

Janis Kozlowski: What ship was that that you were assigned to then?

John Fahey: The U.S.S. Volans.

Janis Kozlowski: And was that a better ship than the St. Mihiel, or more a modern ship?

John Fahey: It was a cargo ship. It was a, what they called, a “Liberty Ship.”

Janis Kozlowski: Oh, OK.

John Fahey: Yeah, Liberty Ship. I think I actually preferred the older ship, which was the St. Mihiel, originally; then a U.S. Army transport. And when the war broke out, it was given back to the Navy, and it was [then] a transport. We transported people all over to Alaska at the beginning of the war. And we took troops and Army nurses up to Alaska. And then we would bring back the dependents of those service men that had been serving in Alaska. And also pregnant nurses after they had been there a few months, ‘cause they wanted to get the hell out of Alaska.

Janis Kozlowski: [Chuckle] So you had quite a varied group of people that you transported.

John Fahey: Oh, yeah. We use to have a lot of fun when we were bringing them back from Alaska, yeah. Because at night we’d have parties with all the women and stuff, because, you know, it was kind of dull on that ship otherwise. It was kind of nice to have women around once in a while.

Janis Kozlowski: So, did you have some pretty harry voyages? I mean scary, scary voyages - big seas and that kind of thing?

John Fahey: Yeah, the first time I went to sea on the boat - it was my first trip - we hit exceedingly rough seas. I got so seasick; everybody got seasick - even men that had been in the Navy for years that were used to it. It was a really bad trip. We traveled the Inland Passage, most of the time - from Seattle up to Alaska. And that was interesting, because of the beautiful scenery and everything. But the ... when we hit the open waters, man, there’s really a difference. So, I had a couple scares on the....

One time, we were coming back from Alaska, we ran aground on the Inland Passage. And I was on duty that night - on the radio shack. And the ship started listing to the side, and, “What the heck is goin’ on?” We hit a rock somehow or another, and put a hole in it - in the ship. So, we contacted ... I forget who exactly we contacted, but we, they had to send a tug out to help us get back into Seattle. We went to Bremerton Navy Yard, and we were in dry dock for, oh, while they patched the thing up. So, we got to stay in Seattle a little bit longer than usual, at that time.