

Oral History Interview



Seaman 1st Class (Coxswain) David Hendrickson
USS Albuquerque
U.S. Navy
World War II

November 4, 2016

Interview with David H. Hendrickson by Joshua Bell

Summary sheet and transcript

Interviewee

David H. Hendrickson

Interviewer

Joshua Bell

Date

November 4, 2016

Biographical Note:

David Hendrickson was born in Berkeley, CA on August 7, 1925. He lived with his mother, father and 6 siblings on a farm in Fresno County. After high school, one summer at the Blister Rust Camp in Yosemite, and some studies at Reedley Community College, he joined the U.S. Coast Guard. After being assigned to the *Albuquerque*, he spent fifteen months on the Bering Sea. After World War II, he taught U.S. History and was active in the Patrol Frigate Reunion Association.

Scope and content note:

This interview includes some notes on farm life in Fresno, CA, the Great Depression. Hendrickson recalls hearing Roosevelt's "Day in Infamy" speech, the removal of Japanese-Americans to Concentration Camps, his summer at Yosemite and the saga of being refused by the Navy before joining the Coast Guard. Hendrickson discusses duties aboard the *Albuquerque* including, sea watches, laundry, training Russian allies aboard the frigates, wheelhouse shifts, escort patrols, and downtime on and off ship.

Indexed Names:

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Interview with Seaman 1st Class David Hendrickson

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

**November 4, 2016
Fresno, CA**

Interviewed by Joshua Bell, Park Ranger,
Aleutian World War II National Historic Area

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. This interview was recorded with the interviewee's permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in wav format and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been edited by the interviewee.

November 4, 2016

Joshua Bell: Today is November 4th 2016. My name is Joshua Bell, park ranger with Aleutian World War II National Historic Area. How are you today, sir?

David Hendrickson: Very good, indeed!

Joshua Bell: Excellent! May I have you say your name for the record?

David Hendrickson: Yes, David H. Hendrickson.

Joshua Bell: Alright, Mr. Hendrickson. And is it ok that we record this conversation today?

David Hendrickson: Oh yes, perfectly ok!

Joshua Bell: Excellent, thank you so much. When and where were you born?

David Hendrickson: I was born in Berkeley, California on August the 17th, 1925.

Joshua Bell: What were your parents' names?

David Hendrickson: Henry Hemming Hendrickson and Selma Maria Hendrickson

Joshua Bell: And what did they do?

David Hendrickson: Well my father was a long-time postal employee, a carrier, before that he spent 12 years in the U.S. Cavalry, back in before World War I and up to World War I.

Joshua Bell: Oh, whoah!

David Hendrickson: And then he had a hardwood floor store business for a while in Berkeley and when the Depression came he lost that and then he went to work for the Post Office and then he worked for the Post Office until he retired in 1945.

Joshua Bell: And what did your mother do?

David Hendrickson: She was a house mother.

Joshua Bell: Did you have any siblings? or do you have any siblings?

David Hendrickson: I had six. Three of us are still alive. I was the next to the oldest.

Joshua Bell: Did any of them serve in the military?

David Hendrickson: Oh yeah, my brother just younger than me, younger than me, served for a brief time in the Navy. And then he was discharged because of eczema, sorta late in World War II. And then he served in the Merchant Marines. My youngest brother was a pilot in the Army Air Force and he flew F-82s in Korea and then he served for 30 years as an airline pilot.

Joshua Bell: And what were their names?

David Hendrickson: My brother closest to me was John Robert Hendrickson and the younger brother, the pilot, he was Peter Henry Hendrickson,

Joshua Bell: Ok. What was it like growing up in the 20s and 30s?

David Hendrickson: (coughing) Well, we lived in Berkeley until I was 10 years old and then we moved down to my grandfather's farm, which was a small farm down in Fresno County, near Parlier, CA. And I was raised there, went to a country school and then went to the High School. I graduated 1942, and all of us, the whole family, my two brothers and my four sisters, we all lived on the farm (coughing).

Joshua Bell: Would you like to grab a drink of water?

David Hendrickson: It might be a good idea. Here, I have a drink right here next to me.

Joshua Bell: I don't want you to feel like you can't stop if there's something you need to do.

David Hendrickson: Oh, it's fine. Let's go ahead.

Joshua Bell: Umm, so how did the Depression affect your family? It sounds like the business kind of dried up there at some point?

David Hendrickson: Well my father was with the Post Office all during the Depression as a Mail Carrier and we farmed this small farm. It was only a 20-acre farm. but we grew peaches and Thompson raisins for drying and muscat grapes for wine. But I mean life was fine. We as kids never realized there was a Depression. We lived well enough, we ate well enough, and went to school. We survived.

Joshua Bell: You mentioned school. You said you graduated in 1942.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, 1942 from Reedley High School, in Reedley California. That was five miles from our farm. We rode a school bus in each morning. It came right down the road in front of our farm

Joshua Bell: When you were in school did they talk about...? Oh, let me back up. When you were in school prior to the attack at Pearl Harbor, were you talking about or aware of what was going on in Europe and in China?

David Hendrickson: No, not very much. I'm sorry to say I don't remember very much and I don't remember that we talked much about it in school. Maybe briefly in history classes, but as a junior, I was in U.S. History.

Joshua Bell: So where were you when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

David Hendrickson: It was a Sunday afternoon and I was riding with a friend of mine who lived on a farm nearby, in his car, which was a 1935 Plymouth Coupe. And he had a radio in there and we heard it on the radio.

Joshua Bell: What do you remember thinking?

David Hendrickson: Well, just I was really surprised. And of course, the very next morning, Monday morning in school, that was all the talk. And when President Roosevelt

came on with his speech about a "day in infamy" we were all assembled in the school auditorium to hear that.

Joshua Bell: That must have been a powerful moment.

David Hendrickson: Oh, yes, we were all very moved by it and we realized right then that we were in a full war. And then of course President Roosevelt described the attack on Pearl Harbor and that we were now at war with the Empire of Japan.

Joshua Bell: Did you have, how did you, let me see if I can phrase this correctly. Um, did any of your friends drop out of high school to sign up?

David Hendrickson: Not that I remember. Now we lived in a farming area. We had a lot of Japanese farmers there and we had good Japanese friends. And that never interfered with us at all. But I do remember when the order came that all the Japanese were ordered to these camps, over in the desert. But we just accepted it, and as far as I know, the young Japanese kids that we knew as friends they just went and that's the last we saw of them. But there was never any hatred of the Japanese in our neighborhood and we swam in the river together and when they went to the Concentration Camps, we just accepted it.

Joshua Bell: Interesting. Very interesting. Um, did your parents ever talk about that at all?

David Hendrickson: Well, not very much. I frankly don't remember us talking at any length about the war. We took the local newspaper; my father read it every night. And he being an ex-army man, he knew something about war, He served two or three years in the Philippines early in his military career, you know when there was revolution in the Philippines. That was in 1911 and 1912. But no, I don't remember that we spent a lot of time talking about the war.

Joshua Bell: Do you think his service affected his, how do you think his service affected you joining the service, if at all?

David Hendrickson: Well, I guess it did. I really can't say. We never really talked much about it. When I graduated from high school in '42, in the fall semester I went to Reedley Community College, there was a Reedley Junior College it was called then, was the oldest community college in California. And I went there for one semester, from fall 1942, until the end of the semester and then I decided that I was going to join up. And my father he never objected. He never objected to me quitting school or waiting for the draft. I wanted to enlist, that was ok. So I was only 17 years and 9 months when I entered the Coast Guard, in May 1943.

Joshua Bell: How did your mother feel about this?

David Hendrickson: Well, she accepted it. I always remember the day I left home to go to San Francisco to be sworn in. She cooked my breakfast, and my dad's breakfast with it but my younger brothers and sisters, they were still in bed. And I don't remember seeing them as my dad and I left in his car for Fresno, where his Post Office job was. We just accepted it and I called in the Coast Guard office in Fresno, and they gave me a bus ticket to go to San Francisco to be sworn in. And next day I was in Coast Guard.

Joshua Bell: How did you pick the Coast Guard?

David Hendrickson: Well I first enlisted in the Navy, or attempted to, and I went in the basement of the Holland building in Fresno, they had all of the enlistment going on, and I was called in there for a pre-enlistment physical and there here were guys joining the Marines and the Army and the Navy, we were lined up, tearing our clothes and nothing but our shorts on. And when I came to the blood pressure area, the doctor declared I had high blood pressure He said, "We can't take you". He said you go home and see your doctor and come back in a month. Well I met my father for lunch, he had come, he was a bicycle carrier for Fresno, and he came into the office. And I met him at lunch, and I said, "They won't let me in the Navy because I have high blood pressure. But I know two guys from high school, who joined the Coast Guard, and they're aboard ship, so I'm going down to Coast Guard office, which was on Mason, uh, Fulton Street, and I'm going to try to enlist in the Coast Guard." And my dad said ok. So that afternoon, before we got home, I went down to the Coast Guard office and the officer there, he was really quite glad to see me. He says, "Oh, you're a college boy, that's good. We need you guys that have been in college, I'll send you right upstairs to our doctor and the physical, for a physical, and I went up and my physical was perfect and my blood pressure was low and I came back down and officer said, "Ok, you'll hear from us in a few days" and was sent to San Francisco to be sworn in. So, I was going to be in the Navy, but I ended up in the Coast Guard.

Joshua Bell: How did you feel in that moment, when you were accepted into the Coast Guard?

David Hendrickson: Oh, I was very happy. It was fine with me. Yes. I suppose I was quite happy.

Joshua Bell: Before leaving where was basic training held?

David Hendrickson: It was in Alameda, on Government Island, on Oakland Estuary. It's now called Coast Guard Island, its headquarters for the Coast Guard in the 12th Naval District. But it's an island in the Oakland Estuary, about two miles up the estuary from San Francisco Bay.

Joshua Bell: Had you been that far away from home before?

David Hendrickson: Not really. I worked one summer in the mountains on what was called Blister Rust Control, chopping out plants that were supposedly carrying a dangerous beetle that was attacking the pine trees. But no, I was pretty much at home, my entire life. But it didn't bother me to leave, because we had traveled as a family. We had gone twice to the World's Fair in San Francisco and Treasure Island, both 1939, and 1940. And we used to go camping up in the Sierras, up in General Grant's park up in Yosemite. My dad would take us up there for overnight camping. So I was accustomed to being away from home.

Joshua Bell: Well since this is the National Park Service interviewing, I have to ask you ask about your experience up there in Yosemite! What were those summers like?

David Hendrickson: Oh, it was only one summer. It was the summer of 1942, just before I went into the Junior College. It was, we were in camp just below the Yosemite entrance, near the town of Fish Camp, and it was a rather large camp and it was called the Blister Rust Camp. And we were attacking these insects or bugs that carried blister rust to the pine trees. We were walking through the forest all day chopping off gooseberry plants. And the gooseberry plant was supposedly the existence, or the place where the bugs lived before they transferred to the trees. They were the host. Anyway, it was very fine. It was a very large camp. There were about 50 or 60 of us in camp and we'd go out every day by truck and walk through the forest all day long in little teams looking for gooseberry plant.

Joshua Bell: And how did you get...Oh, I'm sorry what was that?

David Hendrickson: There was, we walked through the forest in little teams, chopping up the gooseberry plant, which was the host for the bug that was attacking the pine trees with Blister Rust. And I think a lot of that had been discounted in the years since then. But anyway...we were within about five miles of the south entrance on the highway to the southern entrance to Yosemite.

Joshua Bell: How did you get tied up with that? With doing that for the summer?

David Hendrickson: Well I heard in it high school. There were a couple of friends of mine, as I recall, who had worked in it a year before, one who was a little older above me. As I recall, I saw him just before school was out, and he said, "I'm going back into blister rust, why don't you come up" And it was really as simple as that. He gave me an office to call in Fresno, and then the man says, you just report to this camp and there will be an official there to accept you and so my mother drove me up one day. At that time, we had a 1937 Ford sedan and she drove me from the farm up to the camp at Fish Camp and the director there greeted me, and said, " oh yes, yes, we heard you were coming up", and I was in the blister rust, they called it blister rust control. And so, I worked at that all summer.

Joshua Bell: That's excellent! I guess to get back to your basic training, what were your impressions of arriving and going through the process.

David Hendrickson: I accepted it very easily. I remember the day I got sworn in over in San Francisco, there were about six or seven of us who were sworn in at the same time, and he said "Now we're sending you over to Government Island, you go down to Mission Street and get the A train, which goes over the Bay Bridge. But he happened to say, "Does anybody know where the Mission Street office is?" and I said, I do, cause I was just in there this morning as I came in on the F train from Berkeley. So, he said, "OK, you're in charge of the group!" and so I was in charge of 5 or 6 and we walked down to the Mission Street Station, got on the A train, rode across the Bridge through Oakland, out to east Oakland, to the get off, Departure point, it was on 19th Avenue, off the train. And so, I remember saying, "Alright, guys, we gotta get off the train!" well we got off the train and there was a big ol' red faced Coastie in full blues, took over, and that was the end of my official job in getting the enlisted over to Government Island and we marched from 19th street, over quarter to half mile down 19th to the causeway, which led over to Government Island. This Guy was shouting at us all the time, "You gotta learn to march! You're gonna shape up!" You know, all those kind of terms.

And then we marched over into Government Island and before long we were in front of barrack 7 and the petty officer came out and said, "You're in the Coast Guard now. You go up to the shop at the second deck and claim a bunk and in a few minutes or so I'll pipe you down to the ground and we'll march over to the chow hall for lunch." And that was my first day in the Coast Guard and then in the afternoon. They took us over to the clothing department where we discarded our civilian clothes and got a whole sea-bag full of Coast Guard clothes. Dungarees and dress blues, and black shoes and all of that. So, I was there, it was ten weeks in basic training and it was fine. We did all kinds of things: we were out in boats and studying navigation and so forth. And then at the end of basic training we could apply for any training school. And I applied for signalman and quartermaster school. Those are the guys who are up on the bridge in charge of the flags. But I didn't get that, I was sent to seamanship school and that's where you train to become a coxswain and a boatswain mate. And that was fine too. I was there and seven, eight weeks, and that was on Government Island also. And then at graduation that was now at end of October 1943 and then I was [assigned to] the *Albuquerque*, a PF-7, which was just being launched up in the Kaiser Yard in Richmond. And while we were waiting for the ship to come down, or go aboard, I forget exactly, the top members of the Seamanship School were sent to a Navy Deck Petty Officer's school over on Treasure Island, and I was one of those. And that was, that lasted from the end of October until Christmas Eve. Then we left Government Island every morning in a water taxi, down the estuary, down the bay to Treasure Island and we'd go to and we were in school all day and back to Government Island in the late afternoon. And so that lasted until Christmas Eve and then on Government Island, I received my orders to go aboard the *Albuquerque*, which was very in San Francisco and had just been commissioned. So, it was a group of about twenty of us, we went on a bus across the bay bridge and to up hear in San

Francisco and went aboard the USS *Albuquerque* PF-7. And I served for 20 months aboard the *Albuquerque*; fifteen months in the Bering Sea.

Joshua Bell: So you get these orders; that's a nice Christmas present.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, it was a neat Christmas present, exactly.

Joshua Bell: Did you get to go...

David Hendrickson: I had a very good Christmas Eve dinner on Government Island. Before we left. And I will always remember it was a full dinner. And everybody really liked, it was turkey and the whole works.

Joshua Bell: Did you get to go see your family before you...?

David Hendrickson: No, I saw them last when I finished, uh, basic training, and that was, see I went in May, uh, the end of August... I was able to go home and that was the last time I saw the family until September 1945.

Joshua Bell: That's a long time.

David Hendrickson: It was, because from seamanship school, the minute I went aboard the *Albuquerque*, the next day we headed for San Diego for shakedown and we finished shakedown and were back in San Francisco about the first of February, in Mare Island and getting some work done and before we knew it, we were under way again, on our way to Seattle. We though were gonna go to the South Pacific, but the minute the captain said we were going to Seattle, everybody knew we were going to be on North Pacific duty, not South Pacific. And from Seattle, it was the first of, let me just get this straight, we went to Seattle, I gotta remember this.

It was in late May and early June we departed from Seattle for Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians. It took seven days to get to Dutch Harbor and I remember we arrived in Dutch Harbor on April 12, 1944. And we were there in the Aleutians and Bering Sea until June the first, 1945 and the *Albuquerque* and twenty-seven other frigates were picked for turning over to the Russians under lend lease. So, the 7th of June we came back to Seattle for a month of refit and it was July the 4th, we departed Seattle again and for the Aleutians for Cold Bay. Do you know where Cold Bay is? Are you there?

Joshua Bell: Yep, I'm here.

David Hendrickson: So we left Seattle and journeyed up to Cold Bay which as you know, on the Alaskan peninsula almost to the Aleutians. And we were there for a month training the Russian crew and then the Russians took over and we went aboard an old transport, no we flew from Cold Bay to Kodiak, and then we boarded the old transport,

Barinov, and back to Seattle. And that would be, now the war had already ended by then. That was August, in fact we pulled into Prince Rupert Canada on the *Barinov*, on August 15, and they were celebrating V-J Day then. And we dropped off some troops...(air rushing)...This is the Air Guard coming over right now.

Joshua Bell: Oh, I thought that sounded like some F-16s. We'll wait for them to pass...(engines continue)

David Hendrickson: They'll be gone in a minute. I've gone back in the house, flying over, almost every day; it's the 144th Air Guard that's stationed at Fresno airport. And they go on flights almost every day when we're outside eating lunch. Can you hear me now?

Joshua Bell: Perfectly.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, I'm back in side, so it's quiet in here, Anyway, I didn't intend to give you my entire Coast Guard career, but that seems what I was talking about.

Joshua Bell: That's quite alright. I do have some more questions for you though.

David Hendrickson: Ok, yeah, shoot.

Joshua Bell: You mentioned that you were, when you headed to Seattle you kinda knew where you were headed after that. You knew you were going to the North Pacific...

David Hendrickson: That's right. When we were in San Francisco, there was all kinds of talk of joining twenty-two other frigates down in the South Pacific, ultimately to go to Leyte but he, the minute we got underway to Seattle, and the Captain came on and said we were going to Seattle, everybody knew right away, we were going to be on North Pacific duty. And from there we went to the Bering Sea.

Joshua Bell: Did you know what had happened at Dutch Harbor? And that the Aleutian Islands had been occupied by the Japanese?

David Hendrickson: Well, Dutch Harbor had never been occupied...

Joshua Bell: It had been attacked, but never occupied.

David Hendrickson: It had been bombed a couple times before we got there. But then, the Japanese were already gone from Attu and Kiska by June of 1944.

Joshua Bell: But that was something you were aware of having happened?

David Hendrickson: Oh, yes, we knew that, yeah.

Joshua Bell: How did you feel about having to go to the North Pacific?

David Hendrickson: I guess I thought it was alright. It didn't take as long to get used to that lousy weather and storms and heavy seas on Bering Sea, I can tell you that. But we all lived through it somehow.

Joshua Bell: What were your first impressions of the islands?

David Hendrickson: Well of course, you know, they are all pretty barren. No trees, just rocks and muskeg. They looked pretty desolate I can always remember the first time we visited Attu and pulling into Massacre Bay. There was still a lot of snow on the mountains around and I thought, "Geez, what a kind of a place is this anyway. Just rocks and snow!" Anyway...

Joshua Bell: You said that there was still snow on the islands. Did you arrive in a spring or summer month?

David Hendrickson: It was early spring and so there was still snow on the higher parts of the mountains. But all the snow at sea level was gone by that time.

Joshua Bell: So what was your job in the ship?

David Hendrickson: Well I was a seaman first class and we had all been to the Seamanship School and the Navy Deck Petty Officer's School and we were all hoping, and there were 20 of us on that frigate, it only had 38 seamen, deck seamen all total, 38, or 40. And we realized right away that none of us was going to get a coxswains rating, because it was already overstaffed with deck petty officers. And I can remember one of my friends who heard the executive officer and the captain talking one day. And the exec said, he actually said. "You know, we got all these young men from the seamanship and deck petty officers school, and they have no chance of getting a rating on here." And the captain said "I know, but we'll have a good deck force" And my friend rushed right down and told us what he heard these two talking about. And so, it wasn't long after that, that this same friend was approached by the exec and said, his name was Sal. He said, "Sal, I need three guys to run the laundry. we have nobody to run the laundry. he said I want it, will you take it and get two friends? And it pays \$30 a month extra." So he came to me and Jack Cuneo another friend, and the three of us became the laundry crew on the *Albuquerque*, and so there was no chance of ever getting advance in rating, but we got \$30 a month extra, and we ran the laundry.

Joshua Bell: I'm sure that came with its own set of perks, in addition to \$30 a month.

David Hendrickson: What did you say?

Joshua Bell: I said, I'm sure, oh... (engines overhead)

David Hendrickson: The Air Guard's just going over again outside.

Joshua Bell: Oh, it's alright.

David Hendrickson: What did you ask?

Joshua Bell: I said that must have come with its own set of perks, being in charge of the wash.

David Hendrickson: Oh, right, yeah. And we were as the 3 laundry men, there were no Petty Officers over us, the Chief Master of Arms, who was in charge of below deck, he even told us one morning, "I don't want anything to do with you guys in the laundry, just so you do a good job" And of course we escaped all of the boatswain mates and the other deck Petty Officers above deck. But then we still had to serve sea watches, and uh, because when the weather was rough we couldn't run the laundry anyway. So, I stood regular sea watches. I stood 20mm gun watches for a long time. And then, because of my training, I was assigned to the wheelhouse to become a helmsman and a bridge talker on the flying bridge with the officer on deck. And I like that. That was good service. I didn't mind, I liked being at the helm, and being up on the flying bridge with the officer's deck. That was fine. And so, I never found anything objectionable about any of my service aboard the *Albuquerque*.

Joshua Bell: And what sorts of things did you do? You got those job titles in there? What were the responsibilities in those positions?

David Hendrickson: Well in the laundry, we had to make up our own schedule, cause the three of us were completely in charge. And so, we made up a schedule. We took officers and chief petty officers on Monday, and then crew whites, on Tuesday and Wednesday, and Thursdays, and then crew dungarees on Friday. And then we cleaned up and stood for inspection on Saturday. And that, apart from my sea watches, that's what I did below deck.

Joshua Bell: And talk to me about sea watches and what that was like.

David Hendrickson: Well, a gun watch on a 22 mm it was just, you were just standing there with orders to keep a good lookout for anything, But when I was transferred or changed to the wheelhouse and the bridge, that was really very good. It was a four-hour watch and I would report to the wheelhouse, to the quartermaster, and I'd take my turn on the wheel. And then every half hour I would change with the bridge, the guy on the bridge the officer of the deck, I forget, the. Anyway... I would be on the bridge on the phones talking to all of the deck watches reporting anything to the officer of the deck that I would get from people on report from people on guns. And that was pleasant enough. I'd be half hour on that and then half hour back down on the wheelhouse, on the wheel. And that would go on for four hours. And then I'd be off.

Joshua Bell: What did you do in your spare time?

David Hendrickson: Well, we had a lot of movies. We had movies on the mess deck at night, unless the weather was really rough. And writing letters, I was a great reader also, I would be in my bunk...When I went aboard the *Albuquerque*, all of us guys from the Seamanship School and the Quarter Master's School were put in the same bunk area together, it was right on the mess deck, just forward of the tables. And then when they'd have a film, the film guy would rig a bed sheet on the passage way right between our bunks and we could watch the film from the rear, through the...Of course the printing would be backwards, but you could still see the film. And I could see the film by just lying in my bunk. And on the mess deck they would pull the tables up and lay them down and the other parts of the crew would then sit down with their backs against the upside-down tables. And they could bring life jackets in to sit on if they wanted to, so forth. But we had a lot of movies and I did a lot of reading. I'd prop a flashlight above the wires on the guy's bunk right above mine, and I'd read. I read all kinds of, we had a little library on there, and right of the mess deck. One of the lockers, they always had a set of books in there. And I would always go in there and have look and pick a book and read it.

Joshua Bell: Did any of those books stand out in your memory as being particularly good?

David Hendrickson: Well yeah, I remember reading Ayn Rand, uh what was her most famous? You remember the writer, Ayn Rand, really conservative woman?

Joshua Bell: MmHm.

David Hendrickson: Can't recall the name of it off hand...But, yeah, I was interested in almost all the books I read, just having difficulty recalling the titles at the moment.

Joshua Bell: Was that something that was common among your fellow shipmates?

David Hendrickson: Well, yeah, I think I was more of a reader than any of those that were right around me. But we'd do a lot of visiting, and do a lot of talking about life in high school back in the states, and there wasn't much talk about girls, we were all just pretty, just, I never had any girls in high school so I was really not very much interested. But anyway, that went on for 14 months...

Joshua Bell: That's a long time to be around the same people.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, and the entire time, not one enlisted man was transferred off. One officer, do you remember the British movie actor, Henry Wilcoxon? Remember that name?

Joshua Bell: Well, sounds familiar...

David Hendrickson: He was on board; he came to America in the mid 30's from England and became an American citizen. And then when the war started, he joined the Coast Guard, and he was the Gunnery officer on the *Albuquerque*. And I remember he was the officer of the deck on my watch. Anyway, he was the only person transferred off the ship in the 14 months we were out there. And it was in the 13th month. We always remember in the laundry, he came down one morning and he had a stack of his whites in his arms. And he said, "I'm sorry to tell you this, you guys, but I'm being transferred to Hawaii, can you freshen up my whites here so they'll look good when I get off this ship?" We freshened up his whites and when I took them back up to his cabin, I was delivering, he calls me and says, "Come on in, Henry, I just want to say a couple of words. You were a good helmsman and good bridge talker on the flying bridge," and he said, "You did a good job and so I just wanted you to know that." And then the next morning or a couple days later, I think it was in Dutch Harbor, he was transferred off. And then the only new officer we got in that whole time we were up there was in Adak. And a lieutenant, by the name of DelCastillo came on. And I was on his watch, and even though you didn't talk to the officer of the deck on watch, every once and awhile, they'd tell you something. I remember one night he said, " You know when I came out to San Francisco, I was sure I was going to be sent to the South Pacific, because they were getting ready for the Philippine invasion. Was I ever surprised when they said, I'm taking a plane to Dutch Harbor in the Aleutians and here I am. I'm not down in the South Pacific."

Joshua Bell: So your role was to just patrol the North Pacific?

David Hendrickson: Yes, we did escort duties. We escorted tankers and troop carriers up and down the chain. And through Unimak Pass far as Kodiak, Alaska. And then we were constantly on call for ships in distress, and we went out twice with, in fact we'd only been up there two weeks and we were called out of Dutch Harbor, a liberty ship called the *John Straub*, was in trouble off of Cold Bay. And we raced there, and by the time got there it had been broken in half. In fact, they never decided exactly what happened. It either had been torpedoed, or internal explosion. Anyway, it was in half and only the stern was floating, um, and fifty-five men went down on that, but fourteen were rescued in a lifeboat. And then in December 1944, we were called, again we were in Dutch Harbor, to another called the US Army Transport *Northwind*, had run up on a reef in cold, near Cold Bay and we got there, it was high on a reef and it was already broken in half. And two boats had got away, there was nasty weather, it was December the 14th. Two boats had got away and they'd been picked up by a liberty ship and then the main lifeboat of the transport the *David W. Branch*, was alongside the wreck and when we arrived and the *Branch* signaled us, said "Can you get close to pick up that boat?" And so, we tried to work in close even though it was really nasty weather. The boat got away, but had no sooner got away than a big wave washed over it and doused its engine We were able to get close enough to get through a lyle gun, a lyle gun fires a small line and fire it across the boat and they were able to pull that line in and that was attached to a heavier line and that was attached to a heavier line, a four-inch line, and they pulled that line in and the minute they fastened to the board and shouted "haul away" then about 50

of us sailors aboard the deck pulling on the rope, pulled that boat up along our fantail and the last eighteen survivors of the *Northwind* scrambled aboard plus the boat crew of the lifeboat and it was so full of water that it was sinking, the Branch signaled us to destroy the lifeboat. Don't try to pick it up. So, we backed off and opened up on it with our 20 mm and pretty soon it sank. And then we assembled the Branch and the freighter that had picked up the other two boats arrived and we signaled them to follow us back to Dutch Harbor. It was about 4 in the afternoon and it was 3 in morning the next morning when we arrived in Dutch Harbor. And strangely enough about two weeks later, we got a copy of the Seattle Post Intelligencer and there was an article on the front page about eighteen crewmen being rescued off a stricken ship in the Aleutians, they called it the Aleutians, but that you know, is not the Aleutians, t's just outside. And it said that a Coast Guard vessel had rescued the 18 men and that they were picked up by the Branch and brought back to Seattle. That was on the front page of the Seattle Post Intelligencer. I think It was January 5th, 1945.

Joshua Bell: So during those operations, what was your job?

David Hendrickson: Well, I was, in the, my daytime job I was in the laundry, my sea duty job was on the helm in the wheelhouse, or bridge talker up on flying bridge where the officers deck. And then I had a, I was first loader on a 22 mm gun. But there was no war up in the Aleutians. You know once the Japanese were defeated on Attu and they abandoned Kiska, of course the main war was down in the South and Western Pacific. So, we never saw any action at all. I mean every once and awhile there signals that Japanese bombers might be flying from Paramushiro, across the Bering Sea, the most northern post of the Japanese, just off of Russian Kamchatka Peninsula, Siberian. But as far as that, and then another. Not only do you have escort duty, these rescue duties that I mentioned, but also there was a squadron of Navy Destroyer escorts in our squadron of Coast Guard Frigates. Of course, we all were under the Navy. And then we did what we called turns on identification patrol, because by the end of 1943, the Americans had a large airbase on Attu, Adak and were flying across the Bering Sea and bombing the Japanese installation at Paramushiro. And so, the frigates and the DE would go out on 10 day patrols, called Identification Patrol, uh, and listen to our bombers flying over, it was a long flight from Adak, it was round trip, was nearly 2000 miles. And the Navy Air Wing 4 was flying out of Attu, and 2-engine Ventura bombers, but that was only about 800 miles from Attu roundtrip to Paramushiro. Anyway, we spent ten days, seven - ten days out there on patrol. The American planes flying overhead were supposed to signal IFF, Identification Friend or Foe, but a lot times those pilots on those B-24s either didn't have them on or whatever, so we'd have to be at general quarters, as long the plane was in hearing distance. We never could see them, cause it was always cloudy and stormy. In fact, I don't remember ever once seeing an aircraft fly over us on patrol, because the weather was always, nearly constant overcast or stormy or foggy. In the summer it was foggy, the short summer, in the summer it was stormy and overcast. Anyway, we did five of those patrols. I say we did the first one in August of 44, and I think we did that last one in February of '45. And we did, go out of Attu. We'd meet out in Attu, and it would be,

we'd go out 340 miles of the Russian Komandorski Islands and do the Patrol and then we'd relieve the ship that was there and they would head back and then we'd be out there seven to ten days until another ship came out and relieved us. But that was pretty nasty duty because the weather was always so bad.

Joshua Bell: Absolutely, I wanted to ask about the two rescues you were involved with, briefly, again. What do you remember thinking about or feeling when you were involved in those operations?

David Hendrickson: Well, I remember the first one and that was the John Straub, the Liberty ship. I remember when we got there, and I said "Geez, look at, there's a stern, half of a ship is sticking out of the water." Part of the propeller and part of the screw we can see, and of course I thought right away, some people must have died on there. And we circled them. We circled that relic a couple of time and then we actually put our boat down and a four-man crew went over because they could see there was a place they could get onto the stern to see if there was anybody still aboard. And they did! They climbed aboard and did a search of what they could and pretty soon they were back in the boat and back to the ship. And they no sooner took the boat up and secured it and we were doing came another little loop around and suddenly we could hear a big gasp of air and "boom" it sunk right down. And the forward section had sunk earlier and the ones that were rescued, the fourteen men that were rescued by crash boat that came out from Cold Bay they reported that one the ship was either hit by a torpedo or explosion, it sunk the forward section, it sunk in only a minute and a half. And there were fifty-five men aboard that forward section including the Captain and a lot the Navy gun crew and fifty-five men in all went down and only fourteen that were on the rear section that didn't sink right away, were able to get away and were rescued. And then the other on December 14th, I remember I was on watch then. See we left at nine in the evening in Dutch Harbor and we arrived on sight about noon the next day, the 15th and we could see the *Northwind*, see it on a reef. Its back was already broken it was bent and it strangely enough, after the war I went to, I forget what the meeting was, and there was a guy there who was on the, and, how was it, anyway, he had a picture of the *Northwind* and he gave it to me and I have it in an album, and you can just barely see it, but you can see it on a reef and bent, both fore and aft was broken. And anyway, when we worked in close, were the last boat, were the engine swamped, I remember we were all on deck because when they fired the lyle gun they knew that it was a light line, and it was tow line and we'd have to pull the tow line in. And I can remember looking at that boat and thinking, "I hope those guys will be safe" Anyway they pulled the line and fastened onto their bow hook and shouted haul away and less than ten or fifteen minutes we were able to get that large lifeboat alongside our lee side of the fantail, and the fantail on a frigate was very low, with only six feet above water. And then the eighteen survivors of the *Northwind* scrambled aboard first, and then the crew and, from the *David W. Branch* lifeboat they came aboard. And they were all very happy, they would just say, "No, glad you guys were here. You took us, you picked us up" and then we took them all below and they were able to get their wet clothes off and somehow they got dry clothes and they were assigned a bunk even though

they didn't have to go to bed. At that time, it was like four in afternoon and so as that other liberty ship with that two other boats crews safely onboard arrived we headed right back to Dutch Harbor and it took from four in the afternoon to three in the morning to get back to Dutch Harbor. But that's the last we saw of those men when we pulled in. The Branch went to one dock and we went to another one. Didn't see any of them after that, until we read that article in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*. The only time we saw them was the few hours when they were aboard ship before we got back into Dutch Harbor.

Joshua Bell: That's critical work.

David Hendrickson: Well, yeah, it was. Even though we didn't fire any shots at a Japanese enemy, we were busy all the time, either escorting or on patrol, or in this case, saving a few lives.

Joshua Bell: You said the Seattle Post Intelligencer, what, which edition was that?

David Hendrickson: I think it was January 5th, 1945. Cause the accident happened, we were out there, left on the 14th came back to Dutch Harbor on the 15th, and that's the last we saw of the rescued people. And then I have someplace written down, it was January 5th. Somehow, we got a copy of the Seattle Post Intelligencer, and it was dated January 15th, no January 5th. It had this story about the rescue and the sinking of the *Northwind*.

Joshua Bell: I'm going to see if I can find a copy of that.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, it was the Seattle Post Intelligencer, January 5th 1945.

Joshua Bell: If I find a copy, I'll send you a copy of it.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, I have a copy of the actual wording someplace, in one of these things. Am I still going to send you this *Cold Sea, Lonely Sea*?

Joshua Bell: Yes, that would be great.

David Hendrickson: And you're going to send me a Fedex to send it in?

Joshua Bell: We'll send you a package for all that stuff to be sent out in.

David Hendrickson: Yeah, and I've been going through some other old materials and I have a number of photos of frigates. And I'll put those in there too.

Joshua Bell: Excellent. I wanted to ask you, you mentioned, all this great stuff. One of the things that comes to mind is when you're out at sea that log, you must get kind of homesick...

David Hendrickson: Well I can't really say I was, actually. You know it was just your duty. So, you know I can't really remember being homesick, even though it was after we turned the frigate over to the Russians and came back to Seattle and that was August of '45 and then I got a thirty day leave in early September and that's the first time I'd seen any of my family since, joining the Coast Guard in May 1943. Or, no, I came after basic training for ten days and that was the last time I saw them.

Joshua Bell: And did you, were you able to communicate with them through letters?

David Hendrickson: Oh, yeah, my mother was a very good writer and we exchanged letters often and it seemed like every week I was writing a letter. But you had to be very careful. You couldn't say a word that suggested where you were! If you even put cold weather, all the letters that we wrote would be censored by the officers in the ward room before they were mailed. And if you put anything that suggested where you were, either by weather or location or longitude or latitude, they'd immediately scrap your letter and send it back down and say "You can't send this." So, all you could say is "We had a nice day today. I worked in the laundry. We had a chicken dinner tonight and saw a movie." That's about all you could say. You couldn't say one word about your duties or where you were. But my mother was a very good writer. She would write all the family news, so I always knew what was going on at home. And we got good mail delivery up there. Both at Adak and at Dutch Harbor, particularly it would always be a good sack of mail come aboard.

Joshua Bell: How regular was that?

David Hendrickson: Well it seemed like, it seemed very regular. Sometimes it may even had been daily if we were four or five days, or week in Dutch Harbor. I think we would get a mail sack, yeah, I think a mail sack every day would come in on a plane. It was very frequent anyway.

Joshua Bell: So, when you were in port at Dutch Harbor did you spend a lot of time off the boat or off the ship?

David Hendrickson: Yes, yes, we could get off. In fact, I remember very well the first time we went over to there was a cable ferry from the naval base across to the island of Unalaska, where the old village, Unalaska Village was. And I can remember going over there several times. There's an old Russian church there, that had been built in the 1870s or so. And even though you couldn't go in you could walk around it. Yeah, we went ashore quite a bit at Dutch Harbor. Not very much at Adak and Attu. At Attu, after the Japanese were defeated and what, we were told that up on the hillsides there were various signposts with boards on them saying 16 or 17, or 100 "Japs buried here". And I can remember more than once walking up into the hills, in the summer when the snow is melted and running across these signboards registering how many of the enemy were buried there. And you know after the war, the Japanese government returned and

reclaimed all of the bodies from all of those makeshift graves where they were buried in great numbers, and returned them to Japan and gave individual burials somewhere in Japan. I don't remember exactly where, but they reclaimed all of the bodies. But and I don't remember going ashore in Adak much at all, except to go to the dentist. So, it didn't seem much to be seen in Adak. There was one funny little bay called Finger Bay, that we used to go up in because there was this dry dock and we, I think one or two or three times, we'd go into Finger Bay and go into the dry dock to repaint the bottom, or repair the sound gear, dome and the bottom. But there was no place to go there either. Oh, there was one, one old schooner that was an ice cream shop. And we could go there and buy ice cream. And I can remember guys would go over and buy a whole quart of ice cream, and they'd come back on the frigate eating their ice cream. Sometime we could tie right up next to it and you could just jump aboard and buy your ice cream.

Joshua Bell: (laughing) A little ice cream shop!

David Hendrickson: And then in the main bay, Kuluk Bay, there was a main repair ship, and again I don't have anything in front of me. I forget the name of it. But we used to tie up alongside it every now and then for minor repairs. And that was in Kuluk Bay, Adak.

Joshua Bell: So it sounds like you got to see a lot of the islands?

David Hendrickson: Well yes. Well, we saw them a lot. Wasn't stormy; in fact... I'll send you...By the way did you order the *Patrol Frigate Story* yet, from Amazon?

Joshua Bell: No, I haven't had a chance to yet. I'm gonna pull that up here when I'm done.

David Hendrickson: Cause it will have a lot of photos in it also. In fact, it will have a smaller version of a lot of the photos that I've pulled out on 8 1/2 by 11 paper that I'm gonna send you. Yeah do get the *Patrol Frigate Story*. I mean I'm not trying to sell it, but I think you might find it interesting.

Joshua Bell: I absolutely will. I wanted to ask, sometimes people say that they wish they'd been stationed somewhere else or they had an idea that they would be stationed somewhere else. When you first joined, did you have this thought in mind of where you might end up?

David Hendrickson: I think if I was thinking of anything, it might have been Hawaii as sort of a place to at least begin your Pacific duty. I never thought much about the Atlantic. I think I always thought about the Pacific, since we lived here, on the West Coast. But no, I can't remember saying, oh, I wish I was there or particular thing, or anything like that.

Joshua Bell: excellent. Uh, let's see. Where were you when you learned about V-E Day?

David Hendrickson: V-E Day. Uh, that was June 6th, 1944.

Joshua Bell: No, I think it might have, might not have come through clear... Victory over Europe Day

David Hendrickson: Yeah, oh! That was May 8th, 1945, when the Germans surrendered. Yeah that was May 8th, 1945. I would have been in the Aleutians someplace, in Bering Sea. Um, I can remember D-Day very well!

Joshua Bell: Yeah?

David Hendrickson: June 6th 1944. Here's an interesting thing. I was 30 years, you know teaching history and geography at Fresno City College, and the president of Fresno City College, Clyde McCully; he also was in the Coast Guard. So, everyone... we started in the Coast Guard. Well one time, I don't know how it came up, I said, "Clyde, where you on D-Day?" Well he was a coxswain on a LCVP landing troop at Utah Beach, Normandy. He was on a back transport, the USS *Bayfield*. And then he said, "Well where you on June the 6th?" And I said, "I remember exactly because the captain came on the loudspeaker and announced that the Americans had invaded Europe. We were on the International Date Line, a half a world away from you, Clyde - just 180 degrees away. You were on Normandy, which is almost on the 1st Meridian, which Greenwich, England. And I was on the 180th Meridian, cruising along on the International Date Line, in the Bering Sea on D Day 1944. So, we used to sort of joke about that every now and then.

Joshua Bell: That is excellent. That's a neat story. Not many people get to say that.

David Hendrickson: Yeah and he and I are the same age. I'm just a month older than he. I was born in August 1925, and he was born in September 1925. I used to visit him a lot, but his daughter has... He was living in a rest home here in Fresno after his wife died, and just recently whose husband is an engineer in Palo Alto had taken him out of the rest home he was into some place up near Palo Alto. But I haven't heard from him, and she hasn't written to say what, so I don't even know anything about him; even though he was getting into rather poor health. I used to visit him at the senior home quite a bit. But in the last few months, his health was really beginning to fall. So, I don't really know what his case is now. Anyway...

Joshua Bell: You mentioning friends that you're familiar with now, make me want to ask about the friends you had on ship. What were some of their names? Where were they from?

David Hendrickson: Well, a lot of them I communicated with quite a bit. The ones that I communicated with were from California. The last one that I communicated with was Leonard Zecklin. We had been in boot camp together, seamanship school together, and fifteen months, twenty months on a frigate together. And then we parted and then we found out each other's address or something after the war. And he and I communicated regularly. He would phone quite often and he has since died just a few months ago. And then another one Richard Tosaw, he lived in also in California and we visited quite a bit after the war, or on the phone. Yeah, well we all, actually belonged to a group together, too. The Patrol Frigate Reunion Association and so Leonard Zecklin, never belonged, but Richard Tosaw did. And the Patrol Frigate Reunion Association we would meet every year starting in 9... in '85, right up until Two-O-Five. We were disbanded in two-oh-five because the numbers had fallen off. But the Patrol Frigate reunion Association lasted all those years and we met every year in some city in the United States from Seattle, all the way to Boston, to Charleston, South Carolina, and so I got to keep contact with a lot of old Coasties that way. And number, well not quite a number, but a few, were former shipmates on the *Albuquerque*, there was Dick Tosaw, and Sal Gonzales, Whitey Ashcraft, and we all communicated for a long time. Now I haven't heard from Whitey in quite a long time. He lives somewhere in the East now. But anyway, we did keep a lot of Coast Guard contacts for all those years, from 1986 to 2005. And we had quite a celebration on Coast Guard Island in Alameda on June 19 of 2005, when the Patrol Frigate Reunion disbanded.

Joshua Bell: Oh, I bet. Ah, let's see.

David Hendrickson: And in 19... there are three monuments to Patrol Frigates. One is at the New London, Connecticut Academy, another one at Baltimore and one on Government Island, on Coast Guard Island. That one was dedicated in August of 1994. And at that dedication, we had a dinner and I was asked to be one of the speakers, to say a little about the ship I served on. And we have pictures somewhere of me standing in front of the microphone outside in one of the garden there on the island.

Joshua Bell: That's a nice honor.

David Hendrickson: Yeah it was a great day. We met a lot of the old Coasties there. And then on the disbanding day, it was June the 5th 19, 2005. Ooh, we were there almost half a day on the island; visiting and they had a ceremony, a disbanding ceremony. Anyway, that's the end of the Patrol Frigate Reunion Association.

Joshua Bell: I want to go back just for a couple minute. I have a couple more questions. Um, I forget if you mentioned where you were and how you felt about VJ day?

David Hendrickson: Oh, V-J Day! After we turned the ship over to the Russians at Cold Bay, they flew us to Kodiak and there I went aboard with whole bunch of others, old transport the *Barinov*. I did mention that, didn't I?

Joshua Bell: Yep.

David Hendrickson: Then coming down we were headed for Seattle, but we stopped briefly in Prince Rupert, Canada and the fireboats were out in the middle of the harbor spraying, you know how fireboats spray the water up in the air? And we thought oh, they're welcoming us back into the States and then we found out later, they were welcoming the end of the war! It was August the 15, 1945. And we were only there a few hours. We discharged several hundred troops and they were taking a Canadian train across the country to go back to New York. And late in the afternoon we left Prince Rupert and headed for Seattle and I think was it sometime the next day we arrived in Seattle. And I was sent to, there was a relocation base called Payne Field, which was in between Seattle and Everett, and I was set up there and it was from there that I got a 30 day leave and I went home, for the first time. So that would have been end of August early September, 1945

Joshua Bell: That must have been nice to see everybody!

David Hendrickson: Oh it was! And then I no sooner got back to the Coast Guard base in Seattle and I was assigned to a small FS, a freight and supply vessel. So, FS 34. It was only 110ft long and wooden hulled! And we'd go out, we'd go out the Loran stations up on Vancouver Island, and supply them with food and whatnot. We took one nasty trip down to the Coos Bay, Oregon, which was about 600 miles, in December 1945. Rough all the way. Anyway, I was only on there about three or four months. I came back to Seattle and I was immediately assigned to a 600-foot transport, the *Admiral E. W. Eberle*, AP 123, which was then part of what they began calling the Flying Carpet, bringing all the troops home from the Pacific. And I went on that, in February 1946. And I made one trip on it to Jinsen, Korea, which is now Inchon. It was oh, about a month's trip over there and back. And we brought 5000 troops back to Seattle from Jinsen, which became Inchon. That's where MacArthur landed in June of 1950 when we invaded Korea. Anyway, I was on that four months, and I had a couple of *Albuquerque* shipmates on there! And then I got off of the *Eberle* in about the 20th of April, 1946 and then I went to some base for a few days. And then I went, out on the train to San Francisco, and I rode the train from Seattle down to Oakland and across to San Francisco. Then I was discharged from the Coast Guard base at Bay and Powell, the corner of Bay and Powell Street in San Francisco on April the 20th, 1946.

Joshua Bell: Fantastic.

David Hendrickson: The end of my career!

Joshua Bell: What was it like when you would hand over ships to the Soviets?

David Hendrickson: Well that was quite interesting....

Joshua Bell: Yeah, what was that process like?

David Hendrickson: Well, we came back to Seattle and half the crew was transferred off and I was part of the crew that remained onboard and we went on up to Cold Bay. And then another forty or fifty were transferred off. And then we went to tie up to the dock and there were three frigates tied up there. And seventy-five Russians came aboard. And I can remember standing there and they were coming aboard and we were told, "Go up and shake hands with as many as you can." And these Russians came aboard, and then a few days later another twenty or thirty came aboard. And after greetings and what not, those Chief Master at Arms would have one interpreter, only one interpreter...And he was on the ship for the whole month that we were on there. The Russians were taken down below deck to a crew's quarters. They were assigned to what we called the Glory Hole. It was the crew's quarters just below the mess deck. And I was still on the Mess Deck and these Russians lived down below. And then every day we'd go out to sea and they'd practice on the guns and they would be in the engine room and up on the Bridge. And then we'd come back and have dinner at night and we'd have a movie. And these Russians always liked the American movies, even though they couldn't understand them! They would just laugh and clap when the movies would be shown on the mess deck and then after when the lights went on, they were always eager to exchange fountain pens for a medal or coins, and they always wanted to get a pair of black shoes. They would look at our black shoes and they, you could see they really envied a nice pair of black shoes. So anyway, we got a long very well with them. And I remember the morning that the chief master at Arms came down and he said "Hendrickson, I'm sending two," I was the only one left in the laundry, Sal and Jack had transferred off, I was alone in the laundry. He said, "I'm sending two Russians down. It's up to you to teach them how to run the laundry!" And pretty soon these two Russian guys showed up and of course, none of us could exchange a word. Though it wasn't long before they knew "yes" and "no", and I knew "nyet" and "da". So, they knew yes and no and I knew "yes" and "no" in Russian. It only took about a week for them to learn how to run a steam laundry, drier and whatnot. we got along fine even though we couldn't talk. I'd meet them every morning during the laundry and it went on for the whole time they were aboard.

Joshua Bell: What were the names of the two men you were with? Who were gone? Sal Gonzalves and...

David Hendrickson: Jack Cuneo. See they were both from Los Angeles. Sal Gonzales and Jack Cuneo... and Jack Cuneo, he became quite well-known after the war. He inherited a lot of money from his grandmother and I think he went into the insurance business. He and I exchanged phone calls once in a while, not very often. And he didn't come to any of the Patrol Frigate Reunion Association's annual meeting. But Sal Gonzales did, he and his wife. What was Sal's wife's name, Janet? uh, anyway, he and his wife would come. I saw him several years in a row at the Patrol Frigate Reunion Association's annual meeting. And then something went wrong. I think he may have got

Alzheimer's or Dementia, but there came a point when his wife said, Sal just doesn't remember or say much anymore. That's the last time I ever heard of him.

Joshua Bell: How do you spell the last name of the other person?

David Hendrickson: C-U-N-E-O, Cuneo. He went to Hollywood High. He was quite the ladies' man, big, tall, good looking guy.

Joshua Bell: Awesome. Just want to write that down. Make sure we have that down. Um, what was the highest rank you achieved?

David Hendrickson: Seamen's first class, and then in reserves, in parenthesis, coxswain. But I was officially, a seaman first class. And oh, when I was on the *Eberle*, when we came back we had a lad from Korea, one of the Chief, not the chief boatswain mate, but some chief, he came up to our guy called Jerry Watson, he was a good friend and he was also on the... he came up to the two of us and said, "If you two guys will sign up for four months," he said, "you'll advance to coxswain today" And he said "I'll give you the rest of the day to think it over." and Jerry chose to do it but since we both had enough points for discharge, I didn't. But I often regret, because I heard from Watson afterward, in fact we met at his house several times afterwards. He said, "Hendrickson, you should have stayed on the *Albuquerque*, the *Eberle*. We left, after you transferred off we went down to Seattle, down to San Francisco, we tied up and we never moved from there and I was discharged and *Eberle* was transferred over to the Army transport service. So, he got the master coxswain and didn't have to do any, and got a free ride down to San Francisco.

Joshua Bell: Nice work if you can get it!

David Hendrickson: Yeah, I should have stayed on, I would have been a coxswain, 3rd class, Petty Officer discharged. But I was discharged as a seaman first class.

Joshua Bell: I want to ask is there anything that I, haven't asked you about that you'd like to share with us?

David Hendrickson: Oh, god, I don't, I feel like I've been talking the whole time,

Joshua Bell: Well, that's the idea.

David Hendrickson: Um, lemme think about the Aleutians. Oh, I can remember when Franklin Roosevelt, when President Roosevelt died.

Joshua Bell: Yes.

David Hendrickson: Clearly, that was April the 12th, 1945. He died at three o'clock in the afternoon down at Warm Spring, Georgia It was 10 o'clock in morning Aleutian time, and at noon, as I was just sitting down at the mess table, when a radioman came flying down the ladder, the stepped from the office above and he was shouting, "Roosevelt's dead, Roosevelt's dead!" And we all just looked up and couldn't believe it that President Roosevelt was dead. But I can always remember him shouting that. "Roosevelt's dead! Roosevelt's dead! And then that was on about a Thursday or a Friday, because a morning or two later, the Captain had us all assemble in dress blues on deck and he and I think a chaplain, from somewhere on Unalaska Island came aboard and they, the captain and this chaplain made a short talk about President Roosevelt and his death. But I can remember that very well, that radioman shouting, and being mustered on deck in dress blues. April the 12th, 1945.

Joshua Bell: How did that affect the morale of the ship?

David Hendrickson: Well it was yeah, it was all very somber. And a lot of talk about it and I remember a couple of days later, I went ashore with a group, five or six guys, we went over to Unalaska and we were climbing around one of the hills and behind the town and we were all talking about what we remembered about President Roosevelt when we were in high school. Because Roosevelt was really the only president any of us ever knew. He came in at 1933 and we were all just little kids at that time. But I remember us talking about, "Well yeah, I remember President Roosevelt this, President Roosevelt that." We were talking about it all afternoon.

Joshua Bell: Did that lead to any sort of uncertainty about the direction of the war and the country?

David Hendrickson: Well, no I think by that time I think most of us pretty much knew the war was drawing to an end. In fact, in the Aleutians in the Bering Sea, by April 1945, we were spending more and more time just tied up in either Dutch Harbor or Adak, and more and more ships were being transferred out of there or just leaving, because everyone knew there was just less and less going on. The patrols for the bombers that were flying across the Bering Sea to Paramushiro were still going on. But I can remember that we were saying, "Gee, we're not doing much escorting. We've been tied up here for 12 days and we haven't been to sea! We're not escorting!" well the tankers were not coming up anymore and the troop ships were not, so and everybody, I think we knew that the war was really drawing down. The Philippines had fallen by then. The B-29s were bombing the hell out of Japan from Saipan and Tinian. We all knew the Japanese were all but defeated by that time.

Joshua Bell: It's interesting that you should mention Roosevelt, because there was a Presidential election during the war.

David Hendrickson: There was!

Joshua Bell: And how, could you tell me a bit about that?

David Hendrickson: Well, my first time I voted was 1948 and I voted for Truman. Let's see when was Roosevelt's last election was 40?

Joshua Bell: 1944

David Hendrickson: Yeah, '44. Then he died in '45 then Truman became president and then he ran on his own in '48, and that's the first time I voted in '48. So that's really about all I can remember about all that.

Joshua Bell: So I'm always to know how that process worked about getting a serviceman's ballot and sending that back in.

David Hendrickson: Well now, when Roosevelt was re-elected in '44, of course we were up in the Aleutians, and I don't really remember anything about it. I don't think anybody aboard ship voted. I don't think they had, I don't remember anybody talking about voting for the election of 1944. Yeah, I just can't remember, none of the ones that I knew. Of course, none of the ones that I knew were old enough to vote anyway. So no, I just don't remember a thing about the election of 1944.

Joshua Bell: Because you weren't twenty-one yet?

David Hendrickson: No, I was, let's see, I turned twenty up in the Aleutians, and then I wasn't twenty-one until August of 1946. So, I was already back here.

Joshua Bell: How did you celebrate your birthday?

David Hendrickson: Uh, there were no celebrations at all in the Aleutians. I don't even know if we told each other when our birthdays...I suppose we did, but I don't remember a thing about it.

Joshua Bell: And I can't remember if I asked you about holidays or not...um...how you celebrated different holidays on board ship.

David Hendrickson: Well now, let me see...I know on Thanksgiving and Christmas, I know the cooks would put out a special dinner that was more than just the usual daily meal. But that was just about it.

Joshua Bell: Get any special packages from home?

David Hendrickson: Um, no. Not that I remember...I think stateside people, I don't think they sent many packages to servicemen out in the Pacific. I don't remember packages coming aboard, or any of my shipmates opening them I don't remember

opening a package. I don't know what they could send anyway. I don't have any remembrance at all about celebration, other than the cooks doing a special dinner for Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Joshua Bell: Very simple, very down to business...

David Hendrickson: Oh yeah, all the time.

Joshua Bell: I want to ask you, the final question, I have on my list is, what are you most proud of about your time in service?

David Hendrickson: Oh, god, I don't know. Hmm, I can't really say that there's anything that I'm particularly proud of. Well, I think I was, I think was particularly proud of the two certificates I got, because in both the seamanship school on Government Island and the deck petty officer's school on Treasure Island I have two certificates, and I have them, in fact they'll be in the, when I send you this "Cold Sea, Lonely Sea" there's copies of it in there. And both of them say I graduated either top of the class or up in the top percentage. So, I did very, very well in the service school, The Coast Guard School, and the Navy School.

Joshua Bell: Outstanding. Outstanding. Thank you so very much for sharing your stories with us.

David Hendrickson: Ok, Josh.