

**Jerome Norman Greene
Veteran**

**Wayne Clarke
Interviewer**

**New York State Military Museum
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WC: Today is the 29th of March, 2012. We are in Schenectady, New York at the Kingsway Apartment Complex. My name is Wayne Clarke with the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, New York. Sir, for the record, would you please state your full name and your name and date and place of birth, please.

JNG: My full name is Jerome N. [Norman] Greene. Born October 1, 1925. I am living here in the community.

WC: Where were you born?

JNG: In New York City on the island of Manhattan.

WC: Did you attend school there?

JNG: Went through public school, PS173, Junior High School, 115. And went to DeWitt Clinton in the Bronx on Mosholu Parkway. My parents, in the beginning of 1941, moved to Queens, Rego Park. I went to Forest Hills High School. I don't remember exactly when it was, but it was after Pearl Harbor, which was December 7th, 1941. I had a problem, and I won't go into that. I ran away from home. I hitchhiked to Florida, and on December 27th, 1941, I enlisted in the Army in West Palm Beach, Florida, at Morrison Field Air Force Base.

WC: You mentioned you were sixteen years old?

JNG: I was sixteen on October 1st of 1941. I don't remember how long it took me to get to West Palm Beach from New York City, but I wanted to get someplace warm. It was wintertime.

WC: You enlisted in the Army. Why did you pick the Army? Any particular reason?

JNG: West Palm Beach was the Morrison Field Air Force Base.

WC: I see.

JNG: And they were the Army. I was sitting on the docks watching the ships come in, [I was a] sixteen-year-old kid. I conjured up a tale that I could tell somebody how old I was, not sixteen, you know, to enlist in the Army.

WC: So you must have told them you were eighteen?

JNG: No, I told them I was twenty one. The biggest problem I had was I was a skinny kid and the doctor said I didn't weigh enough. I said, well, I hadn't had a decent meal, living on the road. I gave them a cock-and-bull story. They signed me up. They transferred me to Camp Blanding in the northern part of Florida, outside of Starke, Florida. I was there for about a month when I decided I could tell my parents where I was. I didn't think they could get me out, and they did. My Army discharge papers are over there, [points to something off camera] my Navy discharge papers over there. In that period of time, I convinced my father. I worked on a farm until I was seventeen up in Jefferson, New York. Between Jefferson and Stanford. My father signed for me on my seventeenth birthday.

WC: Okay. Let me just go back a little bit. When you were in the Army, were they upset when they found out you were only sixteen?

JNG: Well, it was very interesting. I don't remember the gory details, but one officer wanted to put me in jail, court-martial me. One of the other officers, and I don't remember their names. It was a blur at that time. They argued that there were a lot of people skipping the draft and didn't want any part of it, and here is somebody willing to fight for his country. They gave me an honorable discharge. I think that's what that said. For some reason or other, I can still remember my Army serial number, which was 14061635, and I can remember my Navy serial number, which was 7074728.

WC: Did they give you a ticket to get back home?

JNG: Yes. The full uniform, everything. I came back up on, what was it? The Silver Meteor is what they had that was going up the coast from Miami to___

WC: Oh, a high-speed train? Well, high speed at that time.

JNG: High speed at that time. I got home and my mother sighed a sigh of relief that I was still alive. I realize now that I put a great strain on my parents. It was a stupid kid's reason that I ran away from home. There was a problem in high school. One of the things, I didn't graduate high school. When I got into the Navy, I enlisted. It was down in the Wall Street area where I was sworn in. I think it was Church Street. I really don't remember

that. I got on a train and they shipped me to the Great Lakes. That was in October of 1942.

WC: How did the basic training compare with the Army and the Navy? Was the Navy harder, or was the Army harder?

JNG: The Army was harder because it was very physical. The Army put a sixty pound pack on my back and I had to climb a wall and get over a wall to the other side. I remember it was funny; I couldn't make it. There were two guys with each end of a rifle that I stepped on and they bounced me over the wall. I was in the 5th Signal Service Detachment and we were attached to the Dixie Division, the 4th Army. When it came to carrying a telephone pole, I think they were sixty feet long, I don't remember. There was always a short guy in front of me and a short guy behind me, so it rested on my shoulder. I was a skinny kid carrying this telephone pole. When they kicked me out, I came home. We slept in tents. It was cold in Starke, Florida. Looking back in retrospect, I'm glad I got out of the Army, because in the Navy I always had a nice clean bunk to sleep in, no mud to muck around in. At that point, at the end of 1942, at the boot camp in the Great Lakes, they rushed me through in three weeks. There was really no training. They put me through several tests. One of the most interesting tests was when they put me in a room with earphones on and I listened to tones and I marked how I heard it and what I heard. And going back to the point when I was in school in music appreciation, I was a listener because I couldn't tell the tones. But I passed this test and in three weeks they shipped me down to Key West, Florida, and sent me to sound school. They've changed the name to sonar. I went through that sound school in four weeks and I graduated with a third-class soundman rating. Then they put me on a train. I went up to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and I got aboard a subchaser. A Subchaser was a wooden ship, one hundred ten feet long with about a twelve foot beam. It was the SC-1018. And from the time I got aboard until the time they put me off, I puked my guts out.

WC: Oh, really?

JNG: It was like, if I could have, I would have committed suicide.

WC: How long were you on that ship?

JNG: Let's see. I got on it at the end of November. We came down from Brooklyn off of Cape Hatteras. That was wicked when I was standing my watches. I got down to Miami, and I don't remember the dates on that. But I wasn't aboard the SC-1018 for two or three months. I was down at the subchaser training school down in Miami. I was there for about a week and a half, two weeks, and then they put me on a train up to Boston and to the Charlestown Navy Yard where I picked up the USS Wyffels, the DE-6.

WC: That was the destroyer escort?

JNG: The destroyer escort. She was on the way to being built. She was commissioned in the British Navy because her original letter designation was BDE, a British Destroyer Escort, with number 6. The way I understood it, all those destroyer escorts, when they were built from one to fifty, were supposed to go to the British. We could renege. I'm not too clear on how we backed out of it, but the DEs 1, 2, 3 4 went to Britain. The DE-5 was the [USS] Evert, the DE-6 was the Wyffels. So all the DEs from 5 through 50, I think, were Evert's class. Then after that, they changed the configuration. We had a crew of about one hundred forty starting out. As they changed the weaponry on it, we increased or decreased the complement. So I'm not sure what the actual complement was, but we started out with about one hundred forty. As I sat in the sound shack up on the bridge____

WC: Were you a plank owner aboard that ship?

JNG: Oh, yes, yes, yes. In fact, we just had a 25th reunion of the crews on that. That changed over the years, but there are several of us who were original plank owners. I was probably the baby aboard the ship because we put it in commission in April of 1943. And like I said, it was built at the Charlestown Navy Yard. Fortunately, I ran into a guy named Eugene Jones. He was a first-class signalman. He saw me hanging over the rail and he gave me a quick education on how to fight seasickness. Within twenty four hours, I was salty as anybody aboard had been.

WC: What did you do to combat seasickness?

JNG: We had a denim jacket that had big pockets. Why he took pity on me, I don't know, but he broke a loaf of bread in half and stuck a half in each pocket. He said, the minute you wretch, pull out the white part, swallow it if you can't chew it, but get it down so you have something to come back up. Within hours I was an old salt. I stood my sound watches. It was very interesting. But at one point, I couldn't take the pinging anymore. It bothered me. I liked to be out in the weather on the weather deck. I convinced Mr. Walker, who was the head of the C Division, to let me strike for signalman. I was still standing my sound watches, but I could strike for the signalman.

WC: Were you listening for submarines?

JNG: Subs. This is the only thing I don't remember. I made nine or ten crossings. The crossing went from Hampton Roads, Virginia, Straits of Gibraltar, down to Casablanca [Morocco], back to the Straits and got another convoy that came out, and back to New York. One of the interesting things, and I don't know how to verify all of this, but to me, I remember there was supposedly an imaginary line down the Atlantic called CHOP, C-H-

O-P. West of CHOP came under the United States Navy. East of CHOP was under the Admiralty. We took a convoy to the Straits of Gibraltar, with twelve destroyer escorts and the [USCGC] Coast Guard Cutter Campbell [WMEC 909], which was a luxurious ship. The Commodore was aboard that. Out from the Mediterranean to the Straits were six PC boats. They took a sixty-ship convoy into the Mediterranean and we went down to Casablanca to wait for the convoy that came out. Before we got to Casablanca, we got reports [that said] this ship sunk and that ship sunk. It was just unbelievable. May of 1944, and I don't remember the exact date, May 10th or 11th, somewhere about that, they changed the rules and we took the convoy through the Straits into the Mediterranean. We got credit for taking the first convoy into the Mediterranean without losing a ship. I don't remember the exact number. There was a [Kawasaki - KI] 32, a [Tachikawa Ki-] 36, and Junker 88s [Ju 88] that attacked us. I'm not sure where they were based because the Germans were on their last legs getting supplies into the Mediterranean, getting rid of us from that. Next time we went in, we went as far as Bizerte [Tunisia]. We operated all over the Mediterranean. Like I said, I don't remember. That convoy was classified as the UGS 40. U.S. to Gibraltar Slow. I was fortunate because I did not have the Murmansk Run because those guys played havoc.

But then after that, we had one more run and then I got bored. I was a third-class signalman and the only way I could get off the Wyffels was to volunteer for the Amphibs [amphibious training], which I did. I volunteered for the Amphibs, and I was sent to Little Creek, Virginia. That was an interesting setup. There was a Commander Payne who was putting together a group. I was in the LSM Group 23 [medium landing ship]. He had a staff. He had an executive officer, a radar officer, a doctor, There was one other officer, and I don't remember. We had a staff of about twelve or fifteen guys. His staff included a first-class signalman and a second-class signalman. But at Little Creek, I was a third-class signalman. He already had a guy from the signal school down in Little Creek who was a second-class signalman. That first day, they had a muster every morning in Little Creek, and then they went down the ranks that they needed. [They called for] any first-class signalman? No first-class signalman. Any second-class signalman? No second-class signalman. Any third-class signalman with prior sea duty. It was myself and another guy. This other guy had only been to sea for a month and I already had about eighteen, nineteen months of sea duty. I was interviewed by Commander Payne and Mr. Montgomery, who was the executive officer. One of the questions they asked was did I think I could pass the test to be a second-class signalman. I said Yes, I just had to have the books to read up on it. Well, the complement was filled. We left Little Creek, Virginia. My train went to Chicago. From Chicago, we got a train out to San Jose, and that's where the LSM-246 was being built. That was going to be the flagship of LSM

Group 23. There were, as I recall, ten ships in the flotilla. Before we left San Francisco, I had passed the test for second-class signalman. Then they took this other guy out of the signaler school and made him first class.

One of the interesting things that happened at a funny spot while we were in San Francisco. Everybody had been talking, having coffee, smoking cigarettes or whatever. [The question asked was] How long were we in for? I said, I only signed up for two years. Because when I enlisted in the Navy, the enlistment officer asked me if I wanted to sign up for two, four, or six years. And there was also something called a Kitty Cruise, which was a four-year thing. But you had to be in on your seventeenth birthday and be out the day before your twenty first birthday. So I stupidly said, I like it, sign me up for two years. Well, we were sitting on the docks in San Francisco when the executive officer, Mr. Montgomery, came up and said, Green, I got some papers for you to sign. Everybody's head turned. [I said] What kind of papers? [He said] Reenlistment papers, because my two years were up. And I said, What happens if I don't sign them? He said, You are signing at the convenience of the government. That was the terminology they used. I wish I had met somebody, because I naturally signed the paper and I was in for the duration. Duration plus six. We left San Francisco and went to Pearl Harbor. Unfortunately, the guy that they made the First Class Signalman, last name Caron [?]. I don't remember his first name. But anyhow, he was sick the entire trip from San Francisco to Pearl Harbor. They put him off and we got another guy, Ken [Kenneth Alan] Berven, one of the nicest guys I ever met. He came aboard the ship, came back to the compartment where the staff was, sat down, and sat there with a Bible in his hand, and said, Wow, I can't wait. Everybody looked at him. He said, I guess we got nine days sailing time back to the States. Then he looked at everybody's expression and it was like, [he concluded] we're not going back to the states, we're on the way out. He had already had twenty six months in the Pacific.

WC: Oh my goodness.

JNG: And just about every landing you could think of. And you know something, Wayne, it did not faze him at all. He just took it in stride. We became very close friends.

WC: Where was he from?

JNG: Somewhere on the West Coast. I think San Francisco. I don't know. The interesting thing about Ken was, he made first class. They took me and gave me the test that made me first class so they could get us both off. But we couldn't get Ken off until after the invasion of Okinawa. We went through that. Ken was a very religious person, and he ran church services aboard the ship. About last year sometime, I went into the computer. I'm

in love with that machine. I went onto Google and I typed in Ken's name. Lo and behold, I found out that when the war was over, he got back to San Francisco, became, by San Francisco standards, a well-known interior decorator, married. I think he lost his wife. And then he became a Russian Orthodox monk, Father Simeon. I went on the computer and I emailed one of the fathers of that order and told them who I was and that I was looking for Ken Berven and was this truly Ken Berven. I emailed him some photographs I had of Ken when we were in the Pacific. I got an email back that, yes, that was Father Simeon that they knew as Ken Berven. But he had died a year before I had got onto that thing. He was just a delightful person. He was good as a signalman. He could send semaphore by standing backwards. Semaphore, you faced the guy that you were sending to. He could turn around and have his back to him and still send the message, reversing his flags. I was looking through the binoculars. When the receiving person realized [Ken] had his back to him, he fell apart. [laughs] We went through the Okinawa thing from April 1st.

WC: What was that like?

JNG: I was still a kid at that point in time. It was April 1st, 1945. We steamed in a column. The first plane shot down on April 1st was one of our own. It was a Navy Kingfisher, and we shot it down. Not my ship, but it was coming down the line. When we saw it, it was in flames. One of the first soldiers shot himself in the leg climbing the wall at Yomitan Airfield. I don't know if I'm pronouncing it properly. But we landed on Green [Emerald] Beach. We came in, I don't remember how many yards offshore, left three LVTs, landing vehicle tracks with pack howitzers on them and the Marine complement. Let me digress, we picked up the six Marines at Guadalcanal and took them into Okinawa. We had three Sherman tanks. In fact, [points to a photograph off camera] that photograph up there at the top is one I took from the bridge on L-day.

WC: Okay. Yeah, towards the end, I'm going to turn the camera around. We'll get the pictures.

JNG: We wondered where the action was. There was nothing. But on April 6th, they threw kamikaze raid after kamikaze raid. It was just unbelievable.

WC: Was your ship attacked by kamikazes?

JNG: Oh, yes. One of the things that the LSM did after we let the initial landing force off was, we went back, came alongside a cargo ship and a transport and they loaded it. They filled that whole well deck up with supplies for the beach. We ran into the beach, opened the bow doors, let the ramp down, and then crews came in and unloaded everything. We had gasoline, ammunition, everything you could think possible. One day we were on the

beach, there was a kamikaze raid. There was a LST, about four or five ships, down to our right that got hit and went up in a blast of smoke. There was a hill above us and a kamikaze came over the hill. He was so close I could see the pilot in the cockpit. We hit him with the 40mm that we had aboard and he swerved off. He had been heading, I think, to the AGC-13, the [USS] Panamint. That was Admiral [Raymond Kelly] Turner's flagship. When we hit [the kamikaze], the pilot knew he couldn't make it, so he swerved off and headed toward a hospital ship. I do not remember which hospital ship it was. I think it was the Hope [ship], but I'm not sure. There was an LSD, landing ship dock 5, that hit this plane with a 5-inch 38 [caliber] and it just disintegrated the way what you see in the movies. Was anybody scared? I don't know. I think we just took it in stride. This was what we were doing. I look back and say I'd rather have been in that position than on the beach, you know, crawling around in mud for the whole thing. War, unfortunately, is a young man's game.

Went back aboard the DE-6 when we were under attack. There was only one person that made any comment about it. What it was, we laughed about afterwards, because when the Junkers came in, the 20mms opened up. The 20mms were using red tracers. We still had a 1.1 quad aboard. When that opened up, it was firing white tracers. They were hitting this one Junker 88. But there was a guy on the signal bridge who thought they were firing at us. He yelled, those sons of bitches are shooting at us! He ran off and got hung up on a sound power telephone and fell on the deck. But it was...how do I explain it? We had funny moments.

One of the things that I remembered was aboard the DE-6 on a convoy coming back. We were, I think, junior ships in the escorts. One of the transports broke down. We dropped back to circle it all night while she did repairs. Aboard the 6, the signal bridge moved up to the flying bridge at dusk and moved down at dawn to the signal bridge. We had just come down to the signal bridge when the light came and I was on the light. In signaling with a light, you had a reader and a writer. I was taking the message and somebody was writing the message for me. Well, what was coming from the merchant ship was, we're close enough that they think they would like to make for Bermuda. Fortunately or unfortunately, a guy by the name of Tony Minnow [?], one of the electricians, came up to the signal bridge because we had a coffee pot. He heard this message. Went flying down below, got to Mr. Charbonnet [?]The engineering officer said, We're going to Bermuda. The captain, Captain Hinkley [?], a great man, came around and met Mr. Charbonnet who said, We're going to Bermuda. Captain Hinckley kept a straight face from what I'm told. But the first we heard about it, he got a hold of Mr. Walker, who was the C Division communications officer, and read him the riot act. Nowhere did he want to know from

the engineering officer of where his ship was going. Mr. Walker lined up the signal bridge, the radiomen and the quartermasters. It was like, nobody was allowed on the signal bridge. [laughs] All because of Tony Minnow. We had to kick him off the bridge.

Mr. Walker has a place in my heart. He got me my high school education. Because when I ran away from home and joined the Army, I ran away from high school. At one point, on one of our first cruises, Mr. Farmer, the executive officer, got a hold of me in the wheelhouse. He said, Greene, I want to ask you some questions. He started to ask me some personal questions, my date of birth, just confirming everything that he had. And he said, How would you like to go to Annapolis? Well, to a seventeen year-old kid, Annapolis is the promised land. He asked me a lot of questions. I don't remember the names of the test, a GCT test or something like that. I got a very high percentile, one of the highest he had seen. And that would have gotten me into this preschool. I had to be in and out before my eighteenth birthday, which I could have done. But when he asked me what high school I graduated from, I told him I didn't. I don't remember his exact words, whether it was just stupid or stupid kid, but he tore the papers up and threw them in the wastebasket. I wanted to burst into tears, but somebody grabbed my arm and was hurting it. It was Mr. Walker, who forced me out onto the signal bridge. He said, You missed this one, you don't have to miss the next one. And he signed me up for the Armed Forces Service Institute where I got my high school education. I don't know what would have happened if I wanted to re-enlist. My father talked me into coming out.

WC: Where were you when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt, do you recall that?

JNG: That was April of___

WC: 1945.

JNG: I was in the Pacific. As far as I'm concerned, one of the greatest things was when President Truman dropped the bomb. Because we were already...we had gone back to Pearl Harbor after the...we were at Okinawa for thirty days. We went back to Okinawa, picked up a bunch of piling to bring back to the Philippines when they dropped the bomb. Because at one point, we were told we were going to have to start training for an invasion of the Japanese mainland. They started giving me hand-to-hand combat training. They outfitted me with a wicked knife, brass knuckles at one end and a two inch blade at the other. [We were] Somewhere in the Pacific, I don't remember where, when the word came about the Japanese surrender. The interesting thing was, we were the lead ship in this task force, this task group of ten ships. One of the ships pulled out of line. The ship in front of it dropped back. The two of them lined up. The next thing I knew, I was

watching all this through my binoculars. One of the ships, I don't remember which one, hoisted the third repeater. The third repeater is a pennant, white with a black stripe down the middle of it. A pennant shape, and it's used to signal the third flag up is the third repeater. But in port, the third repeater is flown to designate that the captain is not aboard. And this went up and I was on the light trying to figure out what the hell they were doing. Did the signalman on the ship know what he was doing? Commander Payne [?] came up and I told him what was happening. He said, Find out if the captain left the ship. If he did, tell him to get his ass back aboard. Say it just that way. What had happened, the one captain got off, went on the other ship, and they were hitting the scotch bottles, I guess. But I got back to the States, pulled into Portland, Oregon for discharge.

WC: Now, when was that? Did you go to Japan at all?

JNG: Yes. We ended up in Japan. We ended up in Wakayama. The interesting thing about coming into Japan, they had no chiefs aboard and I was a first-class petty officer. We had to get a piece of metal from one of the mills to repair something in one of the bow doors. I don't remember all of the details. We beached near some LSTs, and found the piece of metal that we wanted. We needed something to eat, and I went to the LST to see if we could get some sandwiches. The cooks aboard the LST gave us half a dozen fried egg sandwiches, which we ate sitting on the beach. This old Japanese gentleman came by and he was watching us. We gave him one. It was interesting. He took the pieces of bread apart, looked at the egg, dropped the egg on the beach, and ate the bread. I don't think he knew what a fried egg sandwich was. It was strange to him, but he was hungry. We got into a lot of things going on. I remember when we got into Japan, they were trying to stop the American sailors from coming ashore with cigarettes, because the Army was trying to control the cost of a cigarette. What you used to be able to buy for one cigarette was now going to cost a pack of cigarettes. Guys had box cameras. They wouldn't put the film in, they shoved the camera with packs of cigarettes. The shore patrol got smart and they wanted to turn the little thing to see the number change in the back. There was a number pasted in it and it wouldn't turn. The guys sacrificed a roll of film for two or three packs of cigarettes that they could get in the back of that camera by letting the thing turn. I didn't see it personally, but one of the guys said there was one guy going ashore with a friend of his who had very large shoes. I have no idea how large they were, but he had packs of cigarettes stuffed in the toes. [laughs] They made him take his shoes off when they saw the way he was walking.

WC: How were you treated by the Japanese people?

JNG: Not bad, because they took it in stride. The only thing is, one day there were a group of us walking through the streets. I don't remember what had happened, but one of

the guys yelled at a kid with a curse word, screw Hirohito. But that was not [exactly] what he said. The kid yelled back in English and said, screw Babe Ruth. That was more of an insult to us than it was to him about Hirohito. But they were nice. Since then, I have been in Rotary, and I have had exchange students from Japan. I was in Japan in [ponders] 1994 or 1995, because we had a Rotary convention in Taipei and we stopped in Japan on the way over. I have been involved with the [USS] Slater since Slater came up here. It's got to be about five years ago, I guess. There were two Japanese men that were doing a movie, something about Orion. [tries to remember] They were doing a movie. There was an American movie called *The Enemy Below* with Robert Mitchum. It was a Buckley-class destroyer escort, hunting a German submarine. It was a cat-and-mouse game. Now they were doing a movie about an American destroyer escort. Doing a cat-and-mouse game with a Japanese submarine. Tim [Timothy] Rizzuto of the Slater called me and said, You were a soundman. They want to know something about sonar and sonar tactics, because they want to build this into the movie. I went down to the Slater and they interviewed me. They were delightful people. At one point, when it was just about over, I don't know, my sense of humor, I guess, [I said] I'm glad you guys are on our side now. You asked me how I feel, that's the question. Look at us with Germany. The enemies are now friends. The Russians are adversaries. But I saw the movie. They finished the movie through Tim Rizzuto. They gave Tim a block of tickets to give to the guys, and I got two tickets. One of my friends and I went to the Palace Theater in Albany. This was a movie from the Japanese standpoint, and they were the hunted ones in the sub. There's a little bit of a love story, but when it was over, everybody in the audience, all Americans, several hundred, stood up and applauded in the Palace Theater after they saw the movie. Do you have a computer? You can go in and search The Last Battle, under Orion, and there is a movie [*Orion in Midsummer, 2009*] that they made. I think you could pick it up on the computer, because I told my daughter about it and she watched it. It was a fascinating time.

When the Slater came up to Albany, I went down. It was a very emotional day for me to get on something that I had been on for almost two years. I ended up doing tour guide duty. My legs started to go out and I couldn't climb the ladders anymore. But it was very interesting to have some of the young people that I took through. There was one young lady, she was a parent of some kind, I guess. When I was through, she asked where the women slept. There were no women aboard ship during World War II. I mean, we did stupid things. Like when I got aboard the ship in the Pacific, we didn't act like we had fresh water all the time. We ended up stripping down naked when it rained and we lathered up in the rainstorm and rinsed it off with salt water. Aboard the DE, we had

water. Guys took the coils out of the desalinators and chipped the salt off, so that they could put it back in and make more fresh water.

Food was good aboard the destroyer escort. You made friends with the cook. Bud Wright [?] was a second-class cook, and he and I were very close. In fact, through a blind date, I introduced him to his now wife. I love canned peaches, and I love the juice. In the tureens that came down to the compartments, there were three or four tureens in a row that a mesh cook brought down. There was no juice, there were the peaches. There was no juice. The next day, there was no juice. All of a sudden, we were getting peaches for dessert, but there was no juice. I went up to the galley, got a hold of Bud, and said, What's with the peach juice? He said, Shut your mouth. I said, Why? He took me in the corner. We used to get water for the batteries for the radio in huge glass jugs. They were in a wooden crate. They had to be about eighteen or twenty inches square. So high. [gestures about two feet] They had one in the corner that was filled with peach juice. They put yeast in it and sugar, and the constant rolling of the ship kept it stirred. They were making peach brandy. [laughs] There were things like that.

I'll never forget one time being the junior ship in the convoy in July and August. There was a point where we had to run up and down every line of ships and check the name board. We flew a signal flag and showed your name board. Then we had sheets of papers. [interjects] If you go down to the Slater, the big twenty four inch carbon arc light bar and the twelve inch incandescent are on the signal bridge. Then there's a ladder up the side to the flying bridge, and they had to be signed. [continues story] The number two gun was the ready gun, and there was always a crew on it. I saw the guys with a pitcher of lemonade, and I went around. Ran up the ladder, got the signatures on the forms, came back down and I asked the guys with the gun for a cup of lemonade. It was beautiful. It was the most refreshing drink I ever had. I did this several more times and I got another cup. The guys were laughing and they were watching me. I was at the top of this ladder, hanging on, talking to, I guess it was Mr. Miller, and he said, Are you alright? I said, It's gotta be the heat. What it was, they had mixed up [an alcoholic drink]. I don't know the percentages, they had powdered lemonade, water, [unclear] 55.35 which I guess was about one hundred eight or one hundred ninety proof, and water. It was a delicious lemonade drink, but it had a kick to it. [laughs] It was amazing how some of the guys went through anything. On the Signal Bridge, we had a concoction with medical alcohol and ground chalk. We used that to clean the mirrors and the lenses of the signal lights. We used a special rag, shook up [the concoction], coated the mirror with it, cleaned it, and then brushed off the chalk. As I mentioned before, the signal bridge came into effect at dawn when we came down from the flying bridge. The signal locker was busted into.

Somebody stole two quarts of our chalked alcohol. That stuff had to be deadly. But whoever the culprits were also stole two or three loaves of bread. They cut the ends off of each loaf and filtered the chalk through the bread to get the alcohol that they wanted. The ingenuity.

In the Pacific, on the LSM, we had movies. We had a sixteen millimeter projector and we set up a movie. After the war was over, whenever we anchored out, we had a guy who went out and looked for a ship to swap a movie with. We had one movie, I shouldn't say this, I never liked this lady because of that stupid movie, because that's all we had to show. It was Jane Powell with her singing with the stupid kids. But at one point we were able to get *Destination Tokyo* with Cary Grant. We told the guy that if you swap that movie, make sure you get a good movie. Well, he came back not only with a good movie, but a case of Coca-Cola syrup. It was interesting, the crew on that LSM was only forty four guys, plus the staff of the group, so maybe fifty-some-odd guys. My mother had a thing called a soda maker that made carbonated water. It made carbonated water with little cartridges. Well, the lifeboats we had in the Pacific were not the Kapok life belts that I had when I was in the Atlantic. This was a belt that had two CO2 cartridges in it. All you did was squeeze the belt and it inflated. This was like the Mae West [life preserver] that the pilots had. All you did was yank it and the thing inflated. Cut to the quick, they took one of these giant jugs that had battery water in. They filled it with water, covered it with strips of metal, cut apart a couple of lifebelts and made carbonated water. I don't remember what movie we had, but we had Coca-Cola. [laughs]

When we got together in reunions, we laughed at the funny things. If you've seen *Mr. Roberts* [1955], they have a thing in there where the guys were looking through the binoculars at the nurses' quarters. We came into Bizerte and there was a French hospital. And we always took what we called a long glass liberty. We had a long glass that was mounted on the twenty four-inch light and we saw what was going on, and binoculars. I was on that light one day when we were coming into Bizerte, and I almost choked. There were French nurses.

WC: Okay, you mentioned the French nurses.

JNG: Yeah, and there was a hospital there, but they had a screen up. The nurses were standing on the seaward side of the screen and changing their bathing suits, and they were bathing topless. Well, it didn't take a second for every pair of binoculars to be grabbed and everybody was gawking at the French nurses. Everybody was looking for a telescopic thing. We had three of the three-inch .50s. They were the main armament on that. There was a pointer and a trainer, and each seat had a telescopic sight, so all three

guns were aimed at the beach. Two guys, I don't remember how, I've never used it, but up on the mast we had a rangefinder in case the radar was ever shot out. There were two guys up there. That's when the captain saw what was going on. He went up to the bridge to find out what was happening, and he blew his stack. The reason he blew his stack was somebody was using his binoculars and he didn't know what his own settings were to get the things in focus. [laughs] I got to tell you, it was unbelievable, the stupid things we pulled.

WC: Once you got out, you mentioned the fellow named Berven. Were you able to stay in contact with anyone else?

JNG: Well, only from the DE. What had happened was, we moved around a lot. I worked in New York City. I was tapped for a job at the lamp division of General Electric out in Cleveland and went out there, and then came back for the Pepsi-Cola Company because they tapped me to come work for them, the parent company. I didn't have a master's degree, so I was on my way out. I had an opportunity. My wife and I hocked everything and we bought a business up here in Albany. I was a beer distributor. This is what happens to me at times; I lose my train of thought.

WC: I was asking about if you stayed in contact with anyone else.

JNG: Oh, yes. Living outside of Altamont for almost forty years, I was a member of the Altamont Fire Department and the Altamont Rescue Squad. I met a guy from Fort Hunter. I don't remember his name. We were talking one day about Navy experiences. When I mentioned the DE, he asked if I was a member of DESA [Directorate of Ex-Servicemen Affairs]. I didn't know what DESA was. So I signed up and I got the paper. In the paper, lo and behold, there was a little blurb from a guy named Ed Marsh about a reunion of the crew of the Wyffels. Ed Marsh is in that photograph. [points to something off camera] He's the one that just died last year. I called him, and next thing I know, we had a reunion in Charleston, South Carolina. It was the first. From that reunion, there was a guy from Vermont who's father owned Hogback Mountain. He and I got to be very close. We met again at the reunion, and we talked about Mr. Walker, who I mentioned. Mr. Walker retired as superintendent of schools of Dover, New Hampshire. Like I said, he was the one that got me my high school education. We got back from Charleston, and we had a lot of photographs, and I called Mr. Walker's house in Dover, because I found out he had congestive heart failure. I talked to him for a while, introduced myself, and he remembered me. I asked, would you be interested in having some company? [I said] We'd drive over. I got Arnold White and the two of us went over, because he also remembered Arnold. Arnold was a bosun mate. Well, a week and a half, two weeks later, I got the films back. I called up, and because he was very sick, I spoke to Mr. Walker's

wife, Ruth. I asked if he was well enough to have company. She said, He's talked about nothing but. Well, my wife Marcy and I drove over to Marlborough, Vermont, picked up Arnold White, and drove on over to Dover that day. We had a wonderful, crying session. One of the things that set him off in crying was I had a certificate when I went from [unclear] 1.08.00 Third Class to Singleman Third Class. He was the one that signed off on the papers, and I had that. He looked at that and just got very emotional. He died two years later. His wife and son, who could have been a double. He looked just like him. When the son retired, he was a full commander in the Navy. They attended one of our reunions. I've never been able to get a reunion together or meet anybody from the LSM. I don't know why. I have photographs and stuff of the people. The LSM has a group called the Alligator Alley. I think it's over there. [reaches for something off camera] There's a paper.

WC: Oh, yes, yes. Just hold that up.

JNG: [shows a newsletter called Alligator Alley] That's the LSMR. The LSMR is...well, take a look at that LSM up there. It's got an open well deck where the tanks were kept in. [references a photo on the wall]

WC: All right, let me just switch over to there. [shows photograph of a ship deck]. While I am up here, let me get these others. Which one?

JNG: The middle picture with the tank leaving the ship..

WC: Actually, I'm going to have to get back a little farther, I think. All right. And while I'm up, let me get these other ones. This one on the left is? What ship is that I'm looking at?

JNG:That's the DE.

WC: Okay. And then over here? [camera zooms to framed photographs, certificates and awards]

JNG: That's the LSM-246. I think that was up at Guadalcanal.

WC: And this is your Army discharge?

JNG: Yeah.

WC: This doesn't always work the best in the lighting. And your awards.

JNG: You want me to turn this light back on?

WC: Yeah, try that, see if that's any better. Okay. All right, then I can zoom in on your Navy discharge.

JNG: Let me get this out of the way. These were the ribbons and the battle stars that I wore on my uniform. After one of the reunions that we had, the Navy, the government, issued a Combat Action Ribbon. This one here.

WC: Wait a minute, I am losing the clarity here. Okay. I think we might have too much light. All right, we'll try the Navy Discharge again. Yeah, losing it again. All right, we're back. Unfortunately, I couldn't focus on the discharge very well. And you mentioned your reunions. Did you join any veterans organizations at all, besides the ____

JNG: No, I didn't, and I don't know why. I don't know why. At one point, I was going to join the Reserve because after I got back to the States and I got married, the group of guys that we were with wanted to join the Naval Reserve. But there was a question of how we got... we lived in the borough of Queens, and how to get to the Naval Reserve thing, which was in Whitestone. It was under the Whitestone Bridge. Getting a car and then this all settled down to this one night, we were going to go tomorrow night. Then President Truman called out the Reserves for Korea. That squashed anybody's idea of joining the Reserves.

WC: I was going to ask if you got called up for Korea.

JNG: No, because when I re-enlisted when we were in San Francisco before getting out to the Pacific, that was the two years and then my time went through, the duration plus six months. Because of some words I had with the executive officer of the ship, they put me off in the Philippines in Tacloban. It was a very interesting set of events. The executive officer and the commander of the LSM group were transferred, but the staff was still left. I was part of the staff. Because I didn't get along with the executive officer of the LSM, they got me off. They said, You have a problem. I got my sea bag. I checked in at the docks. They assigned me a tent. I walked about a mile up the road to the tent, got in. Somebody came in, said they posted a new list on a bulletin board. I walked a mile back down toward the docks. Lo and behold, my name is on the list. I walked another mile back up the road, got my sea bag, and came back down to the docks and got aboard the USS Saugus, LSV-4. It was a giant troop ship with landing vehicles and everything on it. I was assigned to bunkers which were five or six high. We got back to Portland, Oregon, assigned a barracks, and one of the guys said to me, hey, Greene, let's get mustered out here in Portland. [He said] We're going to get three hundred dollars, and a guy down the road was selling some Indian motorcycles. I don't remember the figure, eighty or ninety dollars, some ridiculous number. I said, I've never been on a motorcycle.

It's wintertime. He said, that's all right. We're going to get the motorcycles here, drive down the coast to the southern part of California, then over through Texas and back to the East Coast. By the time we get there, it'll be springtime and we can come up never running into any [unclear]. 1.17.23 How difficult is it to drive a motorcycle? Well, we went down to the place. They sat me on a motorcycle. I started it. They showed me how to do the thing and I gunned the engine. Stupid motorcycle went down the road, and I sat down on the ground as hard as I could. I said, I'll take the train. [laughs] They were boxcars. We had old-fashioned coaches. The seats flipped over and you lifted the seat off and stretched it across the seat so that you could lay out. There were two boxcars in that train that were actually galleys, and everything was done with Sterno. We went across the country and it was a beautiful trip. I mean, it was a way to see a lot of scenery and everything like that. I got discharged at Lido Beach. At Lido Beach, they got a hold of me and said they'll make my First Class a permanent rating and they'll give me a temporary chief if I want to sign over. But my father talked me into coming out.

WC: So you went home. Did you make use of that 52-20 Club or the GI Bill at all?

JNG: Yes. My father sent us up and suggested that my uncle and I get into a business. I didn't like my uncle that much, so that was why the thing kind of fell apart, and I left. My sister moved out to California with her husband, and I said something to my wife about moving out there. She gave notice at her company. It was a very interesting company. They made animation for trade show displays, window displays. She gave her notice and they said, Why? She said we were going to drive out to California and look for a job. Ed Burnett [?], one of the partners said, have him come in and see me. I like machinery. They had every kind of machine you could think of, every type of lathe, every type of milling machine. They convinced me to go to work for them. I went to work for them. Then I got to another company that made battery-operated motors. Then one day on the train ride home, because I lived in Huntington Station, there was a guy from POPAI, Point of Purchase Advertising Institute. He said, Jerry, General Electric is looking for a guy like you. Why don't you give them a call? And he gave me the telephone number. So I called and I spoke to Don Mays [?] and he came in and interviewed me. The interview was very interesting. We were at the Savarin Coffee Bar at the Waldorf Astoria having a kind of a brunch.

I have to digress and say that in 1959, Christmas was the last time I had any alcoholic beverages. I don't remember all of the gory details, but, my taste buds just went and I didn't have any more. I got home drunk as a skunk. My oldest daughter was five years old. I remember dancing with her around the living room floor, and she said to my wife,

is my daddy drunk? I fell asleep, and I got up, and for some reason or other, I never had another drink of alcohol.

Coming back to Don Mays interviewing me about General Electric, he said to me, how are you at parties? I said, If by that do you mean do I drink alcohol? I don't like it. I didn't go into any detail that I was close to becoming an alcoholic. I said, I just don't like it. He sounded like he was interested, but why do I want to move to Cleveland, Ohio? He put a smile on his face when I said why is the job open? Well, it seemed they had a guy that they had liked, but was an alcoholic and they could never rely on him. The plant division was fantastic with their employees. They ended up sending his checks home to his wife, so he had no money. She brought him to work in the morning and picked him up at night. Then they put the word out to all the suppliers. When I went to work for them in 1963, I had a million and a quarter budget. In 1963, that was a lot of money. They told every supplier that if they got caught giving Gordy Conkle [?] any kind of alcoholic beverages for parties or bottles, they'll never do work for GE again. Where he got the stuff, they didn't know, but they went looking and they got me. And that's how I got to General Electric. Then Pepsi tapped me and I went to work for Pepsi in 1968. They were still in New York City, but they were building in Purchase, New York. I went up there. I liked it until management changed and they wanted MBAs and I didn't have an MBA. I went to City College of New York, CCNY, and then NYU. Did that at night school.

WC: You got your bachelor's degree?

JNG: Not quite, but I figured that was enough.

WC: How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life?

JNG: I grew up. I am an advocate of military service for anybody that doesn't know where they're going. I know a lot of people say no, go against the military service, but there's nothing wrong with it. Are we right, are we wrong? I'm not going to debate that. But they did nothing wrong, by me. I know a lot of young people that have been in the military. My grandson is not in the military. My granddaughter is not in the military. That's their decision to make. I have two daughters. Neither one of them went into the military.

WC: Okay. Well, thank you so much for your interview.

JNG: Thank you. I probably jumped around a lot.

WC: No, that's fine.

