

Janis Kozlowski: What unit did you end up in and where did they end up sending you? How did you get into the wartime effort?

Vic Krygowski: Ok. The very first duty assignment that I got upon graduation was to the officer indoctrination school in Notre Dame. It was at Notre Dame University. And that went on for, I guess, a couple of months. At that point they had ordained me to be an ordnance officer. I had no choice in that. I had some designation as an Ordnance Officer. In fact, my designation after Ensign was OV -- initially it was P – Officer Volunteer Probationary, and later, Officer Volunteer Specialist.

And when I got through with Notre Dame or as I was completing Notre Dame they gave me a choice. They said we can send you to one of three places. We can send you to the Naval Gun Factory in Washington DC where you will become familiar with the big 16 inch guns of the battleships and the ordnance of that size. And I'm thinking about my getting out of the Navy some time in the future and pursuing a civilian life. Well, 16 inch guns didn't seem to be in the picture so I passed that up.

The other choice they gave me was the Naval Mine Warfare Depot in Huntington, West Virginia. And here again, I felt, you know, is there any civilian application to mines and I couldn't think of any [chuckling]. Then the last choice that I had was to go to the Naval Torpedo School in Newport, Rhode Island. Now, that appealed to me because the torpedo was a unit of and by itself. It had a propulsion system, it had a depth finding system, it had a course finding system with gyroscopes, it had an exploder system, and so it had ... and being a mechanical engineer I was a gadgeteer – I liked all that kind of stuff. So I chose torpedoes. And so they sent me to Newport.

And while I was at Newport in the Officer Torpedo School – and incidentally they ... it was a hands on course there where you could almost ... they trained you to know so much about the couple types of torpedoes that they had that you could almost assemble and disassemble one in the dark. But, while I was there, the submarines from New London, Connecticut and from Portsmouth, New Hampshire came down to pick up exercise torpedoes and to have their torpedo tubes aligned. And the skippers of these submarines, by and large, invited the officers from the torpedo school to come down and pay us a visit. So I took them up on that. And almost every day after school I would hike down to the docks and I'd climb aboard one of these submarines and just look around. And of course, it was a gadgeteers dream because there are more valves and dials and gauges and things on a submarine than you can shake a stick at so that appealed to me. And I kind of took a liking to submarines at that point. Up until that point submarines were not on my agenda at all.

But ... so when I got back to the Torpedo School or ... I went to see the Officer in Charge and I told him that I want to put in a request for submarine duty. And he said, "You know, guys like you we brought in here to be torpedo specialists and we envision you in a job, perhaps, overseeing civilian inspectors at torpedo manufacturing facilities." And either at Newport or at, I guess there was one from General Motors in Lansing, Michigan and a few others.

And ... so the torpedo ... the Officer-In-Charge of the torpedo school said there wasn't a China mans chance in the world of my getting submarine duty. I said, "Well, I don't want submarine duty, I want to go to submarine school first." And he says, "Well, it's one and the same thing."