

**Glenn George Hall
Veteran**

**Amber Longmore
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AL: How old were you when enlisted?

GH: Well, I have two stories. When I was 17, I joined the Navy. When they took me down to examine me, I was as tall as I am now and I only weighed 100 pounds, so they rejected me. Then when I turned 18, I was drafted, and I went through the Army. I went in and took a physical and I passed. There was two lines, one line goes here to the Navy and one line goes there for the Army, so I got in the Navy anyway. [Pause] I would not have passed when I went in at 17, so when I went in, I was 18.

AL: What reasons did you have for enlisting when you were 17? Was there any reason?

GH: Yes, I wanted to fight for my country. See I didn't go to the 8th grade in school. I was 16 in the 8th grade, so I had to go to a vocational school. In my state it's the law and I was at the vocation school. When I was 17 the war came on, and as soon as I got to 17, I joined because I wanted to go in take care of my part of the world.

AL: Where did you receive your training at?

GH: Great Lakes, IL at Naval train station

AL: What kind of training did you receive?

GH: Well, we learned, and they showed us pictures of Japanese ships, airplanes and tanks and stuff like that. They taught everybody how to swim that didn't know how to swim. They would put us in a pool, and they had a ring in there and they would put fire in it. You had to swim up and splash water away, so you can come up and breathe. If you were on the ship and the oil caught fire, you had to learn that. After that, we did the training for whatever I was which was a fireman, so I would be trained in a boiler room.

AL: It said here under the information sheet that you were a 3rd class water tender. What exactly is that?

GH: Down in the fire room or boiler rooms, they have these big boilers and fresh water goes in them. You get oil burners you push them in, and this heats the water up which makes steam. The water tender is the second man on the watch as the Petty Officer as a noncommissioned officer and the fireman is the one that operates the burners to regulate the oil. We could go faster but you got to put one up higher nozzle in it. That's why a water tender all the way above by the big tank you have to keep it up three quarters of the level so that you have water in there so you can have steam all the time.

AL: Is there anything that really sticks out in your mind from World War 2? What is one thing that you can remember?

GH: One thing was when we were in the Atlantic taking the second convoy right across. The subs got through and got a couple merchant ships. Being that we were on a smaller ship, we went closer to pick up the guys who were in the water. It was around wintertime at that time, and they didn't last too long in the water. There were so many guys in the water, and they were trying so hard to get away, but they ended up swimming right into the screws on the ship. It was cutting them up and they had to shut down all the engines, so we could take them aboard. We picked up twenty-five English merchant Marines. [Pause] We also had to go to the ship to see if anybody was alive that couldn't get off. If someone's wounded, they can't move so they took one person from each section like someone from the fire room, someone from the boiler room, someone from maintenance, and some from sea. And when we went to go on board the ship, we checked down the hatch and there was a guy all burned up on the ladder, so there was no sense going down there to see if anyone was in there.

AL: On the information sheet it said that your daily life was good, how so?

GH: I enjoyed it-I mean to me-it was an adventure. It was being patriotic, and I was doing something that I was happy about. It was a good life. I never got in the Atlantic and only got to go to shore two times. Then I went on over to the Pacific, which I was over there two years, a little over two years and I only got to go ashore three times and that was on an island.

AL: You stated your equipment worked well, what equipment exactly did you use?

GH: For this special ship-which I'll tell you what's on it when we get to it-it's a special ship made specially for German submarines. It had all sonar, radar, guns, tombs and all this other stuff. That was made and built specially for the German submarine. That's what helped you defeat them plus they were also there to escort convoy, so they could get the initiatives of fuel and everything else for the fighting zone.

AL: Answering the question on your information sheet, “how were your officers” you said they were all good except the skipper. What was wrong with the skipper?

GH: [Laughter] What was wrong with skipper was we only had three-inch guns on our ship, and in the Pacific the law was you had to have five-inch guns. He told them we had five-inch guns. Then when we got over there, they kept us there, so we all got beat because we didn't want to go over the Pacific. [Laughter] Well, a lot of people didn't want to go, but I wanted to go. I enjoyed it over there.

AL: Did any one person during World War 2 have a lasting impression on you? Did any one person have an impression on you?

GH: I can't remember anybody that I was good in with or knew well. I was a person that didn't go with people. I like to be by myself, so I really can't remember no one. One of them might be back we had a Jew-I think he was-and he couldn't swim. They tried to teach him how to swim and he wouldn't learn, so they finally had to push him in the water. I kind of became friends with him, he always stuck around me a little but that's about all.

AL: It says that you were in a number of locations and theaters, one of them was the Atlantic. Would like to talk to us about that that?

GH: We started out at the American Theatre Medal, that's up to the three-hundred-mile limit. The ships that go in that is American Theatre, and as you get outside that you went in the Atlantic and Mediterranean. That depends on the position that you're in there and then when we went overseas, I won the Pacific and Asiatic Campaign Medal.

AL: Would you like to tell us about the USS Cronin?

GH: The USS Cronin is designated as a DE, which means destroyer escort. They were made specially for German submarines and were sinking the ships. The reason they were so good was because we only took fourteen feet of water. Meaning the other side that was in the water was only fourteen feet deep. There was no other ship that shallow. This helped us to go faster with more speed. We also had two fire rooms, two boilers and two engine rooms. The fire rooms were for the steam for the turbine generators that run the screws on the ship. One screw could be going forward, and one could go backwards, whereas other ships the only thing you could do is go forward or backward. So, we had a great turning ability to avoid anything or to get anything. We had radar and we had sonar, which was brand new, which could go down and spot a submarine and pick it up. And then we had depth charges. We will start out with the ironmen first. Up front was two three-inch guns, one on the right and one on the left. Behind the three-inch guns were two twenty millimeters. That was four twenty millimeters, two three-inch guns. The front and the tail end had one-third inch gun and two twenty millimeters. Up on the bridge-behind the bridge is what they call the wood deck-we had four torpedoes, and we had a 1.1 and anti-aircraft gun. I had a fifty caliber and thirty calibers on the bridge for the ironmen. For the submarines, on

the very front of the ship, we have what we call hedgehogs, there was 24 of them and they were in a box. When you fired them, they would go up and they would do a complete fifty-foot circle. But these would not go off unless they hit something, so they had a hit to destroy. Down on the side right by the starboard port of a ship, we had K-guns, which fired a depth charge. There were two of them on each side which made four, and then the tail end we had two racks of depth charges where they could set them and roll them out for the submarine. Including that other name, we had four strafe fire rooms, and this was a boiler inside of a boiler with air pressure in it. Whenever we change speeds there will be no smoke coming out of smokestacks. With that, the great turning ability and twenty-four knots we could do, it was great for anything. That's about as far as I remember that go.

AL: What were the sleeping accommodations like?

GH: In our ship, they were the walls of the ship which would be the outside you know how they slam. They had four bunks-well they weren't bunks- it was an oblong piece of metal bolted to the wall. We had a piece of canvas on there with eye holes in it and you take your eye holes and put the rope through it and then around the piping. That was our bed, of course, we had sheets and things like that. During the daytime they take them and push them all up against the wall, so they wouldn't take up no space.

AL: What was the food like?

GH: Well, put it this way, we were a small ship and we usually got what we wanted. I'd say the food was sometimes good, sometimes bad. Seeing that we couldn't go ashore, and I had no other food that I could distinguish with it wasn't that bad, but we didn't die. [Laughter] We had plenty. Before we went onboard the ship, we got our crews together and we all chipped in to get a soft ice cream machine, so we had ice cream which a lot of the ships out there didn't have.

AL: Is there anything that you'd like to tell us we haven't mentioned?

GH: The best thing to tell you is my name is Glenn G. Hall. I am a veteran of World War 2. I was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin. I enjoyed the Navy very well, I liked it. After we went to the Atlantic, we went over the Pacific and there we went to the Philippine islands where I patrolled and had patrol duties. We would go into Mindanao, Bataan, Subic Bay, Manila, Corregidor, and all those islands and we're there to keep them japs moving or to keep them warned. As I told you before, I was there in the Atlantic from 43 to 44, and out in the Pacific from 44 to 46. I got a Philippine Liberation Medal from the Philippines, and I got victory medal from World War 2. [Pause] On one trip we made, when the Navy first started out, all their carriers got destroyed, so they built new ones on top of these big traders. There was a spare one in the Pacific and the Chinese wanted it. They wanted someone to convoy it up through Saint Tuo River up to where their harbor was, but it was loaded with floating mines. So, we went ahead and every

time we saw a floating mine, they would open with a twenty millimeter and blow them up. They blew up about twenty-five mines getting that up and sent out of China. Then we went back to patrol, and we went down to Australia and there they had a ship, and it was almost similar to ours. They called it a corvette, and we would patrol duty with them for a while. When I went back up to the Philippines, as I told you before, the only time we went ashore was in Subic Bay. The officers got to go ashore because they have an officer club there. But we were on an island in the center of the Bay. They gave us two cans of beer a piece, a bat, balls, and gloves and we would stay there for a day. We could swim and do all sorts of things, but most of the time was aboard the ship. As I told you before, I enjoyed it. To me it was an adventure, being patriotic and doing the job I was supposed to do.

AL: Would you like to tell us about Vietnam?

GH: When I first got over there, I was with the Air Force. I was with the bombers here in MacDill and when I went down there, I had to go back to the A group on a propeller plane. I had to go down to Florida and get educated on that. Then I went over there and I preflighted and checked planes out. Finally, an opening opened in what they call a 780 section. I sold parts for their airplanes like Becker's, armored seats and all that other stuff. I had a keeping of records, that's what I did over there.

AL: What was the weather like?

GH: Now we get to the good part. [Laughter] In the Atlantic, in the wintertime it's terrible. There are waves that get so high. We would be 300 feet away from a ship and you look over there one minute and it is not there, and the next minute it's there. The waves were that big, that high. That's when we would be on the upper side of the wave and they would be on the downside of the wave, and you couldn't see one minute. It would be like a teeter totter. That's another bad thing about me being in the Navy too, I was a little seasick. I didn't mind the roll, or the sideways roll, but when we went into the waves and the front end lifted and came smashing down, I was so sad. I used to go down to watch in the fire room and I had to take a pillow and set it between my legs and eat crackers because I was so sick. After about six months I got used to that. In the Pacific there was a couple rough phases too. In the South Chinese seas when the weather was really calm and real nice, you would look out on the water, and it was just like an ice-skating rink. It was just level and shining. No waves, no ripples and then in five seconds there could be a storm you could be going all over the place. Our ship that only took fourteen feet of water and did not have the great tipping ability of a bigger ship that would take twenty, thirty or forty feet in depths of water. Our limit was sixty-eight degrees, and we would hit sixty-five many times and be close to being turned over. When the big waves would come, they would hit the front bowel of the ship and they went completely up and over, and all the outside edges had to be closed because the whole ship just got covered with water. Another thing

about the ship is we had twelve officers. Two hundred fifty men and the ship was three hundred fifty feet long and it didn't give you much room. Everybody we stood watches, we had 4 on, 8 off. When I first went aboard the ship, we had what we call battle stations. My battle station was behind four three-inch guns because behind them was the two guys with the twenty millimeters. When they put a shell in there and fired it, it would come out and if the gun was pointed the right way you could hit one of the guys with a hot shell. I had to stand behind it when they put a shell in-I would put one hand down one hand behind-so when they fired it up, I would catch it put it down on the ground. Later, when I became a Petty Officer my battle station was down in a department for control. So, when a shell came through or anything like that happened, a pipe broke loose, I would have to try to fix it. As you go up in rank, you got better.

GH: [Pause] I wanted to tell you about going across the international dateline. When we left the city-when we left the states-they took three garbage cans. All during the time we were going over to the Pacific, they went and kept putting garbage in them, kept putting garbage and never washed them out. When we come to the international dateline, we had some people on the ship that already been across, but all snoop troops that were on there were just learning and coming up in the rank-they were called Polly wocks- so we didn't want to cross the international deadline. The day we crossed international dateline we all had to line up and cut all our hair off. All our eyebrows off and bald our heads. We had to go down and crawl through the stinking garbage cans. All the grease and stuff in there, then we would come out and run around while they hit us with paddles. The ones that went across before us we had to serve them breakfast in the morning, and supper at night. Then we got this plaque for going over there. Once you go over, you're in and the only way you can get in the international dateline is being on a ship or if you're out on a freighter or transport and was putting troops over there. They had so many guys and they can only do it through just 80 guys, and not anybody else that was on the ship. So that was the bad part, that was funny. Everybody was bald headed. [Laughter] When we went aboard the ship, they took our whole class that was at Great Lakes and each one was put in a different section. Trained firemen, trained engineers, trained torpedomen, trained gunners and we all went in the same ship. Same class went to the same ship. We all started out as firemen third, firemen second and fireman first and then petty officers come after. We talked about the trial before that and it was good, but everybody had to eat at different times because we only had a small room for that. We did have movies, we used to put them on the fantail of the ship, and they had movies every once in a while. Whenever we were on patrol duty or anything like that, we just patrol them, that's all we did. The Japanese used to take barges from one island to the other and the Philippines is loaded with islands. [Pause] You can go ahead ask a few questions now if you want.

AL: You brought in a dagger, the US German dagger. [Hands Dagger] Here's the dagger, you want to tell us about that? How did you get it?

GH: Oh, I got this in the Air Force. I was in the Air Force stationed over in Germany and I was sitting at the table in the best hall and there was an old German there. He was working there, he was a kitchen helper, and every time he came by, he would ask me for cigarettes, and I'd give him a cigarette. So, I told him one day and said do you have any war stories over the years. I said I was in the Navy during World War Two and said I never even got nowhere near Nazi's or German's. I said I took convoys over in the Mediterranean and I said that the planes flew over, but they never bombed us. They always bombed the bigger ships, the ships that the transport is on. He says yes, I've got to an SS dagger. I said Well how about a pack cigarette, so I give you a pack of cigarettes for this and all that other stuff I got right there. Now let's see if there's something else, I want to say about going over the Atlantic. I made three trips, three convoys. The convoys had anywhere between thirty or forty ships and that's merchants, oil tankers, ammunition ships, troop ships. We were on the outside of them, they were on the inside, and we would patrol. We had seven of us on the ship plus the DD [Destroyer]. You can only go as fast as the fastest ship. The fastest ship in the convoy was eight knots, so it took us seven to ten days to go from Brooklyn, New York to Norfolk, Virginia to the Mediterranean. The first one we went, we landed in Libya by where Tripoli is, and we landed there because they just got done taking North Africa. The second trip when we came in was when the subs had a couple merchant ships. We went in the Mediterranean again, and we stopped at Paramount Sicily because at that time the Americans were just going ashore in Italy. Then the third trip we only got about halfway where we were going and then we got orders to be assigned to the Philippines which is in the Pacific Island. When we did, we went back to Boston and then to Norfolk, Virginia and we went through the canal all the way up through Island Kappa Palinkas and all these islands after we got to the Philippines. That took us quite a while to get there. As I told you before, I was never in no real combat situation with all my military service. Except in Vietnam, there we had a few rockets shot at us, but I was one of the lucky ones.

AL: Is there anything you'd like to tell us? I really don't have any more questions for you. [Pause] Would you like to tell us about the Korean conflict you were in?

GH: Well, I didn't really get to Korea. This is a sticky point. [Laughter] See up to the three hundred miles limit in the United States, it's not considered a combat zone. Anything on the other side of three hundred miles is considered a combat zone. When I got out of the Navy in 46, I joined the naval reserve. I went to a few meetings, and I didn't like the way they were operating them. So, I just didn't go to meetings anymore, but I was still in the United States Navy Reserve. In 1950, I got a letter from the war department stating that I was back on active duty, and I was supposed to report to Great Lakes, Illinois for a week session. I went there and all they did with us there was relinquish our memories a little bit. Then I

went up to Brooklyn, New York. I was assigned to an APA 136 [USS Botetourt]. That was the type of ship that carried troops that had the landing crafts on the side. The troops climbed over the side and got in their landing craft, at that time they were up in Korea where the ice and the Snow was, so they wanted to find out if they could land a landing craft and smart troops there. So, we took a load of troops and went up to Thule Greenland, where they practiced running ashore on the ice to see if they could do it and see how things went. When we got back to the states, they said there was no need for that because their troops are moving back-that's when they were pushing them back in Korea-so they put me aboard another ship. This was a boat that you lived on both sides and the center was like a big swimming pool and what that thing would do was call the landing ship docks. We would open the pumps up, pump water in there, sink down, open the back door and the marines come in with their tanks that floated in the water. They'd go up in there and then we'd bring the ship back up and they'd be on the bottom of the ship. That was the way we would do all of them to get them where they were supposed to go if we ever went any place. That's what we did in that ship and that's all I did during the Korean War. I didn't get into conflict; I didn't get over to Korea and I still got \$300 bonus and got my veteran rights for Korea. As long as you were past the three-hundred-mile limit, that was considered a combat zone even though Korea did not have very many ships.

AL: Is there anything else you'd like to tell us before we end this?

GH: Well, there is not too much more I can think about. Let me take a second maybe I can think of something else. [Pause] No I can't.

AL: We're fine if you're done, but if you have anything else you want to say just let us know.

GH: I can probably talk more about the Philippine Islands. There was this one time over the Philippine Islands a tug was towing floating dry docks, that's what they called it. They were all air tanks individually thirty feet by thirty feet and it had the planking along the side and the motors to hoist the boats up at the end. They were towing it, and it broke loose, the cable broke loose, and there was no way they could get it hooked up again because rough weather was coming. They couldn't leave that out there because at night the ships couldn't see it. You would look straight through it, so they gave us orders to destroy it. We opened on it with about everything we had, and it kept floating. [Laughter] Everything up above the motors, scaffolding all that got blown up, but the tank parts were not. They had about-I'd say-fifty tanks and they were thirty by thirty, so the only way they can do it was to send a man in the launch boat over there and take a submachine gun and shoot each tank full of holes, so it would sink.

AL: Would you like to make a general statement about World War 2? What do you tell people?

GH: World War 2 to me was a lot better than the Vietnam and Korea because you were fighting for something that belonged to you. Also, because the Germans had so many U-boats. If it wouldn't have been for the scientists and the ships like mine, we probably would have lost that war. I think even though a lot of people don't understand it, I liked World War 2 better than I did Korea and Vietnam, because for some reason there was something there. That's about it.

AL: Thank you very much, it's been a great pleasure.