

**Edward Kasner
Veteran**

**Hector Allen
Interviewer
Mohawk Regional Teacher Center
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HA: Good evening today we are going to interview Mr. Edward Kasner, who has been teaching in the Little falls central school system for many years and a friend of mine for all of those years he has been retired for a few years now. Ed you were in World War 2 and you look pretty young for a World War 2 veteran. How old were you when you went there?

EK: I was 17.

HA: Were you drafted or enlisted?

EK: No I enlisted, I saw a John Wayne, a couple of them.

HA: You know really that the John Wayne movies had a lot influence on people's attitudes

EK: It certainly did

HA: That type of movie, not just John Wayne but through other people too.

EK: Patriotic and creative time compared to recent years.

HA: I think the threat was of such magnitude that you know it really forced people to be patriotic because if we would've lost World War Two the story today would obviously be quite different. What branch of service did you go in?

EK: The Navy.

HA: Oh that's good because we've only had one other navy veteran on this program, that was Mr. John LaDue who was in World War One. Do you John?

EK: Oh yes I do

HA: We went and interviewed him a couple weeks ago. So you were enlisted in the navy when was this, what year?

EK: 1943.

HA: 1943. Where did you go for basic training?

EK: A group of us from my neighborhood went out to Grayslake that's in Chicago.

HA: Mr. Ladue went there in World War One, that was a training base in World War One also. How long were you there for?

EK: I Always try to think because, it's hard to recall this was 43 years ago were talking about. I think it was an 8 week training period

HA: Do you remember anything much about it, any?

EK: I was in the contingent of really young people. There were two types, people my age 17, 18, and 19. Then there was a group of old people in their 20's, mid 20's. I remember how easy it was for us and how difficult it was for the older men. It surprised me how stuff could be difficult for anybody at that time, but I'm beginning to understand.

HA: Anybody in their upper 20s seems young to me right now. So then you got out of Grayslake and where did you go?

EK: Let's see, spent some time there and next we got out of boot camp. We were given a leave but I don't remember how long it was, couple of weeks maybe, I don't honestly remember, from there I went to Detroit to an electrician school. Stayed there approximately 4 months. From there we had a choice of what we wanted to do, one of the choices was with the landing crafts, one was I think with the Navy itself the big ships and the other one was a submarine service and I chose that one.

HA: Oh you were in the Submarine Service? I didn't know that. See I've known you since 1958 and I never knew that.

EK: Yea.

HA: That's very interesting.

EK: and from there we went to the New London Connecticut which is one of the larger and probably the main training base in the United States and it still is today.

HA: You went by train, most of these movements were by train, many people don't realize how much trains were utilized during World War 2.

EK: No.

HA: You know when I was in London about 4 years ago we took a fairy from the tip of Long Island and we had to truck and camp it and they had a couple of these big nuclear subs up on the way there, gigantic things.

EK: We trained on World War One or after World War One submarines were really the old boats in the movies they called them Pig Boats, and I can understand when you saw that. They were terrible.

HA: How many people would be on a crew?

EK: They were just used for training but the regular subs the newer subs at the time I'd say in the neighborhood of 100. Between 95 and 100.

HA: So you were trained, do you recall the name of the sub that you were eventually assigned to.

EK: Oh yeah, that I didn't forget. I was on the U.S.S. Rock 274.

HA: And then where did this go?

EK: We picked up a boat, a ship in a pier or something or other in New York City, Manhattan and from there we went through the Panama Canal, stopped at San Diego went from there to Hawaii and in Hawaii we picked up the submarine.

HA: Oh I see

EK: Yeah we went by ship, it was quite an experience for a little guy who had never been further really then Pennsylvania because I grew up in New York City. I think the furthest West I had ever been was Pennsylvania and to go through the Canal and go out and see the west coast and we also went to Hawaii, Pearl Harbor and picked up our boat and so forth, then we went to war.

HA: Pearl Harbor probably pretty cleaned up by 43 or did it still have a lot of bomb damage and stuff like that evident?

EK: Well the ships in the harbor were still there that were bombed out, of course they're there today. Interesting because we just got back from Hawaii. Yeah we just got back and we were with some friends and a friend of ours was in the Marine Corps. We visited his base in Maui; which is one of the islands out there and we visited Pearl Harbor and things were entirely different, and it is nothing that looks like. Neither of us recognized the area; nothing was familiar, but a basically that was it we went on a number of different war patrols. Anything you've seen in a movie about the service has some truth to it.

HA: What was your job, you said an electrician?

EK: I was an electrician's mate

HA: And these were diesel boats with electric motors

EK: Yeah underwater they run on batteries the public surface run on diesel. Luckily we got out of the war unscarred.

HA: I've never really seen any statistics on how many of our submarines went out and didn't come back, I know the Germans lost a fairly large number and so did the Japanese I never really knew.

EK: I don't know quite a few, I know when we shipped out there were four different submarines that the guys were shipped t, and I know two of the four went down and were lost. I had some good friends. Chances of survival, I mean among these four was fifty-fifty, but that was high. I don't know how many though I can't answer our question.

HA: so did you participate in any acts against the Japanese?

EK: Yeah I had a flag, that had the record of the submarine and when I left home and my mother and father left their home they got rid of everything. So I don't have anything, but as I recall the biggest thing we got was the Japanese destroyer and got sand bans which are small boats and got and got freighters.

HA: Toward the end of the war, I guess submarines were cruising right off the shore of Japan.

EK: Yeah. Yeah.

HA: Right within in sight of the patrols.

EK: one of our patrols took us as far north as, uh I'm not sure how to pronounce it. I think it's called Cercreils.

HA: The Kure isles

EK: Yeah that's it.

HA: I think that's it, I'm not so sure myself.

EK: No that's, Yeah.

HA: Did the Japanese Navy ever depth charts?

EK: Yeah, Yeah, couple times.

HA: That must have been pretty shaky.

EK: Yeah, a lot of frightening things about it but you tend to forget about it and put it in your past. I mean that's what prepared me so well for teaching. Nothing frightened me. The teaching aspect...one of my first jobs was the east side of New York City which is a tough area. I worked in Harlem. None of those things were frightening.

HA: Not after being in a submarine with depth charts. Well, you survived the war pretty well. When you got back 1945 or so and got discharged.

EK: 46, 1946

HA: So you were probably in three years?

EK: Yeah three years.

HA: Do you ever of course bond with yours?

EK: No we all went our own ways and some of the guys stayed in service and some of the guys got out and no we never kept in touch and we never go back to reunions and so. Which is interesting because this friend of mine, out of Herkimer Bob Margin, who we went to Hawaii with. They have a reunion every year. He sees the people who worked under him, he was an officer, but I never knew.

HA: Wow. I don't know. Some people just don't really that stuff I guess, I've talked to some people on this program who, this is the first time that they have opened up and brought some of this up.

EK: No, this is the first time I have ever talked about it. I was just saying before we started filming in Las Vegas, Bob introduced us into some of his friends, one of whom is an airline pilot and he was very interested and asked questions and I answered him. He just asked and I answered. It's the first time Bob or Mickey, my wife, had ever heard any of this. Now it's past history.

HA: I suppose, what rank did you get up in?

EK: I think the equivalence, the equivalent in the Army to a Sarge, uh Corporal.

HA: And how was the discharge and the processing?

EK: No, no we had a choice when the war was over. We had a choice of bringing our boats back submarines there called boats not ships for some reason and we had a choice of bringing our boat back or decommissioning back some other way. I was still young and single, I decided to ride the boat back and we came back again to the coast through Panama, Panama Canal and the east coast. We went up to New Hampshire, Portsmouth in Portsmouth we did a lot of the work and did a lot of work and took it back to New London and mothballed it.

HA: They probably ultimately scrapped it, because it would be pretty obsolete today.

EK: Oh Yeah.

HA: It's probably all gone.

EK: It's funny because when we were in Hawaii we went to Pearl Harbor and saw the Arizona and right next to it they have a submarine. It was the same class as the one we trained on that they made into a museum.

HA: They have one in Fall River, Massachusetts if you ever been. They have the U.S.S. Mass, which was that Missouri class battleship that the state owns. Then they have a

destroyer next to. Then a submarine that you can go through. It's quite an extensive thing, very impressive. So you've got out, here you are, now what did you do?

EK: When I got out?

HA: Yeah. Did you take the fifty two twenty credits and talk about that with some other people?

EK: No, no. Couple a friends and I went into a little business. The lamp business, repairing lamps, selling lamps. I knocked around for about six or seven month or so and we were not making any money. My folks had wanted me to go to school. I ended up going to school, but I kicked around about a half year and then went to college.

HA: The G.I. Bill?

EK: Yes.

HA: That did a lot.

EK: The greatest thing that ever happened.

HA: I think so too and so you were back and three years older. Had the country changed at all?

EK: No.

HA: How is a veteran welcomed after what... most of the people that I have asked so far have indicated that there wasn't any big welcome home thing for them. The ones that came back earlier, maybe after the Japanese surrendered but the ones that came back in forty-six...

EK: No, we came uh, to Staten Island, yeah I think that's where we first came in. I'm not sure now I think its Staten Island. Speedo beach it's down in the city somewhere near the island, they had a band and ladies with donuts and stuff like that. None of my friends never had a complaint about how they were treated. People were patriotic.

HA: Well I don't mean to treat you badly but I, I got the impression that this was just ho hum and business as usual. After that speaking of bands, it reminds me of when I went east out of Seattle, they had a band an army band on the doc. Those devils played "*so long it's been good to me*". You know if we had been a little bit closer you know, those guys... but anyway. Ok Ed. Well thank you very much. It was good of you to come up here and do this for our program and we hope this will be of historical importance in the future.

EK: I hope so.