

**Aleutian World War II National Historic Area
Oral History Program**

**An interview with George Herold and Harry Suomi
January 14, 2010, West Melbourne, Florida**

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This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with George Herold and Harry Suomi was recorded with their permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska. The transcript has been lightly edited.

George Herold: Jan?

Janis Kozlowski: Good morning, yes.

George Herold: Oh yeah, hold on, let me sit down. I'm on a leg and a half here – it takes me a minute to get from the front room. Hold on Hon.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: OK, good. Now I can hear you good. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to hear you too good. I'm ... I got what [Chuckle] they call "Submarine ears".

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. OK. [Chuckle] Is Harry there?

George Herold: OK. Now, I'm the guy ... I guess you're my gal now for a while. Well, you're just a voice now, to me. OK, now, go ahead - you ask, and I'll answer the best I can.

Janis Kozlowski: OK, now is Harry there with you?

George Herold: No, he didn't come yet. I was hoping he'd be here. He had something to do about 10:30 this morning. And he said he'd be over here. But, but, I'm sorry - he's not here right now. He may get here ... well he may. But I ... I don't know. I can't ... he's a little bit older than I am, I'm 85 and he's 86. [Laugh] And we're about the last couple of guys that were on the "Finback," [USS *Finback* (SS-230)], a Gato-Class submarine back-up - when it was up there in the Aleutians.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, he was on the Finback with you?

George Herold: Yeah, but he ... he ... I'm sorry; he got on the Finback, after we left that area - when we got back to Pearl Harbor. We were only up there ... I was only up there from about ... from May through August. And part of that ... half of that time was on the, the S-27 [submarine] – the one that sank. And then, they put me on the Finback when it came up there. And we did a little reconnoitering out there on the western end of the Aleutian Islands there, for a while.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. Now, do you want to ... would you feel better waiting until Harry came? And do you want me to call back later? Or, what do you think?

George Herold: Wait, you want him here with me?

Janis Kozlowski: No, that's up to you.

Janis Kozlowski: I'm just say....

George Herold: Yeah, well I'll tell you, he ... he was with me on the Finback after Alaska ...

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: ... after we left the Aleutians, he was on the Finback for the next two years. He was with me during our time in the central and southern pacific, but not the Aleutians.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. Now, so do you think we should wait for him, or do you want to get started? Or what do you think would be the best plan?

George Herold: No, you can ask me some questions now. I don't believe he'll be here. He promises me one thing, and then he freaks out, or something like that - I can't promise you anything like that. I told him, I says, "I wanted you here when this, when this lady calls," because, he can help me with some things. You ... you'll have to decide. [But,] I can answer some questions for you.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, we could do a part two, if you wanted to later on - if he shows up. We can add him in – if that would work.

George Herold: OK. Now listen, let me get this one out - you would rather him to be here?

Janis Kozlowski: No, I thought YOU would rather he was. So, I was just trying to be accommodating.

George Herold: No, not really. I'm ... I can tell you all I think you need to know. I've, I've written up about this, the S boat, and how we sank; and how we lived in Amchitka Island for five or six days at that little deserted village at Constantine Harbor before they found us. And, I can answer you some questions. Go a head – you start talking.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. Now first of all, is it OK if I tape our conversation?

George Herold: If you what?

Janis Kozlowski: If I tape our conversation?

George Herold: If you tape it? Oh, no, go right ahead.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: You won't get nothing but the truth from me – I'm not a ... I'm not one of these old sailors that [Chuckle] that tell sea stories, I'll tell you that right now.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. [Laugh] Well, tell me first - how did you end up getting into the service during World War II ... getting into the military?

George Herold: Now wait, you know what, the one thing is, I'm a little bit hard of hearing on the phone. If you don't [won't] talk too fast. I hate to admit that, but I have to. Now, if you'll say that once more....

Janis Kozlowski: OK. How did you get into military service?

George Herold: Oh, OK. You know what, as a kid, I used to watch all these movies when I was 10 or 11 - 12 years old, of the Navy, the Army, the Air Force. And I had a big idea about being the, being a pilot for the Army Air Corps at one time. But, that let out, because my family couldn't afford the two years of college you had to have to get in there. So, when the enlistment went down to 17 years old, I immediately ... had finished school, and three days after my 17th birthday, I enlisted right away - in New Jersey at this time.

Janis Kozlowski: And what year was that?

George Herold: That was ... well ... I enlisted in the Navy on the 27th of May of 1941, in Patterson, New Jersey.

Janis Kozlowski: And was part of your motivation, that you thought we were getting into World War II?

George Herold: Well no, I didn't. I ... you know what, the depression hit my family hard – I was an only child. And we lost everything. We lost our home, and my mother ended up in some kind of rest home due to a nervous breakdown. I don't even remember much of her now, since I was [only] 10 years old. My father and I ended up in a rooming house in 1940 and 1941. And I knew I had to get out of ... out of this little place where we lived in New Jersey. And ... just get away. And at that time, there were posters all around saying, "You can enlist in the Navy right after your 17th birthday. And if you'll stay four years, they'll let you out when you're 21." Well, that looked good to me. So that was an out for me – to get away from everything there where I was. So I did that – I enlisted three days after my 17th birthday in Patterson, New Jersey.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So, you chose the Navy. Right?

George Herold: I chose the Navy, yes. You know what - because, I started seeing these ... these submarine pictures with, I don't know whether you - you don't remember, 'cause it was a long time before your time. But they were making submarine pictures on the Navy in 1939, with James Cagney, Pat O'Brien, and those things. One was called, "Submarine D-1." And that just made ... it must have ... I was maybe 14 or 15 then - that just made a deep impression on me then. And I wanted to be a ... [Laugh] I guess I was a really impressionable type of a guy. And I just wanted to do that, is all I can say. And I did it by God - I did it.

Janis Kozlowski: So, I guess ...

George Herold: What was that, now?

Janis Kozlowski: ... you weren't concerned about the small size and the cramped space on the subs?

George Herold: No. No, that didn't bother me at all – nothing. I wouldn't, I'm not the type to be ... to be sheepish about, or afraid of anything like that - I'll do it. I even ... I even liked to fly after I got out of the Navy in 1949. But, I give it up because of my one bad leg that, that ... what happened in the Navy. And I had to give up flying, because I couldn't use the toe, or the heel brakes. But, that's something else - we'll get into that later. Go ahead.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So, what happened after you enlisted – where did they send you?

George Herold: OK. I enlisted in Lower Manhattan - in New York City. But there were about one to two hundred of us there. And they sent us all up to Newport, Rhode Island – to the training station. They sent us up on a ... would you believe, on an overnight ferry boat – on the Long Island Sound. It was a nice trip. We were all rowdy that night, you know - all talking and joking about the Navy ... “We were all gonna be in the Navy.”

So, we get to Newport. And we ... you gotta go through another whole mess of physical tests, mental tests, and all that, at that time. And I did the six weeks of boot camp training and came home on nine days leave after that. And then, I had requested submarine school, and I had passed everything there – the physical and mental tests for that. So, I got submarine school.

And while I was at submarine school, my father died. So, I was still 17 then. And so I got a 9 day ... what they call, “Family” type leave. And I went home and ... I had my father buried. And then I went back and I finished up submarine school in October of 1941.

And [then] was sent to San Diego to a division of old S Boats – there was the S-27, the S-28, and there might have been the S-34, 35. There were about six S boats there. They were all built in the 1920's and they were refurbishing them for whatever they had in mind. And I went aboard the S-27. And almost immediately, the first week I was aboard, the captain - the skipper, said that he was gonna be sending me and another fellow to school. So the school I was going to was what they call the, “Quartermaster Signalman” – “Signalman School”. And ... the other guy was going to a diesel engine school. And this was both in Pearl Harbor. So that's when I ...we went. We were sent to Pearl Harbor on an old Liberty type ship - just as passengers - like that. And the school lasted four months - until February.

And while I was there, the [Laugh] bombing took place. Now the submarine base didn't get hit, so I can't tell you a heck a lot about that. But, we saw everything – we saw Ford Island, the battleships, and Hickam Field [O'ahu, Hawai'i] and all that [get hit]. Like, we could see it happening over there, but it didn't really bother us, 'cause, we were at the submarine base – [and] they just skipped the submarine base for some reason. But, [Chuckle] I'll tell you, we made them sorry for that, though, because the submarines sank over 1100 ships during World War II. And ... and I can tell you a lot about that – that was really an interesting part.

OK, go ahead now, I'm starting to ramble - you got [Chuckle] to interrupt me.

Janis Kozlowski: No, you're [doing] very well.

George Herold: [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: So ... why do you think they didn't hit the sub base? Did they not know it was there?

George Herold: Well, no, I imagine they knew it was there - with all the spying tactics they used. They just ... from the sub base, we could see Ford Island, plain as day - where the battleships were – the Arizona, the California, [the] New Mexico - all those. But, we could see that plain. And to the south of us, just on the other side of the navy yard, was Hickam field and Schofield Barracks - where there was a lot of damage over there.

But, all we did was just watch. We just ... we could see the smoke and the bombs going off. But ... nothing - it was like they over looked us. But, they did ... just, they either didn't know we were there, or they ... well, they must have known we were there - with all the espionage work going on that they did. I would imagine they.... I couldn't tell you why they overlooked us - but they did.

Janis Kozlowski: Now you said, that it didn't bother you, because they didn't, they weren't hitting the sub base. But how did you feel watching all this going on?

George Herold: Well, I'll tell you what this was just before 8:00 [o'clock] in the morning. And we were all out there in ... the Junior Men – I was a junior man then – I was only 17. We were all out there in whites for the raising of the flag every morning - this was done every morning at 8:00 o'clock. And we saw all these planes flying over. And we were wondering, well, you've heard this before, like, "What the heck are they doing on a Sunday morning - don't they ever take time off." Like that. But then, when they started to hit these ... Ford Island, which was just across the bay from us.... You could see the explosions over there. And we saw the Arizona get hit – that big explosion. Everybody saw [it] - but, we couldn't see the ship, because at the submarine base, there was a big submarine tender there, and it was blocking our view to look across the channel and see the Arizona. The Arizona was just west of us across the channel, and we saw the smoke come up, but we didn't see the big explosion like they keep showing on the films every year.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] So, did it have a impact on you as a 17 year old - seeing all this happen?

George Herold: Now, wait, say that again hon.

Janis Kozlowski: As a 17 year old, did that make a big impact on you?

George Herold: Ah ... [Chuckle] well, you know, as ... it did! I guess if they'd have bombed us, and I seen what happened right off the bat, it might have ... it might have changed us. But, this was all maybe a half a mile away - we could see this going on. I would say that, Ford Island is about maybe a half a mile across the channel from where we were. And the Navy yard was just south of the submarine base. And Hickam Field and Schofield Barracks were just to the eastern edge of the Navy Yard – where all that started - like that. You could see ... we could see that they were being bombed. But, of course, it didn't affect us – we were just standing there watching them. We'd go in the barracks, and come back out, and go in, and come back out. And it ... I can't say I saw a lot of badness, because I didn't - it was all from far away. I didn't see no [Chuckle] I didn't see real badness until I got on the submarine ... until we went to sea to look for the enemy – that's when we started seeing different things. I can tell you a lot about that.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So, you stayed in Hawai'i until February?

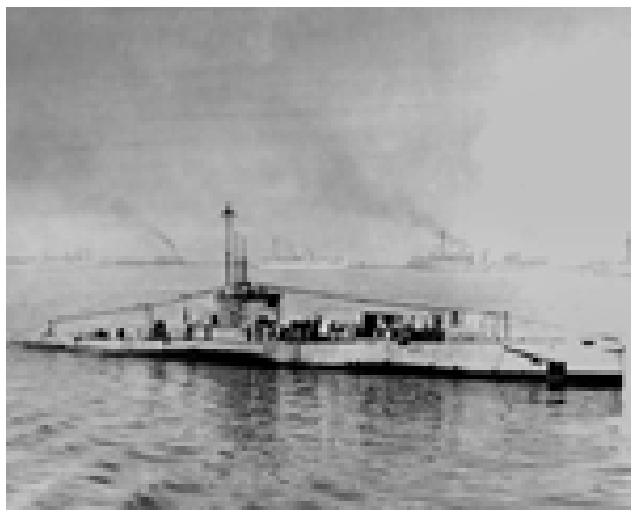
George Herold: Right. February. OK, now in February, the school was over. The school was from October ... well, around the first of November, 'till around the end of February. I'm, I'm sorry I can't get these dates exact, now. But....

Janis Kozlowski: That's OK.

George Herold: OK. Now after they bombed on December 7 - a Sunday, the school closed down for a week. Because, you know, I was only 17 old, and I was one of the junior men, they sent us over to the Navy Yard to help with all the cleaning up. So for a week there, all I did was ... well a bunch of us did, was just push brooms and clean up. Because, it was a mess over there were they hit – where the dry docks were. It was a real mess. And then ... after that was over, about December 14 or 15th, the school started again. And we finished it until around the end of February.

And I was put on old steamer. That's a type ship – a Liberty ship, you know. And we were sent back to San Diego and went back aboard the S-27. And we stayed there 'till May 20th. And we left the 20th of May for the Aleutian area. And then on the 24th, I had my 18th birthday – I guess it was on the way up to Seattle. We stopped in Seattle, because we had some trouble with the boat on the way up. We stopped in; let me see, in Bremerton, Washington – which I believe had a big Navy yard. And we were there a few days.

And then after leaving there, we headed for the Aleutian area – Dutch Harbor. And we arrived in Dutch Harbor a day after the bombing took place there. And the dock where we tied up to had a little bit of damage, but not much – you just had to be careful where you walked, or like that. And I guess we were only there a few days, and [then] we went to sea again. And I think [Chuckle] we were only at sea maybe seven or eight days – off Amchitka Island, when ... our mishap started. We



S-27 (USS-132). Courtesy US Navy.

... its funny, we submerged all day, and you [we] come up at night to charge batteries. And you go ... so it's all enemy territory around Kiska Island. We would surface at night, and we just lay-to in the water and charge batteries. At that time, that old S-boat ... it couldn't go forward, or back – it couldn't have any propulsion while charging the batteries. We just had to lay-to in the water.

And while we were laying-to in the water, we drifted close into land. And the visibility was, was no ... we couldn't see - we had no radar at that time, or anything like that. And we drifted in toward the southeastern coast of Amchitka. And as soon as the battery charge was over, about 2:30 in the morning, we went ahead on one engine. And we almost immediately struck a reef area – a rock area. And it ... holed the boat – by the hull. And we started taking on water. And we had ... we, it didn't sink right away. But, in six hours, we knew had to get off that boat.

So, we had [Chuckle] ... it was a funny thing - we had one rubber life raft. And we had to go back and forth to ... we were off the southeastern coast of Amchitka. It was really a rocky area – a really crummy area. There [it] was ... [un]inhabited, there was nothing, there was no animals, or no nothing it was just cold water and rocks it seemed like. And we finally got the crew off of there - with two or three men, back and forth, in this one little rubber life raft we had.

Janis Kozlowski: And how many guys were on the sub?

George Herold: Go ahead. Now, what now?

Janis Kozlowski: How many guys were on the sub?

George Herold: 50.

Janis Kozlowski: 50. OK.

George Herold: Five ... five-O. That ... now wait a minute, hold on, I think that's Harry now. Hold on.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: Hold On

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: [Talking to Harry in the background: "I hope that's you Harry." Pause in recording. And then:] Hey, Jan?

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

George Herold: OK. Hold it - here's Harry.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

Harry Suomi: Yes Jan, this is Harry.

Janis Kozlowski: Hi Harry. Do mind being part of our conversation today?

Harry Suomi: Well I think George could have handled it. [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Well, do you mind being part of it, though?

Harry Suomi: Oh, I guess not – I'm here.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. And is it OK if I tape your conversation?

Harry Suomi: You can do anything you want.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. And Harry, what's your last name?

Harry Suomi: S-u-o-m-i – Suomi.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, I thought that was just your e-mail handle.

Harry Suomi: No, it's, "Suomi, H."

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So, Harry [George] was just telling me about the sinking of his sub off Amchitka, but when we get to the Finback, can we ask you some [questions] too?

Harry Suomi: Sure.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

Harry Suomi: George was on it before me. I didn't get on it, the Finback, until we got back to Pearl Harbor - after starting second patrol.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. ... So, George, you were telling me about ... your sub grounding off Amchitka, and trying to liter men into shore.

George Herold: Going into what now?

Janis Kozlowski: Taking guys in the raft – two at a time, into shore.

George Herold: Yeah. We ... after the battery charge was over, we attempted to go ahead – 'cause, I told you the S-boats have to lie-to in the water in order to charge their battery, [and] you can not go ahead on the propellers.

OK. So when we went ahead, we immediately struck a reef ... because it was pitch black and you couldn't see anything. There were no lights on, or nothing, and the boat was holed. And we knew we were in some kind of trouble, because the engine room started to flood ... the bilges started to flood. But it wasn't a rush, it was not a rush to get off the boat – it didn't sink right away. We had plenty of time. But, we knew it was going down – it was not gonna last like that. But....

Well, that's it. Now ask another question.

Janis Kozlowski: So, tell me about trying to get everybody off the ship and into shore.

George Herold: OK, now the boat sank ... it sank to the bottom. But understand, the water was not that deep. The ... the stern of the boat was down under the water, [but] the bow was still sticking up a little bit. So, we could ... we spent maybe another day or so with the rubber raft, going back and forth and getting supplies that we could get off the boat before the salt water got into the battery area and started this chlorine gas. You've heard of that? Chlorine is ... poisonous. So, once we detected that ... I guess, after the second day, we made no more trips back to the boat - that was it for the boat. We had to leave it there.

But we got a lot of stores ... we got plenty of food off - we got warm clothing ... well, we didn't really need it then – the warm clothing. But we got ... the food was the main thing – we got a lot of caned food. So, we really weren't hurting. We ate OK - we had two meals a day. We....

Well, go ahead, go on.... We got all the food off. But, we were in this ... this area where you couldn't, you couldn't stay there.

Now, a day or two before, before all this happened, we had reconnoitered Constantine Harbor on Amchitka, where they had a little Aleut village there of maybe six or seven houses – little small houses and a church. And evidently, the Japanese had dropped a stick of bombs there. And three or four of the houses were destroyed. So when we went aground on the other side of the island, we had to walk across the island carrying all our supplies – food that we got. And we stayed; we lived in these houses ... and the one small church there. It was like a little ... I guess it was six houses and one church is what it was. And three of the houses were destroyed by a ... somebody dropped a stick of bombs. And I still don't know whether it was the Japanese, or whether it was the Americans. I don't know. But I know, there were six or seven bomb craters across there, and three of the homes were destroyed. So, that's where we lived – we stayed for six days until they found us. And they found us by accident. We had sent out about six messages with the radio on the S-boat, but only one of them was received. And that one message didn't give any position – just, that we had grounded on the southeastern, off the southeastern end of Amchitka Island.

OK. What else now, babe?

Janis Kozlowski: So....

George Herold: Oh, excuse me for saying that.

Janis Kozlowski: Were you able to get any personal possessions off the boat, or just essential things like food?

George Herold: Was I nervous?

Janis Kozlowski: No, did you get essential, only essential things off the ship, or could you get personal effects also?

George Herold: Oh no, we got, you know.... [Chuckle] Personal effects - I had just bought a \$29.00 set of dress blues in San Diego in October of 1941. And they cost ... well, \$29.00. And I was making \$36.00 a month - \$46.00. It went, at that time.... So, that was a big hunk of money. I made sure I got those dress

blues off the boat. But everything else I lost – my dungarees, another pair of shoes, underwear, skivvies, socks, toiletries; all that - I left that. The only thing I got off the boat of mine, was my, that suit of dress blues - that [Chuckle] that cost me \$29.00.

Janis Kozlowski: That was a big purchase on those days [Chuckle].

George Herold: It was, it was, yeah. It was. But, I saved it. A screwy thing though, I guess.

Janis Kozlowski: So, everybody got off the sub?

George Herold: Did everybody?

Janis Kozlowski: Yes.

George Herold: Oh, yeah, nobody was hurt. Nobody was ... nobody lost their life. We got, we ... we lived fairly comfortable, almost, I would say - in these houses. It seemed like ... I guess it was Aleut – the Aleut people. You'd know more about this than me, now. They ... they had, they left all these school books, like, for little children - with pictures of animals. But, it was all in Japanese. So, I don't know whether they were teaching the people Japanese language there, or not. I couldn't say that. But, you know, I'm just sorry I didn't pick up some of these books and take them with me. But, I ... at 18 years old, [Chuckle] well, one doesn't think like that – like, I could have saved some of that that they had there.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

George Herold: Go ahead there, hon.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you think you were gonna make it out of there OK?

George Herold: Did what, hon?

Janis Kozlowski: Did you think you were gonna be rescued?

George Herold: You know, at 18, [Chuckle] Yes, I did. I figured, "We'll be here awhile and somebody will find us." Because they knew we had ... they knew that we had went aground and the boat had sank. And they knew we were living on some.... But, they didn't know exactly where we were. And we were located by one Navy airplane that evidently had just flew over to get a ... get a fix and find out where he was. And he found us by accident, really. And he ... the way ... sad

thing, though - this flyer that found us, himself was lost two months later - in August of 1942. And I'm sorry about that.

And I'm on-line once in a while with a, with a younger relative of his that never knew him.

Janis Kozlowski: [Hum]

George Herold: His name was Julius Raven, R-A-V-E-N.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. Do you know what happened to him?

George Herold: Yes, he ... he lost his life two months later. Remember, I said he found us on June 24th. We sank on the 19th, and we lived on the island until June 24th - until he found us there. And he landed in ... well you're familiar with Amchitka - Constantine Harbor? He landed in Constantine Harbor. And there was an old dory there that was a row boat. That was really an old worm eaten thing - like that. So, we, one or two or of us, really - I wasn't one of them, but we rowed out to where he had anchored his airplane in the water. And ... I [Chuckle] I hope this all makes sense. And we introduced ourselves, and he took, he took about 12 or 13 of us back to Dutch Harbor from Amchitka. That, that's a, I guess that's a six or seven hour flight, whatever it is - like that. And the next day, two or three more airplanes come [sic] back, and then, picked the rest of us up and flew us all back to Dutch harbor.

Janis Kozlowski: Huh. Did....

George Herold: And I brought, [Chuckle] I made sure I took my suite of dress blues with me.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: Right.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you ever see Japanese planes come over when you were stuck on Amchitka?

George Herold: Now, we saw aircraft - maybe six or seven miles away. But, theirs, or ours - we never knew really knew what they were. The only aircraft that came close was this one American PBY aircraft, that, he said he flew over to get a fix - that he might have been a little bit lost. And that's the reason he was over there. And he, we saw it was a, it was an American plane. So, we were all out

there on the beach waving – I'm not gonna ever forget that. That was a, we were glad they finally knew where we were – that was the main thing.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I bet! After you'd been there five or six days, you were probably ready to get back to civilization?

George Herold: Yeah, we were, yeah. Yeah. We weren't hungry, we had the food, and it was almost, [Chuckle] well, I'm not gonna say comfortable, but it was a ... myself and two other guys, we lived in some kind of a dugout that they had - that the people who lived there before, had dug into the side of the hill there. And we lived pretty comfortable, I guess. There were no ... a funny thing – we didn't see no animals, or nothing at night there. No ... well birds, occasionally, but, there was nothing on that island at all, I guess.

Janis Kozlowski: What month were you there?

George Herold: What now?

Janis Kozlowski: What month was it that you were there?

George Herold: What did you say?

Janis Kozlowski: What time of year?

George Herold: Oh. OK. We went aground on the 19th of June, and we were found on the 24th. And that's when the one plane found us – landed. And he took back about 13 or 14 of us. And the next day, three more [planes] came back and picked up the rest of us, and took the rest of us back to Dutch Harbor.

Janis Kozlowski: And then, what happened in Dutch Harbor? Were you reassigned?

George Herold: OK. Well, Dutch Harbor - they ... yeah, there was gonna be a court marshal on our captain – his name was Herbert Jukes [Herbert L. Jukes]. There was gonna be a court marshal set up, because he ... he went aground and lost his ship. But, it was all bunk because it was so foolish. It was an old boat ... was built in 1924. It had no radar, no fathometer - no anything, really. We, we had a ... if we didn't see the sun or the stars, we were lost. And that's what we did – we had bad weather there for two or three days and we couldn't see anything, and ... the night of the 18th of June, we lay-to in the water to charge the batteries. And while we were laying-to, we drifted right in close to the beach of Amchitka not knowing that we were there – pitch dark and at 2:30 in the morning. When the charge was complete, we went ahead on one main engine, like I said

before, and we immediately struck a reef. And the boat was holed, and that was the end of that. That was the ... the boat was doomed after that - there was no saving it at all.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you didn't think it was your....

George Herold: Just a matter of time, and it ... it sank all the way to the bottom. But, the water was not ... it [the boat] didn't completely go under – you follow me.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

George Herold: The fore part of the boat was still up, and we could ... we all got up on deck - we were OK.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you didn't think it was the captain's fault?

George Herold: We what now?

Janis Kozlowski: You didn't think it was the captain's fault – [for] what happened?

George Herold: Definitely not - absolutely not. No. No. There was a court marshal, and ... there was a lot of questions asked. And it was decided, that in no way.... In fact, he ... he was given command of another submarine [USS Kingfish] – he made several patrols on the ship]. Let's see, I can't ... I did know the name. I could look it up and find out. But, anyway, then he had some success – he sank several ships on another ... another submarine, after that.

Janis Kozlowski: So, it sounds like you didn't stay with him.

George Herold: No. No, after ... after they brought us back to Dutch Harbor, some of the senior men were sent back to the states for what they called, "New Construction." They were building a bunch of new submarines at that time [in] different parts of the country – in California on the east coast, and.... But, the junior men, myself being one ... the Finback pulled in then ... and I guess if was, like, I'm gonna say, early July. And myself and another man, went aboard the Finback -- Harry knows this guy – Rocco A. Pia (we called him "pie"). You remember, Pie, Harry?

Harry Suomi: Yeah.

George Herold: Yeah. Me and Rocco Pia went on the Finback. And we stayed; I stayed on the Finback for another year and a half. And I left it in ... in Fremantle,

Australia. And Harry stayed on – he can tell you more about what happened afterwards on the Finback. [added note following interview: Prior to me going aboard Finback, they (Finback) had fired torpedoes at a Jap destroyer type, but no hits, and were depth charged, but not too severely.]

Janis Kozlowski: So, you got on the Finback at Dutch Harbor?

George Herold: I did, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: And then where did you go from there?

George Herold: OK. Well, right away, we continued to patrol on the Finback, which was ... they were patrolling the eastern Aleutian Islands - out by Adak, Atka and all that out there.

Janis Kozlowski: Ah-huh.

George Herold: And we ... we made one attack on a Japanese destroyer that was not a success – we didn't get any hits. And we were bombed by an aircraft once or twice - that's all in the ships log. I could give you the date if I looked it up. But, we were bombed by aircraft, and we made an attack on one Japanese destroyer which was unsuccessful.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So how long were you on patrol in Finback in the Aleutians?

George Herold: OK, now let me see, we were still, I guess we didn't leave the Dutch Harbor - I'm sorry, the Aleutian area - 'till around the first week in August. And then we headed straight for Hawaii – Pearl Harbor. Well, I guess, we did. We patrolled during July and a little bit of August, when we ended up in Pearl Harbor.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So, do you remember any ... you didn't have any hits in the Aleutians, then, right?

George Herold: I did any what?

Janis Kozlowski: You didn't take down any ships, or planes in ... well, I guess, not planes ...

Harry Suomi: No, there was no ...

George Herold: No, no, we didn't. In fact, on the S-boat, we didn't see any ships, all we saw was aircraft, that ... and they really never came [in] close range to the sea, or any ... to bother us. In fact, [on] the S-boat, we had - all we did was just look at Amchitka. And we looked at Kiska at one time. But, we saw no enemy at all while I was on the S-boat.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. And is Finback of the same era as the 20 ... SS-27? Or, was it a more modern ship?

George Herold: Oh, no, the Finback was much newer – Finback was commissioned in ... I think it was the first boat [that] was commissioned after Pearl Harbor - I'm not certain of this. But I'm pretty sure it was.

Harry Suomi: Silversides

George Herold: Was what now?

Harry Suomi: Silversides. (first sub commissioned after 7 Dec 1941)

George Herold: It was built in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. And so you went back to Pearl Harbor?

George Herold: Yeah, after our business was done up in the Aleutian area, on the Finback, we returned to Pearl Harbor ...

Janis Kozlowski: Um-K.

George Herold: ... for a minor refit and a rest. We had a couple weeks rest in a hotel. And then we'd go back out to sea again.

Janis Kozlowski: So, is that where you met up with Harry?

George Herold: That's right. Right.

Harry Suomi: Yeah, I was transferred on the Finback starting the second patrol.

Janis Kozlowski: So, where did they, where did that patrol take you then?

Harry Suomi: The second patrol, we came back to either Midway, or back to Pearl [Harbor]. I don't remember.

George Herold: Wait a minute; hold it - the second patrol was over in the China Sea – the East China Sea, for most of the area. And we were there for maybe sixty, seventy days. We returned, now, I think we came back to Midway after that. And we stayed at Midway, didn't we?

Harry Suomi: I think so.

George Herold: I think, yeah, we rested at Midway for a while. They had a lot of submarine rest camps where the guys would come in and you'd just, you'd get two weeks off – you'd rest, you could swim, [or] whatever like that. Midway Island was won at that time, and we stayed there for two weeks, and then we'd go back out to sea for a couple of months. And [on] the third patrol, I guess, we were down in the Caroline Islands where - Guam, Saipan ... [It] was all in Japanese hands at that time. And all those southern islands were like, in New Georgia and all that, for the second or third patrol. [The] fourth patrol, was just ... we might have returned to the China Sea again on the fourth patrol. But, that's when we started sinking ships. The first ship [we] sank, or I was with Harry, was in October of 1942. We sank a ship just between Formosa and the Chinese Coast. I keep saying Formosa - that's Taiwan, today it's called Taiwan.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. OK. So were you part of that, did you know what was going on?

George Herold: Did what, now?

Janis Kozlowski: Did, how many guys were on Finback?

George Herold: What ... 65? 66 I think.

Harry Suomi: Oh, more.

George Herold: Well, later on there were more. But, when we went to Dutch Harbor on the Finback, there were 66 guys in the crew. Later on during the war, they started making the crew a little bit bigger.

Janis Kozlowski: Um-K.

George Herold: Sometimes, I guess sometimes 70 - a little bit over 70 I suppose. Right, Harry?

Harry Suomi: 90.

George Herold: 90 on some of the big ... oh, man, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: So, with that, with that many guys on the ... [George and Harry talking to each other in the background blocks further words]

George Herold: Go ahead.

Janis Kozlowski: I'm sorry. With that many guys on the sub, did you know what was going on - did you know that you were in attack mode? And....

Harry Suomi: Oh, sure – constantly, constantly. We, we wouldn't surface till after sunset, and we wouldn't dive till before sunrise. Eh? So, we made ... and one of them patrols was 89 days.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, my-gosh.

Harry Suomi: Yeah. And I think that's the day of a patrol that we lost all our sugar 'cause we dove with the hatch open – we couldn't get it shut. So, we almost had it that day. And all the sugar was in the dry storeroom by the radio-shack going aft from the control room. So, we lost it all ... had no sugar.

Janis Kozlowski: I bet you were pretty sorry about that.

Harry Suomi: Not really.

Janis Kozlowski: No.?

George Herold and Harry Suomi: No.

George Herold: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: You don't think of those things.

George Herold: No.

Janis Kozlowski: Um.

George Herold: He's right, you know. But, [Chuckle] we were both 18 then.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. [Chuckle] Leaving the hatch open like that could have been deadly for the sub?

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah. [Chuckle] Definitely.

George Herold: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: Definitely.

George Herold: You know, when you're 18, you're gonna live forever.

Janis Kozlowski: Right. [Chuckle] But it sounds like somehow you got it closed, and so the mission wasn't ...

Harry Suomi: Well as soon as the Chief on the manifold seen [sic] the water coming down the lower hatch, he immediately closed the vents and started blowing. So, we got it back up to the surface.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] So how did these subs function? Did, were you down deep on attack during the day, and then at night, you came up and surfaced?

Harry Suomi: You're always at periscope depth during the day. And [if] you see any contact, you tried to get around it so you can fire a torpedo. Sometime you had to surface and then pour on the four engines at flank speed to get ahead of the convoy, or the ship. And then dive, and then fire - if you can get in to position.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] And Harry, what was your job on the sub?

Harry Suomi: I was a torpedo man.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. So, you were well aware of what was going on.

George Herold: He was always full of grease.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: I was a young seaman then. And I would stay on lookout watches. I think I missed, like the first patrol. After that, I stood looks ... and [at] helmsman.

Janis Kozlowski: And George, what was your position on Finback?

George Herold: I [Chuckle] I was a little bit higher – I was the Quartermaster. [Chuckle]

Well, I'll tell you what, he mentioned about the hatch [not] being closed – that was my fault. That was ... we made a dive in January in 1943 – we were someplace in the China Sea there in the area of Taiwan. And there was improper

closing of the hatch as we dove - and water poured in. And it washed down into the control room. And when we finally got the hatch shut, Harry was left up there in the conning tower with water up to his waist. This sounds like a movie story, but this is all actual truth – whatever you hear from me or Harry is the absolute way it happened.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, did you get in trouble for that?

George Herold: Did what?

Janis Kozlowski: Did you get in ...

Harry Suomi: No, George didn't get in trouble, because there was this ... a junior man that we picked up in Pearl [Harbor] before we left the patrol, because we were one short [of a] quartermaster on the bridge. And he was kind of drifty. So, it was all his fault, because he was supposed to check the dogs on the hatch when we went down. And George was the last one when we pulled the plug to dive. George was the last one on from the bridge [Harry and George over-talking each other blocks further words]. But, the dogs were half way out, so the latch couldn't grab - the hatch couldn't set properly.

George Herold: And, now let me tell you, I did the same thing on the S-boat – close the hatch on a dive. And I had no trouble on the S-boat. It was a little bit different – a little bit easier, because it was an older type boat. But on the Finback, it was a ... the way this thing worked, it was a little bit different to me. And whether I got proper instruction, I'll, I'll never say. Because ... the guys I sailed with, were ... [Chuckle] I'll tell you that right now, I'd never say anything against none of them. I was probably – I was a junior man - I was 18 years old at that time, and I'm not gonna ... I can blame nobody but myself for whatever happened at that ...

Harry Suomi: No, it wasn't George's fault. It was the guy that he relieved on the bridge that should have checked the dogs on the hatch. So, George wasn't at fault.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, thankfully you all lived through it. Right? So, that you.... And it didn't happen again. [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: [Chuckle] Well, we had another close contact with the enemy on the next patrol. I happened to be on the bridge at the lookout at the time. And I hollered, "Plane," and we dove. And we got down to periscope depth, and he [the plane] blew us right back to the surface ...

George Herold: Yeah. I remember that.

Harry Suomi: ... with his bombs. And if he'd had one more, he'd a had us.

George Herold: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: So, we got ... we had lost our main hydraulics and were cranking hydraulics from the bow and stern planes by hand. And I'll be darned if we got her back down again. And like I say, if he'd had one more bomb, George and I wouldn't be here.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow. What ... and where was this at?

Harry Suomi: South China Sea somewhere.

George Herold: Yeah. Yeah. Right - probably between Taiwan and the Chinese coast, that's were that was. There was two China Seas – the North China Sea and no, I'm sorry - the East China Sea and the South China Sea area. And it was probably in between that and what they called at that time, the Formosa Strait ... when Taiwan was called Formosa.

Janis Kozlowski: UM-K.

Harry Suomi: We were actually on our way to our patrol area. So....

Janis Kozlowski: Well, your ship was credited with a lot of ... a lot of kills, wasn't it?

Harry Suomi: Well, that one patrol, supposedly we got six out of seven ships on the convoy.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow.

Harry Suomi: But, whether they give us that credit, I don't know – you'd have to look at the patrol reports.

Janis Kozlowski: I see. OK. So, was your; was Finback associated with rescuing George Bush?

Harry Suomi: Yes ...

George Herold: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: So, that made you famous in a sort of way.

Harry Suomi: No, George and I got off ... George got off in Australia and I got off in Pearl [Harbor] when it went in to 10-10 Dock for overhaul. And they split the crew up - half went on vacation over in the states, and the other crew stayed aboard to help with overhauling the boat. And when I come back - I was in the second crew. So when I come back, the boat was gone already. So, I was transferred off the Finback. And that happened about the second patrol after the overhaul. But, we did get the invitation to the inaugural and all the other functions ... and Christmas cards a couple years in a row.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: Now listen, let me say, [Laugh] "I'm a democrat."

Harry Suomi: I'm a Republican - we don't get along. [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: So George Bush ... now, I wasn't there when he was picked up, this was in September of 1944 when they picked him up. And they also had picked up four other flyers. And George Bush ... you could, evidently you could tell, was a Joe College type - [he] came from a higher plane or family - like that. And he didn't mix with the rest of the crew. And it's tough not to mix with the rest of the crew if you're on a submarine, because you're always rubbing elbows with somebody - it's so small. But, he didn't, he wasn't a mixer. The other four guys, they mixed well with the crew - they came back aft to the engine room and the motor room and the torpedo rooms and talked, talked to the guys - like that. But, George Bush was a, was just the opposite.

Now, [Laugh] I could be talking like a democrat, so I'll, I'll let up here like that - that's just my impression, I wasn't there, I 'm just getting it from the guys that were there. At that time, I was on another submarine called the Picuda [USS Picuda (SS-382)]. And we were doing our thing on that boat.

Janis Kozlowski: Well you both spent a lot of time on subs, how was it to live in such cramped quarters for a long time?

Harry Suomi: Well that's why they send you to ... its all voluntary. When you volunteer for submarines, they send you to a couple of shrinks first - [to] see if you're mentally fit and qualified to serve on submarines.

Janis Kozlowski: Didn't you miss, you know, the breeze – the ocean breeze and the sun and all that?

Harry Suomi: No, you can get accustom to that right very quick ... and feel better when you're submerged.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. 'Cause, I've been on them, you know, in museums – walked through them. And boy, it sure seems like tight quarters.

Harry Suomi: Yeah, well, I done 20 ... 20 years on them. Then I went to work for the old Electric Boat division. Then I came down to the Cape and I rode submarines out of here - out of the Cape there for 23 years.

Janis Kozlowski: Electric Boat, what, were they in Groton, Connecticut?

Harry Suomi: Groton. Yeah.

George Herold: That's a nice area there, yeah. I was always on submarines from 1941 until 1947 ... that's when, I told you, I was in this automobile accident and I was forced out of the Navy with a medical discharge, because my leg never came around to their satisfaction. So, I, I had to leave the navy. And I never saw a nuclear boat – never had nothing to do with them. Harry knows all about the nuclear boats - I don't.

Janis Kozlowski: So, George, you spent about 6 years, then on subs, before you were discharged because of your accident?

George Herold: Well, if you count submarine school, yeah - October '41, and I left in, I got hurt in December of 1947 when I was on a boat called the Amber Jack [USS Amberjack (SS-522)]. And I spent a year and a half in the Newport Naval Hospital and never recovered enough to their satisfaction to return to duty. So, I was given a medical discharge.

Janis Kozlowski: That must have been a terrible accident.

George Herold: Well, [Chuckle] look, I'll give you a couple of sentences on it – we had bought a 1940 Buick sedan ... it was a nice blue and white one. And I had just gotten a Connecticut drivers license. And ... well, the two of us did, like that. So, we went up to Hingham, Massachusetts to buy some civilian clothes, because at just about that time, the Navy had decided that we were allowed to wear civilian clothes when we were away from the boat - in town, or someplace like that on leave, or liberty. So, I bought two suits, I bought a top coat and some sweaters. And would you believe, this was all less than \$100.00 - for all this now.

And on the way back from Hingham, Massachusetts to New London is when we had this accident. There were four of us in the car, and I was driving. Two of us in the front seat were hurt seriously and ended up in the Newport Naval Hospital. And the two guys in the back seat were asleep when it happened, and they weren't injured at all.

Janis Kozlowski: [Hum]



USS Amberjack in the Boston Navy Yard, 1946. George Herold with his arm on the "fairwater."

George Herold: What, I'll give you a break on what happened, 'cause I'm not gonna tell the story – I fell asleep at the wheel.

Janis Kozlowski: Um.

George Herold: And evidently, we hit a trailer-truck head-on on Route 15 at the Connecticut-Rhode Island State line.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow.

George Herold: This was the third of December. And the next thing I knew, it was about the 7th or 8th of December and was I at Newport Naval Hospital.

Janis Kozlowski: Sounds like you're lucky you survived.

George Herold: Yeah, well yes I am, yeah. [Chuckle] I guess I am lucky I survived of my own foolishness, I suppose. But, you know, what was I... I was 23 years old at the time. You know, foolish youth, whatever.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, yep, we've all been there. [Chuckle]

So Harry, tell me, when did ... I'm sorry. George, what ... after Finback, then you went to [the] Picuda?

George Herold: Yeah, I got off the Finback in Fremantle, Australia. And I was sent ... this was in, what was it? This was in July - July in '43, something like that. And [I] was sent back to the states ... a 30 day leave. Like, we got home to see mom and pop and all that - like that. And I was given an assignment to a new boat that was being built up in Portsmouth Navy Yard, New Hampshire. And it was finished in December of '43. And in January of '44 we took it back around to Pearl Harbor. And we went ... we got back into the war again. And that boat sank another ... I think it sank another 12 ships - I'd have to look that up too. We sank another 12 ships before. And I left that boat at Pearl Harbor, sometime in early 1945. And I was sent home again. And that was the last time I was in Hawaii until my wife and I went there again in about 1983, '82-'83.

Janis Kozlowski: Did it look a lot different to you?

George Herold: Absolutely. [Chuckle] Absolutely.

Janis Kozlowski: I bet.

George Herold: Well, what the ... it was like going there [the] first time again, because, I didn't know where they where ... the, that - well, you've been to Hawaii, probably?

Janis Kozlowski: Yes.

George Herold: Kapiolani Boulevard - the main one that goes by ... down through [the] Waikiki area?

Janis Kozlowski: Right.

George Herold: That, that was just a two lane highway in 1941, I remember. But, back then in 1983, it was a split, six lane highway - something like that ... all the way through.

Janis Kozlowski: Big changes. [Chuckle]

Now, Harry what happened after you got off Finback?

Harry Suomi: Off the Finback?

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: I come back on [from] 30 days leave. And I went back out there. And I got in the submarine relief crew on the Fulton [USS *Fulton* (AS-11)]. And I went out to the Majuro Islands [part of Gilbert and Marshall Island group] to start a submarine base there. And I was there about four months, and they called me up to the personnel office and they says, "How would you like to go the states for new construction?" I says, "Send me, quick." [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: [Laugh] So, I come back to put the USS Chub [USS Chub (SS-329)] in commission. And went back out there and made a few more patrols. And I ended in the Philippines on a tender when the war ended. Yeah. But I stayed 20 [years] active and I put the last submarine commission ... the first missile boat ... I mean, the nuclear missile submarine. And I had made the first watches at the Cape, and I made the first patrol, and ... I had my 20 years plus in - so, I retired.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you saw a lot of changes in subs over those years?

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. Were you pretty happy when the war ended so that you could get back to the states?

Harry Suomi: Well, yeah - I had a wife and little boy.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, you did?

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok.

George Herold: I'll tell you something, I was in the states when the war ended – [I] was at the submarine base in New London. I was instructing at the submarine school on - one of what they called, "The School Boats" there. We would take the young sailors out to sea for a day and show them the dive, and show them all the ins and outs of a submarine. And I ... I was there at New London at the sub base when the war was over. And that was one wild time. We went into New London

that night and everything. I [Chuckle] I kissed so many girls, I couldn't tell you where I started or ended - like that. But, it was one wild time!

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: George is a lover, anyway. [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

George Herold: [Laugh] No, no ... I'm, I was brought up in the city, so I'm good at that, where ...

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] Now, you guys spent so much close time together on these subs with other people, did that make for good friendships, or did it mean that you were, you were sick of those people by the time you got away from them?

Harry Suomi: No, no - very good camaraderie.

George Herold: You're right.

Harry Suomi: Yup.

George Herold: You could, I could depend on Harry, and he could depend on me. [Laugh] Except for that one time when I screwed up on closing the hatch.

Harry Suomi: That wasn't your fault George.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] So, when the two of you split up and went different directions during the war, you somehow got back together after the war?

Harry Suomi: Well, I come down to the Cape ... I was working for [the] Electric Boat Division, of General Dynamics after I retired off the George Washington [USS *George Washington* (SSBN-598)]. And they requested four people to come down take care of the submarines that come in – the missile subs. And I volunteered and my boss wouldn't let me go. [He] says, "You're the only qualified man I got." So, the first four people came down, and they come back to the ship yard for about three months. And I said, "Well..." (They were getting \$14.00 a day per-diem) and I said, "Well I got to get some of that money." So, I pinged on my boss for a couple of months, and he says, "I can't let you go." Finally, about two weeks before the guys were supposed to come back to the Cape, I asked him

once more. He says, "Well, let me go ask the manager." And he says, "Well, we'll let him go, but if it doesn't work out up there, you'll just have to come back." So, I stayed down there for 23 years and

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: ... worked on and rode every submarine that come in to Cape Canaveral.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: That was the first Freedom 41 ... missile boats [United States Navy Fleet Ballistic Missile (FBM) submarines], and the first eight Trident boats.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow. [That] must have been a pretty good place to work, then.

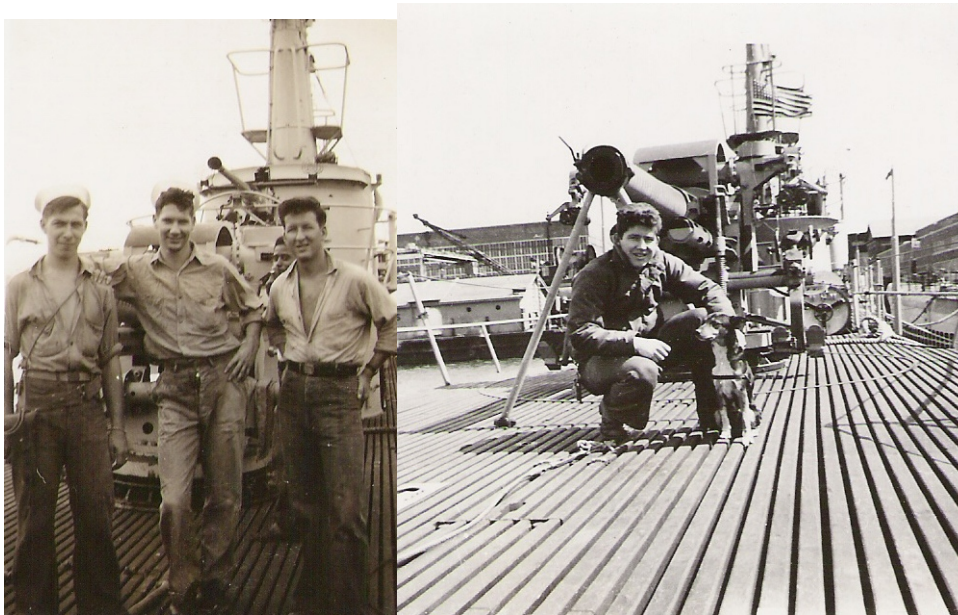
Harry Suomi: Well, whenever we didn't have a submarine ... we were gone – sent to ... I went to Rota, Spain, [U.S. Naval Station (NAVSTA) Rota, Spain], Holy Loch, Scotland [in Argyll and Bute, Scotland] about four times. And all the ship yards - we checked, or overhauled boats, or [did] new construction. We made the inspection and said, "Yeah, you're ready to go to sea."

Janis Kozlowski: OK, so that's what your job was – you were an inspector and rode on these subs?

Harry Suomi: More, or less, yes.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: Now listen, I have to tell you one thing – the best time I had, well, in the navy, was in 1946 when I put the new boat - the Amberjack, in commission. We spent three months in South America. We went all the way down to Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and we saw a lot – it was a good trip. It was amazing. I'm – we had a good time. We had a lot of different types of food, and everything, and ... we made a lot of different stops. I could, I'm gonna send you a list of the stops we made all up and down the coast - all the way down from Rio, all the way down into Buenos Aires, and that other ... I have to look that up, but it's right there. But, we had a good time, was good.



Left: Amberjack crew. Right: George Herold on the deck of Amberjack, 1946. The dog had to be left in Boston. Photos courtesy of George Herold.

Janis Kozlowski: Sounds like you both saw quite a bit of the world during World War II.

Harry Suomi: Yeah - through the periscope.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Yeah. [Laugh] Maybe a very small bit of it, huh? [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: I wasn't lucky - I didn't get any of those cruises.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. Did you get much time on land?

Harry Suomi: I had two years of shore duty, in 20. That's all.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow.

Harry Suomi: That's all.

Janis Kozlowski: And did you have any ... George mentioned that he had R&R on Midway – did you have similar experiences?



*USS Amberjack,
ca. 1970.*

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah – Midway. I was working at Midway, and I was in Australia with him ... and also the Royal Hawaiian– Pearl [Harbor].

George Herold: Yeah, we also stopped in Guam, Saipan, and later on in the war - when, when the marines took it back over again from the Japanese – Midway. Later we stopped at places in the Marshalls and Gilberts and others after the Marines had them secured.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you guys see remnants of war there when you stopped?

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah, yeah ... it always - all the battle wagons over there.

Janis Kozlowski: And had you known what had gone on there where you [stopped] - did they keep you up to date?

Harry Suomi: Well, George ... yeah. George was there when the Japanese bombed the battleships over there.

George Herold: Well, yeah, you see I went through all that. Yeah, that's a ... well, again - at the submarine base. I'll say that again, we weren't hit - we could watch what was happening all around us - the navy yard was just across a channel that they called Makapooohoo [sp.?] channel. They, these Hawaiian names get me all screwed up, anyway ... something like that - Wakapooohoo, [sp.?] Channel. And the navy yard was just ...

Harry Suomi: Waipahu.

George Herold: Waipahu, yeah - something like that. Yeah, whatever- like that ... all these channels.

Harry Suomi: George comes from Long Island [Chuckle] and gets confused.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

George Herold: [Laugh] Well she, I told her she's gonna have to, she's gonna have to look up in a dictionary, to understand what the heck I'm saying ...

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: ... from being from New York - yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Now, what about on Midway and Saipan and other places like that you stopped [at], did you see evidence of war there too?

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah. That ... all the buildings were ...

George Herold: Now listen, let me tell you about Midway ... when we first went ... Harry and I went to Midway for the first time together in 1942 ... I guess it was September, or October - something like that, yeah. And you could, you could see the damage that the Japanese had done with the bombing - the hangars were all bent and blown up - destroyed. And it was a mess there for a while there.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, 'cause you were only there a few months after the battle of Midway.

George Herold: Yeah. [Um-hum] Yeah. I, I'm pretty sure we were there ... in September, or late September in '42, or early October for the first time. I can't give you the exact dates - I'd have to look them up.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. Now, tell me what did you both think about the accommodations and the food on these subs that you served on?

Harry Suomi: We had the best food the Navy could make.

George Herold: You had guys that would do a lot of bitchin', if you'll pardon the expression. But, I'm not one to complain - I grew up during the depression, and I ... you put a peanut butter sandwich in front of me and glass of milk, and I'm happy ...

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

George Herold: ... whatever. But, that ... the food that we had was good. A lot of guys would do, not a lot of guys, no – one or two here and there, would complain. But, the vast majority of the crew, the food was OK for. We did alright.

Harry Suomi: When you left Pearl Harbor, you had fresh milk and you had fresh eggs for the first two weeks.

George Herold: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: After that, on the entire rest of the patrol, you had powdered eggs and powdered milk.

Janis Kozlowski: That sounds grim.

George Herold: [Laugh] Listen, you couldn't tell, I couldn't tell the difference – some guys could, I couldn't. I didn't know.

Janis Kozlowski: How long were you out on these missions on the sub?

Harry Suomi: Oh, anywhere ... as long as ... if you had poor hunting, you were out there at least for 60 to 70 days at a time. And if you had good hunting, you could be back in 36 days.

Janis Kozlowski: So, if you, the more ships you took down, or the more enemy enemies you hit - the quicker you could go back to port?

Harry Suomi: Well, because you got rid of your torpedoes.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, right, right.

It seems like, if you were out 60 to 70 days, though, it would be awful darn hard to have enough supplies.

Harry Suomi: Well, you were ...

George Herold: Well, he had ... they were tucked everywhere – stuffed under bunks and ... we had cans, cans, canned food everywhere ...

Harry Suomi: And everything, like meat and stuff like this - it was just thrown ... they'd take a lot of boxes, just throw 'em down in the cool box – the freeze box. So, you [Chuckle] they looked terrible, but the cook was pretty good ... he done a good job of cooking.

Janis Kozlowski: Huh. And did you eat in shifts?

Harry Suomi: Well, yeah – you stand ... we had three sections – so one section's on watch, and [the] next one could be eating and sleeping or resting. And you stood four [hours] on and eight off. So, if you're standing a four to eight [shift], you had four to eight [o'clock] in the morning, four to eight ... four to eight [o'clock] in the afternoon, you know?

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] And ... as a torpedo guy, Harry, did you stay right there where the torpedoes were?

Harry Suomi: Oh, sure.

Janis Kozlowski: That's where your bunk was?

Harry Suomi: We slept a lot ... we slept on top of 'em.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, boy.

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

George Herold: Just about ... well, I had my ... on the Finback, I slept in what they called the "After-battery" compartment. And on the Picuda in 1944 and '45, my bunk was in the "After-torpedo" room. We had two torpedo rooms – "Forward torpedo" room, in which would be the front of the ship, and the "Aft torpedo" room, which would be in the stern – the back of the ship - like that. And my ... the bunk I slept on in the Picuda, you couldn't go any further back. I slept in the top bunk on the port side, and Harry'll tell you, that's as far back as you can go - right

under what they called the steering motor, the "Steering ... Planes ... Motor".
What was that called again?

Harry Suomi: [Unclear word, no suggestions]

George Herold: "Motor generator, motor generator," yeah. What in the heck,
wa...

Harry Suomi: Well, the hydraulic ... ramps.

George Herold: Maybe we are getting old.

Harry Suomi: Yeah, the hydraulic ramps for the rudder and the stern planes.

Janis Kozlowski: Huh.

Harry Suomi: So, when we were submerged, they were constantly going.

George Herold: Yeah, you, [Laugh] you had, you hardly, you always had
hydraulic oil dripping into your bunk if you lived, if you slept in the top bunk.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] Oh, jeez!

George Herold: That was interesting, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: So, you had very little personal space?

Harry Suomi: Well, that's right. Most of the time, you had a leather cover-all for
your mattress. And most of the guys didn't even bother unzipping 'em, they'd just
crawl up in their clothes - sleep in their clothes.

Janis Kozlowski: And....

George Herold: Now Listen, Jan ...

Harry Suomi: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: ... we would paint, we would paint messages on the, on the
warheads of the torpedoes. You know what a torpedo looks like?

Janis Kozlowski: Yes, I've seen one.

George Herold: OK, good. The front part of the torpedo is the warhead. I guess
that's about a three or four foot long section. Like, I don't know whether it ... we'd

paint on there, "Happy birthday to Tojo." And we'd paint our girl friends names on there ...

Harry Suomi: [Chuckle]

Harry Suomi: ... "Love from Mary." "Love from [Unclear word, sounds like Bernie.]" "Love from Ellen." I guess on the Picuda, I painted "Love from ..." I was in love with a girl named Ellen McDermott on Long Island at that time, and I painted, "To Tojo, with love, from Ellen McDermott."

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: This was just a nothing thing that we had during the war.... Crazy. You know, [Chuckle] when you're 19/20 years of age, what else could we do?

Harry Suomi: You had to entertain yourself someway, for sure. [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: Right. Right. [Chuckle] So, how ... what was your normal day like? If you had an eight hour [shift], then what did you do on your shift, and then what did you do after for recreation?

Harry Suomi: Well, if you weren't qualified, you'd have to ... hit the books, and go ...

George Herold: Ah, wait a minute, hold it - you got to tell her what qualified is now.

Harry Suomi: You got to ... when you go aboard submarines, they give you so many months to qualify, from the bow to the stern - you're supposed to know everything in case something happens and you're there - you can take over. OK.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

Harry Suomi: And you got to qualify when you first get onboard. So ...

George Herold: Yeah, he means with all the valves and the levers and everything like that ... and switches and stuff - you have to know just about every one of them, and know which one to turn on, off, open, [or] shut in case something happens.

Janis Kozlowski: So, during your eight hour shift, if there was nothing else going on, you were studying?

Harry Suomi: Studying, or else ...

George Herold: Studying.... We read....

Harry Suomi: ... or, go to bed - get some rest.

George Herold: Yeah, we take books to ...to read.

Janis Kozlowski: Because you could be called out at anytime, right?

Harry Suomi: Sure, anytime you had to attack on a convoy, or something like that, you know.

Janis Kozlowski: And ... when you were ...

Harry Suomi: Battle ... battle stations.

Janis Kozlowski: when you were studying to qualify, they wanted you to be able to take over any position they needed you on?

Harry Suomi: Right.

Janis Kozlowski: OK. And what happens if you didn't qualify?

Harry Suomi: Well, then they kicked you off the boat.

George Herold: Yeah, you'd be gone then. You, you'd have a ... you were given enough time to study. And it ... well I would say, I can't recall a heck of a lot of guys loosing out and being kicked off. Although, I do remember one – what the heck was the guy's name? The ... jeez, I ... I can see the guys face and I can't think of is name. Well, anyway, we lost one guy. What the heck ... I can't think of his name. Aw, forget it.

Janis Kozlowski: So, would they get a discharge then - a dishonorable discharge?

Harry Suomi: Oh no, you'd transfer to surface craft.

George Herold: Well, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.

George Herold: He'd go to some other part of the navy.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, I see. OK.

George Herold: [Laugh] You know, we looked at ourselves as a cut above everyone else - like that. Just like ... it was just like the “Fly-boys” did – the aviators ...

Janis Kozlowski: Right.

George Herold: ... they thought they were a cut above everybody, too.

Harry Suomi: Far as I’m concerned, submarines are just a different navy, too.

George Herold: Yeah, you’re right.

Harry Suomi: Your officers are ... you can speak to ‘em, you know. Where in the surface craft, why [Chuckle] you almost have to put up a chit to talk ... to the guy.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.

Harry Suomi: All your skippers, and everything – they’re ... they’re human.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] So you ... guys on subs were pretty proud of their duty.

Harry Suomi: Oh, you bet.

George Herold: You bet ... absolutely ... that’s the one thing. Now, and with ... Jan, I want to tell you one thing here before I forget - the ... I only came face to face with one Jap during the entire war - this was on the Picuda. We picked up ... we passed through an area, I guess it was just off the northern coast of the Luzon Island and the Philippine Islands in August of 1944. And there were a whole, a whole mess of people in the water in life jackets - like that. And they were, they were Japanese soldiers. The boat in our ... one of the boats in our pack ...they were in submarine packs at that time ... had sunk a ship a day or two before that. And all these soldiers were in the water. And we passed through this area I guess just before sunrise – it was still not, not quite light. We heard all this yelling in the water close by. And we slowed down. And we could, we turned the search light on, and you could see that there were people here - like that. And we beckoned [them] to come ... anybody want to come. But, they were Japanese soldiers, and they would, I guess they were lead to believe that ... whatever we’d do to them if we ever picked ‘em up - like they were gonna.... They looked at us as, as demons – devils, or whatever you want to call ‘em - like that. But this one guy - this one little soldier, he was, I guess, had enough of

being in salt water. He was all raw under his armpits where the life jacket had rubbed on him - like that. He ... he wanted to come aboard. So we pulled him aboard. And we and the pharmacist, they took care of him. Ah, took ... under his arms - his arms were all raw from the life jacket and the salt water. But, we only had him a day or two, and we transferred him to another boat in our pack that was returning to Pearl Harbor. And I [Laugh] always wondered what the heck happened to this little guy - like that. Because, he was a little guy, and he looked like he didn't know much. He didn't speak any English, or nothing, so, we couldn't get nothing of him.

Janis Kozlowski: So, how was he treated as a prisoner?

Harry Suomi: Oh, they treated them pretty good.

George Herold: Oh yeah, we fed him ... he ate whatever we had - like that.

Harry Suomi: They used to volunteer to do the mess cooking.

George Herold: [Laugh] Yeah, well ... yeah, well I'll tell you, I wouldn't trust him being a mess cook, or nothing.

Harry Suomi: Well they were, they were ... some of them – we had about four or five of them on the Finback.

George Herold: Oh ...

Harry Suomi: The Chub, yeah.

George Herold: Oh, well, now I mean – not Japs?

Harry Suomi: Japs.

George Herold: You had four ... five.... Oh, I don't remember that. I knew ... this one guy - we ... we kept him back in the after torpedo room. And we kept him [in] what they called the "Bosons locker," at... If there was nobody gonna watch him, or nothing, he was always chained up. And we'd walk him up forward to the mess hall, which was another hundred feet forward of where we were in the after part of the boat, to get something to eat. And then we'd bring him back aft again.

Janis Kozlowski: So ... it sounds like they wouldn't have had any complaints when they left the ship, the way you treated them.

Harry Suomi: Well, I don't think so. They enjoyed it.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: Back when I made a Westpac trip to Japan on the USS Chub after the war, about 1950, there was a whole bunch - all the buildings there were tied up - they were all bombed out. And then, people would want to come aboard and do all the dishes for us. And they'd ... we'd put the garbage in big flour cans, or coffee cans, or whatever. And they'd grab that thing and go up in the building and feed the rest of their crew.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh!

Harry Suomi: Garbage.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh!

Harry Suomi: [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: [But] that's probably the best they had, huh.

Harry Suomi: The best they had, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. Huh.

So, you guys said you made some pretty good friends during your days in the war. Did you keep up with those guys over the years?

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah. Yeah. A lot of guys I still write to on a computer and so forth - exchange Christmas cards. We have a ... known as, "The Submarine Ventures of World War II ..."

George Herold: Oh Yeah. Listen, Jan, you got to send me a mailing address ... and thinking about - I'm gonna get you into our organization, you know, it's, U.S. Submarine Veterans, World War II - as an honorary member. They have other honorary members in there for something like this. But, I'm gonna see if I can get you in, and you'll get a nice certificate, or something.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, that's awfully nice. I don't think I'm worthy, but I'm interested in finding out what your organization's all about.

Harry Suomi: Yeah. Yeah. Well, they have another group that didn't make any war patrols - they're called, "Submarine Veterans Incorporated."

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, OK.

George Herold: But, we're all one, all one group.

Janis Kozlowski: And so, do you guys have reunions, or any kind of activities?

Harry Suomi: Every year, every year it's shifted – last year it was in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. And then where this year?

Harry Suomi: I think there's gonna be two more, and that's – they want the last one in Jersey City, 'cause that's where it all started.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, they would go to Florida, except it's too cold down there.

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: Yeah, it has been cold.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle]

George Herold: Yeah, I'll tell you what, like he said, 'we're all dying off now.' Like, I'm 85, and I'm probably, I'm the youngest of some of these guys. Some of these guys are in their 90s - like that. So, we had a reunion in Orlando, and we had 4,000 people there, you know - if you're counting wives and submarine guys.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow.

George Herold: And now, what do you get, Harry, about 400 - if you're lucky. You get ...

Harry Suomi: Yeah, it's, it's going down.

George Herold: That's the natural.

Harry Suomi: In fact, the last Sub-Vet's magazine I got, there was three pages of obits.

George Herold: Oh, yeah.

Harry Suomi: So, we're dying off fast.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, that's sad.

Harry Suomi: I just turned 86 yesterday.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, well happy birthday to you!

Harry Suomi: Thank you.

Janis Kozlowski: But, you ...

George Herold: [Unclear words, no suggestions] ... were yesterday?

Harry Suomi: Yeah.

George Herold: Oh, you owe me a beer, you son of a gun! You ...

Harry Suomi: I don't drink, George.

George Herold: Oh, well I do, I do.

Harry Suomi: [Laugh] George's got bad habits.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: No. No, no, not a bad habit, no, no, no.

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

George Herold: I'm hooked on Bud-Light – I have it with dinner.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Well, it sounds like you two are doing pretty well ...

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: ...still.

Harry Suomi: George and I go out for breakfast twice a week, and dinner twice a week. And we go to Sub-Vets Incorporated meetings once a month.

George Herold: You know, we both lost our wives about the same time, and that's a, that's a tough thing to do. That, that's.... You know, I always thought I'd

be the first to go, but, it didn't - it didn't pan out that way. And I, we both ... I lost my wife in May of 2007.

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum]

George Herold: When, when did ...

Harry Suomi: Two days before Christmas, 07.

George Herold: Oh, yeah.

Harry Suomi: And I just lost my youngest son ...

George Herold: Oh, yeah.

Harry Suomi: ... the third of January, there – he was 59.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. What happened to him?

Harry Suomi: Well, we don't really know whether he had a heart attack, or.... We're supposed to get an answer in the next day, or two.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, that's sad. I'm really sorry to hear that.

Harry Suomi: Yeah. Beautiful guy. Big.

George Herold: Now listen Jan, every, don't get any idea you're gonna hang up now, 'cause I'm gonna hold on to you while I got you here. Every, every June 19th - that was the day that the S-27 sank - I talk on the phone to one of the, to one of our cooks - our ship's cooks. He's in Illinois and he's a little bit older than I am - I mean, I guess he's close to 90 now. But we, we never fail to talk on June 19th of every year.

Janis Kozlowski: That's amazing.

George Herold: Yeah. [Laugh] Right. Yeah, amazing, I guess – that we're still living.

Janis Kozlowski: Is that Al Jacobsen?

George Herold: Is what now?

Janis Kozlowski: Is that Al Jacobsen? Oh, no, no, that was ...

George Herold: No. Now listen, I never met Al Jacobsen. Al Jacobsen is ... is the one that was in charge of the three PBY aircraft that came to pick us up after they located us – after they found us on Amchitka.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, OK.

George Herold: They found us on the 24th of June ... and that was when the PBY guy, Julius Raven – he found us - he just flew over there by accident, almost, just to get a bearing so he could get back to Dutch Harbor. And the next day, three more aircraft came back and picked the rest of us up. And what was amazing about this, Kiska was just over the horizon – only about 25 minutes flying time from, from where we were. So, they had to get in and out of there quick to get us out of there. And Al Jacobsen ... was the one in charge of the three aircraft. I'm on e-mail with him occasionally, but he's getting old – I guess he's up in his 90s. And I don't ... I don't hear from him much any more.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah ...

George Herold: But I never met any of these guys. I'm in touch with two or three guys that were involved in our rescue - the flyers. But I've never met them face to face. I have to sometime, but I don't know, we're all getting old – I'm 85, and I'm probably the youngest, than most of these guys.

Janis Kozlowski: [Hum] And who's the cook that you talk to?

George Herold: What's that now?

Janis Kozlowski: Who is the cook that you talk to?

George Herold: Oh, gee ... what the heck is his....? See, that's old age now. I had that right on the tip of my tongue. He's the second class ships cook, and he lives in De Pue, Illinois. And I'm gonna have to send you his name on the e-mail. It just.... What the heck is his name? [Post interview addition: The cook's name is George D. Dinsmore. He lives today in Illinois. I'm on the phone every June 19 with him and we hash it all over and laugh. We joke about how close the Japs were and never knew we were there.]

Janis Kozlowski: Well, you'll think of it after you hang up.

Harry Suomi: Yup. There's one thing George mentioned, though - when you serve on fleet boats, fleet submarines, you got two stills that make 40 gallons of

water a day - an hour. And you got to use all that water for cooking and watering batteries. So, if you made a 30 day patrol, or an 89 day patrol, you never got a bath.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, wow! I never thought about that.

Harry Suomi: [Laugh] You could brush your teeth and wash your face - that's it.

Janis Kozlowski: That's not very much water for all those people.

Harry Suomi: No, that's not much water, no.

George Herold: Well, we made water.

Harry Suomi: Yeah, you made water, but there wasn't enough water ... [you] had to use it in your batteries and cooking.

George Herold: Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: So, that sub must have gotten pretty ripe after a time.

Harry Suomi: Well, you all smelled the same way, so ...

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: But, I bet you were sure happy to have that first shower.

Harry Suomi: Well, [the] first thing that you got, off the boat, when you got into Pearl, or ... they give you a couple cans of beer. And you were feeling your alcohol by then - because you can't take that. And you haven't had any sun for 60, 70 days.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: So, the alcohol hits you pretty quick. [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: I bet, yeah.

Harry Suomi: Yeah. Now, on these nuclear boats, you can take a shower any time you want ... wash your clothes ...

George Herold: Right! The best thing with the [Unclear word, sounds like "rail or wine"] - sleeping between sheets - between clean sheets. That was the ... that was the best thing.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] Oh, I bet.

Harry Suomi: [Laugh]

Janis Kozlowski: I bet those nuclear subs are pretty plush, compared to what you guys were in.

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah. Definitely. Yeah.

George Herold: Yeah. [Laugh] I'm gonna say, that they're making babies out of these guys. They're great sailors ...

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: ... and they know just what to do – they're all engineering type people. But, they're, they're not sailors like we were back then. I hate to say that, but, I would – that's just my impression.

Harry Suomi: Well, there the sailors now, that, you know, that hear about our exploits in World War II. Well, they all really look up to us.

George Herold: Yeah. I'll tell you a funny story. I went aboard a nuclear boat in the late '90s, about 1997 - that stopped down here at Cape Canaveral. And they treated us to dinner - like that. They [Chuckle] served us pizza and they served us ice cream ... ice cream, [and] strawberry short cake, for dessert. I'm saying, "What the heck are we in here – a hotel? What is it, you guys go to sea and have this stuff, like that?" Like, it was nothing to them.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] Yeah, they had it good compared to you guys.

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] Now, I ...

George Herold: Yeah, we do a little bit of bragging Jan. We get ... [Laugh] we can't help that. I guess that was inbred in a submarine sailor.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, I was just thinking, you pro... you guys didn't get mail very often then either.

Harry Suomi: No, it [the sub] never came by a mail buoy.

Janis Kozlowski: No. [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: [Laugh] There's no mail buoys out there. You got your mail when you got back in port.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, so you didn't have a lot of communication about what was happening?

Harry Suomi: No. And, when we pulled into Perth Australia, that's when I found out I had a brand new son, ...

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, boy.

Harry Suomi: ... in May of 1945.

Janis Kozlowski: Did your wife have any idea where you were?

George Herold: Oh, you were married then?

Harry Suomi: I was married then, yeah.

George Herold: Yeah, I didn't know that.

Harry Suomi: I don't know if she had any idea, because ... if you wrote a letter and tried to tell where you were at, it was all blanked out.

Janis Kozlowski: And didn't they have, like, a fleet post office that they - that [your] family mailed to, so it was ... they didn't know where you were?

Harry Suomi: They didn't know where the mail was going.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. Well, do you guys have any ... remembrances of ... any particularly memorable events during World War II?

Harry Suomi: Well, I think the hardest part is, some of the guys that you went through recruit training with, and then you went into submarines with, and you found out that they went down on some submarine – you take it pretty hard. Yeah.

George Herold: I know, at submarine school, I can, I knew two of them [that] went down. Well, look, one of them, his name was Al Ullman. [post interview]

addition: He was a good friend during the short time we were at sub school in 1941. I suppose I only spent a couple of months with him in mid-1941 prior to my going to the west coast. I suppose it was in the mid 1950s when I found out that he was lost on USS Grunion in 1942.] He went down on the Grunion [USS Grunion (SS-216)]. And they ... I'm sure you know about the Grunion – that was the one boat that they lost up there off Kiska.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, they're in our calendar this year.

George Herold: What's that now?

Janis Kozlowski: They're in our calendar this year.

George Herold: What did you say?

Harry Suomi: They're on the calendar this year.

Janis Kozlowski: The 2010 Aleutian World War II calendar

George Herold: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: OK.

George Herold: Did, did I send you one?

Janis Kozlowski: No, those are our calendars – I sent one to you.

George Herold: Oh, I'm ... Oh, yeah. [Unclear word, no suggestions] ... how bad I am getting mixed up here?

Janis Kozlowski: The January [month] should be the Grunion.

George Herold: That's right, that's right - the Grunion. Right. Then you do know that, yeah, yeah. Well, then you know Mary.

Janis Kozlowski: Yes, [Um-huh.] I do.

George Herold: Have you ever, you've never met her, though, have you?

Janis Kozlowski: No. [Uh-uh].

George Herold: No. I now, I've met both of you girls – I call you both, "My girl friends from afar." Now, you, where are we talking to right [now]? You're not in Dutch Harbor?

Janis Kozlowski: No, I'm in Anchorage.

George Herold: Where?

Janis Kozlowski: In Anchorage.

Harry Suomi: Anchorage. ... Anchorage.

George Herold: Oh, Anchorage. OK. What's your temperature there?

Janis Kozlowski: Ah, it's about 10 [degrees].

George Herold: 10 degrees?

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

George Herold: Oh, boy. Are you a skier?

Janis Kozlowski: Yes.

George Herold: You do?

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum]

George Herold: Oh, good on you. Good. Good. That's, that's ... I can ice skate – I played a lot of hockey, but I never, I never could master skis. I tried when I was a younger man, but I never could do that. Of course, I can't now with the leg ... with a.... I'll bet you're a beauty on Skis, Jan – I'll bet you that.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh no, I'm pretty clumsy. But I get by. [Laugh]

George Herold: [Laugh] Right, yeah. But, well, I guess both of you guys, both of you kids do – your husband too – he's probably a skier too?

Janis Kozlowski: Ah, he, he doesn't ski so much anymore. He, he works pretty hard, so he likes to relax when he's finished.

George Herold: Oh, good on him. Good, good.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah.

Harry Suomi: Any fishermen?

Janis Kozlowski: Yes. Yes, definitely. And we have a, we own airplanes. [Um-hum] So....

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: So, that's how we get around,

Harry Suomi: Yeah.

George Herold: He, he owns airplanes?

Janis Kozlowski: Well, actually, they're mine. I was a pilot before I met him. I got my pilot's license when I when I was in my 20s.

George Herold: Oh, now listen, you, do you know that I also, I was ... before I got hurt, I got a private pilot's license at Portsmouth Municipal Airport in New Hampshire in 1947. And this is before I had the automobile accident. And I only had about 120 hours all together when I had this accident. And I tried, after I got out of the hospital, and out of the navy, I tried again at a, a private airport on Long Island. But, I could never use the heel brakes, or the toe brakes. Now, you know what they are?

Janis Kozlowski: [Um-hum] Yeah.

George Herold: Back to here. 'Cause, I couldn't move my left foot up and down – my ankle was paralyzed. So, I was, that was out – I couldn't do brakes at all. So, I had to give it up.

Janis Kozlowski: That's too bad.

George Herold: But, I did, I flew a ... when they build Luscombe aircraft, back in 1946, 47- 48.

Janis Kozlowski: [Ah-huh]

George Herold: I flew a Luscombe 8. And a Stin... the, the biggest aircraft I ever flew, was a Stinson – Stinson Voyager. I think they have a 145 horsepower [engine] – I'm not sure now. Forget - so long ago.

Janis Kozlowski: [Uh-huh] Yeah.

George Herold: But, that was a ... that was my short stint of being a, being a private pilot.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah. It's fun flying.

George Herold: Yeah. Right. But, you do fly now?

Janis Kozlowski: I do, yeah. My husband doesn't – I do all the flying.

George Herold: Oh, good on you. Good. You got to tell me more about that on your e-mails now. I'd love to hear about that - all about what I missed.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Well, you guys did something I would never; I don't think I could do. Um, being in a sub, just, when we were just on vacation this year; we went on two different subs that were at museums. And I just thought, "I don't know how you guys do it."

George Herold: Well, I'll tell you, if you ever get down here to the Canaveral area – Cape Canaveral, I'm sure me and Harry can get you on one of the nuclear boats for one, for a day trip out there - after all you've done for our part of the, our part of the deal here.

Harry Suomi: Ah, very few boats come in here now, George.

George Herold: Well they, yeah, they use to. They don't anymore?

Harry Suomi: Very few....

George Herold: They don't anymore?

Harry Suomi: No, they don't come in anymore.

George Herold: Oh, sugar. Well ... another thing we lost.

Harry Suomi: They're up in Georgia.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.

George Herold: Yeah, that's right. Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, at the ... Saint Mary's Sub base? OK.

Harry Suomi: Yeah.

George Herold: Right. Right. Right.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: That's a big setup up there.

Janis Kozlowski: Yeah, I never got to see that. I wanted to get down there this year on our trip and we didn't get down there.

George Herold: You're right. I'm still taking you guys to dinner when you get here again. So, just be careful.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, we might get down there again. My husband occasionally works for Pratt and Whitney.

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: And he's, they're building that joint-strike fighter. And he's helping them with their test cell, and testing some of their components. So we were there last year, and they might have him come again.

George Herold: Yeah, now listen, if I ever win the Lotto, the first thing I'm gonna do is fly to Anchorage and take you guys to dinner.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: He'll probably take you to Wendy's, though - you better watch it.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: Aw, get out of here!

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: Now listen, don't get any ideas of hanging up on us yet, but, just keep asking questions. I know there's stuff you're gonna think, "I should have done this, I should have asked them this." But, if you got something there - anything, anything [Unclear word, no suggestions] about clothes, how we did this, that, and the other thing....

Janis Kozlowski: Well, I have, I have hundreds of questions for you guys, I just ... I don't want to keep you too long. But, I would like to ask you ...

George Herold: No, listen, what do we got to do here?

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: We both lost a wife, were retired - what do we got to do better than talk to a young lady ...

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: ... the best thing in the world.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Well, I just would like to ask if there's, If you have other memories from the war that kind of stuck with you?

Harry Suomi: Well, sometime ...

George Herold: Ah, yeah, we do yeah. [I'll] think a minute here - like that.

Harry Suomi: [To George] Sometimes you're pretty jumpy - you still think about those depth charges?

George Herold: No. Ah, the depth charges – Yeah. They were frightening. You, you didn't want the guy next to you to know that you were, you were, you were tight, you were holding up ... you were shaking inside. The worst thing in the world was to let the other guy know that you were a little bit leery about not getting out of this alive. You know, you seen these, submarine movies of the German sailors on the U-boats getting depth charged. Well, it's, it's just about the same thing like that – the lights would blink and, whatever. But, the main thing was to not, don't let the guy know that's standing next to you, that you might be a little bit afraid. Keep showing that bravado. A bit like, "Hey, don't worry about it, nothing will happen, you're gonna get home to see your mother again - don't worry about it." You understand what I'm, talking about?

Harry Suomi: Keep a stiff upper lip.

George Herold: Yeah, right. [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: It must have been awfully frightening, though.

Harry Suomi: Oh, yeah.

George Herold: Yes it was - it was. It, you never knew when the next one was coming, or from, or how close it was gonna get. And, they ...

Harry Suomi: [As] long as they were above you, and not below you when they exploded, you're fine.

George Herold: You're right. If one got below you, you might have been in trouble. But, along side of you - they might have scared the hell out of you, like that, and shook you. But, the lights blink.... But, it's just like in the movies - the same thing, the same thing. But, just don't let the other guy know you're afraid. Keep that a secret.

Harry Suomi: Have you read any of the submarine books?

Janis Kozlowski: No, I've seen some of the movies, but, what would be a good, what would be a good one to read?

Harry Suomi: Ah, "The USS Tang – Clear the Bridge."

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

Harry Suomi: Yeah. And another one is, "Take Her Deep."

Janis Kozlowski: "Take Her Deep."

Harry Suomi: "Take Her Deep," yeah. "Tang," will give you an idea of what we were doing out there.

Janis Kozlowski: "Tang," is T-A-N-G?

Harry Suomi: T-A-N-G, right.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

Harry Suomi: And they're usually in paperback at the library.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

Harry Suomi: Yeah.

George Herold: Now another thing, I asked you before - send me a mailing address. I'm gonna send you some submarine magazines that we; our

organization puts out a print every couple of months, and I got a bunch of these from down through the years. And I'm gonna send them to you.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh. OK.

George Herold: And I'm gonna force you to look at them. [Chuckle]

Janis Kozlowski: OK. [Laugh] Well, I'd probably enjoy looking at them.

George Herold: I got a lot of them all over the house here.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: And just send me a mailing address, and I'll have them to you. You can see us what our organization did.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: [There's] a lot of different stories in there. And in fact, my, that S27 story you ... well you, you've read that - everybody in the world has read that. I pumped that out so many times, like that – they're [Chuckle] they're getting tired of hearing about it.

Janis Kozlowski: That's a ...

George Herold: There's all different types of sub stories a lot worse than ones I got.

Janis Kozlowski: You did a great job of writing that up.

George Herold: What's that now?

Janis Kozlowski: You did a great job of writing that up.

George Herold: Oh, well, I [Chuckle] I'm not an author. I just wish, I just wish my parents could have seen that. But, they weren't around to see it. So, that's the end of that, likely. But, make sure I get a mailing address, Jan ...

Janis Kozlowski: OK, I'll e-mail.

George Herold: so I can send you this stuff.

Janis Kozlowski: I'll e-mail you.

George Herold: OK, good. Good, good girl, good girl ... good girl.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: And when you ... again, when you guys are down here, well, if you ever do get down here again like that, don't say it's too far to Melbourne, Florida. Come down here, and me and Harry will take you out for some steaks.

Janis Kozlowski: OK, that sounds good. [Chuckle]

George Herold: And don't forget now.

Harry Suomi: We can't give you any moose steaks, though.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh] Well, we get, we get them at home. So, that's OK.

Harry Suomi: Best meat I ever had was that moose steak.

Janis Kozlowski: Is that right? Where'd you get that at?

Harry Suomi: Ah, it's ... my step mother's son in-law went up to Canada, and he come back with it.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh.

Harry Suomi: It was just beautiful.

Janis Kozlowski: We have a freezer full of it - I have some for lunch, in fact.

Harry Suomi: Oh, boy.

Janis Kozlowski: We're pretty lucky that way.

Harry Suomi: Yeah. [Um-hum]

Janis Kozlowski: But, well, I'll let you guys go. I've had you on the phone like an hour and 45 minutes. You're probably ...

George Herold: Now listen; I hate to let you go now. You, you're, you know [Chuckle] I'm a New Yorker, and I [Laugh].... Forget it, forget it, Jan.

Janis Kozlowski: We can talk again.

Harry Suomi: And you're gonna say, "Thank God that old guy hung up."

Janis Kozlowski: No. [Laugh] We can talk again.

Harry Suomi: OK.

George Herold: Yeah, but just make, give me your mailing address and I'm gonna send you some magazines ... of our organization.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: The Sub-Vets of World War II.

George Herold: OK?

Janis Kozlowski: Well, thank you so much, both, for spending time with me today. It was just a pure pleasure to talk with you.

George Herold: Yeah, if you; now listen, are you sure there's nothing more now. Because, I don't want you to say, "Jeez, I should have asked them that, what this.... Anything - something like that.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, can I call you back? Or send you a note if I have other questions?

Harry Suomi: Sure.

George Herold: You call and listen, Jan. You call me anytime in the world.

Janis Kozlowski: OK.

George Herold: Just, you give me the e-mail and say what time you're gonna call, and I'll be, I'll be sitting by the phone here.

Janis Kozlowski: You know, 'cause as soon as I go back through this, I often see the missed opportunities to ask questions. So, I might take you up on that and give you a call back.

George Herold: Right on. OK.

Janis Kozlowski: Well, you two have a great day today, and thank you again for taking the time to spend with me.

George Herold: Oh, OK. Listen, I'm gonna make Harry buy me dinner.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

Harry Suomi: [Unclear words, because of overtaking by all thee] fish hooks on the end of his fingers.

Janis Kozlowski: [Laugh]

George Herold: OK, Jan.

Janis Kozlowski: Alright. Buy now.

George Herold: OK. We love you girl.

Harry Suomi: Nice talking to you.

Janis Kozlowski: You too. Bye-bye.

George Herold and Harry: Bye-bye.