

Vic Krygowski: And then the following day I reported back to the Beaver at the pier that she was at. And a day later we left for Scotland. Now I didn't know that we were going to Scotland. Neither did anybody else. But the night that I reported back on board we then left New London and we went to Long Island Sound to form a convoy of 40 ships, a total of 40 ships that we were going to a destination across the Atlantic. And that was the time when the German U-boats were having their heyday if you remember or if you recall from your elementary school history lessons.

So we left and that was the scariest journey that I had ever gone on because a wolf pack of German U-boats found us, found the convoy, and began to take pot shots at us.

Now, the USS Beaver carried, among other things, 500 warheads – torpedo warheads – each of which weighed over 500 pounds of Torpex, or TNT, so we were a veritable floating bomb. And so, being considered an ammunition ship they put us smack in the middle of the convoy. Then close by us they put other valuable ships like aviation gas tankers and ships that were carrying precious cargo for the war effort and then finally on the outskirts of the convoy were the banana boats and others that were kind of expendable.

Janis Kozlowski: How many ships were in the convoy?

Vic Krygowski: 40. On the way across we lost 10 of them.

Janis Kozlowski: What ... how'd you lose them?

Vic Krygowski: Through German U-boats, yeah. I remember very vividly one night ... well, first of all, you've got to remember that the Beaver was originally a pleasure craft. It was an excursion boat that was built for civilian purposes and acted as an excursion boat. I guess it was built in 1905. It had a steam driven engine and the Navy, I think, took it over in World War I, 1918 or thereabouts, and converted it to a submarine tender. So they took out all of the pleasure amenities and replaced them with machine shops and that kind of thing. And so she was a submarine tender, which was a mother ship for a squadron of submarines.

Janis Kozlowski: Did you have submarines in your convoy that went over or were you going to meet the subs that you were tending?

Vic Krygowski: We were going to meet them over there, yeah. We went separately in this all surface ship convoy and the submarines caught up with us later.