



Photo 1: Walter "Andy" Andersen, 1944. Hut 32, Cape Wrangell, Attu Island, Alaska

Walter Andersen: I grew up in Chicago, Illinois.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you spend your whole life there until you went into the service?

Walter Andersen: Then I came back, I went to school a little bit and then I got a job there and I got married and then I ... the steel company I worked for transferred me to Rockford, Illinois, they opened a little plant there. Then I was transferred to Baltimore and ran the plant there and then I went to Cleveland and then San Francisco and Sacramento.

Janis Kozlowski: All for the same company?

Walter Andersen: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Which one was it?

Walter Andersen: A.M Castle and Company.

Janis Kozlowski: Is that a steel company that's still in business?

Walter Andersen: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. And where were you when you went into the Service?

Walter Andersen: I was in Chicago.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you enlist or were you drafted?

Walter Andersen: No, I was drafted. First, what I did ... after I got out of high school.... By the way, I went to a high school, I think it was the biggest one in the country at the time. We had 9000 boys in this school.

Janis Kozlowski: Wow, that is big. What school was that?

Walter Andersen: It was Lane Tech.

And then I went down to Southern Illinois Normal University. I spent the summer there and then some recruiters come into the school and they were looking for some technical students. So I went down to Evansville, Indiana and I worked for the Missouri Valley Bridge and Iron Company there. We were building the LSTs on the Ohio River.

Janis Kozlowski: An LST is a Landing Craft?

Walter Andersen: Yes. It was a big one, for tanks.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. And was ... you were doing that for the war effort?

Walter Andersen: Yes, and then I took flying lessons there when I was in Evansville. I went back to Chicago, I tried to get into the Navy Air Corp, it was a V-5 program and they said it was filled up at that time and I should just wait until I was drafted, so I did that. I went back to school for another semester, then I was drafted.¹

Janis Kozlowski: But once you're drafted do you have choices?

Walter Andersen: Not really! [both laughing] I had a choice to go into the Navy.

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, as opposed to the Army?

Walter Andersen: Yes.

Janis Kozlowski: Ok. And what ... did you get to choose what profession you had in the Navy?

Walter Andersen: No. They take a lot of tests and then they just say, I was going to go to the aerographer's school in Lakehurst, New Jersey. And I went there in '43, early '43, and I forget

¹ The Navy V-5, Naval Aviation Preparatory Program, was established in January 1942. This program offered enlistment to college sophomores, juniors, and seniors for flight training in the Naval Reserve leading to an Ensign's commission. Candidates were able to complete their current college year at the time of enlistment before being called to active duty.

what class number I was in. But then after I went on ... I graduated from there I went down to ... I got transferred back to Kodiak.