

Chris Pesola

Interviewing Ken Pesola

At 1750 Glenwood Ln. on 12-28-87  
about his life on an oarboat then  
an EMT

Me - When were you born

Uncle - Nov. 16 1948

Me - O.K. Where

Uncle - I was born in Ishpeming Michigan

Me - Who lived at your home when you were young

Uncle - There was my mom Astrid her name was Astrid  
and my dad his name was Toyvo and first of all  
of course there was my brother John and then me

Me - O.K. and what was your father's job

Uncle - a he worked at a Cliff Shaft Mine he was a miner

Me - Did your mother have any CCI  
just work around the house

Uncle - No she, well before she married my dad she  
a she worked she was born and raised around Muskegon  
and she worked for a baker the name was  
Mullus and I guess she worked for them  
for quite awhile and she did quite a bit  
of domestic work also as far as helping  
people clean and what ever

Me - O.K. what were your chores at home

Uncle - We had the dishes that we were supposed  
to do we didn't have to do them every  
night Mom was pretty good about that  
she usually let us slide a little bit

uncle - but as far as taking out the garbage  
and of course in the wintertime snow  
shoveling we had to do most of that  
of course when it was young it was  
fun anyway

(Me + uncle laugh)

Me - When you went to school what was it  
like

uncle - High School well all through school I enjoyed  
school I liked it I liked learning  
it was these are obviously learn about  
things you haven't heard before and I  
enjoyed it and I had a good time at it  
and I was I always got fairly good grades  
I I knew I really could've done better  
(laughs) It was a good time I enjoyed school

Me - Did you have any favorite teachers

uncle - Oh not so much not so much favorite teachers  
I guess I kinda remember the more nasty ones  
but favorite teachers let me try to think  
I guess my German teacher in high school that was  
I guess she would have to be my favorite, Mrs.  
Tallo I had German for a couple of years in  
High School she was she was a really good teacher  
my German name was Bruno (we laugh)

Me - Do you remember any humorous or special times  
that you remember

uncle - Oh ya lots of lots of lots of good times Page 2

Uncle - I was in mixed chorus for 3 out of the 4 years I was in High School that was a lot of fun we took a lot of trips to music festivals Escanaba, Iron Mountain this kind of thing and it was these were always those were always a lot of fun and my Freshman year when I first got into the chorus I mean it was one of those type of things where the Junior and especially the Senior members the image was to do weird stuff like we were forced all the Freshman members of the chorus were forced to bring in peanuts and we had to give those to the Senior members of the chorus I mean you know if u-didnt if u-didnt want to get pounded (laughs) get pounded up in the hallways or outside of school or what even you will bring peanuts (ue laugh) but look back on it it was a real good time and ofcourse sports that was always that was always real good time I was an avid basketball fan I guess I still am today the trips we made down where Ishpeming went downstate for basketball tournaments that was a real good time

Me - Did you go to college

Uncle - Ya I attended Northern Michigan University from well it would have been September of 1966 till August of 1970

Me - How many years were you there then

Uncle - Ya it was it was 4 years I finished up in August of 1970 I had a couple of of courses to Page 3

Uncle - go to to get my degree and I took a summer courses and I got my bachelor science degree I had the double major it was political science and sociology

Mo - what were your first jobs

Uncle - My first job other than of course around the house was as a paper boy and I started out I started out subbing for my brother and then the opportunity came for a route of my own and I continued I continued being a paper boy well almost ~~right~~ through High School even the pay wasn't much back then I was probably lucky if I cleared 5 bucks a week you know after I after I collected but of course 5 bucks went a lot further back then than it does now (well yeah) My second job that I had actual work experience was I worked at Sandy's in Marquette its now ~~an~~ Arby's is now and I started out at a dollar ~~an~~ five an hour and it was a lot of fun working there too there was a whole bunch of crazys in the fast food business

Mo - after those jobs did you then go on the car boat

Uncle - after I worked at Sandys I worked at the Republic and Empire mines during the summer when I went to school to kinda get some money for myself as well as to help out abit with my college education and that was a real good experience

Uncle- too I didn't mind it at all and after after  
graduating from college I had some interviews  
down state as well as in Cleveland Ohio  
and those really didn't pan out with anything  
so I came back and ~~or~~ before I came back  
I did work in Detroit for an actually North-  
field which is Northwest of Detroit I worked  
there for 6 months in a place called the  
Wayne County Child Development Center and that  
was really an eye opening experience it was  
about I was working with disadvantaged kids  
it was in a cottage type of setting and I guess  
one of the most strong memories I have  
especially coming up around Christmastime a lot  
of these kids really didn't have families that they  
could depend on or for some reason their families just  
didn't want them they couldn't handle them a lot of them  
were hyperactive there's this lad named Griffiths he  
was 13 yrs. old and he stood about 6'5" and he weighed  
about he was about 200 lbs. and he was very muscular  
but his parents were supposed to come pick him up  
at 9:00 on Christmas Eve 9:00 in the morning on  
Christmas Eve and they didn't show up and they  
didn't show up and he just stood by the window  
looking out into the driveway and he didn't even eat  
he said he didn't want nothing to eat well finally  
they did come and pick him up at 4:00 but  
just the disappointment in his face you could read  
it it was all over his face

Unc- after that did you come up and go on the sackat (Page 5)

Uncle - Ya Right I came back up here and I  
put applications in for CCI in the mines  
as well as for the corboats I put my application  
in for the city and in for Robins Flooring Mill  
It was about it was quite a I was a few  
months before I got called for CCI they  
said that they needed somebody on the corboats  
so I went down to St. Ignace and I got  
my merchant marine card and I went on a  
boat called the Champlain which was an older  
older type boat corboat that had it still had  
a piston type engine not like the turbines  
that they got now but I liked it I liked  
the corboats and then I didn't like it you  
had so much time to yourself and even though  
we made a lot of trips up here to Marquette and  
also to Duluth, Superior, we went up to Two Harbors  
Minnesota you really didn't get that much time  
off like we went down into we had a trip  
on the Champlain we had a Captain it was  
~~called~~ called Johnny Johnson and he was a real  
Swede he was really such a character he  
would go out into almost anything he says  
we got radar we go I can still remember him  
saying that and that it was an old boat too  
It was kinda uncomfortable at times and well  
we picked up a load of ore up here and we  
went down into the Tiaoga in Cleveland  
we were supposed to Republic Steel Mill there  
and this Tiaoga River I mean this was  
really dirty there was big mudling

Uncle - about it back in the 60's that this  
is the river that had caught fire it was  
just a not like rivers up here were then clear  
and lot of times you could see the bottom I  
mean this was just like a cream color and  
you could see the oil on top, but anyways we  
got down to Republic Field and we unloaded  
and we got a couple of tugboats to take us  
out because there was an abutment that they  
had to swing us clear before we could get out  
into the main channel of the river and  
the tugboats and the captain weren't in sink  
what happened was they pulled us back too fast  
before pulling us clear of that abutment and  
we messed up our rudder and had to go in  
for repairs so I was off for a few weeks  
until I did then I got back on the Edward B. Gyring  
which was kinda the flagship of the CCT  
fleet at that time just beautiful boat that  
was a good time

Me - What were meals like on the ships

Uncle - Good! They were undergoing a change  
just as I was on there I was on there for  
part of the '71 season and the full season  
of 1972 but they were starting to change  
too lot more frozen stuff which I really  
wasn't welcomed but all in all I'd say that  
the meals were real good there  
was always made a good Breakfast

Uncle - Lunch, and Dinner the cooks they were just well respected well thought of some were better than others but I got this one guy from I don't know where he was from but his name was Jesse Geleena and he was a he was a huge guy he was about 6 foot and he went about 270 or 280 pounds but his specialty was baking I tell you he could make the best pies, cookies and whatever and then other than your main meals they put out a good night lunch if any of the guys were on watch they could go back at the end of their watch and make a sandwich and have coffee or whatever it was they fed us real good and then of course all holidays I mean they just loaded it right up I mean it was just all the traditional stuff I mean turkey I never had so much turkey like for Thanksgiving, Christmas and Christmas they sure fed us good

Me - Were you ever on any different than that

Uncle - well ya, ya, like I said before I started out on the Champlain and then our rudder got messed up and I went



Uncle - the E. B. Greene and that was a real nice boat I was a deck hand which means I was the one that pulled cables on the dock the full year that I was on the Greene 1972 we made 45 trips up to Marquette and I only got off the boat once and that was for the week I had vacation because I couldn't leave because I had to be down on the cable pulling or down on the dock pulling the cables for when it was time to spot the carboat they had different pockets on the caudocks where the car is located and you had to move the boat up and down to get to those pockets that had the car it was real interesting to watch them load the boat and how they did it its loaded so its a little deeper draft than it is foreward and also obviously its got to be loaded so you don't have to mach over on one side or the other if you get in some rough weather the cargo would shift and you don't want that so they did a pretty good job

Me - What was the roughest weather we were in

Uncle - Oh, um, we had it was they were into late season shipping at that time trying to keep trying to keep the shipping lanes open and whatever

Like we used to get called down to fit-out a boat in early April and then a course by the time you got the boat fit out which usually took about a week you'd come up here into Escanaba even on into Marquette when the locks opened lot of times going through we'd have to have an ice breaker break a path for us or if we were able to

Uncle - back our own path it was just like someone  
~~boating~~ boating on an empty 55 gallon oil drum I  
remember one time we were coming into Two  
Harbors Minnesota and there wasn't an icebreaker  
available, but we were only about a half a mile  
away from the dock and captain decided to  
to just push his way in there use the boat as  
an icebreaker itself and it took us about  
I'd say 5 or 6 hours to make that last that last  
half mile had some ice and hit that ice  
firmly it'd stop we'd put in in reverse go back  
far enough to where he thought we'd get a good  
enough running start and then had order the power on  
again and we'd make a few more feet well we finally  
did get in there anyway it was kinda interesting

Mc - How fast did those usually go

Uncle - I think our normal cruising speed would've been about  
16 or 17 knots the Greene was 650 feet long I think  
top speed was about 22 knots which would've been  
a knot is a little bit more than a mile an hour  
but a trip say from Duluth down to Cleveland  
which we went about on Lorain or Conroy Ohio  
that take us a couple a days of course we had to  
slow down in the rivers because they had speed limits  
in the rivers so we wouldn't damage the shoreline or  
going down through the St. Mary's river, below the dam  
or in the Detroit river you had to slow down that's  
all

Mc - what was sleeping like were you slept

Uncle - Well I could sleep anywhere so

Uncle - it didn't bother me at all what we had was the deck hands slept there was well if you can picture the front of an aircraft we slept up front and there was no slept below decks all the deck hands deck hands and deck watches then the level above us which would've been the deck level is were that were all the mates slept as well as the wheelman and watchman and of course up another deck you have the captain's suite and they really had very comfortable very comfortable sleeping conditions but down below decks it was nice too

Me - When did you finally get off the aircraft carrier  
Uncle - that was in the last well it was January first part of January of 1973 I figured enough was enough it was just to much time away and I felt I maybe had some other things that I wanted to do so I just didn't go back I still got my merchant marine card (laughs) though you never know a course there not running very many boats now

Me - Did you then become interested in ambulances

Uncle - No! (laughs) when I came back I was I was again just looking for a job I reapplied at CCI and the city of Chicago, Robins Flooring, Mill and wherever and even though I had a lot of money I still wasn't working and that got to be a real drag after a while so finally through my sister-in-law's father I did get a job at Coburn's I was stringing vegetables for a while that was something anyway but then I got a call from the city and well first of all I just well they had an article in the front ads of the paper employment that fireman applications were being taken and at that

Page 11

Uncle - time the pay was \$59 a month and I applied specifically for that job and I had the interview with the manager Robert Nowel the fire chief at that time was Ralph Bluet and I got accepted

Me - Did you go back to college to study about medical stuff

Uncle - No, I had two days of on the job training as far as the ambulance goes I didn't really know that much as far as first aid and the first thing that I had they basically said here the ambulance you're going to be driving it (we laugh) and I was basically terrified (we laugh) I remember the first ambulance run I went on we had a '73 ~~van~~ Chevy suburban 4x4 ambulance and there was just a call about a woman who had been sick over on main street and I was driving and my pointers opened up the door and I was so shook up that I went out the door siren was blowing I forgot to put the lights on (laughs) but I turned on main st. I blew a stop sign which you never do even though you got your lights and siren on that doesn't give you the opportunity from someone else who has it you gotta slow down look both ways then if traffic is clear you can go through - but it was kinda frightening but then where did get the advanced first aid training through the American Red Cross things got much more comfortable so far as my training went

Me - So that was your first job driving an ambulance at

Uncle - Ya right I drove the ambulance as well as how to operate the fire truck because we do drive for the fire department also Page 12

Uncle - and that just took a little bit longer since  
each truck had its own ~~own~~ particular characteristics  
and those just had to become familiar with as it  
as you were trained it was firetrucks operation is  
really much easier because when you pull a lever  
something happens and that isn't working with people it  
just isn't that simple

Me - When did you become an EMT

Uncle - Through the department of transportation they really  
developed this EMT course in the early 70's and  
it was really starting to catch on and Marquette  
County started to put courses on and I first  
took the course in '77 and graduated in '78 that  
was the basic EMT course and it's a real good  
course it covers alot of ground and my instructors  
~~was~~ did a real good job in the course and I got  
very well qualified and happy with the course  
and the patient care got so much better

Me - What's the difference between an ambulance driver  
and an EMT

Uncle - O.K. state of Michigan right now recognizes 3  
different levels of EMT's there's a basic EMT  
which is a course of about 110 to 130 hours  
which is the first one that the first level of  
certification that I got also they do have an ambulance  
attendant license and for this for this level of  
certification you've got to have at least the advanced  
first aid course which runs about 50, 60 hours and  
then you can be certified as an ambulance driver  
however most of the people that are running the  
ambulances right now are atleast basic EMT's  
and also we have gone ~~so~~ onto some additional  
training there's a ~~2~~ level above the basic which is  
called specialist or EMT and that's what

uncle - I'm currently certified ~~and~~ that was about  
hundred hours of training beyond the level of the  
basic EMT we can start IV's inter venis fluids  
and we can intubate people which is allows us better  
control of their airway its ~~also~~ actually putting a  
tube down into ~~the~~ their trachea and inflating that  
tube because really the greatest danger in a person  
dealing with a person airway is that their ~~gonna~~ gonna  
respire on their gonna get stomach fluids inhaled  
into their lungs and that's real dangerous

Me - O.k, what classes did you have to take to  
become an EMT

uncle - O.k, I didn't mention the Basic EMT course and that  
consists of anywhere from a hundred and ten hours to  
even 160 or 170, 180 hours depending on what the  
instructors wanna cover in a course and basically  
what covered in the course is such things as  
you basic anatomy, your bone and muscle structure  
the internal anatomy of a person and then it goes  
on to the different respiratory anatomy, cardiac anatomy  
and also covers CPR and it goes on to just the  
various things that can happen to people as  
far as injuries and how to treat their  
injuries like arms, legs, fingers, neck injuries, spinal  
injuries, trauma say from car accidents, falls  
this type of thing basically covers assessing the  
patient properly and then treating what you find  
its a very set procedure that we do use we start  
out with the ABC's which is of course the  
Airway you want the person to be Breathing  
and you assess the rate of respirations (Page 14)

Uncle - And the depth and it they are breathing you  
can go on to circulation which is a course  
pulse, heart beat, you check for adequacy of that  
then you do a survey from head to toe  
and you compare the various parts of the  
body the body is usually fairly symmetrical  
and you look for any lumps or bumps or  
punctures or anything that might be out of line  
as well as what the patient is telling you what  
their chief complaint is and then you go from  
there to treat it it also goes into the course  
goes into patient transportation how to move  
a patient so that you don't further even though  
the patient may be splinted that certainly is  
covered there also even though the patient is splinted  
just because they got a splint on don't mean  
just means you can jerk in around and further  
aggravate the injury so it goes into patient transportation  
also how to handle an ambulance call how to drive an  
ambulance some of the state laws that we gotta  
abide by and that's basically what the EMT does  
covers but it is really comprehensive and I tell ya  
it's really a relief when you take that state  
test then you get your certification back and like now  
I really passed

Me - What was your most frightening experience

Uncle - Well I had a lot of 'em (we laugh) a little bit about  
that goes with each run I guess that you go  
out on - / on never know really  
whats going to happen

Uncle- you gotta be aware of weather conditions that  
might hold you up could be dangerous you never know  
what people are gonna do even though you have your  
lights on siren on when they're in there can they might  
have the air conditioning on, the heater, they might have  
radio up and cranking and you know they're just not  
looking in their rear view mirrors every 15 or 30  
seconds or whatever and the as for all people  
pulling over usually have pretty good but occasionally  
~~like~~ like I say I remember one run we had  
out to Michigan and we were on that straight  
stretch just beyond the Peshigo Bridge there and there  
was this guy ahead of us and he wasn't pulling over  
and there was ~~on~~ oncoming traffic and I really  
didn't want to pull over in there have even  
though they were moving over to their right side of  
the road but other than lights and siren we started  
shining the spotlight trying to catch him and one  
thing people should not do is once that they  
notice that there is an ambulance behind them that  
not to jerk off to the right-hand side of the road  
and feel that they gotta get off the road right  
away well this guy he noticed that we were there  
and he jerked off to the right-hand side of the  
road well he bounced off the snowbank and  
he had tried to correct at that time and he came  
back right out in front of us to the left-hand  
side of the road he went into a snowbank and got  
stuck there so it's not something you gotta  
take care of your yourself when you're pulling  
off the road also it can be real dangerous but  
it gets interesting it's always interesting each one is a lot  
different cause each patient is really different Page 16



Mc- Did you ever use the jaws of life on a  
that mainly for the firemen

Uncle- That's ~~no~~ No if I'm involved in the jaws of life  
<sup>2</sup>  
<sup>4000</sup> extraction training in what of course we  
got the Marquette County Rescue Unit Unit  
171 here in the County and their their the  
ones that are really trained in the usage of it  
so when my duties at an accident scene would  
be patient care what they basically do right now  
is they don't so don't take the patient out of the  
car we take the car out from around the people  
and then we can properly take the people out  
out there like I say I have been trained in  
the use of the jaws of life but it's not my  
primary responsibility

Mc- Did you ever teach any classes?  
Uncle- ya I've been a CPR instructor for <sup>well</sup> it's been  
over 10 years now I started out back  
'm '77 and I got my CPR instructor certification  
and well I kept it up for the last 10 years  
and that's also very interesting and reminding  
that always changing things the Journal of  
the American Medical Association ~~that's~~ that's just some  
changes that we've gone through in the past  
year were trying to we basically got everyone  
retrained in their in these new changes but  
I do take care of the certification of the  
Champion Township first responders as well as  
the ~~the~~ Michigan, Spur first responder group  
and there a real good group out there they  
it sure is nice to have <sup>em</sup> them able to take  
care of a person

Uncle - until we get there I mean something  
we sometimes its gonna be 30 over 40 minutes  
if we get a real bad snowstorm or whatever  
in order for us to get up there and these people  
are trained basically to the EMT level and they  
can take care of the person while were on  
the way its a lot better than it used to be

Me - Did you ever teach any children anything?

Uncle - Children not I really havent got involved in  
in the teaching of children persons basically  
in order to take a CPR class I guess  
you should be about 12 years old anyway but  
I guess not I think its something that really  
could be done in a community something could  
be done to teach children what to do in  
case of an emergency who to call this type  
of thing Ya that probably should be done

Me - Did you ever teach any more advanced classes

Uncle - No, what were doing were doing an EMT course  
right now through Marquette County and it started  
September 15<sup>th</sup> or September 15<sup>th</sup> rather and its probably  
not gonna be over until we'll probably the  
beginning of April all the people will be getting their  
clinical work done but I havent really instructed  
well Im not qualified to instruct anything <sup>that</sup> above my  
level of certification

Me - all right I guess thats it

Uncle - O.k.

Me - Thank you