

Interviewer: Matt T. Wiitala

Interviewee: James J. Bennett

Subject of Interview: Mr. Bennett's World War II experiences.

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Interviewer: Matt T. Wiitala (MW)

Interviewee: James J. Bennett (JB)

Subject: Mr. Bennett's World War II experiences

MW: What is your full name?

JB: James J. Bennett

MW: Where and when were you born?

JB: I was born in Marquette, Michigan, on March 4, 1924.

MW: What were you parents' names?

JB: John W. Bennett, who ran a clothing store in Marquette.
It was called "J.W. Bennett & Son." My mother's name
was Edith.

MW: Where did you go to school?

JB: I went to elementary school at Bishop Baraga and also Bishop
Baraga High School in Marquette.

MW: Did you continue your schooling in college after high school?

JB: After high school in June of 1942, upon graduating, I
shipped out on the Great Lakes, out of the Marquette Harbor.
I was aboard the **S.S. Cletus Snyder** as a deck hand. The
Cletus Snyder was a Cleveland Cliffs iron ore carrier.
After the navigational season closed that year in December,
I had a deferrment from the war for essential war work.
I locked that in my drawer and enlisted in the navy on
January the 22nd 1943.

MW: While you were in high school, did you follow the news

leading up to Pearl Harbor?

JB: Yes. When I first heard that Pearl Harbor had been bombed, it was a Sunday morning and I was working at a filling station. And most most people, including myself,... the first question was 'where was Pearl Harbor?'

MW: How did you get most of your news?

JB: Either by newspaper or radio. We didn't have television in those days.

MW: Did you have any hopes before the war started? Anything you dreamed about?

JB: I was in high school when the war started and it was predicted it was going to be a long war. So I felt that as soon as I graduated from high school, I would be in the service. I had no other plans than serving my country.

MW: Where did you receive your basic training?

JB: My basic training was in Norfolk, Virginia. Then I enlisted in the Naval Reserve. My enlistment was changed about that time of my basic training to the USN from the Naval Reserve. From there, I was transferred to the West Coast and stationed on Treasure Island, which was on San Francisco Bay, California.

MW: When you first enlisted you were assigned to shore duty, is that correct?

JB: When I first enlisted, I really was in the Seabees, which was a naval construction battalion. That was in the naval reserve like I said. Then I was transferred to regular navy. So there was no shore duty other than when I got

to Treasure Island in California. And were assigned to the **U.S.S. Orion**, which was a submarine tender, and it was being built in Hunter's Point, California.

MW: How did you get involved with serving on a submarine?

JB: Okay. After the submarine tender was commissioned, the entire complement on Treasure Island was transferred to the **U.S.S. Orion**. That being a sub tender, and a sub tender is a mother ship ship to a submarine or a flotilla of submarines. After its shakedown cruise we sailed for Pearl Harbor and from Pearl Harbor we went on to Brisbane, Australia. We were there a very short time and then went over to the west coast of Australia and moored in Fremantle, Australia, which is only about twelve miles from Perth, Australia, which was one of the main cities [in Australia]. We were permanently moored there, servicing submarines returning from war patrol. I requested submarine duty from the tender and I was transferred to the **U.S.S. Cod (SS 224)** as a Quartermaster Third Class in June of 1944.

MW: What did you do as a Quartermaster?

JB: As a quartermaster, you're a navigator's aid. You help the navigator plot courses, take star sights, and plot your course and get an accurate "fix," and keeping the ship's log. And in battlestations, submerged or surfaced, one of the quartermaster's took over the helm, the duties of the steering of the submarine.

MW: How long did you end up serving aboard the **Cod**?

JB: Aboard the **Cod**, I got on the **Cod** when it had just completed

it's third war patrol. I got on the **Cod** and it made two war patrols. I served on the fourth and fifth war patrols. And war patrols consisted of anywhere from fifty to sixty days. We made two "successful" war patrols. A successful war patrol is sinking enemy tonnage, laying mines, special missions, landing forces on islands, picking up evacuees, and also picking up downed fliers who were shot down. That was considered a successful war patrol. The **Cod** made a total of seven war patrols and I served on two war patrols and they were all successful.

MW: And a war patrol would consist of sinking enemy vessels and picking up evacuees?

JB: Yes. On a war patrol, when they normally left, particularly the **Cod**, Fremantle, Australia, and within three or four days after leaving, we'd be in enemy waters. So anything we sighted was the enemy. And a war patrol, if you were in that area, you were in there possibly forty days in a combat area.

MW: Was there any particular length to a war patrol or typical mission, or did it vary?

JB: It varied. In one instance on the **Cod**, the first patrol I made on the [**Cod's**] fourth [war patrol], it was a two-phased patrol. Because after we got out into the [combat] area the submarine carries 24 torpedoes and we expended our 24 torpedoes and they were faulty torpedoes. [That meant] we didn't get a hit. We returned to Darwin, Australia, and got a fresh load of torpedoes and went back

out and that was the second phase of the patrol. And out of that load of torpedoes, we got eleven hits and sinkings. Along with your eleven hits or shooting torpedoes, you are also, normally, most times, which is either a destroyer escort or patrol craft or a submarine chaser. A submarine chaser comes down your wake. After you fire a torpedo, the torpedo leaves wakes and they'll [chasers] come down your wake and normally you are in for a severe depth-charging.

MW: What was life like aboard a submarine?

JB: Well, it was very close quarters. And I served four-hour watches. Four hours on, and eight off. We didn't have bunks to go around 80 men and we had what was called "hot bunking." When somebody else was on watch you took his bunk. And, in some instances, three men were assigned to one bunk but they were on different watches at various times. I might add that the food was excellent on submarines.

MW: Was it scary being underwater and in such close quarters?

JB: Well, it was very exciting duty. Whatever you sighted was the enemy. Any aircraft that sighted you would try to drop bombs on you. If you were on the surface, you'd submerge to evade these airplane bombs. Depth charge attacks were quite frightening at times and some of the depth charges were very close. I could probably describe it as being in a fifty-gallon drum with somebody on the outside pounding it with a sledgehammer. A lot of depth

charges came very close and light fixtures and depth gauges cracked and valves flew off the walls. It was sometimes referred to, when you were getting depth-charged, as the "dance of death." You'd be down for many hours and the air would get stale and hard to breathe. And when you cleared or maneuvered away from the depth charge attacks and came to the surface and opened the hatch and got all that fresh air in, it was called the "breath of life."

MW: Did you do any kinds of activities on submarines?

JB: You could read and there was music. You couldn't partake of any of that activity when you were being depth-charged or going into attack. And card games. You really weren't supposed to be playing poker but they kinda turned a deaf ear to that. It seemed that from the time the submarine left the dock to the time it returned, there was a continuous poker game going on. Somebody'd get up to go on watch or go to bed or go to sleep, there was always somebody sitting there to fill in.

MW: What did you and the other sailors feel your part in the war was?

JB: Well, with submarine service, the camaraderie was terrific. You just knew that when you were out there, you were alone against the enemy. You were dependent on your fellow sailor. He had to do his job and you had to depend on him doing his job as well as you doing yours. The camaraderie was terrific. It is to this day because we have reunions once a year and we all get together and just

re-hash some of the sea stories. We're just as fond of each other as we were then. All young men at the time, anywhere from 18 to 25 years old. The skipper's that had command of their ships were in their early 30s. I can't say enough for some of those skippers. They were marvelous men and we lost a lot of them. We lost 52 submarines and that's 3,505 men that are encased in iron coffins in the depths of the ocean today. We feel for those sailors that we lost and that's part of our organization, to perpetuate their memory.

MW: Serving out of Australia, what were your target areas?

JB: They assigned various areas. (Reading from an official account of the history of the Cod). 'The Cod left on her fourth [war] patrol on July 3, 1944 and our patrol ended on August 25, 1944. It was 54 days duration, 36 of which were spent in combat areas.' As I stated before, it was conducted in two phases. The first was off of Manila and, following a re-load at Darwin, was made at Milhauk, in the Far East Seas and it was an aggressive patrol. We had sunk about 5 ships on that patrol. They were classified tankers, or oilers, and freighters and patrol crafts. I stated the patrol was 54 days and we arrived back in Fremantle on August 25, 1944 for a normal re-fit period. Normally, when submarines came in after patrol, they would be greeted or five or six miles out of the harbor

because sometimes our aircraft were overanxious and, if they spotted a submarine, they bombed first and asked questions later. So we were usually met by a destroyer escort and they would escort us into the port and bring out fresh milk and fruit and our mail. By the time we were three miles out of port, the navy band was playing and the admiral would come down and greet us and give us our citations. Buses would be waiting and the navy took over three of the best hotels in Australia and put us up for rest and recuperation. We had our own cooks and the only thing we had to pay was our own bar expenses. It was called rest and recuperation, recuperation while the submarine was being refitted for the next patrol.

MW: Were there any special health problems, mentally or physically, that you saw among the men while serving on submarines?

JB: Usually men were young and they were in excellent health. They had to be in excellent health to qualify for submarine duty. When they came in from patrol, before they ever went on their rest and recuperation leave, they went to the dispensary on the tender, and we were thoroughly examined for health problems. And then again before we went on patrol. We did carry a pharmacist's mate on our patrols that tried to care of our health cares. There's a story, I don't remember just what submarine it was, I think it was the Silversides, where, when they were out to sea, they had a man come down with appendicitis. The

pharmacist's mate had to perform the operation. He never done anything like that before and he just went by the book and had some people help him and the story was written up and it was a successful appendectomy.

MW: About how long did you serve aboard the Cod?

JB: Well, I served on the Cod on it's fourth war patrol. After refit we went out on the fifth war patrol, which went out on September 18, [1944], which was conducted in the areas west of Luzon and Mindanor. After completing that patrol we returned to the United States, via Pearl Harbor, for a complete navy yard overhaul at Mear Island Shipyard in San Francisco Bay. We arrived in the shipyard on December the 1st 1944. The Cod was tied up alongside the dock from which it received the overhaul, and the crew was assigned to barracks. Half of the crew and officers got 30 days leave starting immediately and the rest would get theirs when the first half returned.

MW: When you got your leave in San Francisco, did you notice any changes in civilian life there?

JB: Well, I really didn't notice that much difference. I took second leave and came back to Marquette, Michigan, about January the 1st 1945. I didn't see that much change. When I got back to Marquette there was absence of a lot of young people, young men particularly; they were all in the servce. Upon returning to San Francisco, I transferred to another submarine. I didn't notice that much difference. Maybe I just wasn't looking for it,

either.

MW: When you were home on leave, did things change for people at home? Were there any different attitudes from before the war?

JB: I think that everybody was geared for the war. They worked hard for the war effort. They had essential jobs, not so much in Marquette, but in the cities where they were producing more for the war effort, such as in the Detroit area. Here in Marquette they had a manufacturing plant, the 'Lakeshore Engineering Works.' I don't know just what they were doing for the war effort but I'm sure they were doing something.

MW: When you got back to an Francisco, you were transferred to another submarine?

JB: I was transferred to the U.S.S. Ray. The Ray had come back to the United States about the same time the Cod did. The Cod was built in Groten, Connecticut, and they called them "New London boats." The Ray was built in Manitowac, Wisconsin. The Manitowac, Wisconsin, shipyard built about twenty-two submarines during the war and they were excellent submarines. When I came back from leave I was hospitalized for a time because of high-blood pressure and fatigue. In the meantime, the Cod had completed it's overhaul and went back to the combat zone. After I was released from the hospital, my blood pressure under control, and I was rested, I was [placed] in a relief crew. The Ray had come in about the same time the Cod did because she, on her

sixth war patrol, had flooded her conning tower. Almost lost the ship. After she surfaced and got a short re-fit, she continued her war patrol but had to return to the United States for a navy yard overhaul. She was short a quartermaster after completing her re-fit, and I knew some sailors that were on the Ray and I requested duty and, subsequently, I was transferred to the Ray, where I left Mear Island on her seventh war patrol. I made the seventh war patrol on the Ray and completed that war patrol and went out again on its eighth war patrol. The Ray had made eight war patrols and I served on the seventh and eighth war patrols. And they were all successful patrols. I can give you a short resume, a brief report on her success on her seventh war patrol (this account was published by Rear Admiral W.T. Kinsella in a volume entitled, The History of a Fighting Ship: U.S.S. Ray (SS 271)).

MW: What was your home port with the Ray?

JB: Well, as the war progressed, they had moved the division from Fremantle to the Midway and Guam island(s). Submarines would come off their patrols. The first patrol when I came in off the Ray we went to Midway Island for a re-fit. The submarine tender Orion gave us our re-fit. They put the crew up on barracks on Midway Island. When that patrol was completed, we went to the Gulf of Siam to patrol. We were at sea when the atom bomb was dropped and shortly after, the war ended and that completed our eighth war patrol. On the seventh war patrol, I'd just like to give

you the patrol report that was put into the records for the Ray.

*****End of side one*****

*****Start of side two*****

MW: How many different war patrols did you serve aboard the U.S.S. Ray with?

JB: I served on the Ray on its seventh and eighth war patrols. The Ray had made eight successful war patrols. (He then proceeds to read an account from Kinsella's volume). 'Particularly on the seventh war patrol it was an outstanding performance for the fighting ship Ray: two rescues, one made under most adverse weather conditions in shoal enemy waters resulted in twenty friendly aviators being picked up and returned to port. Three torpedo attacks were made but, unfortunately, no hits were obtained due to faulty torpedoes. A total of twenty-one well-planned and expertly conducted gun attacks were made upon miscellaneous small craft, resulting in twenty small craft being sent to the bottom.' They called when picking up these fliers, they called it "lifeguard duty." When the aircraft carriers were having their air strikes against

the home islands, they would notify the submarines and they would call it "lifeguard duty." They [the submarines] would circle and they would be on the surface and circle in a certain area and all these pilots knew approximately their locations and if they were hit, and they had to ditch, they'd try to ditch near that submarine. In this case we picked up twenty-two downed B-29 fliers. They were some pretty happy guys when we picked them up. I think totally, throughout the war, the "lifeguard duty" of submarines, they rescued over five hundred downed aircraft pilots.

MW: Now between the two subs you served on, the Cod and the Ray, did you notice, were they built differently? Or were there several differences between the two subs?

JB: All submarines were called "fleet-type submarines." There about 1525-ton displacement. They're built in about four different shipyards in the United States and the "Electric Boat Company" in Groton, Connecticut, built most of them. And, like I stated before, Meer Island built about twenty-three of them. Twenty-three or twenty-two. And a lot of the sailors would classify 'em as like the "New London Boats" or the "Groton, Connecticut, Boats." They called them "thin-skinned," in other words, they were built with thinner steel. And Manitowac boats, they called them "thick skinned" boats. They were built with heavier steel and we claimed that they could take more punishment, they could take more depth charge attacks, and they were extremely

sturdy boats. But, by the same token, there was controversy there, too. They'd say sometimes the thin-skinned boats would "give" better. And where the thicker-skinned boats were more brittle. I guess you'd have to leave that up to the opinions that served on the submarines. I served on both the "New London" and the "Manitowac" boat. The Cod was a New London; it went through some terrific depth-charge attacks and it survived so that's not the controversy, it's a sailor's story.

MW: Other than the one time you mentioned, did you make it home to Marquette at any other times?

JB: The only time was right after my basic training for, I guess they call it, a nine-day leave. And I went back and I was gone for two years before I came back, came on my first leave.

MW: Did you have any other close family members serve?

JB: I had a brother who served five years in the Army Air Corps. And he spent the five years in the States. As much as he wanted to get overseas, he was more important for training pilots and maintaining the aircraft. I had another brother who was in for a short time and he was discharged because of a disability. They were both in the Army.

MW: Now the high-blood pressure you described earlier, did it subside?

JB: Well, I experienced mostly high-blood pressure from the time I was eighteen-years old on. It was always a little high. And perhaps the type of duty that I was in elevated

it some, too. Even to this day my blood-pressure is controlled with medication.

MW: Was there a high stress factor being below the water? Or being in that kind of position, especially where you're inside of a submarine and you have depth charges going off?

JB: Well, I would have to say it was a high-stressful duty. There had been men that had made twelve war patrols and that's very stressful and they normally take 'em off long before they made twelve war patrols. They'd give 'em shore duty for a while because it was too stressful to be in a short time, less than a month, and go right backout on a forty, fifty, sixty-day war patrol. It was stressful duty.

MW: When you were serving aboard the Ray, was that when you found out about the bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

JB: Yes. I was at sea on war patrol when the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and it came over our radio and most of the people didn't know what a A-bomb was. They looked at one another and says, 'what's an A-bomb?' It's a well-kept secret, the A-bomb. We had many submarines out in the area. By the time the war ended, we had about 300 submarines in operation. As the war progressed, towards the end, we were running out of targets. We didn't have anything to shoot at. We mostly surfaced and used our deck guns on small craft. The targets weren't worthy

of wasting a torpedo on.

MW: When you heard the news about the bombs being dropped, was there a feeling that the war was over now, even before they actually surrendered? Was there a feeling that now the war is now over?

JB: Well, even before the bombs were dropped, there was a feeling that the war, was, naturally we were winning it particularly in the submarines because we just didn't have anything to shoot at out there. We had strangled their shipping lanes. And if the war would've continued, some of us felt it wasn't necessary to drop the A-bomb because we had would've had the islands so blockaded they wouldn't have had anything incoming or outgoing; eventually they would've had to surrender but, in looking back, I think Truman did the right thing and otherwise we would've had to invade the islands and cost us a millions lives, American lives, not counting the Japanese. It shortened the war and saved the lives of many people. A submarine was three percent of the naval and they accounted for over fifty, maybe, fifty-one, fifty-three, or fifty-four percent of all the tonnage sunk, enemy tonnage. That small force of submarines accounted for that much tonnage and we lost more submarines than any other craft in the navy

MW: How many different divisions were active that you were in contact with in the U.S. Navy?

JB: Okay. There were three submarine divisions. One operated out of Brisbane, Australia, and I think that was under

Admiral Fife. And the other one operated out of Fremantle, Australia, and it was under Ralph Christie and later, I believe, under Admiral Lockwood. And the other division operated out of Pearl Harbor. Admiral Nimitz was, naturally, commander of the entire fleet. And he also had a son, Captain Nimitz, Jr., that was in command of a submarine. I don't recall the submarine at this time.

MW: Did you ever happen to run across anybody you knew while you were serving, from Marquette or the surrounding area?

JB: Yes. This might coincide with your interview with "Boots" Kukuc, who was a pilot with the Wildcat division, named after the Northern Wildcats. And I was returning from a funeral in Perth, Australia, and one of my shipmates on the Orion, this was just before I transferred to submarines, had died and I was returning from the funeral and I was standing on the street in Perth, waiting for the bus, and the main street of Perth was maybe twice the width of Baraga Avenue [in Marquette]. On the opposite side of the street a little car pulled up and an officer jumped out, was coming right towards me, and I didn't recognize him till he got up to me. And it was Blake Ford from Marquette, Michigan, and he was with the Northern Michigan Wildcat Division Fliers. It was quite a coincidence to meet a guy from Marquette. And while I was home on leave, talking with my fiancée, my wife-to-be, who's is my wife today, I mentioned this episode to her and we were sitting in a nightclub and I mentioned

it to her and who walked, who was also on leave, but the same Blake Ford. And that was a coincidence. And I also met another guy when I was in Australia that I hadn't seen since the fourth grade. He was attached to submarines. His name was Jerry Brady. And since then, after the war, I believe he was killed in an automobile accident. That was the extent of the homefront boys. One other boy, when I was serving on the Orion, and he was from Marquette. And his name was Willy Beauchamp. We were both on the Orion together.

MW: Now, working our way back to Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the eventual Japanese surrender, what was the feeling among the men you served with about the war finally coming to an end?

JB: Well we felt, at the time, that the war was coming to an end, particularly, on the submarines. Because there was just no more enemy shipping, it was at the bottom of the ocean. There was just no more worthwhile targets. We had a stranglehold on the islands. They could ship nothing in and ship nothing out. Eventually, if they had continued, they would've had to surrender or starve. And I think President Truman's decision to drop the Atomic bomb was the right decision as we would've had to invade the islands and would've cost a million American lives plus millions of Japanese lives. So he made the right decision.

MW: Was there a sense of relief that the war had finally come

to an end? Was it joy or excitement?

JB: Well, it was joy. A lot of joy. We were all going home and a lot of the sailors and soldiers, they had a point system, and they were all almost qualified to be discharged in a short time

MW: How did this point system work?

JB: I think it was the number of months that you were in the service, you got so many points. And if you had 35-40 points, you were qualified for immediate discharge. If you were in for forty months, well, you were eligible for discharge.

MW: How much longer after the Japanese surrendered did you serve?

JB We returned from our eighth war patrol and we went to Saipan and a lot of submarines were in a holding pen because Washington was in a scramble, what to do with all these submarines and surface craft and we got orders to proceed to New London, Connecticut. We had Pearl Harbor and the Panama Canal and we all started out in formation with submarine tender Orion in the lead and about fifteen submarines trailing behind and we went through the Panama Canal that way and then some of 'em were going to Florida and some to different ports and we proceeded to New London, Connecticut. And I was discharged on December the 22nd of 1945. I enlisted in January the 22nd of 1943 and was discharged December the 22nd of 1945, which was two years, eleven months and twenty-two days. And I was happy to

get back to Marquette. I had enough travelling. I said that I'd never leave the Upper Peninsula after I got back, and I never did.

MW: How did you feel about your serving in the Navy?

JB: I was very proud. Particularly the branch of service of service I was in. I was extremely proud being able to serve in the submarine force. I have many, many fond memories. It was a million-dollar experience and I wouldn't give you a nickel to do it over.

MW: Was there anything about the war, I've heard stories where soldiers, when they were writing, they would never be able to tell where their position was? Did you find that, in transit, in mail, they kept a tight rein on security, as far as not giving away your position?

JB: Even when I was in Australia I couldn't give away my position. When I wrote a letter home, it was always somewhere in the southwest Pacific. And, by the same token, on submarines, when I'd write home I'd usually say to them that 'you won't be hearing from me for a while.' And that was an indication, they knew, that I was going out on patrol. And you can't mail letters from the submarine out at sea. And when I returned, I had so much mail to answer and it was such a pleasure to get letters from home and when we mailed our letters, they were censored and if we said anything in there, they were deleted and could never tell where we were or what we did. Just that they knew that I was on a submarine, the name of the

submarine, but they didn't know where we were operating from.

MW: Did the military place any special restrictions on you once you were discharged from the service about materials that you had come across or any knowledge you had about the war?

JB: Well, they cautioned us, particularly on submarine duties because it was highly classified and it remained so for a number of years. Particularly, the commander would get what they called an "ultra." It was a secret, coded, message that maybe the Australians had placed coast watchers on different islands and they would observe enemy shipping and they would get off a message and even after the war that was kept secret. Recently it's been revealed. And the Japanese, at the time, didn't know know that we could break their code, either. We knew a lot about their ship movements. But, even to this day, the Cod, right now, is tied up in Cleveland, Ohio, as a museum, as a national museum. And it's just the way it came out of the war. She hasn't been modified at all. There's several submarines that are museums that have been modified and stairways have been put in for the public to get into them. Where the Cod, if you go aboard the Cod, it's open from May through Labor Day to the public. And if you go aboard the Cod, you go aboard just like I did, you go down the hatch. There's no stairway so it's kept up because of navy regulations and, even to this day, when you go through

the Cod, where the radio shack is, it's locked. You can see it in there, but you can't get in there because a lot of that is classified and the conning tower, where you go up from the control room, you climb up a ladder and go into the conning tower, where the hub of the activity was when you were going into attack. That's closed off to the public. There's a lot of classified information up there but, primarily, for liability reasons, too. And they called it "the silent service." We didn't talk too much about what we did, and where we were going, how we did it, or how deep we could go. The Japanese set their depth charges, they didn't think we could go as deep as we did. And, consequently, they set their depth charges a little shallower. They were going off above us, where, if they came down and went under us or on the side of us, they could do much more damage. Today the nuclear submarines, their so classified, we don't know how fast they can go or how deep they can go. Our top speed was twenty knots, on the surface, on four diesel engines. Each engine was a Fairbanks-Morris engine, a V-16. We had two engine rooms and two engines in each engine room and, submerged, we'd go on batteries and we to conserve our batteries, we'd have to go at a much slower speed, maybe one, two, or three knots, submerged. And the longest you could possibly stay down would be twenty-four hours. The air was very stale and exhausting to the men. We didn't stay down that long unless we were forced down that long.

They'd surface during the day, during daylight hours, and take periscope depths for enemy shipping and surface at night and charge their batteries. And, immediately upon daylight, we'd submerge for day patrol.

MW: Did you ever track the history of the Ray?

JB: Yes. The captain was W.T. Kinsella and he was very proud of the Ray and he was the second commander of it and he got it on it's fourth run and then completed all the other runs and put it out of commission?

MW: So you served under...?

JB: Under Captain Kinsella. And he was a marvelous man, he's living to this day and we get together, we try to get together with the Ray crew once a year. Sometimes they put it off to the second or third year. At various parts of the country. There's an organization called the "United States Submarine Veterans of World War II." This organization was formed in 1955. They get together, they have a nation, state charters, they have regional charters. They have a national convention once a year in various parts of the country and then show up from all these submarines for reunions and the camaraderie is just utterly swell.

MW: Do you get together individually as well with your crew of the Cod and your crew of the Ray as well?

JB: The Cod, usually their reunion is held in Cleveland, Ohio, because the Cod is tied up right there. And they have it in that vicinity and there is always a memorial services

for our lost submariners. And that memorial service is held aboard the Cod and there is the ringing of bells, fifty-two bells, for the fifty-two submarines that were lost and wreaths and carnations are tossed into the water.

MW: Fifty-two. Was that the number that was lost in your division or the war?

JB: Total war. Fifty-two submarines.

MW: And that was out of a total of how many?

JB: Out of a total of approximately three hundred. At the end of the war, we had three hundred. Now, in comparison, the Germans lost over seven hundred submarines in the Atlantic and we lost fifty. So that tells you that our anti-warfare or anti-submarine warfare in the Atlantic was very superior to the Japanese anti-submarine warfare in the Pacific. Just with the total number of submarines that the Germans lost. 'And the Ray was overhauled at the "Electric Boat Company" in Groton, Connecticut, from May 17th until the 2nd of August of 1946.' (Mr. Bennett reading from the Ray report by W.T. Kinsella). This was right after the war. 'Following which she was inactivated in the reserve fleet at the submarine base, New London [Connecticut]. She was placed out of commission on the 12th of February, 1947. In early 1952 Ray was towed to the Philadelphia navy yard to undergo conversion to a radar-picket submarine. She was cut apart forward of the control room and a forty-foot section was added as an aircraft control center, jammed full of radar and electronics

equipment. The old bridge was replaced by a streamlined sail, aft of which a large pressure dome was built to support a specialized radar antenna that came to be known as "the nodding idiot." She was also equipped with newly-developed snorkel equipment; her communication facilities were greatly expanded; her fuel capacity was substantially increased; and her aftertorpedo tubes were removed, to permit the expansion of berthing space.' (Mr. Bennett reading from the Kinsella report on the Ray).

MW: What finally ended up with the Ray? How many more years did it serve?

JB: Okay. (Mr. Bennett reading from the Kinsella report):
'The Ray departed Norfolk [Virginia] for the last time on June the 30th, 1958, and, on July the 1st, reported to the Charleston naval shipyard for inactivation. She was placed out of commission on the 30th September 1958 and her name was stricken from the navy list, effective April the 1st 1960, with a "view towards disposal."' She was cut up for scrap.

THE END