ANDREW CLARK

ANDREW: My name is Andrew Clark and I wrote the book A Cornfield Shipyard.
When I was in high school I read every book I could about World War II and learned as much as I could. After high school and a career in the Marine Corp I moved to Evansville and I started my full time profession and one day I was watching TV and the crew of the LST 157 held a reunion in town at the shipyard and they dedicated a monument to the shipyard, the workers and all the crews that said from there. I said well I know what an LST is. A lot of people in town didn't but I know what is an LST and I said I am going to write a book about it. And the family yeah right pass the potatoes and go on with supper. But I decided right then that I was going to write a book about it. Partially ego for myself but partially to educate the people of Evansville. Because here in Evansville everybody knows about the P47 plant and what we know as the Chrysler plant but what was then where they bullets by the billion. But not too many people knew what an LST was. I thought why don't I write a book about it see if maybe I can't educate people just a little bit.

LINDA: Have you?

ANDREW: I believe that it has. I believe the people now know what an LST is. They know that we had a full size working shipyard here in Evansville. You couldn't now it is just a parking lot and people learned what an LST is and just what Evansville did to help win the war.

LINDA: What was the shipyard like in 1942, 43, 44, 45.

ANDREW: Just an absolute beehive of activity.

LINDA EXPLAINED HOW HE SHOULD ANSWER QUESTIONS
ANDREW: When the shipyard came into existence in 42, 43 all through the war, it was the busiest place in town. It was people coming and going. There was noise, there was activity. It was just an absolutely beehive of activity building these mammoth ocean going ships. To build an ocean going ship on the Ohio River was quite an activity but there was always people coming and going, trains coming and going. Ships crews coming into town. Workman coming in. Supplies and equipment coming in and just an absolute beehive of activity down there. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In the middle of the hottest summer or the coldest winter the work went on down at the

shipyard.

LINDA: I read in your book that there was a sense of pride among the people that they wanted to work at the shipyard.

ANDREW: Oh people were very proud to work at the shipyard. But it wasn't just pride that put them there. They made good money. My gosh they could make a dollar 35 an hour at some of the higher jobs. But there was pride in what they did. They were helping win the war. Maybe in todays day and age we don't talk about a popular war but World War II was a very popular war and people did what they could to help with the shipyard and to help win the war. And there was pride in what they did and their was pride in their workmanship and rightly so as the record bears out. The Evansville ships held up very well. Not a single ship was lost due to faulty workmanship or due to poor construction. So there was pride in what they did and well deserved pride. Even the name of the shipyard A Cornfield Shipyard was a source of pride. During that time it was felt that the only people who could build ocean going ships had to be on the Atlantic or Pacific seaboard. Well when these ships were constructed they were built inland. If nothing else because they needed more room for shipyards but also fear of attack on the coast. So it was decided to put the shipyards inland. Well the East and West Coast shipyards refer to these as Cornfield Shipyards because that is all there can be in Indiana and Illinois, cornfields. And the people use that name as a badge of honor. Yes we are a cornfield shipyard and we are going to build good ships and they did.

LINDA: You talked a lot about the city of Evansville and the security. Tell us how they secured the area

ANDREW: Security is a prime concern not only to a shipyard by everywhere. Loose lips sinks ships and that is not just a cliche that was a fact. So there was a lot of security at the shipyard. Of course you had to have a pass not only to get in the shipyard but to get to any portion of the ship under construction you had to have a certain badge or pass. If your badge says you are supposed to be working on the keel then you better not be up on the bridge. Especially up on the bridge when the new ones come they might have the radio equipment or the radar equipment which was very top secret confidential then. The Coast Guard closed off the river. Of course with gasoline shortage there was very little pleasure craft going on anyway. But the river was closed down right at the shipyard. The Navy

wanted them to close Reitz Hill. Reitz High School sits on a hill overlooking the shipyard. I guess they didn't want any spies up there looking down on the shipyard but the city did not go along with that. Other things that were curious when the ships were launched, the launching was by invitation. However, the invitation would not refer to the ship as an LST but rather a Naval Auxiliary Ship and rarely would it give the ship number. In other words they wouldn't say our first ship or the 17th ship or even the number of the ship. I don't know whether this was for security purposes. I find that kind of curious because it is kind of hard to hide a ship over 300 feet long and with the ships being built at Jefferesonville, here in Evansville, and Seneca Illinois somewhere near Chicago, any spy who wanted could sit in Karo Illinois and count the LSTs going down the stream. However security was a prime concern and since this helped the boys overseas and the sailors and the soldiers who were on them the people took it seriously. So security was very much of an issue.

LINDA: In your research did you find any breach of security.

ANDREW: I found no breaches of security. I am sure there were. I am sure there were people who went in who didn't have badges. I am sure there were people who were talking who shouldn't have talked. But I found no evidence, there was absolutely no sabotage that I could find. No evidence where a loose lip sunk a ship so I believe the security measures worked. In writing the book the security measures worked clear up until 1991. I got a diagram of the entire shipyard and I took it to a local printing firm to try to get it reprinted and it was stamped restricted. Of course it would have been in 1941 and 1942. When I tried to get this reprinted was during Desert Storm and the person at the printing office would not reprint it for me. Said that it was restricted. I explained to her that it was the Evansville Shipyard. I said have you ever heard of that and she said no. Well I said can you reprint it. She said no it must be a big secret and I won't have anything to do with it. I finally had to go to another printing place where the person knew about the shipyard. But I was afraid that I would get my diagram reprinted.

LINDA: That is when you needed to go back with your book and hand her a complimentary copy of it right.

ANDREW: Well I would rather give the one that made the copy for me than her.

LINDA: One thing that I found while reading your book that was kind of interesting, I didn't know anything about the shipyard when I started my research, about you describe the shipyard as a city within a city. I mean did you talk to people who worked in the cafeteria, or the printing presses, or the hospital. Did they had nurses, did they have doctors.

ANDREW: It was a self sustained city. They had cafeterias, they had their own hospital, they had their own security force, they had their own fire department, it was a completely self sustained city and it was self sustained for not only workers needs but for shipyards needs. If they needed to draw up some new plans then they had a place where they could draw up plans. They had a building where they could make templates, one ot one. They were constructing these parts. Everything, absolute everything was in short supply during World War II so you couldn't go down the local hardware store to get it or you could requisition another part or item from the government. If you needed it you made it and that is exactly what they did. Again going back to this pride of the shipyard, if something needed to be made, something needed to be fabricated to get these ships into the water and get them downstream then that is exactly what was done.

LINDA: How many people did you talk to that was at the shipyard

ANDREW: I would hate to count. I would have to put the number in the hundreds. I would talk to people who worked at the shipyard. I talked to people who served on the ships and I talked to people who worked in the shipyard and worked on an LST. That was very interesting with those people. They had different attitudes the people that both worked in the shipyard and served on an LST. Two of the gentlemen were going from England over the continent over to France after Normandy and one of the men turned to the other and said Roger we have to hurry up and get off this ship and Roger said why is that and he said because we helped build it so we have to get off of it before it is too late. But we saw that was not a factor. The ships held together very well.

LINDA: What about the design of a LST that allowed it to hold together.

ANDREW: The design of it was very simplistic. The design of the LST was very simple. It was designed in about a half hour by a man named Needamyer. And every description of Needamyer has the word genius or brilliant and he called upon his knowledge of submarines to build void spaces

where spaces could be flooded they would ride deeper in the water and then these spaces that would be vacuated would ride higher. But he designed it in about a half an hour, showed it to the Navy Department, they made a few modifications, they wanted the tank deck a little bigger a little more clearance, they wanted the ship a little bit longer and then it was put in operation. So maybe the simplicity of design of the LST helped it to survive but I am still going to go back to the workers and their fine efforts at construction. The welding that they did. The material that they had. The design was good, the construction was excellent and that is what held those LSTs together.

LINDA: Are you aware of the quote that Churchill made that the war was won by LSTs.

ANDREW: Yes, the language is a little bit blue

ANDREW: Winston Churchill of course he came up through the Admiralty before he became Prime Minister and he was familiar with a landing craft In fact, Winston Churchill after Dunkirk came up with the idea or he thought about LSTs. Because if you remember the film of Dunkirk the British soldiers are wading out to the water until they get deep enough to get out to a ship to evacuate them. They could evacuate a lot of men but very little equipment. Very few heavy guns. Those were all lost to the Germans at Dunkirk. So he envisioned the LST but his idea was more like what we would call the LCT, a landing craft tank, not nearly as big as an LST. When the LSTs were finally designed and built they were needed of course for the landing at Normandy. Again everything is in short supply though before the invasion we had plenty of tanks, guns, plenty of planes and battleships but to quote Winston Churchill he could believe the whole thing was being delayed because of some God Damn Ship Called The LST.

LINDA: You had mentioned in your book something about the solemn words of christening. What are solid words of christening?

ANDREW: In the book I mention the solemn words of christening and that was the only description I would ever get. They would talk about the solemn words of christening. I could never get the exact words. I know that the ladies that would break the bottle, it was always a lady, and she would practice to make sure the bottle broke. I the bottle broke the first time on christening it was good luck. If it didn't break it was bad luck so they would

practice breaking the bottle but the exact words of the christening I was never able to find out. I don't know if that was a secret because I wasn't there then or the words were different but I was never able to find out the solemn words of the christening.

LINDA: Why was the christening always done by a woman?

ANDREW: Christening done by a woman has to be tradition. Sometimes in our politically correct world of the 90's we worry about just women doing something or just men doing something but it was tradition that the women would always tradition the ship in the same tradition that a man would always raise the broom, which is a tradition I was not familiar with. But christening of the ship, or putting it into the water or the raising of the broom after it passes sea trials, and the sea trials here were on the Ohio River and it made it clean sweep of these trials then they would raise the broom. So a lady would break the bottle for the christening and a gentlemen would raise the broom to put it into service.

LINDA: Did the christening happen before the broom raising?

ANDREW: Yes. The ship would be christened just as soon it was watertight and ready to be put in the water, they would christen it and it would be put in the water. It might be several more weeks before it would be completed because the shipyard to build as many ships as possible need as much room so as soon as they could put a ship in the water and move it to the outfitting docks they would do that and complete the construction on the outfitting docks making more room for the next que to be laid and the next ship to be built.

LINDA: Tell me about launching an LST on the Ohio River.

ANDREW: To launch an LST on the Ohio River, first of all was unusual and the LST would be launched sideways or beam. A lot of times you see a launching of a ship, the Titanic, any other ocean liners you can think of, they are launched longitudinally, that is the direction of flow and it would go down in a mighty splash and go down into the water. An LST was launched sideways. For one thing was space. Three hundred feet was a lot of room to take up on the Ohio River and the other thing was they wanted to keep control of it. After the christening the ship would be lowered but again it was rather an anti-climax. The launchings in Evansville because the ship

would be slowly winched sideways down these launching waves into the water and it was not a might splash. If the Ohio River was low there might be an hour time between the breaking of the bottle and until the hull finally got wet and it would be lowered into the water. The cradles, the wood cradles that have supported the keel while being constructed, would float out, these would be herded in by tugs or tenders, returned to the shipyard and the next keel would be placed on top of it. But the christenings and the launchings were big events. As I said before they were invitation only. There would be a band. Dignitaries. Everyone dressed up in their Sunday finery. It would be quite an event.

LINDA: Did it happen every day?

ANDREW: No, but it would happen maybe every three or four days. One day two LSTs were launched in one day and that was quite an event. But when you are building 167 ships in a period of less than 3 years, they are launching every three or four days.

LINDA: How did the Evansville shipyard compare to other shipyards.

ANDREW: The Evansville shipyard was a championship inland shipyard building more LSTs than any other inland shipyard. Again, that was another point of pride that they had. They built 167 LSTs and then some lesser ships like APBs which were sell propelled barrack ships and a smaller ship called a Lighter almost looked like a yacht to me in the photographs that I have seen. But Evansville was the champion corn field ship yard.

LINDA: Is that documented?

ANDREW: Oh yes, the numbers prove that out. You can compare the numbers in Evansville Shipyard compared to Senaca and Jeffboat, Drafco and Pittsburg and you will find that Evansville is the champion shipyard at 167. Now the champion corn field shipyard. The east and west coast shipyards built more LSTs but inland, Evansville holds the crown.

LINDA: What did the shipyard do to the economy of that city?

ANDREW: The economy of Evansville was greatly bolstered by the shipyard. The number of workers that were here. Over 70,000 people received a paycheck from the shipyard. The maximum employment of the shipyard was

about 16,500 at any given time but all these people either lived in the area or spent money in the area. Of course with rationing and what have you, you couldn't commute very far and you had to live in the area of the shipyard and spend your money there in the shipyard for something as simple as a restaurant or a recreational activity, gasoline. I would say the vast majority of this money came right back into the Evansville economy and helped bring Evansville the rest of the way out of the depression because we weren't completely out of the depression in Evansville when the war broke in 1941. And the war time economy to include a shipyard did a lot to being Evansville out of that depression.

LINDA: So if the shipyard employed all those people what happened the day it closed?

ANDREW: The shipyard didn't close all at once. It slowly went out of existence. The war was coming to an end. We had already won the war in Europe. It was obvious that the next step of the war was going to be the invasion of Japan itself. Something that everyone dreaded. And people in the shipyard were being taken out. Some of the workers were being transferred to Hawaai to be closer to the Pacific to do repairs, some of them were going to Oakridge, TN, the mutual plant down there. They didn't know why or even what they were doing but they needed experienced welders down there and Evansville had some very fine welders. So the shipyard slowly went out of existence until it actually died at the end of the war. Now that was in 1945 and in 1946 Evansville had one of the largest fires in history when the shipyard burned to the ground. We will be diplomatic and say it was of suspicious origin, the fire in 46. So the shipyard was born with the war and died with the war but the effects I still think went on. I think Evansville was brought completely out of their depression, and moved forward economically from that point up to and including today.

LINDA: Because of industry and the welders did people realize businesses born out of the shipyard?

ANDREW: Well there was a lot of skilled labor that came into town. There was a lot of people educated. They had additional jobs. People moved into town because of the shipyard and elected to stay here. More infrastructure. The railroads that came into town. The roads. And I think the shipyard had a lasting effect on Evansville. So we know that the shipyard is gone and very

little can be seen of the physical shipyard obviously the effects are still lasting today. And not just the shipyard but the P47 plant, what we now call the Chrysler plant, all those things. In effect it put Evansville on the map or at least keep it on the map up to today.

LINDA: Could we build a shipyard today like they did in 1942?

ANDREW: I think we could build a shipyard today but we would have to have regulations, or I should say the lack of regulations that we had in war time 1942. And that was the idea is we want to put LSTs in the water so we may not have had all the OSHA safety regulations that we had and the bidding process may have been a little bit different. If we could get into a war time footing maybe we could build that shipyard again maybe not. But back then we didn't know it was impossible. They didn't know there was going to be hard work. They just knew they wanted to win the war and in order to win the war we had to put in a shipyard. The company that built the shipyard had never built a ship before in their lives. They were the Missouri Bridge and Iron Company. They were instrumental in building the transcontinental railroad. They never built a ship before but that didn't stop them. As we have seen they did an excellent job constructing this ship.

LINDA: So a big thing I guess I hear you say is attitude. That attitude was different in war time.

ANDREW: I think it was. There were a few, but I think the attitude was better that what people would think. Now there were people looking out for themselves. They were looking to get into a blackmarket business, or getting some extra ration tickets but the vast majority of people were down there to build ships. Yeah they got a paycheck and that was good but I think the pride went a long way and the attitude was well we are going to build some ships and we are going to build the best ships that we possible can, whatever the person's job was. I am going to be the best welder that I can possibly be. I am going to be the best electrician that I can possible be. I am going to be the best electrician I can possible be. All up and down the line the attitude was I am going to do the best I can to put out the best ships that I can. I think it shows. I know it sounds corny today and maybe some people who are a little more cynical would tend to think everybody was down there for the paycheck. Yeah they liked to cash the check and use the money but I also think they liked the product they put down the river.

LINDA: The various compartments of the LST that was really an

interesting function of the ship was the ballist and how they would tip it over to launch the LCI.

ANDREW: Yeah, the compartments on the ship were all functional. Functional was the best term for that. It was a war ship. It was not a cruise ship. It was a very utilitarian ship. But going back to John Niedmeyer who designed the LST he came from submarines so he understood the idea between ballast and void areas. He knew he wanted a ship that could be beached on a foreign shore but could still ride deep enough to go through the ocean and handle the swells. So there were spaces, void spaces on the very lowest deck that when going through the ocean these could be flooded so the ship would ride deeper and try not to ride quite so rough or capsize. Then these would be pumped dry, completely dry if they wanted to beach on a foreign beach or domestic beach, what have you. An LCT, Landing Craft Tank would be carried upon the deck. To launch it was kind of a repeat of launching the LST, it would be launched sideways. They would literally grease the skids then flood the ballast tanks just on one side of the LST and get a 12 degree lift. The captain would blow the horn, the line securing the LCT would be cut and a mighty splash it would be launched to go on its way. Now this launch was never done under combat conditions. These would be done close to the beach head as possible. Say the nearest port and then the LCT would be loaded and towed or under its own power go to the enemy beach. That was not done under combat conditions but it stood the use of these void spaces and selective flooding that they could lift the ship to do that and then pump it back out to level the ship back up onto an even keel. There was a series of pumps and valves down in the engine room that the machinists had to know by heart. To me it looks like a very complicated map but the machinists had to know by heart which valves to open and close to flood these areas or to evacuate these areas.

LINDA: Some of the guys talked about the LST crashing into the waves and how seasick they got because the LST was a flat bottomed

ANDREW: The LST was a flat bottomed ship. Again it was very utilitarian. The idea of it was to land on enemy beach and therefore it had to be flat bottomed. It was very rough riding. The crewman would say that it rolled in drydock. So it did not ride smooth at all because of the length of the ship it was different from the swells of the ocean it would ride very rough almost slapping onto the bottom. It was not a comfortable ship to be on in any way but that didn't lessen the need to be on it and you got used to it one way or

another. They had to get used to it.

LINDA: After doing this did you wish you could have been on an LST?

ANDREW: I don't know if I want to be out on the ocean with it. I know I didn't want to go through one of the typhoons with it but if I could have ridden on one for a couple of days I would have very much enjoyed that or at least toured one. I wish I could find one LST that is docked someplace. A lot of places have battle ships that are docked or destroyers or submarines but the LST is not so glamorous so nobody put one on display but I would really like to visit one. I would like to go through there just to get the feel of it and maybe some of the ghosts might still be around.

LINDA: You know that I am doing a story about one particular LST but in your research on the shipyard what are some of the more outstanding stories that people have told you about particular LSTs that were born out of there.

ANDREW: Well the LSTs that came out of the actual shipyard all had a reputation being very soundly constructed and it was amazing. Some of the LSTs had their bow doors torn off as a result of hurricanes, or typhoons as they call them in the Pacific and still survived. LSTs that were attacked by the Kamikazes and I don't know if the Japanese realized the value of the LSTs or if they mistook the large flat decks for being aircraft carriers but the LSTs would come under a lot of attack and would take quite a beating. Mainly it was the longevity of the LSTs. They were basically designed to be throwaway ships. They were designed to be used on maybe one or two invasions and left there and they lasted the entire war. They were used again in Korea and my boss served on an Evansville LST down the Makong River during the Viet Nam War. The main stories though coming out of the LSTs had to do with the crew. The camaraderie of the crew and the ability to get along and the ability to adapt to situations as best they could and that would come from the Captain on down or from the crew on up just to get the job done and it was amazing the tightness of these people. Many of these LST crews had never seen salt water in their life and all of a sudden put upon a ship they had never heard of before. One an amphibious ship and to go out and serve. To land these materials and man and equipment on a hostile beach right under enemy fire. As a matter of fact one was attacked by a Japanese soldier. They landed and everything was supposed to be secure, the opened the bow door and a Japanese soldier jumped out from a nearby

bush and attacked the ship. He was cut down before he could inflict any casualties but it made the crewmen pretty nervous being on those ships and maybe a little more watchful while they were beached.

LINDA: You mentioned the tightness of the crew on the LSts. Do you think there was the same tightness on aircraft carriers, battleships, destroyers?

ANDREW: An LST was a small crew. I think they were designed to have 110 men aboard the ship. Everything was in short supply during the war so I doubt if they had a full crew of 110. Compare that to hundreds on a battleship, thousands on an aircraft carrier, and it would be harder to have this camaraderie on these larger ships. Whereas these LSTs you had a smaller group. You had no choice but to get to know each other. You shared berthing compartments, you shared the head, you shared the mess hall, you shared the watch. You shared all the trials and tribulations and that might just be sitting around and chipping paint for several days. And because of that I think the crews got very tight and became very acquainted and very family oriented as a family. I have seen that up till this day clear up into the 90's during the ships reunions. This family spirit goes on. I believe more so on a smaller ship that that can take place than the larger ones.

LINDA: Do you think there would be an interest in an LST museum where people would be able to tell their stories through video tape and computers. Bring their memorabilia flags or

ANDREW: In my research I seen a great need for an LST museum of some sort. It would be nice to get an LST restored to its World War II era and have it floating someplace for review and be able to look on the ship. The LST was not the big glamorous battleship, it was not the high flaunted air craft carrier, but the LST carried something which the Germans and the Japanese feared even more and that was the American fighting men. The American with a rifle. The LSTs delivered the American fighting men, they delivered the tanks, the equipment, the medical supplies, they evacuated the wounded and that did as much to win the war as all the other ships and I think that we need a museum or some kind of remembrance to show these things. To show what these ships did. The supply was important and these were not supply ships these were war ships. That has got to be remembered. They were under hostile enemy fire and they delivered the equipment while under fire and I think there is very much a need to educate people about what

these ships did. We still have LSTs in the Navy today. They don't look like the LSTs of World War II but we have LSTs now to prove their importance and I think we need to show what they did in World War II. I believe their are places that would accept an LST for a museum but we have to find one and get it back into shape.

LINDA: You know when, you are a State Policeman so I believe you are the kind of person that likes to think of things right smack dab in the middle of action and when you think about it, an air craft carrier sat out what five miles out into the ocean, destroyers were sitting out, but here that LST was coming right smack dab in the middle, landing on the beaches I mean that must have been for the crew real anxiety, fearful, pride, happy, you know what I mean they had to be right there in the middle of it all.

ANDREW: Well I would think that when LSTs were going into a beaching there had to be a mix of emotions. Your larger ships of course, your battleships sat off maybe 20 miles to throw their shells, the air craft carriers farther out and the air craft carriers and battleships all had their supporting groups, cruisers and destroyers. The LSTs had to go right into the thick of it. They were designed to deliver men and equipment directly on to an enemy beach directly under hostile fire and the entire ship was put in danger because once the ship was put aground they were there with nothing more than machine guns or maybe 20 or 40 millimeter guns to protect them. But they had to unload that equipment, put it exactly where it belonged. To show the danger they were under.....

During a typical invasion you can envision the air craft carriers maybe 20 - 30 miles maybe even farther than that out at sea and the would be ringed by cruisers and destroyers. The battleships would come in a little bit closer. The battleships almost relegated to just ocean going artillery platforms. But during the invasion the LSTs had to come directly on the enemy shore because they had to deliver the men and equipment exactly where it was needed and that was where the fight was going on. So now you have a ship which is liable to be struck by a mine or hit by artillery and then it goes into the second danger when it comes on shore and becomes basically a stationary target. Now some people thought LST stood for Large Slow Target. When it was on the shore it was a Large Stationary Target. Most invasions were at high tide so when the tide went out an LST could be high and dry for a long period of time so now these men are in a very foreign situation. They were under hostile fire for which they were not trained, they were not infantry men, they were designed to take that ship to sea.

They had to unload this equipment sometimes under direct enemy fire. And more than one ship suffered casualties from such short range weapons as enemy mortars. And a burial at sea while quite impressive but not very easy when it is one of your crewmen. So these people were directly under hostile fire delivering this equipment. Not the most glamorous role in the world but a very important one and they were quite successful at it.

LINDA: Could you just imagine being there.

ANDREW: I try to and I have tried to look at both sides of it being at sea on a rough riding ship, being anchored for days on end chipping paint, and then turning around and all of a sudden loading up with maybe 2100 tons of aviation fuel which means you are a floating bomb and delivering this under enemy fire not knowing if you were going to be subjected to a mine, the ever present Japanese submarines or enemy fire from the beach, it looks to me to be the worst of all the world on these LSTs yet these men persevered and they are not trying to forget it. They still have their reunions till this day. It is amazing. It is incredible.

LINDA: Some of the guys told me they avoided German torpedoes because of the flat bottom.

ANDREW: I don't think either the Germans or the Japanese had seen an LST before and to look at that through a periscope looked like a very large ship and a deep draft ship and therefore they sent torpedoes to run too deep. Now ideally you set a torpedo so that it will go underneath the ship and explode directly under the keel breaking a ship in half and sinking it. They, the Germans and the Japanese probably set the torpedoes too deep so that they would run underneath and get on their way and more than one LST saw that. Now the back of the ship, the stern, rode deeper than the bow and often times the first thing that would be hit especially by mines during landings would be the stern of the ship and it would break off and sink. Consequently it was found that they would lose almost the entire crew because all the crews quarters were in the stern of the ship so to counteract this the crew was distributed along all the compartments, up and down each side of the ship hopefully saving some of the crew in the event of a torpedo attack. I would tease some of the crewmen, ask them if they were in the stern or moved up to the bow. Saying if you got left in the stern that maybe you were expendable and if you were up in the bow maybe you were more important. Of course they did not know that everything kept a

secret. The crew did not know that one part of the ship was more vulnerable than the other. But I think the shallow draft compared to the size of the ship probably saved them from some torpedo attacks.

LINDA: I also learned that in convoys they would place the LSTs on the perimeter of the convoy because they wanted to protect the interior battleships and things like that and the fact remains that the torpedoes would go under the LSTs and destroy some of the inner ships. Have you ever heard any of that?

ANDREW: I have heard that torpedoes that passed under the LSTs that were on the outside of convoys and were going in and would strike a ship on the inside. Of course each convoy commander would have to decided which ships were most important and those of more important would be towards the center of the convoy and those of less importance would be on the outside. I am sure the crew members riding on the LST felt that his was the most important and should have been surrounded by 16 battleships and 120 destroyers. Decisions had to be made what ships were placed where. Of course in a convoy situation a chain is only as strong as its weakest link and of course a convoy can only move as fast as its slowest ship.A lot of people thought that the LST was a very slow ship at 10 knots but it was still faster than the liberty ships. So they were not the tailing charlie. It was the liberty ships that would slow down most of the convoy.

LINDA: How fast is 10 knots?

ANDREW: 10 knots is about 11 miles an hour. One crewman told me that the thing could do 15 knots going down him. I am not sure what that meant, but I guess it meant if they were being chased or if something was going on they could speed up a little bit. I suspect when the war was over and they were heading back to San Francisco they would push those engines for everything they had.

LINDA: Do you remember do any research on the 534?

ANDREW I remember when I was doing research on the 534, of course this ship had two histories, because it served at the invasion D-Day at Normandy and then had to turn around and serve in Okinawa. the two biggest invasions of the war. It was almost like two completely different ships and there ships and the history. I found a lot more on the kamikaze attack in the Pacific

rather than the Normandy invasion. Now that is not to say that the 534 wasn't important enough to Normandy but apparently it avoided any attack or any near scrapes with German minds or anything like that. They weren't so lucky in Okinawa. The Kamikazes were a very real threat. I think the worst part of throwing a kamikaze is the death wish of the Japanese. Most of the time in a combat situation if you throw enough fire power, if you throw enough lead at an enemy he will back off in a life preserving way whereas a kamikaze didn't have that. So now you didn't just have to hit the plane you had to physically destroy it before they destroyed you. The kamikaze main goal was supposed to be air craft carriers and the large ships. But a lot of these pilots it was their first flight or at least their first flight over enemy ships and they would either attack the first ship they saw or going into a beach head they would see an LSTs or they would attack a ship with a large flat deck. Well the weather deck on an LST and to an excited teenager knowing he is going to his death it may have appeared to him to be an air craft carrier. So the LSTs took their beating from the Kamikazes.

LINDA: I have also had more than one veteran shipmate tell me that the typhoons was the most frightening part of their whole experience on the 534 and these are people that had been in the Normandy invasion, had suffered through disease and evolved and they literally said that the typhoons were more fearful than the enemy.

ANDREW: I think that the typhoons could have been more fearful than the enemy for several reasons. Number one if you struck a mine or were attacked by an enemy and your ship went down somebody knew it and would come to your rescue. On the typhoon it was almost every ship for himself. You could see another ship being capsized but because of the rough weather there was nothing you could do about it. You can't shoot back at a typhoon. You can't take your aggressions out. You can't shoot it down. You can't do anything about it. The worst thing on these typhoons is no matter how bad it got it got a little bit worse. The meters on the barometers went well below any numbers. Clear down to where it said US Navy at the bottom of the barometers and they read the barometer based on whether it pointed to the U or the S or the N because it was well below any of the inches of mercury that were on there. Plus they would all be trapped, the crewmen inside the ship. Almost a trap. They would all get down as far in the ship as they could. So they were probably feeling claustrophobia because the couldn't see what was going on. They could feel the ship rolling and hear the roar of the wind

but they couldn't fight back. And for people that had been in combat and were wanting to fight back and they could I suspect it was a kind of helpless feeling and I could understand their fear involved with that.

LINDA: What else do you need to tell me?

ANDREW: At the LST at the shipyard one women was working down there and she was worked at the gun tubs which was up on top of the deck. Just as the name sounds there is a tub that surrounded the gun and she told me - well I could never touch it. And I said surely that is not security. She said no it is Indiana weather. In the summer it was too hot to touch and in the winter it was too cold. And she got a letter from her son one day who had enlisted in the Navy and the letter said Mom build them good you know why. That was his way of saying I am serving on LST so do a good job on it. She raised several children working at the shipyard down there. Some people worked at the shipyard for almost the entire duration some people would only be there for a week or two and move on either be drafted, enlisted or moving on before they could be drafted or enlisted. Now working at the shipyard was not easy on the workers as well because of rationing and what have you they couldn't commute so a lot of times they would take an apartment right within walking range of the shipyard. With the apartment owners knowing that would evict their full time tenants and rent their rooms out for 8 hours at a time so what it amounted to is you could sleep for 8 hours, you work for 8 hours and 8 hours you are out on the street. Well the beds were rented out 8 hours at a time somebody came in and woke you up, you got out of bed and somebody else got in bed right behind you. And that became the land of warm sheets. When the crewmen came into Evansville most of them came in by train to the old train station which unfortunately is gone now. It was walking distance from there to the shipyard. But a popular place to go was called Socko Dicks which is a restaurant just across the street from the shipyard where you could get what most of the men remember you get the best steak you could. It was served on aluminum platter. Apparently the platter would be pretty hot because the steak would still be sizzling when it was placed on there. When the equipment came in to build the ship not all of it was fabricated here. At the Union Tank Car Company in Mount Vernon, IL, which is about 60 miles West Northwest of here. The compartments would be made there and then shipped over here on the train. Now a train line runs directly from Mount Vernon to Evansville s but the train would ship it from Mount Vernon to Honeyburg, IN which is Northeast of here. Take it off one train and place it on another and then shipped back down here because there

was a difference between long haul weights and short haul weights that they could charge the government. So some of the compartments would come in piecemeal such as that. The LSTs had designed what they were suppose to have, the type of weaponry and all that and that looked real good but when the ship showed up in Algiers it got what was there. If the design called for 40 millimeters and all they had were 20 millimeters then that is what they had. There was an original plan to put a three inch gun on the deck but the first time they fired it, it buckled the deck plate so that was quickly scrapped. That is about all the war stories I have on it.

LINDA: Have you been to Algiers?

ANDREW: No I have not been to Algiers. I am not sure if there is anything left down there if there is a Navy yard or not. Sometimes there is a difference in the commissioning dates. Here in Evansville they would set a commission date was when they sold a ship to the Navy. But normally the Navy didn't place them into commission until they got down to Algiers and would have to go from here on down the river. Usually a River Pilot would take it down while the Navy crew might be aboard. There would be a Coast Guard River Pilot who would take the ship on down the stream. Most of them would travel during the day and tie up at night. There were some of them that did travel overnight. The biggest problem is not the depth of the river but the height of the bridges. Had to make the bridges were high enough so they could get the LST underneath going on down the stream.

LINDA: Those Coast Guard Pilots that would take a ship down the river to Algiers, how did they get back.

ANDREW: The pilots that would take the ship down there probably came back via train and they would get on a another ship and take it down stream. They spent most of the war faring ships down the river. It was an important job. They had to get down there.

LINDA: The Ship Photography, Jack Roochie, did you ever meet him.

ANDREW: No Jack Roochie passed on before I was able to meet him. I saw his work which is fantastic photographs and I have spoken to his widow for a period of time but Jack was gone before I started my research.

LINDA: His widow worked at the shipyard as a secretary?

ANDREW: I didn't know about that. It wouldn't surprise me. I know I sent her a book in tribute to Jack and got a nice note back from her.

LINDA: Somebody told me they stayed at a place here when they came to pick up the 534, that had red faucets in the bathroom. Do you know what place it was?

ANDREW: No. When the ships crew came into town some of them would come in a literally walk from the train and get aboard their ship and be ready to go downstream. So of the ships are still be painted and touch up welding being done. Others had to stay a little bit longer period of time. Whether they stayed here at Evansville, some of them up at Naval Yard at Crain which still exists and the Naval Service Warfare Center at Crain. Some of the crews got kicked out of Crain which is Bloomington, Indiana and then they had to come down here and fend for their own. Bunch of sailors on their last liberty got a little bit too rowdy got sent on down here. But I am not familiar with the story of the red faucets.

LINDA: Where did the people stay in Evansville if they were waiting.

ANDREW: Most of the ones I have talked to when they came into town went straight aboard the ship and stayed there. Some of them would walk up to the ship and say I am going to the sea in that? They weren't very enthused when they saw it. I guess they wanted to be on a battleship or something else. But that was going to be their home like it or not. And they learned to like it I think or at least learned to tolerate it.

LINDA: They did become close.

ANDREW: I think they became as much a family as you could. Like any family there were the quiet ones and there were the hotheads and there were the pranksters but I think they all got together and learned to get along. The Captain was the stern father in some cases. Some cases maybe he wasn't quite so stern. One ship had a Captain that they could help but notice that his initials were RAT and they thought that was very appropriate when you would see something with the word rat at the bottom because they thought that was appropriate for their captain. Some of the captains were Merchant Marines that would take a reduction in rank to get back into the full Navy. Others were recycled if you will from World War I. Some of the

captains were very pleased to be on amphibious ships. Others thought it was beneath their dignity and their crew could tell one from another. The crew could tell if the captain wanted to be aboard or not and it made a difference of how the ship worked. The crew was always interested in whether they had a medical officer or a corpsman aboard the ship. If they had a corpsman they could usually blackmail him into getting some alcohol and that helped with the still. Medical officers were a little bit harder to blackmail and then they had to go back to the old recipe that involved raisins somehow and the black gang, the engine crew, was always in charge of that. At one of the reunions I talked to, their first reunion I stood up and said okay who had the still and a guy raised his hand and said okay we did and the captain was there acting like he didn't know about it and I suspect he sampled some of the wares every now and then and it was a very good time. I don't think it was a good time being shot at or when they went through the typhoons but I think looking back I think they had fun.

LINDA: What about the LCVPs that were almost like the

ANDREW: The LCVPs, the landing craft, the one you always see John Wayne charging out of on the enemy ship, that was not the main function of the LSTs to carry those, though they did and had the appropriate crew with them and they were the smaller ship. They could carry a few men or probably a platoon of men or maybe a couple of jeeps something like that and they could be used maybe for shuttling back and forth to the beach or shuttling to other ships, but the cargo was not unloaded through those. Rather the entire ship would beach and the bow doors would open and a big ramp come down and they would do the unloading. Some of the LSTs carried two of the LCVPs some carried six. A few carried four. While no LST was designed to be a 4 dabbet LST some of them were. Most of them were either 2 or 6. But these were more of an auxiliary purpose because whenever possible the entire ship would land to unload the cargo. Now if it was offshore and some smaller piece of cargo had to get on shore or returned, then it was up to the LCVPs to do that. And again they were going right back into harms way and getting right back in that mess on the beach to get the equipment and maybe return a damaged piece of equipment for repair.

LINDA: How many decks did an LST have?

ANDREW: Well lets see. Lets start of the bottom. We had the engine deck on the bottom of the LST, and also that would be the engine room and the

void spaces and all that. Then you go in and you have the main deck, not the main deck, the tank deck, which was the main deck and that extended all the way to the tope. And then along each side there would be a second and third deck, cruise compartments, things such as that, berthing compartments for the crew members and then finally the weather deck on top which was a large flat deck but it could still be used to haul trucks and quipment. In the early LSTs that hd an elevator from the weatherdeck on top to the Tank Deck where they could lower one truck or tank at a time and then drive it on out. That was good technology but it was slow. So the new LSTs the 542 class replaced this elevator with a ramp so they could just drive the eq uipment off the top deck right on through the Bow doors. Traffic moved so fast they had to put a stop light on a lot of LSTs at the bow doors so they could get the people out of the tank deck and off the weather deck with as much organization was possible. The idea is to unload the equipment and get out of therefor two reasons. Number one to keep from getting shot at and number 2 once your ship was empty then you moved out and let another full ship come in and unloard. . At the invasions it was almost choreographed as far as what ships would go in. It wasn't accidental what was put in each LST. It was know what exactly was in each one and the invasion commander knew what was in each LST. So if they needed fresh water then the LST carrying the fresh water would go ashore. If they needed ammunition then the LST carrying ammunition would go ashore and that was all known and they were strategically placed knowing which would be most needed at any given time of the invasion so they could get aboard or get on shore, dislodge equipment, pick up wounded or what have you and return. Now the LSTs were not designed to be Hospital ships but that was another use that came about and it worked out very well. Once that tank deck was empty it made a very good hospital ward or a POW camp. So the LST adapted, the crew adapted and they served their purpose very well.

LINDA: What happens if they were unloading and a tank stopped. If you are going through the Lincoln Tunnel in NY and a car stops it backs up the whole city.

ANDREW: Well it would be a catastrophe if something blocked a ramp during unloading. That was the bottleneck right there. As I said before the first thing off the LST was a bulldozer and it usually had some armor plating around it to protect the operator. So if the beach was exactly what they needed for unloading then it was his job to push dirt, or sand or material up to the ramp to make the unloading. I suspect he stood by, probably had a

Winch or a Chain and if something blocked that would pull it out of the way. Get it out of the way one way or another. And if nothing else the depth division got down there and just heave hoe and move that thing out of the way. Though it was the job of the people aboard the ship to make sure that every truck was going to start and every tank was going to start and that it was ready to roll. I have to believe that one or two had to stall and I suspect they got moved out of there pretty quick to get that ship out of there.

LINDA: It is interesting the crew had to work, they each had a specific job to do, fireman or

ANDREW: Well everyone aboard ship had a specific job but most of them had more than one job. For example there were certain jobs that had to be done every day while at sea whether that meant ships clean out, lining the engines, standing watch on the deck and then there were beaching quarters and there were certain jobs each man had to do during beach and a certain place he had to stand by whether he operated machinery or helped unload. Then when the claxion horn went they went to general quarters of course then they had another place to go and each man had a job. The most important job obviously was damage control. Damage control can save or break a ship. Because when a ship is first damaged, if damage control people know their job and do it well and not wait for supervision or wait for somebody to give them an order but immediately go to it they can save a ship. Poor damage control and the ship will be lost. So I would say each man aboard the ship wore several hats. Not only because of the beaching and the general operations and general quarters but I have said before no ship was ever fully staffed in World War II so people had to cover two or three jobs. And there was some initiative involved. If you saw a job that had to be done then it was your job to go do it and not wait for someone to tell you.

LINDA: What do you want people 100 years from now to know about the Evansville Shipyard?

ANDREW: I would like it very much if a 100 years from now people new there was an Evansville Shipyard. That they know there is something more about that than a big parking lot or the place down by the casino. I would like them to know there was an Evansville shipyard. That men and women worked down there. They toiled down there in 1940 technology. That they built quality ocean going ships. Not beautiful ships, probably ugly ships, but quality ocean going ships that went out and did the job and helped win the war. A lot

of people dream about changing the world. That is a big saying. I would really like to think that these LSTs, the people that built them, the people that served on them did help change the world. We stopped aggression in Europe, we stopped aggression in Japan and we very much changed the world and I would like to impress that upon the people of Evansville, a 100 years from now. I would like to impress that upon the people that work the shipyards and serve on crews now. I would like to look at them and say - He changed the world. You may not realize it but you made the world what it is for me today. You made the country for what it is. We talk about the new world order. Changed it back then. I tell them at the reunions - you are a bunch of farmers from Nebraska or a coal miner or wherever it was that you did and wherever you did it, and you went out and took upon the best fighting force, the Germans, the Prussian tradition, the Japanese who had been a fighting spirit and they had been fighting since 1936 went out, land on fortress Europe and took it back. Sailed up through all the islands and finally sailed right into Tokyo Bay and took it back and sometimes I don't think they realize what they did. So today I would like to tell them thank for what you did and 100 years from now I would like the people from Evansville or anyone passing through to know what these people did. I would like them to know at least that there was a shipyard there.

LINDA: I think they will. I think your book is great.

ANDREW: Thank you. I enjoyed writing it and I am glad people enjoyed it.

LINDA: Do you have anything else.

LINDA: You have a real good comprehensive understanding of LSTs.

ANDREW: I feel bad at some of these reunions that they have me speak about the LSTs and I talk to well your LST has come and gone and unfortunately is a razor blade someplace and you are asking me to stand up and tell you about it. The main thing I want to do is tell you what you did. I don't think the crew members knew what they did. We look back and think about Normandy and World War II and we think wow Normandy that was it, Okinawa that was it, they didn't know that. They were worried about the big invasion going into Japan itself. They were worried about that. When I first wrote the book I wrote about Operation Tiger which is a prelude to the Normandy Invasion. Ad being the author I have the option of writing chapters where and whenever I want. The first I wrote was operation tiger which was

an invasion Slappedinsand which was England but it was found that Slappedinsand England was very similar to Normandy and we knew that because we sent frogmen over to Normandy and stole little bottles of beach to compare or whatever to compare the sand. Well the invasion of Slappeninsand operation Tiger was supposed to be a live fire exercise. Well unfortunately some German S Boats, snell boats which we call PT Boats stumbled upon it and opened with live fire. And the crewmen aboard thinking it was part of a live fire exercise until ships became damaged and sunk and people were killed. We had to keep all this secret because if the Germans looked and said what a minute if they are going to Slappinsands and that looks like Normandy they could put two and two together so it all had to be kept secret as far as what was going on. Now during that period of time if you knew either the location of the invasion, the day of the invasion or any of the pertinent information you were called a Bigot. You were a Bigotted Officer. So only Bigots had this information. And if two officers talked to each other they would ask are you a Bigot. Yes I am. Okay then we can talk. What was important after the casualties and after some of these LSTs were sunk to recover all the bodies of the Bigots. Get their know abouts. If a Bigot was captured and tortured and gave up the information it was important. So the people would go around, other ships were sent out, boats would have to find the bodies and check the dog tags. And if a body was found and he was a Bigot the body would be recovered. If he wasn't it may not be. Well I wrote this first chapter and I needed some feedback on the book so I showed it to a woman I work with. She was 26 at the time and a college graduate. And I said I need you to read this and see if it says what I want it to say. So she looked it over and I said well what did you get. She said well there was a practice invasion and the Germans stumbled on it and sunk some of our ships. I said okay and she said there is just one thing I don't understand. I said what is that. She said well you keep talking about Normandy. Did we ever invade Normandy. Did that ever happen. I said yes Christie we invaded. We won that war. So going back to your one hundred years and I would like those people to know what we did. I would like them to know we were there.

LINDA: Operation Tiger I read about that not only in your book but another book and it was really devastating. I mean the confusion that was going on.

ANDREW: During the time that I was in the Armed Forces, I was in the Marines for five years, but they still let me go to these Navy reunions, I

thank them for that. But I knew what it was like on some training exercises and training exercises weren't always taken as seriously as the actual exercise. It was just another training. Lets get this over and done with. It is going to be a great big snafu and lets get going. Unfortunately the Germans stumbled on it and made it a bigger snafu and made it a bigger problem. We lost a lot of men but we learned a lot of things. Found out not to put one entire regiment on one LST because if you lose it, in this case it was a construction regiment, engineer regiment and when that regiment was lost then that was going to be a lot of work that wasn't going to be done on the beach. So things were learned at every invasion. By the time we got to Okinawa and Iwo Jima we were getting pretty good at invasions. Earlier ones, Guadalcanal and Terowa we learned some lessons the hard way. And the LSTs learned their lessons as they went along too. Learned how to adapt and how to move on.

MATT: Could you tell Linda what a Chief Hull Inspector does and what is expected of him.

ANDREW: I can go a little bit. It is my understanding is a Chief Hull Inspector is just what the name implies. He was the chief and it was his job to be sure that that ship was being built by design and make sure that it was going to be sea worthy. It was his job to check the wells and he was very much involved with the welding to make sure of that. But to make sure that it was a sound ship and that it was something appropriate that could be sold to the Navy and that our men could be put in. He had other Hull inspectors under him but as the Chief he is the one that bore the main responsibility to say that that ship was sea worthy and ready to go.

OUTSIDE:

ANDREW: What we have here is the birthplace of the USS LST 534. Now the way this shipyard came into existence, when World War II broke out, Mayor Dress, and George Cook and other City leaders went to Washington, DC to the War Department in an effort to see, patriotically, to see what Evansville could do to help win the war. Actually they wanted to get more businesses, more employment in here to get Evansville the rest of the way out of the depression. Now one of the things they got was a shipyard to build something called an LST. They didn't know what an LST was, they didn't

care, they knew they were getting jobs. The jobs they got, a maximum of 16,500 people worked here at any given time and over 70,000 people received paychecks during the life of the shipyard. Obviously the shipyard had to be on a navigable river and it is, the Ohio River. Here we are looking from upstream to downstream and we are standing where literally would be the birthplace of the LST 534. These would be the launching ways. The ship would have to be lowered slowly down this bank. You can see how steep it is, the necessity for having to have to slowly lower the ship down. They could just release it and let it go on down the way. And then we move slightly down stream to where we see these barges and those would be the outfitting docks where the finished work was completed. The ship would be 100% watertight when launched, maybe 75% complete and then it would be sent downstream just a short distance to be finished out before it could be placed in commission. The sooner they could get a ship launched down the outfitting docks the sooner that another keel could be laid up on the assembly line moved on down. Now a lot of what we see around here is contemporary, a lot of 1980, 1990 but some of the buildings that we see now was in existence in the shipyard and that would be down here and just around the bend the Ciggi Cove, Southern Indiana Gas and Electrical docks were present and upstream the Mead Johnson Terminal is still present. But this would be the actually shipping way and these trees while not structures were present during the era of the shipyard and were actually in several of the photographs of the shipyard. Right now the River is up a little bit so if we were to launch an LST today it wouldn't take quite so long to get it down into the water. We would have to have some boats standing by. The current is a little bit stronger to make sure it didn't get lost and go down stream but the launch is downstream. But the launching wouldn't take quite as long with the River because of the River being up high. If the River was lower it would take longer to slowly winch the boat or the ship down into the water and then send her on down to be completed. Again it was a very slow process. Almost an anti-climax for the launching to take place. Back up in here would be where almost the assembly line would take place. It would make Henry Ford Proud. But the ship, if we go back to the fence where the cars are now, that is where the ship, the keel would first be laid down. First the keel would be laid down and it didn't look much like a ship at all. It would look like so many ribs. As it became more and more completed and other ships were launched, it would be closer and closer to us here at the launching ways until it finally became water tight and ready to be launched and moved on down stream. But the whole operation was self contained right in this area. All the equipment would come in by rail or by truck, mostly by rail. All the workers

would come in here and all the work would be done right on site. The administrative offices, the fabricating shops and the things such as that will be in the area off to this area. These building obviously more contemporary than from the shipyard. All those buildings were lost in the fire of 1946. But that is where the shops and officers and what have you would be. But the actual work on the ship would be taking place on the launching way. Wright Hill which is Wright High School right up behind these trees and we can see a portion of it sticking out here, there was an effort made by the Navy to close that as a security problem. People could get up there and look down and see the ships being built, but the Navy turned that down, or the City turned that down.

What you are looking at now are some of the actual transfer waves where the tracks run in 90 degrees of each other so they can move the ships either perpendicular to the river or parallel to the river. The idea being is to work them into the launching waves where we are at now where they can be set on down stream.

Now that cargo elevator back there is not from the 40's but the one down there with the roof, you will pan around to it in just a second, off to the right, see with the shingled roof, no further right it sticks out there. It is kind of framed by that conveyor belt. That is in a lot of pictures of the shipyard. The Mead Johnson Terminal. So that is 1940's era probably 1930's era because it was here when the shipyard was built. And then as you pan around as you are looking upstream you are looking upstream coming down. Now not too many of those buildings with the exception of the McCurdy Hotel which you can pick out from the picture later on that is where the shipyard really was born because the that is where the engineers got together and drew the plans up and decided where it was going to be and drew the actual diagrams for the shipyard. Of course then the ships would come around and you can just imagine the side of this. A 359 foot long ship, 50 feet wide coming around the bend there whether it was from the Enzo shipyard or one of the ones from upstream. They would come down. Of course it looks a lot different if you come back in June or July when the River is lower and it would come on down. And you are looking out right now where they would be launching and set on down stream. Of course immediately after a launch they just go down to the outfitting docks wjhich is down by where these barges are on the right. Of course these two trees were here in the 40's but the area you are looking at right now that is down by where the outfitting docks were. So once a ship was a 100% watertight ready to be

floated they would get it down there and do the completion work down there. A lot of times that is where the crews would pick them up and they would still be welding or doing the finally touch up work or provisioning it when the crews came on board and go on down stream. Sometimes they would spend a night or two here and sometimes they get off the train, walk down here, get on the ship and go down stream just spend hours if not minutes in Evansville. It just depended on each ship.

LINDA: It must have been days though.

ANDREW: Some of them would spend days. They get here and the ship wasn't ready yet and they would spend days here. Maybe they had to help finish the ship. They might have had to do some touch up painting or help provision or whatever. It would depend. Some would spend days, some would spend hours and some of them just minutes. Some of them wanted to spend more in Bloomington than they did before they got kicked out by the shore patrol or by the civilian employees.

Of course it is really a poignant moment when they are laying the reef when the crews come back in town and they put the reef on the water and set it on down stream. There aren't any dry eyes when that happened. Especially ones who actually came and picked up the ship here. Just kind of orient yourself. You are looking due South when you are looking that way. So the river makes a complete horseshoe bend at this point.

Talking about a building:

The ground floor was protected by sand bags in the flood of 37. It just surprised me how they got that through. I don't know if Mayor Dress was a real ramrod or how he managed to get that through.

LINDA AND ANDREW TALKING ABOUT FLOODS AND INCIDENTS AND HOW THE MAYOR PERSUADED WASHINGTON FOR THE SHIPYARD.

The only original building is the one with the smokestake.