you were saying you're on your way to Japan two weeks after the bomb or?

EA: After the atomic bomb we went into Sendai Japan. Uh, after a prisoner of war was ended up Bataan Death March, American prisoners of war, that was where they were held prisoner. We went in after them and took a hospital ship down in that and then we escorted the hospital ship. That was two weeks before the peaceful side and the fact that there was a guy come on board our ship, something that could walk and we got talking, a guy from Bennington, his name Levine, but I never, I tried to find him after and nobody ever heard of him. So I don't know. So we had liberty in Japan for two weeks before the war was over and the Japanese people were very nice to us. You'd be walking down the street way down below, far away in the distance, and you'd see probably a thousand people. You got down there. [unclear]. So our hearts started jumping up and down. Then we went to the Japanese, uh, a house of the souvenirs and stuff. In fact, I had an opium pipe and I never know what it was. I'd never known till 40 years later, but I never know what it was. If I got a picture of a couple of Japanese girls and they had a horse show right across from where I live on the river road one time and [unclear] married a Japanese girl. She was from Japan, so I got talking to her. She says, "Oh yes, I'm from Sendai," I says, "You're what?" "From Sendai Japan." So I said, "Wait a minute." So I ran home and got these two pictures and she knew one of the girls.

Q: What a coincidence. So, you went into Japan and they sign the armistice on September second?

EA: Yep. But prior to that, we had Bernie Pie the famous writer, he come up on the ship. In fact, I got pictures of him at home on our ship, he was on there about three weeks before he got killed. He and another guy, Harold Stassen politician, he was a nominee or thought he was a nominee for president, I think he was from Minnesota.

Q: I believe I know who you're talking about. Okay, so you went into Japan there and you guided this hospital ship in to get the men from [unclear]. Then what happened?

EA: Then we had a Japanese sub rose, it come up out of the water, and it was twice as long as our ship, and they surrendered to us. Being so young, we didn't

know how to cope with that. It was long on both ends. But uh, other than that we had a great time--but I do think at that age don't have no fear.

Q: For how long were you overseas in a time frame?

EA: Twenty-two months without no leave...because when I come back, the skipper on our ship, I got talking to him I got ten days leave on Green Cove Springs to come home for a ten-day leave and when I went back I got talking to him and he says, "Where you from?" I told him. He says, "Hey, I went to school with a guy, my neighbor next door, I went to college with him too, he's the principal up there." Marble Lobbies! So, I couldn't get over that. So, uh, just kidding with him, I said, "Well how about another five days I'll go home and tell him?" And he says, "you got it."

Q: So that was the end of the war?

EA: Yeah I got out 20 days before I was supposed to.

Q: But you gotta wait and they discharge you?

EA: From Green Cove Springs, Florida.

Q: Then that was the end of your service and you came back home. All right. Tell us a little about your life after you came home.

EA: Well everybody had that 52-20 Club. You get twenty dollars a week and what's twenty dollars a week?

Q: Well in those days it was a lot of money.

EA: Well it was but anyways, I met the darling of my dreams over in Hoosick and we got married.

Q: What was your wife's maiden name?

EA: Ester Fleming. In fact, her family goes way back to the Revolutionary War time. I think her great-granddaddy is sitting on a monument up there. Colonel Sam Moore. Anyway, so then the kids started coming, we have five children and they're all grown up and their wings are all gone I guess.

Q: You don't have anybody in town left?

EA: One's up on Johnson Hill, one's in Rotterdam, one's in Manhattan and one's Minnesota and Tina's going to--Tina went to school with your daughter-- And their building a house up in Petersburg.

Q: That's the story I've heard most veterans I've talked about. They all had five, six children that only one or two are left in town and the rest are all besides. They all made their own life.

EA: But that's good yeah.

Q: Anything else you'd like to tell us about the service, about Hoosick Falls, anything you'd like to tell us before we call this interview a take?

EA: Well though as it turned out--of course I'm home alive and all that--I think the service was a great, great experience...because I have guys from all over the country come visit me and I go there.

Q: What'd you were seventeen, eighteen years old and you grew up. And twenty-two months on the sea...cause a lot of the sea action was monotony. It's different when you were escorting and there's battles going on there, but when there isn't it gets pretty monotonous.

EA: I did have one thing to happen to me that I was sorry that I volunteered for but as it turns out, it turn out alright. That big typhoon I was telling you about. Our depth charges got loose on the back, and that was my station, I was in charge on the [unclear] and the depth charges. So the chief says, "We've got to have some volunteers to go out and get the depth charges and a tie them down." Well they're rolling around, and I raised my hand. Well four or five other guys did. In fact, I wasn't the first one they did, so I said, "Well I will." And then I get out there and I was sorry. I never volunteer for nothing after that,

Q: What'd you do, tie down the depth charge so they wouldn't explode?

EA: Yeah, cause some of them are sent for fifty feet and then they explode.

Q: I see...Hey, thanks a lot for coming. We greatly appreciate it.