

**Leland V. Emlaw
Veteran**

**Mike Russert
Wayne Clarke
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on April 24th, 2003, 1:30PM
Ogdensburg NY**

Q: Could you give me your full name, date of birth, and place of birth please?

LE: My name is Leland Emlaw. I was born in Norfolk, NY on the 7th of August 1922.

Q: What was your educational background prior to going in the service?

LE: I quit my junior year and went into the service.

Q: Do you remember your reaction when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

LE: I figured I was nineteen, so I was gonna go in.

Q: Were you drafted, or did you enlist?

LE: I enlisted; I was called up in the Army in Mascina. The next day or two there was three or four of us. We went to Watertown to enlist in the Navy.

Q: Why. Did you pick the Navy?

LE: I couldn't tell ya! [Laughter]

Q: Could you tell us where you went in and where you went for boot camp?

LE: I went in on November of 1942 and I went to boot camp in Samsun. I was about the third bunch in there. I was in there for four weeks then they sent me down to gunnery school in Virginia.

Q: When you were in Samsun did they have boats there for you?

LE: Nope! They had nothing because they were still building it. Just like flies down there building. From there I went to gunnery school in Virginia and then the Armed Guard in Brooklyn. I got orders to go over to a ship that belonged to Panama and I and another person were gunners on that.

Q: What was the ship like?

LE: It was an old ship.

Q: What kind of guns were fitted out on it?

LE: We had one old six pounder and we had four twenty millimeters.

Q: How long were you on the ship?

LE: I was on there less than a year. I made two trips to Iceland to an airbase. We brought supplies and stuff. First time over there we lost a lot of ships. [Shows Pictures of Convoy]

Q: So that was on your first trip?

LE: Yes, my first trip. I made two trips.

Q: Were you in a convoy both times?

LE: Yes! I was in a convoy both times.

[Pause]

Q: What was the ship you were on?

LE: The Endicott four ninety-five. The Destroyer.

Q: How long were you on the Endicott?

LE: Till the end of the war. Till I got discharged.

Q: Where were you on the Endicott?

LE: I was in the Atlantic, Pacific, and Mediterranean.

Q: What was your duty on the Endicott?

LE: I was a cook.

Q: How many people did you cook for?

LE: It was a little over three hundred. Two ninety eight I think.

Q: Did you have a lot of fresh food or was it mostly frozen?

LE: After we left port we did but no we didn't have it. We saved a little for ourselves, the cooks.

Q: What was the Endicott involved in?

LE: A lot of convoy duty. We also escorted troops up and down the channel to invade Normandy during the war. In May 24th we were rammed over there.

Q: What do you mean by rammed?

LE: Banged into upfront. Then we got orders to go get patched up. They put a plate inside and outside.

Q: Were you involved in the invasion itself?

LE: We done a little part but not much. We woulda been right in there. There were five destroyers in the squadron, but we were rammed so it saved us there.

We rejoined the fleet and escorted LST's and CSI's into the Mediterranean from the buildup for the attack on Southern France. Many boats bombarded the beach in Southern France. We bombarded down away from where the invasion was, trying to pull troops down there six or seven hours before they landed.

Q: Was this when you were escorting British gunboats?

LE: Yes. They are the gunboats I am talking about now.

Q: Was Douglas Fairbanks Jr. on board?

LE: He was on it. In fact, I got a picture here.

Q: He was with the British on their gunboats?

LE: He must have had something to do with it. I couldn't tell ya. These two German ships were going after him and they called for us to come down because they were swarmed. So we came down and the first shot we took at one it hit it square in the center and it blew up. Then we went after the second one.

Q: Were you below deck or up on top?

LE: I was on the twenty millimeter. That was my battle station.

Q: So even though you were a cook you still managed a gun?

LE: Oh yeah I did! Then we sunk both of them and picked up one hundred and sixty-five survivors.

Q: When your ship was being converted did you have to leave?

LE: Yes we did. I was home for about eighteen days. Then we went into the Pacific and were in task force fifty-two. We got over there in Okinawa in the 23rd of September 1945 and that's when I got off the battleship.

Q: Did you do any duty at all around Okinawa?

LE: There was a lot of battle like and cruisers still there. We went around them.

Q: Did you see any of the Kamikaze attacks?

LE: Yes! There was a few of them but but I did not see them. We screened around for their big stuff.

Q: Were you there for that Typhoon?

LE: I was in that! That was terrible. We could not get up on the deck.

Q: So you left your ship shortly after that?

LE: There was three or four of us. There was points back then, and I had enough to get out. I wanted to leave. I had seen enough of it

Q: So how did you get back to the states?

LE: We came back on a submarine. We came back to letal beach.

Q: Was that after or before the Atomic bomb was dropped?

LE: We were on our way over when it was dropped.

Q: What was your reaction to that?

LE: I could not believe it.

Q: What was the reaction of the ship when it happened?

LE: I guess they were pretty happy because we lost nearly a million men to Japan.

Q: What was your reaction when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt?

LE: I was pretty sad. I liked him. In fact, I didn't see him close, but he was in the chair up there in the deck on the Quincy. He was in a wheelchair ya know? We were always around him. And we weren't alone he had other protection too. There must have been four or five destroyers around always.

[Long Pause]

Q: When you were in the Galley working, were there any blacks?

LE: Oh yeah! There was probably about fifteen blacks on our ship.

Q: What was the relationship like with them?

LE: With me good. Not all of them. Not with the Southerners. We had a lot of Southerners on there. To me I got along with them good. There cook was a black. He was a good one.

Q: When you returned home did you ever make use of the GI Bill?

LE: Nope! I brought it home.

Q: Did you use the fifty-two twenty club at all?

LE: I don't think so. I went back to work shortly after I was out.

Q: Did you keep in contact with anyone from the service?

LE: Ferwell. One of the cooks. He was from Tennessee. Lived back in the hills. Called him an ol' hillbilly. [Laughter]

Q: Did your ship ever have any reunions?

LE: Yup. But no I never went.

Q: So have you joined any of the Veterans Organizations?

LE: Just a legion.

Q: You still a member?

LE: Oh yeah. I'll be there this afternoon

[Shows Pictures]

Q: Do you have an original copy of that comic?

LE: Nope, just a copy.

[Shows copy of comic]

LE: Okay right there read that. That tells us about picking up Ferbanks air just like the movie she said.

Q: Oh he was the commander of the British?

LE: Yeah but I don't know what he would be doing on such a small one. I can't understand it. This is all about Bulkely. I don't know if you can get that.

[Shows Pictures]

Q: Did you have this taken with your camera?

LE: No. We had it photorized when we got back to New York and Bulkely signed them. There all autographed by him. He was a good fellar.

[Shows Pictures]

Q: Where about are you in that picture?

LE: The wife and I are right there.

Q: Were you married in the service?

LE: No. When I got home. In fact a year before this picture got taken. I married in the twenty fifth in 1943 and this was in 1944.

Q: Do you think being in the service affected or changed your life in any way?

LE: Well I tell ya when I got out, I done a lot of drinking. I like my beer, but you got to grow up. I was young ya know I was twenty I think. Yeah, I was twenty in August and I went in November. I still like my beer.

[Laughter]