

Today is Monday April 14th, 2003 and this is the beginning of an interview with Frank Hicks at his home at One South Haven Rd. in Weaverville, NC. My name is Jennifer McPherson and I will be conducting the interview.

Jenny: Do you have an idea of what you want to talk about?

Frank: Well I'd rather you lead.

Jenny: Ask questions? I can and I will.

Jenny: So you were in the Navy?

Frank Yes.

Jenny: Were you drafted or were you enlisted?

Frank: Well, I went in October 1943 WWII, and I came out in January 27th 1946. We went through seven invasions in the Pacific aboard the USS Bush Destroyer and we had quite a few contact with the enemy. I have written a book about that and I've got some other literature that I've gotten from the war department and other historical libraries which would give you a better understanding of what I could ever tell you because I can't think that fast. I've got some literature in there that I would like you to look at. It would confirm everything that was in this book.

The biggest reason I wrote this book, I don't agree with a lot of the records that's about the Bush on the last day that she was afloat, and I tried to explain that in this book. The action report was taken from different people. Of course all the records were lost. The action report was written after, by memory. It was reported in one place that a lot of the people took their life jacket off and gave up. In other words what its saying is that they committed suicide because they didn't see any way out. Personally, that could have happened in some cases, but what I saw, it wasn't that way. I was in the water with them. Before the ship went down we were holding on to the lines that were tied to the ship. We thought at the time that she would break up, but we thought she would remain afloat. While we were in the water we had quite a few Japanese fighter planes that were strafing or machine gunning the people. The people that were in the water, including myself, tried to get out of the way. And the only way you got to go is down and you can't go down with a big life jacket on. A lot of those people were pulling the jackets off and going under water when the planes were coming in strafing. When they came up we were in fairly swift water and if you let go of that life jacket it is gone, then panic sets in, you take on water, and you drown.

At a distance, or farther back on the ship, if that would have been seen I can understand people thinking that that's what happened - that they were giving up. But they weren't. I tried to explain that in this book. I'm not a writer and I don't know if I got that point across or not. But I got this action report a few years back. I don't know when I got it or how I got it. But I've got it and I'll show it to you. And I just didn't agree with a lot of things that were in there. The Bush has got a web site, or it did have, I couldn't find it yesterday and the fellow that wrote the web site took the same thing that I've got and just put it in that way you see. And a lot of these people that still have brothers and sisters alive know what ship they were on and where they lost

their life. There would be a question of whether they committed suicide or not and in my mind, they did not. That is the biggest reason that I wrote this book.

Jenny: It's wonderful that you wrote that book, (hands me a copy to keep) So were you drafted into the war?

Frank: Yes.

Jenny: Did you chose the Navy?

Frank: Yeah I did. I went to Fort Bragg. At that time you could chose any branch and I was so small I weighed around 100 pounds and my Dad said I would never be able to carry a pack. So they had recruiters there from each branch of the service, you could request which branch you wanted. It wasn't sure that you were going to get that, but fortunately I did, I got the Navy. And I was happy that I did. Although War is war and its bad wherever you are at, but I felt like, its a crazy thing to say now but I could keep drier. I didn't but you know how it is I didn't want to sleep in the mud or walk all day. I felt like it would be easier, it was easier, but if I had it to do over, I would do the same thing. I enjoyed it although I was scared to death half the time, but I still enjoyed it all. It's something that happened, that I was grateful that it did happen, that I could be apart of it. I wasn't grateful that they had a war, but that I could be a part of it and could remember those things.

Jenny: Do you remember your first days in the Navy

Frank: Yeah.

Jenny: What was that like?

Frank: Well like I said I was scared to death. I went to Great Lakes for boot camp and that lasted eight weeks I believe. And after that they kind of drafted me into service school to signal core so I stayed there another six weeks, learned the morris code, whatever there was, flags, semi fore things like this. I was signal man striker when I went to the Bush with the Californian. I was assigned the Bush and shipped out of Shoemaker California and we went from there to Pearl Harbor and that was in the first of '44. And you could still see the signs of where the Japanese attacked. The masts of the ships were sticking out of the water. You could see the buildings that had been bombed. You could see a lot of scars from the December the 7th of '41. We stayed there probably a week or two and then we headed south and we had target practice about every day. We went through quite a bit for three or four or five months. Went down around New Guinea. And our first two invasions were a couple of islands that really didn't mean that much. I mean it looked like the Japanese had deserted, they had a few snipers left and you could see a bogie, which is an unidentified plane, occasionally. So it really didn't matter much until we went to Leyte Gulf in the Philippines and there it was bad from then on.

We went through Leyte invasion of Mindoro, we had Luzon, and we went to Iwo Jima. We were there 26 days and that every day, every night. Just firing dog fights, firing at planes, submarine chasing, and we went from there to Okinawa. April 1st which was Easter Sunday 1945 we had invaded Okinawa. As soon as the invasion was over sometime that afternoon we were sent to a patrol station 50 miles North in the East China Sea between Okinawa and Japan.

We patrolled there in about the fifth day we were relieved to refuel and while we were refueling we got the word that the ship that relieved us was under attack so we were sent back and the next morning. It seemed to be okay but around noon, somewhere around noon or one o'clock it just looked like a cloud. All the planes they had I guess coming into Okinawa and they came directly over us. There were probably 18 or 20 of them peeled off and were circling us and we were alone. They were out probably 10,12 miles, just out of range, gunfire range, but one would start in he would come in a little close stop and turn around and go back. Another one would start in, he'd get a little bit closer and go back. As soon he got within gun range we'd start firing with a five inch. One came in and our battle station was on a 40mm. One came in, was getting closer and we started firing the forty's and we could see we were making direct hits, but it wasn't stopping him. And he got fairly close, I guess 100 to 125 yards, 5 inch projectile got it right in the nose and it exploded and the fire the gasoline the shrapnel and everything came right in on the ship. I don't know if that's where I got hit or not, but I got some shrapnel.

It hadn't more then a happened til we heard a loud explosion and the ship was dead in the water. A plane had come in from the starboard side and hit by the mid ship between the two stacks. It was either carrying a torpedo or bomb that exploded. It killed about everybody in the engine room. It blew a part of the boiler it blew it up in the air high enough to knock the mast off the ship and hit on the bridge. We had an admiral aboard and I believe that's where he got killed. There were 94 people lost or killed that day. It was pretty bad. So we stayed afloat until five o'clock or so and we saw a ship coming and we knew it was coming for rescue, but the planes that were circling us left us and went after it. That was the Calhoun. And we could see them diving on it, and then we saw fire. The Calhoun didn't sink, but she got hit and she had to go back to port. As the planes returned. We were dead in the water. There were two more that dived on us before the ship finally went down. I went as far as I could up on the deck, which is the forward part of the ship and that is where most of the people were. So when I saw the last plane come in and I knew it was going to hit, I jumped.

We'd been told in boot camp when a ship goes down, get away from it, because the suction of the ship will pull you down with it. So I swam as hard as I could and I was a pretty good swimmer at that time. I got out 50 or 75 yards and I heard the explosions as the ammunition blew and I looked back and both ends of it raised up. It broke in two in the middle and it came together and went down. By that time, and I don't know what those people were holding onto, but there was quite a few people in a group, but I was alone.

I was way out there and we were in fairly swift water and we were drifting on out. That was a scary time. There was nobody there but me. I knew I was going to die. There was quite a few things went through my mind from then until, I don't know if I passed out, or whether I'd had the excitement of whether I went to sleep from exhaustion or what happened. But I woke up and I had my head over on the life jacket and I was just drifting and it was getting dark and there was something and I'd get hot and I'd get cold. I couldn't understand that, it felt like the water was burning and then I'd hit cold water. And I'd say the water temperature was probably in the low 50's. But I heard later that we were in an area where there were underwater volcanoes. Whether that's what it was or not, I don't know. It could have been that I had a fever. I knew I felt like I was real hot in my head and I was thirsty and I knew I couldn't drink salt water. So I drifted on and I'd go in and out of consciousness and I floated on and I felt something hitting my legs. It would be a big thrash against my legs and it would move me and it would hit hard and I don't know if it was a school of large fish of some kind. They didn't want me there. Anyway,

evidently they didn't want me there cause they would hit me hard and it carry me 20 or 30 feet and then they hit me so much my it felt like I didn't have any feeling in my legs and I didn't know if I had any legs or not I was so cold every where else. I don't know how long I drifted, I could feel a little rain coming now and then and it was so dark you couldn't see nothing. All I could feel was the waves sloshing and sloshing. It went on until, I don't know way up in the morning.

I knew it was late and then I heard someone moaning and groaning and I was real close to them. And I didn't know if I was dreaming or if I was dead or what, but, in a few minutes I bumped into something and someone got me by the shoulder and I held onto this little raft type thing and there was some people holding onto that thing and there was a guy they had laying on it and he was tore up pretty bad and he was the one who was groaning. And this fellow said he was from the Bush he was fire control and we talked awhile. And we talked about our options if we had any options if we might live. We thought we were drifting toward China and we were but that was Japanese control at that time and we thought if we got there before daylight we'd have to hide out all day and try to steal something to eat at night. And if there was some island that we could hit we would have to try to find something to eat we knew we had to survive somehow. If the tide changed and we went back out to sea we would probably drift. A may west will only hold you up about 24 hours so we knew our time was short. The best option we had wasn't good. We didn't see any way that we could survive. If a Jap gun boat saw us they'd machine gun us. We knew that that's what they'd do. They wouldn't take any prisoners that late in the war.

So I guess it was around 4 o'clock. It was getting a little bit lighter and we saw the bulk of some ship. We didn't know which one, whose or what. Whether it was Germans, Jap or what, but I'd happened to have a flare gun. I don't remember where I got it, I must have strapped it on before I left the Bush. We talked about firing it cause they couldn't see us and they couldn't hear us and we decided to fire it and take a chance. So I did, I fired it and luckily it fired. It lit up the heavens - 1 shot right over that ship. It was in the process of turning it looked like. It finished the turn and came back toward us. It was moving fairly slow and these two 16" spotlights came down on us and then we heard the guy holler over the blow horns stand by we'll pick you up. It was an American LCS. When they got us everyone turned loose and started swimming except two of us. There were eight of us total. Six of em turned - or five of em - the guy died that was laying on there. Five of em started swimming toward it but they didn't make it. I don't know. Well two of em got in the screw and it killed em. But the other two, the current must have been so heavy it just carried them off. But myself and another fellow stayed with it and they threw us a life line and pulled us in.

The next day we were talking, I don't know if it was a captain or lieutenant or who, but they sent them out to look for survivors from Okinawa and they told them to come back at midnight. He said at midnight they were just where we went down so he followed the tide until they got to where we were and they didn't know we were there. They were turning to come back and that's when we saw them, they were close enough that we could see them. So it was a pretty scary time.

Jenny: What happened after that?

Frank: We came back to... the next day when I woke up it was around 11 o'clock. I guess it was about 11 best I remember. Anyway there was a pharmacist mate with me. My thumbnail had

been torn off and I had shrapnel in my hand and in my thigh. And he said, 'you know you could have died out there with all that blood you lost' And I said, 'that wasn't my problem' So I went aboard the Enrico because she was scheduled to come back to the states. It took thirty days to get back to the United States. We came with an LST convoy which was 5 to 8 knots. When I got in California there was not many telephones. In fact we didn't have any in the neighborhood that I lived in in Madison county. And I knew my dad had heard that the ship went down about the time it did go down I guess the next day or something. And he knew that I was on it so he was watching for a telegram from me - from the government. Back then they sent you a telegram and ten thousand dollars and that's it. So I knew he'd have a heart attack if I sent him a telegram so I sent my brother and he went over there and told him. It was about another two weeks before I got home. There were six weeks from the time the ship went down until I got home. Then I had a thirty day leave and I went back and I got shore duty. From then on they \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_until the end of the war. I had enough points in January of 1946 to get out.

Jenny: So you were in the States at the end of the war?

Frank: yeah I was in Seattle at that time.

Jenny: How old were you?

Frank: I was 18. Well I'd have been 19 when the ship went down. I've got all the dates and everything in that book. It was a pretty bad time, but I'm glad I did it.

Jenny: Was it Iwo Jima that you said was 26 days of fighting? What was that like?

Frank: Well there was a lot of activity in the air. That was all through the Philippines. We had a lot of air coverage they had a lot of planes too There were dog fights all the time, continually. Day and night. We bombard, we'd go in and we'd bombard to try to get the soldiers a foothold, the marines to get on land. I don't remember how long it took, but it took quite a few days to ever get anybody onto land at Iwo Jima. And heck, they were just dug in, it was just a solid rock and they were dug in and we could not get enough people there to push the line back. It was just a mound with a big rock with an airfield on the back. And that is what they wanted was the airfield because that would put them very close to Japan for relay bombers and that was almost a must that we had to have Iwo Jima. That was probably, at that time, one of the biggest obstacles. Japan really didn't want to lose that one, they knew then that they would be in trouble. That was terrible it was 26 or 28 days that we were there. I don't know if it was secured completely or not when we left. And there were people floating in the water. I don't remember exactly how many people were killed there but there were thousands and most of them were floating in the water, they were swollen up real big. At the time it was just terrible. We had rescue ships. We had 3 or 4 thousand ships around the island I guess. They didn't want to give that one up.

Jenny: Did you have plenty of food to eat?

Frank: Yeah we did. We had tenders we'd go to. They'd stay 50 miles back. And the small ships would go in and refuel and take on food. We ate pretty good. A lot of times we'd have to eat beans or sea rations, but we never did go hungry. We'd have to go sometimes days without taking a shower and sleep on the deck with a mat for a pillow, but we didn't go hungry. Except the day that we were in the water and I guess it was 20 or 30 hours since I ate or had

anything to drink and that was the only time I could remember, but they took care of us as far as giving you something to eat.

Jenny: Did you go back to the States because the ship went down, or because you got hit, or because you had shrapnel in your leg?

Frank: Well, there was an order passed by... There were five brothers killed in the Navy on one ship sometime before that, in the early forties. There was an order came from President Roosevelt that any survivor would not go back to war, we all got shore duty. I tried to go back because I felt bad having to leave and the war not over. I went to the Commander Shoemaker and asked him if I could go back and he said I can't send you back. But I wanted to go back. I wanted to go back on the Destroyer. Because that is what I liked.

I liked that type of \_ ? \_ \_ was not bad, and we had good duty, we had good people to work with and I don't feel like that I was a hero, because I wasn't that important, I was just a backup man on the machine gun, but the people that I saw out there they were the Captain, the gun captains, torpedo men, people like that. I never saw anyone turn away or even look away when it looked like they were going to die. I saw planes come in and strafe. It looked like they were coming right at you and I never saw anybody try to get away except when we were in the water and you had no way to protect ourselves. But those are the people that I felt like won the war. They took it as a grain of salt if they got killed they got killed, but I tell you one thing, they would take somebody with them. But those people you talk about suicides, that's nothing new. Those people came to die, they knew they weren't going back. I don't know how many dived on that shipped and got dead in the water and they missed. It didn't make any difference, that is what they came to do. And we talk about it today, but that's nothing new, that's been going on for years and years. In the Philippines I was never on the ground, except on the Liberty they'd give us a few hours to go drink beer sometimes. But I was never on the battle or anything, but we were told that those people were carrying hand grenades and they would walk right into a group of soldiers and pull the pin. They'd paddle out to you when you was in the harbor with explosives on a canoe and they'd get just as close as they could to you and blow it up. So they meant to die. That is what they wanted to do. But I didn't feel that way, I didn't want to die.

Jenny: Did you go into the war thinking about that at all?

Frank: Yeah, I did. I thought I might not (come back) especially after we started out there. I accepted that. I thought well if I get killed I'll get killed. And you know my dad was a Baptist preacher and I was raised in church, and I felt like when I was there and I knew I was going to die it didn't bother me that way. I thought if I died everything would be okay. I felt stupid, or not stupid, a bad feeling for the predicament that I was in when I was floating in the water but I didn't feel like it was punishment or anything. I felt good. I felt like if I would have died I would have went to heaven. And I don't know. It is a pretty bad experience. Something you don't forget.

Jenny: I bet your dad was very happy to see you.

Frank: Yeah. They sure were.

Jenny: Were you able to keep in touch with your family while you were there?

Frank: Yeah. We got mail I'd say about every three weeks, something like that. When we'd go into the tender they would have mail for us, but it would be two or three months old. But my mother wrote about every week whether she heard form me or not.

Jenny: Do you feel like there is anything else that you want to share?

Frank: Yeah I want to show you some of that paper work that I've got in there. You through with this?

Jenny: Sure, (hands me the mike) thanks.

Frank: There is our captain

Jenny: What was his name

Frank: Westholm. That is an obituary that was taken. Once a year we have a reunion. I don't go, I've only been to one. I went to that one and these people here are still in contact. And I get one of these things once a year that he tells me all about what went on. There is the Bush. Maybe I can find a better one then that. Then I can show you where. If I can get one on the other side. This one here is a little bit better. This is the bridge. I was stationed right here. When I was.. as a signal man. There is a 40mm right there. That is where I was at. Now the plane that came in and hit on the other side. On the back side of this right here. Right in this area here. On the other side, on the starboard side. And it blew about a twenty foot hole in it. Part of that boiler came up and knocked this off. The admiral was right here and I'm thinking that's what killed him. Then I think when I came back to the bridge is where I found that little flare gun that I had buckled on. I think that's what it was. but I was up in — It broke in two at about this point here and this end went up and this end up and I was right about here at that time. And it was up in the air like so, like that and this plane the last plane came in it was right here and it rolled over to make his dive and I knew it was going to hit and it hit right about there and all our ammunition was below deck right about here and that blew up so it broke into and it went down.

Jenny: Did the other people up front with you did they jump in too?

Frank: Yeah. Most of them, and I don't know when...The second plane came in and crashed right along here and I was right in this area right in here and there was a first aid room set up in here and I was helping get these people in there and whenever we decided it kept going further up and further up I left. And I got out here and there was a fire in this area, well I couldn't. I don't know what was going on back here. There had been a ship come in here earlier and took a lot of them off see. In fact I know a boy in Burnsville and he said he never got his feet wet, he just stepped over on that thing. But anyway I was right along here and when I saw it coming in this direction I jumped as far as I could that a way. But he gives up all the literature about everything that goes on, where they go when they go every year for the reunion. We went to Charleston and we went out ten miles and it shows all the people that were there.

Jenny: That's great. So every year you get one of these?

Frank: There is Iwo Jima. That is pretty well self explanatory. By the way these pictures were taken off of our deck.

There's a ship that we were taking up to Mindoro, ammunition ship. Suicide plane got it, so it blew everything, no survivors from that thing. There's a suicide plane in action. They were changing commands there. I answered to him this guy here he was really something else. He was a lieutenant in the gun crew. I'll tell you about him in that book. Here is a declassified thing. Action report of what happened the last day we were afloat. And up there somewhere right here in this area right here. Okay read that first paragraph.

Jenny:

Some men became hysterical and violent although they were wearing life jackets and in all cases appeared to be physically unhurt they would give up, slip out of their life jackets and go down or swim out into the darkness to meet the same fate. It is hard to believe that such a circumstance would arise in a group that had spent any time on or near the water, but such was the case. These unfortunates must have believed that rescue ships would never come. 33 men were lost in this period.

Frank: I didn't agree 100% with that. That could have happened to some people because I didn't see all the way around it. But what I saw could have been taken for that had you not been right up close. And there is our doctor that operated on me.

Jenny: George Johnson

Frank: And there is a brief history of the Bush. I've got quite a bit of literature that I look at occasionally. I got this right here from... It's a place where they keep antique records they told me. But anyway I requested the ship logs the LCS's that picked us up. It tells all that its a detail of what happened at that time on this ship LCS 24. I took all of these numbers out of here, but the one that picked me up is not in it. It came on later. It had to be another one in the area that was listed. But I am listed in the inventory that was taken the next day on Okinawa.

Jenny: Wow this is interesting.

Frank: There's a lot of history and I've studied a lot of history since the war because it fascinates me and I like it. But there is a lot of history that is questionable in my mind whether it is true or not and whether it happened exactly that same way. It can be distorted very easily. I got a letter from this fellow that made up this web site for the Bush and he wanted my story. He was not one of us he was the Chief Torpedomen's, son. much younger you know and his dad was dead. He wanted the history of the Bush so he took a lot of stories second hand. A lot of stories on that web site are not right In fact he said that Lieutenant Hubbard had transferred two or three weeks before the ship went down, but that wasn't true. Whoever told him that was thinking of somebody else. Because I've got his obituary over there and it tells what he did that last day. He received a bronze star on that day, April the 6th, 1945. He operated some guns by hand. We had no power and he stayed until he was one of the last one's that went down. And he was recommended for a bronze star and he got it. But looking at that web site it tells you a different story. It says he was part of that crew up until two weeks before it happened. So there again it is second hand news. It's not all true. So what little I know, and what little I've been connected in, look at how big a territory that is and how many falsehoods there is in history that we may be



teaching in our classrooms today it may be all wrong. We don't know that Davey Crockett was a hero, he may have been a murderer. I just don't put that much stock in everything I read.

Jenny: I agree. That was a good story.

Frank: Glad you enjoyed it.

Jenny: You were smart and lucky.

Frank: Yeah. I considered at that time I was better than the average swimmer. In fact that is all I did in the Pigeon River before I went when I was a teenager, but there was a lot of people on board who couldn't swim. I knew two of them that couldn't swim one lick. So you know when they get in the water and they get frustrated, you know what happens, they go berserk and they swallow salt water and they start retching and that's the end of it, they go down and they don't come back up. That's what happened to a lot of people. And I can understand that that could be thought as that they wanted to die, but they didn't. I was down at Lake James 10 or 15 years ago and there was a fellow in the water that I went after, he was drowning,. Those people when you get a hold of them they don't realize what they're doing. All they want to do is get out of that water and they will climb right up over your head to get put of that water and they will drown you if you're not careful and don't know what your doing. So this is what happened on a big scale that day. There was 300 of us aboard the ship. At one time I'd say there were 200 or better in the water. So you know there is a lot of disturbance going on. There were a lot of people trying to get out over someone. Trying to get on anything that was substantial to hold. The way they were fighting the water, fighting everything. If somebody can't swim and you throw em something to pull out on he don't take a hold of it. If he can't get up on top of it he don't want it. And they are strangled already. Get excited and they drown. It is to late when you get a mouth full of saltwater they will swallow it And that will kill you in itself if you get out on the ground your dead you can't live through that. So that is what happened to a lot of those people that day. 93 of em was killed.

Jenny: The people that were in the raft with you they must have been so happy to get rescued and then...

Frank: They were they started screaming. One guy was a real good swimmer he said he was he was first class he'd been in the navy a long time and he turned loose. We were as far as from here to that highway down there (100 ft.) And the water was carrying us right into him if he had just held on we would have got right up to the ship. But he turned loose and started swimming and got killed He was one that got into the screw because two of them they got part of their bodies torn in two. When we first got hit I don't know how many people were killed on deck. There were bodies part of bodies, pieces of body, blood running on deck, you couldn't walk it was like walking in quicksilver, blood was running everywhere. There was one fellow that got hit with a piece of shrapnel behind his ear and he was talking mumbling just a walking around, but he didn't see nobody. Dr. Johnson got him by the arm and took him into his ward room and he sit him down and he died. But Dr. Johnson said you know we thought he was mumbling something he couldn't understand, but he said he was speaking ancient Greek. He could have had that in school, I don't know. He wasn't talking normally. You never know when you get half your brains knocked out what you will say. There are a lot of different ways a person can die. He seemed to be happy, just mumbling and smiling. He didn't see you when he

was talking to you. But there again these people Hubbard the captain, and other people were just as calm as you and I are right now. It amazed me and it still does. It seemed like they knew what was going to happen was inevitable. They were going to get killed, but it seemed like they were calm as they could be. I was scared to death.

Jenny: Well they probably were to.

Frank: (laughs) There nothing you can do it's just like shooting fish in a rain barrel. There we were, there's no place to go. The number one gun was up there, they'd come in this way and I would go around the back side, but then they'd come on this side and I'd have to go around the other side. Bullets singing ofit. Pretty tough.

Jenny: Do you keep in contact with anybody?

Frank: I call Bob, he's the guy that sets up, he's in Portland, OR. He's a lawyer. He's the treasurer of our group. He helps organize the reunions. I met him and his wife in '95 when I went to that one. There's a fellow in Burnsville I go see every once in awhile. He was on the Idaho, he was on the deck. I don't know exactly what he did. And then there's a fellow over in Mountain Home. And I go see him once in awhile. I have a person in Minnesota. He was on the helm most of the time and my station was right outside so I knew him real well aboard the ship and I talk to him a couple of times a year and I get a Christmas card from him. We stuck pretty well together those three days we were down in Charleston. We talked about a lot of things that happened back then and what had happened since. I guess there's a half a dozen of them that I get in contact with every two or three months or so. Bob Thompson from California. He calls me. He was our Baker. I remember him well. Most of them I didn't remember though. There was so many people. And I was pretty much a loner. There was ten or twelve of us that had duty on the bridge and I knew all of them. Outside of that that is about all I knew except that cooks and bakers people I had contact with every day.

We had four on eight off. Stood watch on the bridge with myself and a fellow named Cobb. We had duty together. He was a wonderful person. He got killed, but he was an astronomer. He studied the stars all of the time. He knew every constellation. He knew whenever it ruled, he called it ruling. He knew every star, he knew everything about the heavens and he would show it to me, down in the South Pacific. On a clear night those stars looked like you could reach out and touch them. And that water just as flat as that floor, and the moon was shining you could see the reflection of the stars and the moon in the water - most beautiful sights you ever saw.

Yeah. And you talk about UFO's - down around New Guinea. There were a lot of objects you'd see at night that you couldn't explain. A lot of them would be moving slow a lot of them would be moving fast., a lot of them wouldn't be moving at all. The Navy called them weather Phantoms. But they were just objects that couldn't be explained. The radar would pick them up and we'd go to investigate and nothing would be there. As a matter of fact, you can read in that action report that morning April the 6th. Around daylight there were three ships picked up on radar, not only us but other ships picked them up - they were unidentified. They were about 15, 20 miles from us and they were traveling NEI believe at 15 or 20 knots. And we were sent to investigate. When we got within 4 or 5 miles they just disappeared. They weren't submarines because we had good sonar that picked up submarines and that is in that report. There are other things in that report that happened mysteriously there is no answer for it. There is no

explanation of what it was. We had to report everything on the bridge, we got so if radar didn't pick it up we didn't report it. Half the time the captain would come out, he was right close to us we have to notify him, a lot of times he would come out and just shake his head and go back. But there were a lot of objects, I mean large object we couldn't explain what they were, nobody could. They would just disappear. A lot of people don't believe that, but it is there. It is in reports, it's in Washington, they know it, but we don't know what they were.

Jenny: Do you feel like there is anything else?

Frank: Not mat I can think of Jenny right now.

Jenny: That was a lot.

Frank: Well I hope I filled you in a little bit. Take that book right there and read it

Jenny: I will.