

Janis Kozlowski: In Seattle you stayed on a ship? The ship that you were assigned to?

Harry Bailey: Yeah.

Janis Kozlowski: And you did your training during the day?

Harry Bailey: Yeah, this again is one of the funny things. The ship—that was a little yacht too. For the most of the time I was on it--which might have been, I don't know, six weeks or more--the engines were out and these other fellows were with the civilian person and they were learning or working on the engine – I think there was only one engine. But anyway, we just stayed tied to the dock and then one day, I guess, they got it ready to operate again.

They brought a group of fellows down from our group that were still living up at Fort Lawton and we were all the way in to the dock to street side on Alaska Way and they started the engines and the civilian Skipper called for “astern” and we backed out of the area between the docks into, well, a waterway, where other ships could come down and go to various docks. And across the way was a ship yard where they were building destroyers.

Well, anyway we backed out between those two docks and he called for forward speed and that damn ship didn't want to do that. It kept going backwards, backwards, backwards. And it went all the way across the waterway and bumped into the dock where the destroyers were made. I was again, scared to death. I thought that damn thing was gonna sink.

Anyway, this is one of the comedy things about it too, we went back there and hit the dock and somehow got it going forward again and took it out into Elliott Bay. And on the way back he decided to take on fuel so we went in to a ship oil dock and he came in nice and slow and now he wants to put it in reverse to slow it down and snug up to the dock. So he put it in reverse again and the damn thing wouldn't come out of reverse. So, we were backing up....

They used to have little power barges. I never saw one in Alaska but they were little small things and that ship that I had ... that I was on the rear – the fantail, as they called it – it was sloped, you know, from underneath and going, getting bigger as it got to the main deck. We crawled up on that little power barge, just like you're on a ladder. And there was somebody putting a radio in the little power barge. He was coming across the dock on a plank. He threw his radio into the water and there was a big fat guy -- the most I could see was a big, fat fellow trying to crawl out a window. [laughing] We got up there and, like I say, crawled on 'em and did an awful job on the power barge. Finally he got it going forward again and as far as I know that was the last time that it ever went out to do anything on the training bit.

Janis Kozlowski: I was gonna say that's not the ship that you took to Alaska I hope.

Harry Bailey: [laughing] No. I don't think it ever ... it was called the Bonhomme. But the designation the Army put on it was the Q103. So it was a strange thing – queer, if you want to call it that.