

Janis Kozlowski: Do you have any ... any of your wartime experiences that stuck with you that seem very important, that kind of shaped your life?

Vic Krygowski: All of them.

Janis Kozlowski: All of them [laughing]. The whole experience for you....

Vic Krygowski: Yeah. Well, you know, you undergo some of these, some of these periods in your life where your life is at stake and at periods of time when you're sure you are gonna die. You begin to wonder, what's it like to die. So, it's ... that has a sobering effect on you, I guess, all through your life, somehow.

Janis Kozlowski: Yes, particularly when it happens at such a young age.

Vic Krygowski: Oh yeah, yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: Do you keep in touch with some of the guys that you served with, do you ever keep in touch with them?

Vic Krygowski: Yes, I kept in touch with a few of them. I never.... I kept in touch with the radar officer aboard the Beaver right up until lately when he went into an assisted living facility. He's not well.

But in the meantime another friend showed up, a guy by the name of George Reynolds, who was a motor machinist mate on the Beaver. He was ... he had gotten out of the Navy and had experience in many fields and lastly he became an ordained minister. But, he was trying to get a roster of old surviving Beaver-ites so that, maybe, we could have a reunion.

He caught up with me through the memorial log of the US Navy in Washington. Are you familiar with that?

Janis Kozlowski: No.

Vic Krygowski: Yeah, they have the US Navy Memorial in Washington DC and part of their claim to fame is that they keep what they call a "Navy log." And if you go into that log, and this is all available by email, internet, you can submit a name and they'll tell you about, you know, who this guy was what his rank was, what duty stations he had, what medals he won. You know, they give you like a brief biography of the guy.

He found me on that and he hasn't had too much luck making contact with too many others because most of us are gone.

And so we ... I got to know him in 2006 and we met, we met for ... just about at Thanksgiving Day. I have a son that's a dentist in Falls Church, Virginia. We go down there for Thanksgiving holidays every year by tradition. On the way down since this guy is in Elkton, Maryland and he's right off I-95 so we made provision at that time to meet at a McDonalds right off the highway. And we had a very, very nice mini-reunion. And then last year we did the same thing. And this year, God willing, we'll do it again. (see photo in gallery)

Janis Kozlowski: So now you have another new tradition.

Vic Krygowski: Yeah. [both laughing] In fact, he had a battle station that was not more than maybe 20 feet away from my battle station on the Beaver. He was in charge of the searchlight that was on the mast, just in front of the flying bridge that I was on looking over my lookouts.

Janis Kozlowski: So you worked pretty close together?

Vic Krygowski: In fact, we have ... he sent me some pictures where he identified, you know, where his perch was and where I was. Yeah, I'll send you some of those pictures.