

Makinsters Interview

Tape 1, Side1

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Linda: So they're not going to hear me,so I'm going to be saying to you, "Oh, that's a great story. Start with....when I was...", or something like that, okay?

Harold: Oh, okay.

Linda: So....um....Harold, why don't you just tell me the recreation of what you remember of the day you met Rita.

Harold: Well, I was in Evansville to...on a...uh...on a...uh....draft to go aboard a landing ship, an LST. And a friend of mine who was in the same draft with me, Navy boy, we were uptown enjoying a beverage in a bar across the street from the Bendeaux Hotel. And things were rather slow there in this particular place and I said, "Why don't we go across to the...to the hotel and see what's going on, which we did. We walked across the street and went up to the bar in the Bendeaux, sitting there, ordering a beverage. And this gentleman came up and tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Son, would you like to join us for dinner?" So I motioned to my friend. I said, "You watch me real close, now, we'll see what is going on here." But I agreed to go with him to the table where Rita was sitting, and her mother and stepmother and sat down. I was a little bit embarrassed, because there was an Army officer there with a gold braid on. I was scared to death. I was just a seaman then. But, anyway, that's how I met Rita, was her father tapped me on the shoulder and he said I looked like the cleanest sailor at the bat, so that's the one he...he picked me to go meet his daughter. That's I met her, in the Bendeaux Hotel in Evansville, Indiana. I was there to pick up the ship.

Linda: At the time were you thinking, “I’m going to go over and see if this is like a pretty girl, a dog...I mean, what were you thinking as you were walking towards the....

Harold: No, I had no idea what....uh...I just thought he was very generous and hospitable. I was a sailor and there weren’t too many sailors in Evansville. And I just thought he wanted to honor the Navy by buying me a dinner. I had no idea that Rita was there. He knew what he was doing. I had no idea myself. She was sitting there when I went up to the table and there was a chair for me. She had a blue hat on with a....

Rita: It was a black hat with a bluebird.

Harold: Black hat with a blue bird and some kind of a screen over...it came down over her eyes. And that’s how I met her. I had no idea that she was there.

Linda: When you approached the table...uh...I mean, did you say, “Whoa! This could be my lucky day....this is a real good chick or...?”

Harold: No, I was scared to death, because I saw the gold braid on this Army man that was sitting at the same table and I was ill at ease in regards to the gold braid, but I stayed with it and sit down and enjoyed the....did we eat there or was it just a beverage that I had there? I can’t remember.

Rita: I think we were having some hors d’ouerves and then somebody didn’t....one of them wanted Chinese food, so then we got up and went to a Chinese restaurant.

Harold: That’s right. Anyway,...

Rita: But we were going to have dinner there. That’s what we were supposed to do.

Harold: That's how I met Rita.

Linda: So what happened, Rita? You were sitting there and said....

Harold: Well, here came this handsome sailor. (laughs)

Linda: Oh, yeah, don't forget that part.

Rita: Actually, how the whole thing got started was my mother and stepfather-to-be had come up from Kansas City to Evansville thinking I would have a graduation ceremony in January.

Harold: Oh, you were graduating from high school.

Rita: And I was graduating from high school, but I graduated a half year early, so there was no ceremony and here they'd driven all the way up there thinking, you know, they'd see me get my diploma. And...uh...dad and Hazel, my stepmother, wanted to take them out to dinner, you know, to kind of make up for the disappointment. So I went along and we were at the Bendome Hotel supposedly to have dinner and dad and Hazel and Wilke and mother were busy chatting.

Harold: Wilke Was a gold braid.

Rita: Wilke was the gold braid. Were busy chattering and I'm just sitting there. I mean, they're talking about all kinds and I have no \_\_\_\_\_ and finally I said, "Hey, this is supposed to be my celebration and I'm the only one here that doesn't have a date." And I was just joking, you know, more or less. And...uh...so dad gets up to go to the restroom and when he came back from the restroom....

Harold: Well, he didn't find me in the restroom.

Rita: I know, but he had to pass the bar to go to the restroom, the mens room.

Harold: That's the excuse he gave when he got up was whatever you...

Rita: Yeah, I have to go to the restroom, but he went up instead and picked Harold up from the bar and brought him back and then told me, "Now you got a date, so let's don't hear anymore about that." So there, that's the rest. And as Harold told you, we went to dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Then the folks all disappeared when we got back and we sat there in the Bendome Hotle for about six hours.

Harold: Til the bar closed.

Rita: And that's when we got acquainted and, you know....

Linda: Your mom and this guy Wilke were living in Evansville?

Rita: Oh, no. They drove up from Kansas City, Missouri, especially....

Linda: For the camera, for the audience...tell me...say, "My father and...."

Rita: My father and stepmother....I was living with them and going to Bosse High School in Evansville, Indiana, and graduating from Bosse. And my mother and stepdad drove up from Kansas City thinking there'd be some kind of a ceremony, which there wasn't. And...uh...so Harold went back, of course,....where were you staying? I never did ask you.

Harold: Well, we were in a barracks. The crew was...we had quarters in the...some barracks there in town. The ship wasn't ready for us yet. We hadn't picked up the ship yet.

Voice: Could you...could you just start that again? If you can look at him and ... he can tell...say where...where he was staying.

Rita: Oh, you mean leave the part out about like I never asked him?

Voice: No, you were great. I just need to set my camera up. If you can say where you were staying.

Harold: Well, as I recall, we were staying in a Navy barracks there at the shipyards in Evansville. We weren't ready...the ship wasn't ready for us to board, so that's where we were staying and I got the liberty to come up town.

Rita: And that's what happened.

Harold: That's what happened.

Linda: Was your father a playful kind of guy? I mean, was this unusual for him? So you have to start out, "My father...this was typical of my dad to do something like this...or atypical."

Rita: Well, it was a little bit typical, because he was a very playful person, but he had never been very playful with my dates. I mean, you know, they always had to come in and go through the third degree before I could even go to a movie show or anything with them, so it was kind of not typical for him to go pick up a young man he didn't know and bring him to the table. I think

he was showing off a little bit for the folks from Kansas City. But, anyway...

Linda: It benefited you.

Rita: Yeah. Yeah. And then Harold came down. I, of course, went home that night ...when he went back to the barracks, I went home too...with my dad and stepmother. And my mom...

Harold: You mean back to the hotel.

Rita: No, I went to the house.

Harold: Oh, you went home. Oh.

Rita: Yeah, we lived there. I was living with dad and Hazel.

Harold: I thought I'd take you up the elevator to....

Rita: You did no such a thing.

Harold: I did too.

Linda: In your dreams.

Harold: I did too. I said good night to you up on the fourth floor.

Rita: Well, that's possibly true.

Harold: I didn't know that you'd gone home. I came back the next morning you were gone. I guess you had gone home.

Rita: Yes.

Harold: I thought you were staying there.

Rita: No. No. No. No. But just dad and Hazel were...were up in the room where mom and Wilke were staying.

Harold: I thought you were staying at the hotel.

Rita: I had to go up there to get my ride home.

Harold: Okay. I got you.

Rita: Okay, but anyhow, I went home and he came back this morning, but, of course, I was at school then picking up my stuff and my diploma. So.

Harold: But I'd given you my address and P.O. Box and whatever...

Rita: Yeah. And I gave you my address. You wrote me one letter while I was still in Evansville working at the...uh...Chrysler Corporation.

Harold: I didn't even know the ship number then. We hadn't picked up the ship yet.

Linda: So what address did you give her?

Harold: Well, I wrote her a letter then...after we probably got down to New Orleans, I probably wrote to you and by that time I knew that it was an LST 534, an APO number I think they called it in those days. And they kept track of where we were so we'd get our mail.

Rita: And then I...

Harold: Then you sent me a picture.

Rita: Yeah.

Linda: Rita, what did you think when you're sitting there and your father went to the bathroom and drags Harold back? I mean, you see this guy....I mean, come on, you know, I've been at a dinner table....so here's this...your dad and he's got a guy and you're sitting there going....what were you thinking?

Rita: Why I was...I was embarrassed...just...and Harold was very...he too. And it was just, like I said, I think my dad was just kind of showing off a little bit and I certainly didn't expect just to sit and have the dinner and then get up and go home. I didn't expect to prolong.

Harold: Marry the guy.

Rita: Yeah. And end up marrying him. But my dad always got such a laugh out of telling that he picked out his own son-in-law. And he really did. I didn't have anything to do with it until later.



Linda: So the dinner itself was uneasy. I mean, he sitting there with this Army captain or whatever and you're sitting there saying, "Oh, my God! What has my father done?" Like all girls would say.

Rita: Yes, and I mean...

Voice: Um...I hate to...stand by...could you just unfold your arms.

Harold: Sure.

Voice: Thanks.

Rita: Harold...coming from the Pacific Northwest, we really had absolutely nothing in common. I'd lived in Kansas City all my life except for this year of high school when I came up to Evansville, but...uh...we didn't have anything to talk about. I mean, ...you know...like most young men you meet at your high school or whatever, you know....but we were a little uncomfortable through the dinner. But once the folks left, then you asked more intimate questions face to face. Like 'Where did you go to school?' and 'Where were you born?' and we got acquainted. And then, of course, we wrote to each other for fourteen months through the invasion. And then when Harold came home and transferred from 534 to 1062....you got a thirty day leave?

Harold: Yeah. That's when we were married, wasn't it?

Rita: Yeah.

Harold: I think it was.

Rita: It's been so long ago.

Harold: Yeah. that's right.

Linda: A lot of water under the bridge since then, right?

Rita: Well, anyway, he had decided that he would like to marry me. And so he had broken off his engagement and had...she returned the ring to his sister in California. So Harold sent for the ring. That's why it took him three days to propose to me. It took him that long to get the ring. And then...then...

Linda: He gave you a ring that he bought for another girl?

Harold: Well, she still has it.

Rita: Yeah. I still have it. I just...we just put it in a different mounting, because she was a little bit...

Harold: I won the money in a poker game in England and I sent it to my sister to buy the ring for....

Rita: Is that what you...for Marie, but I got it. But anyhow, then we had to wait three days for...they...you had blood tests. I don't know whether they still do that or not, but...

Harold: Well, when the 534 came back to the states we went into Hoboken and the port side got the first thirty day...they call it R & R...they got the first thirty days, the port side, as I remember. And I was on the starboard side crew, so I had to wait a month in Hoboken before I could take my thirty

day leave and I had intended to go back to Washington state and I figured on the way I'll just take that Spirit of St. Louis, or whatever train it was that took me through St. Louis and on into Kansas City, and I'd drop off and say 'Hi' to Rita in Kansas City on my way home. And when I...and, of course, I called her or wrote to you and told you. So Rita met me at the train station when I got there and that's when I...as I recall, that's when I made up my mind that, 'Hey, I'm not going to lose you.' That's when I phoned and got the ring sent out. So why I took the three days or four days before we could get married.

Linda: So you guys....uh....I mean, you met....

Harold: I didn't even know her really. I still don't know her. (Laughs) 1953.

Rita: Like I told you when I first mentioned this story, if one of my kids that had done something like this, I would have had a fit. But those were strange days in war time. I mean, romances were very lightening quick. That's the reason why a lot of the guys married overseas...married English or German girls or something. Can you take time out for a minute?

Linda: Sure. Absolutely. (Pause)

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Linda: Rita, I still want you to tell me that you're sitting at this table and here comes Harold. Did you think he was cute?

Rita: Oh, yeah. Yeah. I thought he was very handsome, but like I said, I was so kind of embarrassed.

Voice: Let me just break. Uh...the way she's going to cut this we may not actually hear what you said before, so you have to give every answer as if it's the

first time. So you shouldn't say, 'As I said...' This might be the first time that she's hearing it.

Harold: He's quite an editor, isn't he?

Rita: Well, do I start over now?

Linda: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Rita: Oh! When I first saw my dad approaching the table there with Harold beside him I thought maybe he was a son of somebody that Harold knew...or my dad knew. I didn't think too much about it, but then when dad walked up and said, "Have a seat."...you know, and,"Here's your date. Don't let me hear anymore about...."

Harold: That's the way it was. He introduced me to you as 'Here's your date, Rita.'

Rita: Yeah. And of course that threw us both, you know.

Harold: That's why I was a little uneasy, cause I didn't know her.

Rita: Because I was just being mouthy when I mentioned that I was the only one that didn't have a partner at the table, and it was supposed to be my party. But, yes, I thought he was very handsome. I still think he's handsome. He's got dimples and everything. I always wanted dimples. I never got any. You do too. I slept on a button once when I was a little girl hoping that it'd make a dimple, but it didn't work.

Linda: You really wanted dimples bad just to figure out 'if I sleep on a button.' So during the dinner, I mean, obviously it was a little tense, because of all that. But then, ...when did you realize that...like every girl, when you first meet a guy that you think is cute, you know, you....you sort of...your heart starts beating faster and you start kind of getting, you know, excited. I mean, when did you realize this about Harold?

Rita: Well, I think after, like I said, when we returned back over to the hotel and my stepmother and dad went up to the room where Wilke and mom were. And then we were alone. That you began to ask questions and....any conversation I think stimulates....

Harold: I gave you the right answers.

Rita: ...another person. Yeah. And he was not smart Alec and he wasn't overly

Harold: Aggressive.

Rita: Aggressive. And I think I fascinated him a little bit, because I was such a big city girl and he had come from Calama, is where he was born and went to school in Kelsoe(?). We just...when we exchanged our addresses I gave him my Evansville address with my stepmom and dad. And I got one letter from him before I left Evansville and went back to Kansas City to live with my mother. Then is when we spent most of the time writing our letters. He was very romantic in his letters, but...like I said, you know, we had fourteen months to lie to each other.

Harold: Well, you sent me that picture.

Rita: Yes. I didn't show Linda that picture either.

Harold: I put it on the inside of my locker. Very, very pretty picture. Really. So all the whole crew, including your dad would come by and if my locker was closed, if it wasn't locked, which we didn't lock our locker, they'd open that locker so Rita picture would be there. They did do that all through England and all the time I was on the ship.

Rita: I better get that picture out or nobody's going to understand why in the world they were opening your locker and looking at me.

Harold: Well, no, it's just your face.

Rita: It was my graduation picture actually.

Harold: I think that's when I made up my mind I wasn't going to let you get away, if I could help it.

Linda: But you were engaged to somebody else during this time?

Harold: At the time, yes. Yeah. At the time.

Linda: So...at the time....start out, "at the time...."

Harold: In fact, the girl I was engaged to married the same day you and I married.

Rita: Oh, did she really?

Harold: She sure did.

Rita: I'll be darned. I didn't know that.

Harold: Well, I'd written her....

Linda: Hold on a second. We got to...(Break in tape) End Side 1.

## HAROLD'S INTERVIEW

### TAPE 1, SIDE 2

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Linda: .....Evansville.

Harold: (Laughs) He's really recording things.

Linda: Matt. Look at me.

Rita: So you going to send that to your wife for her birthday.

Linda: I do...I do have pictures. Of every shoot we do I take pictures of him, so he can document it too, so....are you rolling? Okay. Okay, let's start back when...with your father was bringing you this guy.

Rita: Okay.

Linda: And...uh...you know, you were a little nervous during and then you had gone up to...they had gone into the room and you guys were alone. So. You were talking about kind of more personal things then.

Rita: Right. Right. We were talking about his school, where he went to school. What...his part of the country. Probably...must have been some hunting and fishing in there, because he's always been the outdoor type. And I talked about my schooling and the fact that I was...had just come up to Evansville the year before to live with my dad and stepmother. For my

junior year of high school and then was transferred to Provo, Utah, where my dad was instrumental in building the steel mill in Geneva, so I actually spent my junior year of high school there, then went back to Evansville to graduate from Bosse. And those were the kind of things we were telling each other about. And he was telling me about his life and I was telling him about mine. Then we exchanged addresses and I think Harold had a APO number or something was it?

Harold: That was not until we got to New Orleans. I didn't even...hadn't even picked up the ship yet.

Rita: Oh. Oh. So he wrote to me then and we carried on a correspondence for fourteen months.

Linda: So you only saw him that one night in Evansville?

Rita: That one night for six hours. Yeah. Then when he came home, of course, on leave. I was in Kansas City then. I had gone back to live with my mother.

Linda: So do you remember writing the first letter to him?

Rita: Ah, yeah, I remember writing, but I can't really remember what I wrote. I probably told him about graduating and possibly about my job at Chrysler Corporation, going to work there. 'Cause that was kind of exciting.

Linda: When did you decide to send him that picture?

Rita: Gosh, I don't...I don't really remember. Uh. When the picture was taken even...whether it was taken in Evansville. I don't know whether I sent it to



him...I think I sent it to you when you were still in the states, didn't I, honey?

Harold: No. I got it after we were over in England.

Rita: Oh, did ya? Well...well then it must have been after I'd gone back to Kansas City and I had it taken then.

Linda: So you were probably writing back and forth and at some point...you said he was writing you romantic letters...

Rita: Yeah.

Linda: So at some point you made the decision that only a young girl can make is that you're going to 'Wow' him, right?

Rita: Well, I don't think that I necessarily thought I'd 'Wow' him. As a matter a fact, when Harold came back through Kansas City I wasn't the least bit sure that anything would go any further. I can remember being very proud of myself to have him to show off to my sister, because she had a million boyfriends, you know. And I...well, I hadn't had time really to have too many boyfriends, but I know that she....accompanied me down to the train station to meet him and that's probably just about the time that...that we had our first kiss...when I kissed him 'hello'. And six days later, why we...kissed again, I guess in front of the preacher this time.

Harold: Yeah.

Rita: Yeah. So. It was a whirlwind romance, but like I said before, I wouldn't...if one of my daughters had a done that, I'd of had a heart attack.

Linda: So, Harold, you were...you went over to Normandy and then you came back and it was that second thirty day leave that you went to Kansas City and decided to....

Harold: Well, yeah, it was the starboard side. The ship was allowed a thirty day rehabilitation leave and I was on my way home to Washington state and I chose a route through Kansas City on my way, because I wanted to stop and see Rita and say 'Hi' to her. And that's the reason I was in Kansas City.

Linda: Did you have marriage on your mind at that minute?

Harold: Oh, I think I probably did. Yeah.

Linda: So talk about that.

Harold: Well, you know, war was still on and I was nineteen and I was infatuated by Rita. I mean, she kind of excited me and turned me on. I thought she was too good to turn loose. Yeah, I was thinking marriage. You bet. Anything to play the role in those days. Everybody in...when the war is on why you don't know how long things are going to go for you, so you want to fulfill or complete your life as much as you can, which includes marriage. And she was a cute little gal, so I thought, 'What the heck. Go for it.' And she did. (Laughs)

Linda: So you did all the blood work and went down and filed for the...

Harold: Well, yeah, we had to wait three days. You had to get...in those days you had to get a blood check for whatever reason. Then we were married.

Rita: We were married in the church where I went to church, down in the plaza. If you are familiar at all with Kansas City , Missouri, the Plaza is one of the very highlighted areas, because of the architecture and the lighting and what have you. And this was the new Christian Church built there in the Plaza. And I had been a member of that church and that's where Harold and I were married by Reverend Duncan. When we had our Fiftieth it was right over here. It has since turned into something beside a little church. Just a block over here. We had....we repeated our vows.

Harold: That's right. We did. And I cried.

Linda: Good.

Harold: Because of the...the ceremony when we first married, it was 'love, honor and obey' and now the ceremony says, 'love, honor and respect.' It didn't say , 'obey'.

Rita: That's why he cried. He said, "What happened to the obey?"

Linda: What did your parents think about you Haroldg these very quick decisions?

Rita: Well, my father wouldn't have dared say a word against my marriage, since he's the one that picked Harold up for me. But my mother....

Harold: She was all for it.

Rita: ...she was positive about it...because....like I say, a single mother with three teenage children, you know....war time and whatever. She was...she was a pretty...tolerant type person, she was.

Harold: Well, it didn't take too much tolerance to accept...

Rita: Well, I mean about different events in your life. See, my mother was fifteen when she got married, so to her I was practically an old maid, I guess. Seventeen. You know. What are you waiting for?

Harold: Oh, that's right. On the marriage license I changed the seven to a nine, so...if you remember....to make...because you didn't have to have your parents consent.

Rita: Oh, that's right. You weren't nineteen.

Harold: I was. You weren't. You were seventeen.

Rita: Well, I had my parents consent.

Harold: Well, but on the form....

Rita: You were the one that couldn't wait for yours.

Harold: Maybe...no, I was nineteen, honey, when we married. Anyway, I changed the seven to a nine. I remember that. No biggie.

Linda: So that the Judge would say 'Okay.'?

Harold: Yeah. We got the license. Your mother wasn't there when we got it.

Rita: Oh, that might be why.

Harold: I think I just changed it to a nineteen, because you were of age at nineteen, but not seventeen. I think your mother would have had to have been with us.

Rita: That's possibly true.

Harold: But, anyway...

Linda: So then what happened? Now you're married. You're going to have to go off.

Rita: We spent our honeymoon on the train to Washington state.

Voice: Actually, if you can start that again, that would be...

Rita: What?

Voice: Start from 'We started our honeymoon....

Rita: We had our honeymoon on the train from Kansas City to Kelso.

Harold: Washington.

Rita: Where, of course, Harold's father lived, and his foster mother and father lived there.

Harold: Well, we stayed two or three days here. Then I had to get right back.

Rita: Right. Then he had to go to Norfolk, Virginia.

Harold: To pick up the other ship.

Rita: To pick up the 1062 there. And so we went back to Kansas City. And he shipped out from there, went through the canal.

Harold: Yeah. Out to the Pacific.

Rita: Yeah. Out to the Pacific. Was partially out...away from...in the ocean when they got orders to turn around and come back to Seattle.

Harold: Well, we had a LC...LCM on our deck and there was only one crane in the Pacific ocean that could lift it off and that was at Pearl Harbor. And when we got to Pearl Harbor the crane was busy repairing a damaged air craft carrier, so the only other crane available to us was in Seattle, Washington. So I...using our code that we had set up, Rita and I, I indicated that Jim Elcart...I just heard that Jim Elcart is going to be in Seattle. It'd be nice if you could say 'Hi' to him. Well, she knew I was coming to Seattle. I don't know how I got the date in there. I got it in there some way. Got it through the censored mail. So when I got to Seattle you were there. The reason we went back to Seattle is to get this LCM off...I think the LCI or LCM off our deck. Was this huge crane.

Linda: And that's the time that you took a train to Seattle.

Rita: I took the train out from Kansas City, changed trains in Denver and came to Kelso and then Harold came down. Do you remember?

Harold: No I don't

Rita: Yeah. I was at his dad's little house in West Kelso. And Harold came down with his brother, was stationed at Woodby(?)...

Harold: That's right.

Rita: ...island.

Harold: We pulled into to Seattle to Pier 91 or some pier.

Rita: Did you go out of your brothers pier or come into it? Where Bobby was serving. One time....

Harold: Well, we came....it doesn't really matter, honey, but we came into Seattle.

Rita: Anyway, he and his brother Bob came down on the bus.

Harold: And then I grabbed a bus and came down. That's right.

Rita: To West Kelso. And then, of course, he had to be back up there just a couple of days, back up to Seattle to ship out.

Harold: And you went up with me.

Rita: And I went up with him. And there's a tower in Seattle, which is a very small building now compared to the things that they've built since. But it was the tallest building.

Harold: Smith Tower.

Rita: Smith Tower. Is that the name?....in Seattle. And I went and I got permission to climb up in the top of the tower, because you could see...and

I knew which pier his LST was docked...and I watched it pull out and cried and tears rolling ...I was up there in the top of the clock tower watching Harold's ship moving out.

Harold: Oh, it went out through Puget Sound, yeah. You could watch us for a long ways.

Rita: Yeah. I watched it for a long ways.

Harold: We were headed over then to, out in the Pacific where the 534 was.

Rita: And I'm trying to think of the hotel that....was it the Shanuck?

Harold: Honey, I don't remember.

Rita: Anyway, they had Perry Cuomo singing a song on the...and that's when you put the nickel in and, you know, punched some buttons and got me in the....and I was sitting this, one of our favorite songs sobbing away, you know. Yeah, that was sad. Knew then how all these ladies felt when they'd sing those songs about please bring....

Harold: Don't sit under the apple tree with anyone else but me.

Rita: No, about harbor....harbor lights and all those sad, romantic songs.

Harold: And Careless, White Cliffs of Dover, Bluebirds.

Rita: Course, like I said, after he shipped out I went to see my sister in Anacartus, because my brother-in-law was stationed at Woodby Island. Visited there for a little while and I had left my train ticket at home under



the scarf on the dresser. My return trip ticket to Kansas City. And when I got back from Anacortus the return trip ticket was missing, so I couldn't go home. So that's how I got stuck in the state of Washington

Harold: Don't know anything about it. I really and truly didn't know anything about that.

Rita: Well,...he....anyway, it's very strange that the ticket disappeared.

Linda: Who did you live with when you stuck in the state of Washington?

Rita: Well, Harold's father had married meanwhile and he and LouLou, his wife were going to move into her house. So I just stayed there and kept the little house where the diddy bag disappeared.

Harold: Oh, the seabag. Yeah.

Rita: Yeah. And I just rented that house. And that's what I said, I was trying to save up money, because it cost quite a bit to take the train one way. And went up to visit my sister and brother-in-law again in Anacartus and the war was over, so I just stayed there.

Linda: When you came out here to meet him because he was going to be here for a day or two, is that the first time you met his dad?

Rita: Oh, Yeah. Yeah. Everybody was kind of surprised when they me, because his other girlfriend was kind of a big girl. (laugh) you went from one extreme to another. No, she wasn't that big, but she was...she was large.

Harold: Well, Bobby....my brother Bob...when he saw you he came to me and said, "Where did you find her? Where did you find her?"

Rita: They were all pretty surprised, because I was so little.

Harold: Well, they just had no idea I was thinking about getting married.

Rita: And besides, Marie had been his girlfriend. I didn't know that, but she'd been his girlfriend for two or three years and they had him pretty well figured out to be married to Marie and then all of a sudden he shows up with me.

Harold: Married.

Rita: Married. Right. And then he shipped out again and I just stayed here, which is probably a good thing. I don't think we would have made fifty-three years if Harold had had to come back to Kansas City. He didn't care for it. He liked to hunt and fish and see the ocean.

Harold: It was like I said, I'm the reason we stayed together for the fifty-three years.

Rita: Right, cause you got your own way. That was that 'obey' part that they threw out the second time.

Linda: Did you learn anything in the war that helped you stay together fifty-three years?

Harold: Absolutely nothing that I recall. No.

Rita: He got tired of chasing all the girls around and wanted to have one home base.

Harold: No. No. No. Uh...I don't know where or what inspired me, but...uh..I just...uh...truly felt we should stayed married, you know, for the rest of our lives, which if she doesn't straighten out, we're not going to make it.

Linda: You're going to turn him into a couple of twenty...

Rita: Yeah, a couple of 25 year olds.

Harold: No, nothing from the war really.

Linda: How long were you gone from the time you got on the 1062? How long were you on that?

Harold: Oh, I think that was in...the war was over that September of '45, if I remember right. I think that's when the war was over. And then I came home...I had enough points, because of the experience on the 534 I had enough points....I had accumulated enough to be discharged in December of '45, so I was gone from March of '45 to December is all. It was about six-seven months, probably.

Linda: What was it like when you knew you were going to come home.

Harold: Oh, Well, that...actually, I lacked a half a point when we were in....the war was over and we were in....we put the first troops in Japan. We went into the harbor there in Yokihama and we took the First Calvary in to occupy the airport there at Yokihama. Our ship took them in. And I had enough...I lacked a half a point of having enough to warrant discharge.

And our orders were to go down to New Guinea and I knew that was going to be at least four or five months down and back, but I couldn't get off the ship. And in those days if you had enough points, you just called any ship you observed in the harbor that was making steam and asked them where they're going and can I ride with you and that's the way I got home from Tokyo, or from Yokohama, off the 1062. I had enough points and we came back four or five months later to Japan. And I saw a ship making steam and so I...I was a signalman, so I just flashed to them and got the signalman and asked him where they were bound. In those days you would talk. You have to worry about what you said. The war was over. And they said San Diego. And I said, "Do you have room for one more?" "If you get here in twenty minutes." I think it was something like that. I had a half an hour max to get off...get everything packed in the seabag and get off that ship and get over to the other one. But I made it. So it took us fifteen days to get...if I remember right, to get from Tokyo to San Diego. And I stayed down there in San Diego for two days and kept nosing around trying to find out how I could get...I didn't have enough money to take the train to get home, so I found out the Shangri La was going to go from San Diego to Birmingham, so I bummed a rider on the Shangri La and came on up on the Shangri La, the big aircraft carrier. Got lost two or three times on the ship. Huge thing compared to what I had been on. And we pulled into Birmingham and I was discharged out of Birmingham. that's when I came on home.

Rita: Just in time for Christmas.

Harold: Yeah, I was excited about it. I wanted to get out. I wanted to get home. I'd had enough of the Pacific and the Navy and they wanted me to sign...they'd of made me a Chief if I'd of signed over. I was a...I think by then I was a second class signalman. And they said, "If you'll sign over for

another four years, we'll make you a Chief." But I didn't want any part of that, so I came on home. Should have stayed in really. I'd be on a pension now from the Navy. No biggie.

Rita: And that was...like I used to always tease your brother Bob, because he joined the Navy and he never got a.....(Tape stops)

END OF TAPE

#### MAKINSTERS INTERVIEW

#### TAPE 2, SIDE 1

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Linda: You know, everybody loves a good love story and you guys are a perfect love story.

Rita: Well, we've had our moments. Like throwing the stew pot in the middle of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Linda: Pigs in a blanket.

Harold: Oh my.

Linda: Okay. So talk about...start out saying, "I didn't know he was coming home..." or tell me about when you...

Rita: Well, when the war was actually over, you know, and the big lines JAPAN SURRENDERS and all this, why I knew I had to get home, because Harold would be coming home sometime, but I didn't know exactly know when. And letters were always usually two or three weeks late, you know, behind times. So I decided I would wait there, because I figured he'd probably come back to Seattle and by this time...I thought, 'Well, there's

no point in me going back to Kansas City and him having to come all the way there to see each other first when the war was over. So I stayed there and somewhere along the line....

Harold: Stayed in Kelso.

Rita: In Kelso. In this little house. And somewhere along the line....I was working at Snyders Hardware then....I had found a little horse, a little stuffed horse. A darling little thing. And you wound it up and it played ANCHORS AWAY. And, of course, I had to have it. I think it was probably was reason why I didn't have enough money for a return ticket to Kansas City is because it probably cost an arm and a leg, but I bought it and I had just wound it up to play ANCHORS AWAY and sat it on the bed and the front door opens up and here Harold had come in. See, I hadn't...well, he couldn't tell me. He didn't know which ship he was going to be and where they were going to go until it was there, as he explained. He said he thought...he thought he was going bananas when he heard ANCHORS AWAY the first thing when he walks in when he was home. You remember the horse? I think Linda has it now.

Harold: I sure do. It was black with white feet. Yeah.

Rita: Yeah. I think I gave it to Linda for her collection, but I had just wound it up.

Harold: I hadn't called you from Birmingham had I?

Rita: No. No. I had...

Harold: I wanted to surprise you.

Rita: Evidently. You sure did surprise me, but I surprised him equally as well by playing ANCHORS AWAY when he comes in his front door. He says, “What is ANCHORS AWAY doing here?” That was our meeting after the war was over with. And then, of course, like I said, we stayed. Harold went to work down at the mill. Went from there.

Linda: And you stayed working at the hardware store?

Rita: Yeah, for a little while and then I worked at a portrait studio doing...taking the wrinkles out and that kind of stuff you used to have to do. They do it now different ways. But I had two or three jobs, but then I had my family and that’s what I wanted. That’s all I ever wanted to be was a wife and mother. It took me a while. Seven years, I think, before I was successful.

Harold: Wasn’t my fault.

Rita: No. It certainly wasn’t your fault.

Linda: Anything else you want to say to end this part of this?

Rita: No. Except it’s been pleasant meeting you all and doing it. I think it’s going to be a real wonderful project when you’re all done.

Linda: It’s amazing. Do you know anybody else that has met...that met because of the war? You met each other because of the war.

Harold: Yeah, that’s true. No, I don’t know of....

Linda: I don’t either.

Rita: Well, didn't anybody on the 534 marry some English girl or Irish girl or French girl?

Harold: No. No. We...no, not to my knowledge. No.

Rita: So many of them did, you know, that...and...uh...but that's a surprise that they all come home and married their childhood sweethearts or newly met sweethearts or whatever.

Linda: Did you write home when you were in England? Did you write home at all and say, "I know I am going to marry this girl...."

Harold: No.

Linda: ...because you were still engaged to good old Marie.

Harold: No I didn't. No I didn't communicate. I wrote to Maria.

Rita: The only one that knew was your sister Anita.

Harold: Oh, yeah, I did....yes. I sent Anita some money to buy that engagement ring. I won't say how much. I'd won it in a poker game using British Pound notes. They were worth \$4 then. A pound was \$4 then. And they allowed us to play a little poker on there, except Stockdale. He'd break us up anytime he'd see us playing...gambling...well he'd break it up. Old Stockdale.

Rita: His sister knew, because when you came home from the service wasn't she in San Diego then.

Harold: Jeannie was, yeah. Jeannie knew I was home, but she didn't betray me.

Rita: Yeah. Well....



Harold: Cause it was two weeks before I got up to Birmingham.

Linda: Well, this has been a great story. You guys are unbelievable.

END OF SECTION

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Linda: ...got the ship in New Orleans.

Harold: Okay. yeah, we just had a small crew to go down the river, if I remember right.

Linda: Yeah, so far I can account for about twenty people.

Harold: I know I stood the signalman watch.

Linda: Well, we're going to be talking about that. You've been in the movies, you've been doing this your whole life, haven't you?

Harold: Oh, yeah.

Linda: Okay. talk to me...oh, no. Actually, I have my cell phone, so...everybody knows how to get a hold of me and I have to turn it off. I have to remember to turn off the cell phone and turn off the camera, because it also has an automatic thing.

Voice: Alright, I'm rolling and speeding. Just so you know, if you lean an inch to your left, you're in the shot.

Linda: Me. Me. He means if I go like this....

Harold: Yeah, you'r cutting me out kid.

Voice: Stand by.

Linda: Because this is not my ship. It's yours. So, you know. I'm just here kind of asking the questions.

Voice: That's great. You can count to four and go.

Linda: Two, three and four. Okay. State for the record your name and your rank.

Harold: My rank...when I was in the Navy?

Linda: Yeah. Yeah.

Harold: Harold Makinster, Signalmán...I think Second Class, when I was discharged.

Linda: Okay. Say it again. My name is Harold...

Harold: Harold Makinster.

Linda: No. Start out with, "My name is..."

Harold: My name is Harold Makinster. I was the Signalmán, Second Class in the US Naval Reserve.

Linda: How old were you when you were drafted and where were you? So start out saying, "You know, when I got my draft letter..."

Harold: Oh, I was employed here in Long View. I was eighteen years old when I was informed that I should report to one of the branches of the service and

I chose the Navy. You could select the branch you wanted to go into at that time. So I went down to Portland and signed up.

Linda: Where did you go to boot camp?

Harold: In Faragut, Idaho, Camp Elliot.

Linda: "I went to boot camp in...."

Harold: Oh, I went to boot camp....I'm sorry. I went to boot camp in Faragut, Idaho. Camp Elliot. And then I went to signalman school, also, at the same naval base in Faragut, Idaho.

Linda: Did you know when you went to boot camp that you were going to signalman or how did it turn out that you got chosen? Are you chose or...?

Harold: Oh, I was very interested in...in this signalman...in communications. I thought I wanted to be a radioman and then at the time they had an opening, so to speak, in the signal division, so I chose to go to be a signalman. One of my friends also went to the same school with me. That might have motivated my selection.

Linda: After signalman school what happened?

Harold: Well, they formed...when you graduated from signalman school you made your...your first class seaman. Some graduated with a Crow, which would be the third class signalman. Some had the top students. The rest of us that graduated made seaman first class, which meant an extra seven dollars a month or so in our salaries, which were eleven dollars a month then, if I remember right. I was on a draft to...uh...I wanted to be in the submarines

originally, so you had to have your...uh...your physical skills had to be....or that is your...boy, we better edit this one out.

Linda: Not to worry. We can do that.

Harold: There was a very strenuous physical inspection of your senses and your eyes and I had...my eyes weren't too good even when I was a youngster. So I wanted to be in the submarines. So we went to this submarine draft and went through the physical for that and, of course, my eyes were poor, so I memorized the eye chart. They just lined us up one behind the other, so I memorized the eye chart with both eyes, so when I got up to the station for my test I just shot it right off...the bottom line and 'Hey, you passed.'" So I was on a submarine draft from Faragut, Idaho to New London Connecticut and we stopped along the way....we all got on the train and we were going to New London and we had a change in orders when we got to Chicago. We had a change in orders and we were sent to Soloman's, Maryland for the Amphibious group, which meant the LST. We had no choice. We were just assigned to the amphibious department of the Navy. they needed signalman in those days for the new ships that they were building to go into the Atlantic for the invasion and that, as it turned out, hit Normandy. From New London...I mean, from Soloman's, Maryland we went by train to Evansville, Indiana. That's where we were going to pick...they were building the LST's in Evansville. And our ship had just been launched, but it hadn't been outfitted or hadn't been equipped yet to go down the river, so we had to wait a little while in Evansville. We stayed there in the barracks and I had a liberty from time to time to get on uptown and enjoy a beverage or whatever. The...uh...however, the ship had been launched to my memory. We saw the ship there in the Ohio River, but we weren't able to board it. It wasn't equipped for us, so we stayed in the barracks...I think probably about a week, maybe ten days and

then we went aboard the ship and took it on down the Ohio River to the Mississippi and then down the Mississippi and then on down to New Orleans. So that's how it all happened.

Linda: Anything exciting happen in Evansville when you were there?

Harold: Well, that's where I met my lady, the girl I eventually married. I met her in Evansville. I went uptown one evening to enjoy a beverage and encountered my lady in the Hotel Bendome. In the final analysis, why after we...after we came back from Europe, why I met her again and married her. That was exciting, yes.

Linda: When you saw the ship in the shipyard was that the first time you.....or in the river. Is that the first time you had seen an LST?

Harold: Yes. Yes. Yeah, I didn't even know what I was going to be assigned to. I just knew it would be a craft that would go in on the beaches and discharge soldiers or tanks or personnel on the beaches. We knew we were amphibious at the time. We knew that's where we were going to go. We didn't know what type of ship we were going to be on and it turned out to be an LST, which probably was the best of all of them in my opinion. More comfortable and probably more spacious and better conditions. I know I was pleased to see the ship. It was big enough that I didn't have to worry too much about it.

Linda: Do you remember the first day you got on board?

Harold: No, I don't. I was so confused and just trying to get along.

Linda: How old were you? 'I was...'

Harold: Well, I was eighteen when I went aboard the LST 534, just a kid.

Linda: Who did you....who did you bunk with or who did you, you know....do you remember?

Harold: Well, the crew...we all stayed in, as I recall, just over the engine room on the stern part of the ship was the...uh....we had...uh...a cot, so to speak, on...uh...chains that suspended from the overhead and we had a little thin mattress about like that. The crew, there'd be twenty or thirty of us in the same compartment stacked four high. And I...as I recall, I lucked out and got the center bunk, if I remember, somewhere in the second or third level. We were in close quarters at all times and it seemed to me like we were right on....right over the engine room, because we could always tell when we were getting ready to get underway, feel the vibration of the engine.

Linda: Do you remember the first day you met Captain Olsen?

Harold: The first day I met Captain Olsen we were in...uh...we were in Soloman's, Maryland waiting to be shipped to Evansville to pick up the ship. And I had Cat Fever that I had picked up in Chicago. I was sick. I was just really....anyway, I failed to get up one morning when they blew revelry or whatever they called it. I couldn't get up. I was just deathly sick, deathly ill. Couldn't wake up, I guess. Anyway, Captain Olsen came through. I had never met him, but he came through the barracks where we were stationed and I was still in my bunk. He kicked the side of the bunk and he said, "Sailor, don't you know enough to stand up....hello there....well we ran out of....oh....

Linda: And you tell me if it's Olsen or not. I...we called Evansville...tell me when you're ready, Matt.

Matt: Speed.

Linda: Okay, so pick up the story. Wait a minute. Don't move.

Harold: Don't move.

Linda: Okay....

Harold: Well, the first time I met Captain Olsen I failed to get up at the morning wake up call. I slept right through it and he came through the barracks where we were quartered and kicked the side of my bunk. Of course, I woke up and I looked up at him and he says, "Sailor, don't you know enough to stand up when you see an officer." I couldn't determine, you know, that he was our captain, but anyway, I staggered up and he put me on report, told me to get out on the drill field and go through the morning ritual that we went through in those days, the exercise field...before breakfast. That's when I first met him, so it was a bad...it was a bad start between myself and Captain Olsen. And I learned later that we was...I'm almost positive he was a Chief Signalman in the regular Navy and when the war broke out....so they made him captain of a ship. They were really up against it for captains for the new ships. So that didn't help any when I was a struggling signalman and he was a Chief Signalman. But anyway, we had a bad beginning, so to speak. But as it turned out he got us into Normandy and out of there without sinking us, so I'm grateful to him. I stayed with him for almost two years, as I recall anyway. It seemed like quite a while.

Linda: Did he go on to the 1062 also?

Harold: No, he stayed....I believe he stayed aboard or unless he left and French took over. I'm not sure. I think French took over. That's one of the reasons why I....you can cut that one, if you will. That's the reason why I wanted off that ship. Ooooh, French was something else.

Linda: Yeah, difficult.

Harold: Oh, extremely. Stockdale wasn't any angel. That isn't on there. Better not be, 'cause he'll see that.

Linda: No, it's not. So when you were in Solomon, Maryland did you know....I mean, did Olsen come on the train with you to Evansville?

Harold: No. I don't know how he got there. I know we....I don't know. But I know that they had sorted the crew at Solomon's. They made up what they call the...Nucleus crew, I think they called it. (Phone rings) They we go.

(Pause)

Linda: This is kind of funny.....okay, so they had made up a Nucleus crew.

Harold: Well, yeah, we had the...we formed the basic crew for the ship there at Solomon's. Other sailors came in and joined the crew and that's when Olsen met them for the first time and we'd go out and muster all as a crew of the ship. I didn't know it was a 534 at the time until we got to Evansville and it was a 534 we boarded, but it was ready to go.

Linda: What did you think when you got on board and there was Olsen?



Harold: Well, I knew I was stuck with him....for the whole war, I knew that. He was our captain. No, I had no...I had no choice. I was on the 543 and he was the captain. It's just regrettable that I picked up Cat Fever in Chicago on my way to Solomon's, Maryland.

Linda: He probably forgot about that during the time of war. I mean,...

Harold: I don't think so. I think he remembered. (laughs) I don't know.

Linda: Going down the Ohio River...I mean, you were one of the people in Evansville going down. I mean, what was it like? Anything...

Harold: Well, yeah, I stood the signal watch and, as I remember, every lock we went through we had to identify our ship call number and then they'd give us instructions at what speed and whatever. We had a pilot aboard, however, but I was a signalman up on the Con along beside of Captain Olsen. Course it was the first time on the ship, you know, the very first cruise I'd ever made and that was down the Ohio and then we went out into the Mississippi and on down to all those series of locks, one after another, that I remember...to get down into New Orleans.

Linda: Were you at the Commissioning Ceremony?

Harold: Oh, yes.

Linda: Tell me a little bit...say, 'the commissioning ceremony took place...'

Harold: Well, a whole bunch of gold braid came aboard and....

Linda: Start over with, 'When the commissioning ceremony happened...'

Harold: Honey, I don't remember it that well.

Linda: No,...I mean, start what you do remember our with, 'When the commissioning happened....'

Harold: Oh, well when the commissioning took place in New Orleans, if I recall, several Admirals, Captains or somebody came aboard. A lot of gold braid came aboard and they whistled them aboard, piped them aboard, as I recall. And presented Captain Olsen with a charter of some type of some kind of a paper of authority and we had hung a little commissioning flag. In fact, I think I'm the one that snapped that on the lanyard to put it up....when a ship was commissioned it had a little pennant that we'd fly and I think it was my duty at that time to hoist that pennant to show that we were actually commissioned in the Navy.

Linda: Who were your friends on the ship?

Harold: Well, it's been so long that I...I'm sorry to say that I can't remember all of them. I had many friends, of course. Eddie Holt was probably one of my best friends on the ship. There was a...uh...a sailor from....he's a New Yorker, on the east coast somewhere and I...his name was Mageris or something....I can't remember his last name now, but I'm sure you have a record of it. He was a striker. He was understudy for me. He was my recorder whenever I'd take a message either flag hoist or flashing light...why'd he'd record the message as it was received by me.

Linda: What can you tell me...do you remember my father?

Harold: Yes, I do. He was a coxin, as I recall. He would get in those small boats that we had and he...uh....Henry Alvers, a little fellow about my size...and

he'd come in the wardroom or somewhere where a group of us would be and someone would call Henry....Henry Alvers...and he'd say, "Coming, Mother." And that was...I remember that vividly about Henry Alvers, because in those days on the radio we had the Henry Aldridge program and it was quite a famous radio show, so we'd always greet him as 'Henry....Henry Alvers'... you know. And he'd say, "Coming, Mother." But he was wiry, tough, little fellow, a good boat operator. We had,.... as I recall, we had two Davits(?) with our small LCVP's on them and he would captain one of them. During the invasion...I'm not sure if we launched... I think we....I don't know if we launched the small boats or not. I can't remember whether he...whether we launched those small boats off the davits or not. I can't remember that we did. I think we just went right on in like we owned the joint and off loaded the tanks we had on top deck and then tank deck.

Linda: Did you remember my father taking you ashore or taking you to another ship or taking you anywhere?

Harold: Well, he ran the liberty boats, so he must have taken us ashore from time to time. He was a coxswain and....yes, we used to....we'd anchor or tie up to a buoy there in the harbor at Plymouth or Dartmouth or Southampton. And then we'd take the small boat....lower the small boat and take it in for liberty or for whatever purposes...get the mail or get supplies or get new personnel whatever. He would operate the small boat.

Linda: When you left...I mean you spent a lot of time in New Orleans or Pensacola training. I mean, you had to practice beaching, practice night beaching, practice abandoning ship, do all these practices. Did that get kind of boring?

Harold: Well, the....our main purpose in New Orleans was to outfit the ship, get it ready to sail. It was what you call a shakedown cruise. We hadn't trained a lot until we got out on the Atlantic on our way from Halifax to England, then we held a lot of drills then. We spent an awful lot of time when we first hit the gulf in preparing the ship to sail. We called it the shakedown cruise, all the various problems that take place. Then we had to go through our degousing (?) routine, which was to remove the magnetism of the ship for mines. It neutralized, as I understand it, it neutralized our ship from any magnetic mines. They wouldn't respond to our ship with this degousing. It was a lot of electric material throughout the ship. Then we'd have to check our compass and go out and...I forget what they call that, but that took hours and hours to maneuver the ship, to check our bearings and our compasses and be sure that we had good instruments aboard. I can't recall that we made any tests....oh, yeah, we made some test landings, but not...as I recall, not in the gulf. Not out of New Orleans. We waited until we were overseas for a test landing, as I remember.

Linda: So you....

Matt: I think we should probably change tapes.

END TAPE

MAKINSTERS INTERVIEW

TAPE 2, SIDE 2

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Linda: Okay. So you were in Pensacola and doing all that and then you headed up and you came up to New York and got ammunition and whatever and headed out, right?

Harold: Well, we went to New York for more outfitting and supplies and then went up to Halifax, Nova Scotia where the convoy was formed. I remember taking the signal for Captain Olsen to where he was to report the next morning at a certain station there in Halifax and I got it letter perfect. It was by semaphore, which, you know, is rather difficult. You have to look through a long glass to read it, but anyway, I was quite pleased that I had. I was scared to death I was going to miss an address or a word or a letter or something, but I crept it right off.

Linda: Start out with the line 'semaphore means....' Wait a minute.

Matt: I just want to lower the contrast just a hair. It looked fine before. It looks fine now, but just want to match everything from before. Okay.

Harold: Well, a signalman is proficient in semaphore, flag hoist and flashing light. It's all...the semaphore is all hand motions with the flags and a lot of the...during the war...semaphore is quite popular, because flashing lights would attract submarines or whatever and flag hoist could also be read by a submarine that was lurking out there somewhere. They could read a flag hoist. If they had our code, that could determine our course for the next day. But from Pensacola we went to Boston....or in to New York and into Boston and on up to Halifax where we picked up the convoy to go across to Europe over to England. There were 57 ships in our convoy, as I remember. We were stationed the last ship in the...on the port column. We were way back. We were the last ship in the line. That's because we had...I think we had a five inch rifle on the stern, either it was a 3.5 or a five inch rifle on the stern, which fairly shook the boat when we fired in practice. We never did fire it in anger. But that's the reason they put us on the corner of the convoy. And, of course, we had the British Corvettes were escorting us and, so we had quite an interesting trip across to

England. We started out with 57 ships as I remember and we lost twelve or fourteen on the way over from torpedoes. There was a lot of German submarines in this particular time in 1944 when we went over in the fall...I think it was in the fall of '44 left Halifax to go to England. And, if I remember right, it took us almost....I believe it was almost thirty....almost a month to get there, 28 or 29 days. It was a long trip. We were doing about six or seven knots is all. In fact, I think the whole convoy had to slow down, because we were the slowest ship in the convoy. I don't know.

Linda: The LST wasn't known for it's speed.

Harold: No. No. We....an interesting....when we left New Orleans to go to....or left Pensacola to go to New York we went through what they call the Bermuda Triangle and that's real rough water, extremely rough. And everybody on the ship, including Captain Olsen, got seasick. I didn't get seasick. I was the only, that I was close to anyway, that didn't get...I never did get seasick on the ocean, ever. I don't know why. Even Captain Olsen was seasick and Stockdale was just almost dead. A lot of the officers were very, very ill. We had to stand double watches.

Linda: I heard that Jim Sarres was sick most of the time.

Harold: Jim Sarres was quite a...he was our communication officer. Fine person. We had a lot of fun. When he came aboard he was, in my opinion, he was about as green as I was too, you know. So we worked together and made each other look as good as we could. Yeah, he was a fine officer. I enjoyed working with him.

Linda: Can you take this and show us what this is and then the LST 534.

Harold: Oh, I got to remember how to do the numbers now. Well, it was US...okay. This was one of the aides that we used to learn flashing light when we went to school in Faragut, Idaho, or in...uh...yeah, Faragut...It was Faragut, Idaho. If...if you'll notice it's....

Linda: Stop a minute. The airplane going over. I'm sorry.

Harold: I am too.

Linda: If we get back and there's....and we take tapes back home and there's an airplane in it when an important story like this, our editor will shoot me. I'm the producer and he'll shoot me, so imagine what he'd do to you. Okay, start over.

Harold: Well, in signalman school they issued these little cards of that nature to help us whenever we wanted to, communicate with one of the other signalman students and we could sit across the barracks from each other and talk to each other this way. It just fascinated the rest of the crew, cause we could use the code and they wouldn't know what we were saying, but we could talk back and forth about this and that and the other. Anyway, as you see, this is 'A', as I remember, and this is 'B', and 'C' is. That's your A'B'C. LST 534 was (Demonstrates). I believe that was 534. It's been a long time. But I really enjoyed being a signalman. I really did. I enjoyed it. I always...from time to time there'd be a flag hoist up, I'd be the only signalman on duty. So there'd be a flag hoist up a ship ahead and about the same time another ship would be calling on the flashing light or semaphore and I'd get real frustrated. One time I read them both at the same time and got both messages. One was very brief, but I got it alright. So I was always pleased about that.

Linda: That....uhm...I mean, you were in...signalman...that's....let's face it, that's the communications of the ship.

Harold: Well, yeah, the signalman knows what's going on before the old man knows, because he's taking.....a lot of it's in code, so you have to go to code book and look it up. You never did 'Roger' or signal unless you understood it first and then you'd have to understand it. And then, of course, was the duty of the...if the signalman himself couldn't determine the message by the...out of the code book, the communications officer...that's when Sarres would take over and he would determine the nature of the message and the content and then it'd go to the captain or to whomever it was addressed. But we always knew what was going on before....if we were going to set sail or anything, we'd get a signal, you know, they'd call up the USS LST534 \_\_\_\_\_...at 0:800 on a certain date we will sail or set sail, whatever. Then every night when we were in convoy from Halifax to England the lead ship in the convoy, the commanding ship of the convoy would signal where we would rendezvous the next day in case we were attacked by submarines at night. Once you....if a submarine attacks you, disperse. You just go in every different direction. And then we always knew where we were going to get together the next day. I believe we were the back ship on the port column, the last ship back and, of course, the command ship was way up front, almost a half a mile...I'm guessing...away. But I knew at a certain time of day they always put up a signal for the next morning, so anticipating the signal I would get my long glass out and...Olsen was aboard then and he'd wonder what I'm doing. I'm saying, "I'm waiting for a signal, sir." "What do you mean you're waiting for a signal?" I says, "Well, ..." I didn't tell him, because that was my style. I knew they were going to put the signal out just any minute, because every evening they did it at the exact same time. So I had the long glass out and I watched the signalman on the main ship,



on the lead ship go to the flag bag and open it up and I knew he was getting ready and I can see him reach up and get the halyards (?) and hook on to the flag and his assistant would pull it up as fast as he'd snap them on...while someone else is pulling them up. And I read the flags as they came out of the bag, because it was dead calm and the flags wouldn't open when they went up in the halyard. So I read it as it came out of the bag and I'd call my recorder...I think it was Algiers or someone from back east....and I'd say, "Message." And then I'd call, as the flags came out of the bag I'd read them, because they'd open up real good. Some flags were very similar. The Queen and Option Q & O. As I remember, the queen flag has her blue dot in the center of it and the Option...the O flag had just a solid yellow. Anyway, up went the signal and I'd call it out to my recorder. And when you put the signal up if you understand it, you'd take it all the way up to the top of the mast at the top of the halyard, and you waited until you understood it before you did. When you took it all the way up that means 'message understood'. Usually, if it was a course change, they would...execute, they'd pull it back down and as soon as the signal came down you'd change course. Well, anyway, I read this signal out of the flag bag from the lead ship and I put it up half way and then I checked my code book and I got all the numbers right. It was our position for the next day in case we were attacked that night by submarines or for any reason we had to disperse, we knew where we could come back to the next morning and form up again. So I understood. I got the course and all the information I needed, the longitude and latitude, yack-yack-yack. I went ahead and told the recorder, "Understood." So up...all the way to the top. And Olsen was up there and he was looking all the around the convoy and no one else understood it. No one else even had the signal, because they couldn't...the flags were hanging so close to the halyard. There was no wind at all, no wind at all. In fact, the signalman's waving the thing back and forth trying to open the flags up. Well, I already had it and I

already had it hoisted up that I understood it. "Makinister," he says, "What the hell are you doing putting that signal up?" he says, "None of the other ships have it. No of the others. None of them." They didn't. All the way around, none of them had it. I had it. And the difference was the option flag and the queen flag. It was a...it had the blue dot in the center. Well, I saw that as they put it up and the other ships put up the yellow flag, which is option or 'O' and it wasn't in the code book right, so they couldn't take it on up. They were...all of them were wrong except mine. "How the hell did you get that?" Finally I told him, "You know," I says, "Well, I read it coming out of the flag bag, sir." "Well, I'll be damned!" You know...and...we were the last ship in the line and we were the only ship that was out on our way to England. As I recall, we got hit that night by subs. One evening on our way over I reported a flash of light ahead of us. It looked to me like about two ships ahead of us. Flash of light. I reported it. About that time we overtook the ship, because it was sinking. It had been hit by a torpedo. Then they fired again right underneath us. They went under our ship, because we only drew about eleven feet of water. I reported the torpedo starboard side or port side, wherever it was...it was port side....apparent torpedo and it was coming right...it went right underneath us and went over and got a tanker on our starboard side and it burned, it burned real quickly. It caught fire. And as we went by the ship ahead that had been torpedoed, the crew was out in the water and we couldn't stop. you couldn't stop to pick anybody up. I always felt bad about that, because there they were...like Mae West or something, you know, afloat and we couldn't throw them a line or stop or pick them up at all. We had to keep going. Apparently, because we'd be in danger of catching a torpedo ourselves. I always regretted that. That kind of haunted me, but the next day they'd sent out a signal that we'd picked up all of the survivors, only lost one or two crew, you know, and so it made

you feel better. But it was all British escorts, British Corvettes that took us over.

Linda: Did that change your life then...that particular night? I mean,....how fragile life was....

Harold: Oh, yeah. I...that first experience with the torpedoes and I seen this ship going down as we were going by it and seeing the crew in the water, I...uh...there was a ladder going down to the second deck from the con and I actually went and sat on the top of that ladder and I was praying for the men that were in the sea. And Olsen, he'd been down below, he came running up....of course they called...sounded general quarters and everything and here came Olsen. I was sitting on this ladder and I was in his way to get up tot he con. So I moved out of the way and the next day he said, "Makinister, what the hell were you doing sitting on that ladder?" And I said, "I was praying." And I was. I was just sitting on the ladder praying for the crew we'd just seen and the men in the water.

Linda: Your prayers were probably answered since you....

Harold: No, we didn't have any communication to that extent. Olsen didn't like me and I respected him. But Olsen and I had a bad beginning....but way back in Solomon's, Maryland. No biggie. We got through the war.

Linda: So you actually saw the torpedo.

Harold: Yeah, the one that caught the tanker on our starboard side. I saw the wake come up. It went underneath our ship. Of course we...I think we drew about maybe ten feet where it went through, maybe eleven feet, so they fired under us and got the tanker next to us. But we put...the tankers were

all....no, they were firing the tankers. They wanted the tankers, honey. The tankers were all in the middle of the convoy. They all...there weren't any tankers out on the outer edge, because they had airplanes on the top decks of the tankers, these oilers, big....and they had airplanes stacked on the top. The German's wanted those tankers is what they were after, so....but they were all in the center of the convoy, in the columns...in the second, third, fourth and fifth column. Then the outside column would be ships of a lesser nature, such as LST's, whatever. But we had the gun on our....on our stern, so I imagine they figured if we got into some kind of running battle with a sub, we could fire at it. This never happened really. I was sitting on the lead (?) side of the ship on this trip over. You just leaned up against the bulkhead and I saw the periscope out about a hundred, maybe two hundred yards from the ship. I could see it. You know, the waves were going this way and it was just steady, so I reported it to the officer of the deck. I think it was Stockdale then, one of them. Anyway, he called General Quarters and they got right on the radio and they radioed the British Corvettes that were escorting us and they dropped a few depth charges where they thought...they might have picked it up...they might have picked the sub up on their sound equipment, but they set off...and I think we set off....we...as I recall, we had...uh....depth charges aboard when we went over. I think we had four on each rack, two racks, one on each side of the stern, as I recall. I think we had depth charges. We might have released a couple.

Linda: What's a depth charge?

Harold: Well, it goes down maybe a hundred feet and then blows. It's anti-submarine. You can set the depth and then they'd explode and if they were close to the submarine, it'd compact the hull of the submarine and destroy it. It was about the only defense we had against submarines unless they'd

surface. Then, of course, you had your rifle on the back and your forty millimeter...as all we had were forties and twenties. But amazingly, on our....we called them tubs, our gun tubs...especially on the forties and the twenties....especially the forties. We had dual forties on the bow and singles, as I recall, back on the starboard port side of the ship, maybe three or four gun tubs. Then they'd put piping up so you couldn't lower the gun low enough to hit another ship that's beside you, which is wise and all that, but you couldn't fire against an enemy if he's on the horizon or if he was in the water, you couldn't lower your guns enough to fire at a....so if a sub had surfaced next to us, we couldn't have fired at her. The pipes were in the way. Then...when they went into Normandy we....what I call broached instead of going right head in and the bow doors....we got our tanks off alright, but we couldn't get off, as I recall, we couldn't get off the beach. We missed...either missed the tide or our stern anchor wouldn't pull us off, so we had to stay til the next tide. And on the incoming tide it broached us to where we were almost parallel with the beach. We got a signal to make smoke and we had a smoke machine on the stern of our ship, so they fire that thing up and it just rolled right back where I was on signalman duty. It came right over the top of the con and that smoke machine...you could hardly breathe, you know. I remember that. They wanted us to make smoke to protect the other ships as they were coming in. I don't recall any heavy firing at Normandy. A couple of planes, a couple of German planes came over. Densmore was on the watch then. I think his name was Densmore, another signalman. And they sounded General Quarters and a couple of German planes came over the beach head, but I can't recall any direct fire on us in Normandy. That is where they picked us out as a target. There was a lot of shelling going on, but none...they were firing from inland somewhere, just firing their rifles or their cannons I call them, on the beach head in general hoping that they might hit something, so there was all kinds of action there. That first night

at Normandy, first day...well, I'm trying to recall now, anyway, the planes...all of the allied planes had three stripes painted...white stripes around the side of the fuselage on the wing, three stripes on each side. And the planes were not supposed to make any direct runs on any of the invasion ships. If they made a direct run, we were ordered to fire on them at night. If you just hear them coming straight at you, our orders were to fire. And this poor guy, he was lost or something, didn't know where he was, small plane....a fighter, I imagine. He was flying right directly down the beach and these ships were opening up. You could hear the fire started pretty quick. The ship next to us was firing. And I could see the white stripes on his wings as he was....he was hit, so we put him down. That was sad.

Linda: Well, all the action was going on at Omaha Beach, really.

Harold: Well, we went into...we went into Gold Beach. No, there was some action where we went in. We went into Gold Beach. We took British...British tankers in. They were just up from Australia. Mean bunch of guys. They were mad. They got in from Africa, but they were Australian troops that had just got out of Africa and come to England and then they put them on us and went into Normandy. They were ugly, ugly soldiers. Tough. Big, all of them big. Six foot or better. And we got every tank off and, as far as I know, off the beach. There was something I wanted to tell you about.....oh, yes! The very first buzz bomb that was launched by Germany, the very first one, it was launched....came....it went up and misfired and came back over the beach, the very first....it says in the book, somewhere I read...and it came right over our ship. I was on watch and I didn't know what it was. Nobody was firing at her and just Chpp-chpp-phut-phut-phut, you know, coming. And I saw it coming towards us, but it was the strangest airplane I 'd ever seen. It just had short wings and a little

trombone type thing up above it. It was the little jet that flew these buzz bombs. The very first one they ever launched, I read this later, went awry. When it was heading out over the channel it made a bad turn and came back and landed inland, the very first one....was the buzz bomb. And then we used to fire at those buzz....that was the....the buzz bombs were our biggest problems. We'd rather be on the beach in France than at...at the docks in London on the Thames River, because they were....buzz bombs were coming in about every two or three minutes when it dropped. That kept us awake. They were...no pilots on them, you know, and they just flew by rocket. And we always...we'd always hoped to heck that the motor didn't go silent, because when the motor quit the bomb went down. And we saw many....we used to fire at her with our forty millimeters. I'm not sure whether we...I think we probably downed a couple of them, if I remember right. You know, hit a wing or something and knock it down. And then the British Spitfires would come behind and fire at them and knock them down, but that was the biggest problem for us as far as enemy action...was the buzz bombs.

Matt: Can you move back a little bit please?

Linda: Oh, yeah. Lean back. That'd be kind of scary. You told me in the last fifteen minutes about torpedoes, about buzz bombs, about...I mean,....

Harold: Well, there was a lot of...there was a lot of heavy action during the invasion. More especially in Utah and Omaha. See, we were up in Gold Beach and either it wasn't heavily fortified or it was a lower profile for mounting antiaircraft or anti-ship guns. Utah and Omaha...I think it was down south....we were the next beach from Omaha, as I remember. They were very heavily fortified and they were elevated cliffs, so...no, there was a lot of action, but we didn't have any...to my memory, have any

direct...we weren't in the sights of any particular cannon or rifle or gun from the Germans. Now, I've forgotten again. I wanted to tell you. Sorry.

Linda: What is the most frightening signal that you ever had to send?

Harold: Oh, we were...I give Captain Olsen...I remember now...I give Captain Olsen credit. There were a lot of mines, a tremendous amount of mines that the Germans had planted off the coast and they were very effective. They took a lot of our ships. And the Rodney, the battleship Rodney was anchored just off the coast of France when we went in there and they were...we dropped our anchor next to the Rodney, but we didn't allow enough chain to swing so if we would swing around on the tide or on the wind, it wouldn't collide with the Rodney, but it was there. It was close. Then when they...and they were firing inland. Now, this might have been the night before the invasion. We were in midchannel on June 5th when they called the invasion off, so we...I don't remember whether we stayed in the channel or whether we went on in and anchored by the Rodney, but anyway, we did anchor in by the Rodney one night. And when that...it only had two rifles on the Rodney, one a fifteen incher on the stern and one on the bow. Just two cannons is all they had. Ancient British battleship. And when that dogged Rodney would fire the ocean would just level out, it'd just be level. And oh, the impact and the concussion, just from the...and the shells went right over our ship to go inland. And Rodney must have fired a dozen rounds there at one time. It just leveled the ocean, just leveled the waves right out when the Rodney fired. The only firing that we did that I can remember was in the channel either going towards France or...we made eighteen crossings to France from June til December. We made eighteen landings on the beach in France. We'd go into East India docks in London, up the Thames River and we'd load up with whatever was...they needed and go back across the channel and go in on the beach



again and offload. And they needed...they were trying to capture either Shurberg or Breast...Shurberg, I believe....and they needed some ammunition....

END OF TAPE

MAKINSTERS INTERVIEW

TAPE 3, SIDE 1

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Matt:           Okay.

Harold:        Yeah, we crossed the channel eighteen times, as I recall, from London we'd go up the Thames River and load up with whatever we could take, whatever they wanted on us, and then we'd go back over and land or go on the beach again at the same beach or a similar beach head. And this one trip...I think it was about our fifth or sixth voyage across. They needed some...I think it was 155 shells for their...their...uh...army guns. Big shells. Big, big shells. They loaded us up with all this ammo that they had excess there at the beach. They'd put it on us and set us down between the Jersey and the Guernsey Islands, and they were still occupied by the Germans. Very, very risky trip. Mines were still there and we were loaded to the...the tank deck was just full of these shells. So that was kind of interesting. We went into St. Low...St. Malow, a beach, a landing south of the usual Omaha, Utah, Gold beaches....way south somewhere on the French coast. I think it was St. Malow. ....and off loaded this ammunition for the big push to take Shurberg. But they picked our ship. I don't know why, but they assigned LST 534 to make that run.

Linda:         Probably because they had a great signalman on board.

Harold: But that was interesting, because we went right through water that hadn't been cleared by the sweepers. The islands were still occupied by Germany. The Jersey and Guernsey Islands. I think that was the name of them. Just off the coast of France. We went in inside of those islands to get there. That was scary.

Linda: By this time you knew enough to know that that was a dangerous situation.

Harold: Yeah. Well, it was interesting, but we made it. Off loaded and came back to East India docks in London to load up with whatever else.

Matt: I'm sorry to interrupt you. Is there a fan on now?

Harold: Is there who? (Change in conversation?) Our hand...our catcher...Oh, Laragut...Laragut...We've got his portrait in my den. Steve Laragut. You got to know who Steve Laragut is.

Linda: No. No. I'm a Yankees fan. Why would I...

Harold: No, I'm talking football.

Linda: Oh, football.

Rita: Steve was the...Harold's...

Linda: Oh, wait a minute. She's doing something with ice cubes. Let her...

Matt: Both of you are brovices (?)

Linda: (Laughs) Okay, it's documented now, Harold. We're in trouble. Okay. Lean back. Relax.

Harold: Lean back.

Linda: Okay. Now, so we were talking about this trip to Shurberg and back. I mean,....

Harold: Oh. Well, we loaded up with all these shells, this ammunition. I think they were 155. I don't know what they were, great big ones. They had, as I recall...they had the brass on them. It wasn't powder and shells. It was...they had the brass on them. But...just pallet after pallet after pallet stacked just as high as they could get them in the tank deck, just filled it up and sent us on our way through unchartered waters, so to speak. The mines were still there and we went through...between the coast and the islands, which were still occupied by the Germans. Of course, the one thing about the invasion the German air force had been eliminated for all...there were no airplanes. There were no attacks on the invasion fleet. These two planes flew over just observing, I suppose. There weren't any bombers or strapping at all. We were really concerned about that. But we had the....our people had the German air force neutralized by the time we went in on June 6th and it was a good thing, because it could have been real ugly. That's why I was so amazed to see this...this first buzz bomb come over...come right over our ship, right over the top of us...almost hit the top of the mast. It was low. And that's when I first heard the buzz...bun-bo-po-po....it was just pop-pop-pop-pop-pop-pop-pop and from then on it was months....all the time we were there, there were...until they captured the launch site of these buzz bombs, why they hit London with two or three dozen every day that we were there, half the time. We just wished to heck if it had to go, let it fall on somebody else not us.

Linda: It often seemed like the 534 had this little charmed life.

Harold: Well, I think it did. Captain Olson...I give him credit for knowing...you see, he anchored right next to the Rodney and they knew they wouldn't put the Rodney in there unless they'd swept mines away. And there was also a British cruiser right close to the Rodney. And this one night...it was the same night...the cruiser as sending out a signal to us. Olsen read the initial call signal, but the light was so bright I couldn't read it. It was just...they used a hell of a bright light. And we had a British aboard. Our ship was a flag ship for this particular occasion. We had the top British Navy man of this group that we were in...aboard. This British cruiser called us and Olsen must have read the call signal, but he didn't get any of the rest of it and I didn't either. He said, "Makinster, what'd you get?" I said, "I didn't get a damn thing, sir." And he said, "Makinster, go below." He sent me down below and Densmore went up. He called Densmore to come up. I couldn't read that light. It was so bright it blinded me. The light was just...and I was a good signalman. I could read, but they was so bright I couldn't read. I couldn't respond to it. And they were I think suggesting to us that we get the hell out of where we were. They didn't want us anchored where we were. I think that's what it was all about. I don't know. I'll never know. But he sent me below. He was upset with me, because I said, "I didn't get a damn thing, sir." Course, that was disrespectful. I called him 'sir', but I said, "I didn't get a damn.." Well, I was upset. I was kind of mad that I had missed, but I don't know why in the world why they used such a bright light. But they must have used one of their search lights some way, had to rig it up. Extremely bright light...and it blinded me and I couldn't read it. I knew it was for us, but I couldn't respond to it.

Linda: You know, my father was in Shurberg, France for forty...about...like almost two months. And for the longest time I never knew how he got to Shurberg if you guys were going back and forth, you know. So when you went up to Shurberg you moored or you docked long enough to unload some things and that's when he must have...

Harold: Honey, we didn't dock in Shurberg. We went down to St. Malow and went in on the beach there. Shurberg...they were still attacking Shurberg trying to capture it. I don't believe we ever went into Shurberg. I can't remember that we ever went in there.

Linda: If you went into St.Malow....

Matt: Can you lean back also?

Linda: Oh, yeah.

Matt: Thanks.

Linda: If you went into St. Malow, would he have been transported to a naval hospital in Shurberg? This would almost have to be after.

Harold: Oh, he was in the hospital? I don't know how he got off the ship.

Linda: I don't know either. I'm trying to put that one....

Harold: Yeah, I don't doubt but what he....cause we'd take people in...I spent some time in the hospital in South Hampton from just pure exhaustion. We stood four on and four off for months and months and months all the way from...we were short...shorthanded in the communications department, so

we had four on and four off, and then we'd have general quarters every morning and every night and then general quarters during the day if we saw anything suspicious. So four on and four off you get no rest. Say you had the midnight to four watch and so you'd get off at four and go down and hit the sack. Then they had general quarters at six, so you'd have to get up for general quarters and then you had to be back on watch again at eight, so you wouldn't get anymore sleep. It was just sheer exhaustion that I suffered from in England and I...I guess I collapsed. I don't remember, but they took me ashore and put me in the hospital there at Queen Ann Hospital in South Hampton. I slept for thirty six hours before I woke up. That's what they tell me.

Linda: And you felt better.

Harold: Well, yeah, I survived it.

Linda: What is the Unit Commendation? You said....

Harold: Well, because of our run that we made to St. Malow, when I was discharged in Burmington they were checking the little ribbons that we were qualified to receive, and also checking the points to be sure that we had enough points and that was...the 534 was listed as a Unit Commendation...went to the 534, which gave you another five points on your...and they gave me this little ribbon for the Unit Commendation. They gave me one. That's the first time I knew we got it. I'm not even sure if the rest of the crew knew that. I assumed they did when they were discharged. Of course, we had the European Theatre and the Victory ribbon and the Asian Pacific ribbon when we went out there. When I went on the 1062 Captain Anderson wanted to have a dress inspection. There were...on the nucleus crew on the 1062...there were all...had been...we

were veterans from Europe and we had a couple of medals, you know. I reported in dress blues, you know, with my dress blues, but not the ribbons. Oh, he just raised all kinds of hell with me. He says, "Makinster, where's your ribbons?" I says, "Oh, I don't wear those darn things, you know." "Well, you go below and get them.", ...you know, because he wanted to show that his crew had some...crew members that knew what was going on, I guess. But, anyway, there was this commendation ribbon when I was discharged and it was because of the 534 and that run that they made to St. Malow. We were the only ship to go, no escort, no nothing. We just went on our own and made it.

Linda: Did you ever think that you might not?

Harold: Well, we were concerned. (Laughs) We figured if we hit a mine, that would be the end of it. And there were lots of mines.

Matt: Uh, could we just...uh...get a little patter under....

Linda: I just can't believe that you went up through the mine fields to Sherberg or to St. Malow or wherever.

Harold: We went from the beach head, which I would imagine was Gold, but it was our second or third trip over, so I'm not sure what beach, but we went into the beach, loaded up with this ammunition for the Army and then pulled off on the next tide and proceeded on down to southern France and went in to a community there, little town...a beach there on the tide and they came aboard with trucks and off loaded us. We sure did. All alone. 534. I don't know why they picked our ship. We all wondered why in the world they picked our ship, but they did. It might have been Captain Olsen that had a good reputation or something. Going up the Thames River, one trip we made the British tanker, the British freighter

collided with us. No real damage to either ship, but Olsen just...he got on the....we didn't have a electric system with the blow horn. We had the megaphone type. He got on that and he just chewed that Captain of that British ship up and down, you know. "Watch where you're going", you know, and all that. I remember that. I hope I don't remember some things that...everything I'm saying is correct. Hopefully, it might remind my shipmates of some of the things that they've forgotten. I don't know.

Linda: Who...there's...everybody has different things they remember, which is helping keep the little collage...

Harold: I remember when we loaded in Nipswitch or Harowitz Nipswitch...they're right together. That's where we loaded our troops, our tanks. And we loaded up probably two or three days before the invasion. I'll say maybe the third of June or fourth of June. No one could go ashore even the soldiers on the tankers. They couldn't go ashore. We were under strict secret control at that time and they had to stay aboard, which wasn't bad, because we had good facilities for them. But then we set out...on June fifth we set out for the invasion, which they postponed a day. But we were already out in the channel heading towards France. This is why I can't recall what in the hell we did that night, whether we went on over and anchored or whether we...I know we didn't go ashore again, so we might have laid too somewhere out of radar range from Germany or from France, but I know we were out there one full day before the invasion and those poor soldiers were getting seasick. I felt real sorry for them. They couldn't do anything but just stay aboard. They couldn't get off.

Linda: Remember what they had to eat?

Harold: Oh, the same thing we had, as I recall.



Linda: Spaghetti.

Harold: No. We had an awful lot of chipped beef on toast, they called it. Beans every Sunday. Pork and beans every Sunday morning...not pork and beans, just baked beans...beans. Sunday morning. Always....as I recall. It might have been Saturday morning. No, I think it was Sunday morning we had beans, every Sunday morning. NO fresh fruit. No fresh vegetables. Powdered potatoes, powdered eggs, powdered everything. We didn't have a fresh orange or lettuce or cabbage...or anything fresh until we got back to the states, as I recall. Nothing fresh. It was all powdered, all canned...a lot of spam.

Linda: With the tension that was there during war time and, you know, everything that you were going through...tired....what...how important were liberties, R & R?

Harold: Oh, it was the only way to go. If you go ashore....

Linda: Mention 'R & R was the only way to go....'

Harold: Well, the pubs would open...we'll say....I think...probably, maybe noon, maybe two o'clock in the afternoon. The only beverage they could serve was the dark beer, warm....none of it was chilled, and gin with orange chasers. They called it Gin and Orange. And they'd premix it, Gin and Orange, and then they'd serve it in a little cup or a little glass. And the bars always close, I think it's six o'clock, just when you're getting ready to enjoy the evening why the bar was closed. But that's all we could get was bitters and Gin and Orange. We didn't have any trouble with money, because it didn't take an awfully lot of money in England. We got...we got ashore....except when we were on some special detail...we got ashore quite

often, maybe two or three times a week we'd get ashore for a short period of time from noon until nine o'clock or ten in the evening...maybe even midnight. Yeah, it was important to get ashore.

Linda: Did you ever get homesick?

Harold: I can't recall ever being homesick as such. I was homesick when I first went into the Navy. I was just a kid, but...no, I didn't get homesick. I was there for a purpose, for a reason. I was dedicated to it, looking forward to it, in fact. I had a problem on the ship....uh...there was....I'm not sure I even want to talk about this one. I don't think I will.

Linda: Well, you talk about it for your own tape.

Harold: No. No. No. No. No. No.

Linda: How important was mail?

Harold: Well, we had....whenever we went into port we'd always have a big bag of mail come aboard with all B-mail. I still have one of those little B-mail's here somewhere. I just saw it the other day. That's how I'd learned that my brother had been killed was a B-mail letter that I had received from my sister here in the states while I was aboard the ship there in....it was Plymouth or Portsmouth. I got this B-mail letter and I read it and dropped the letter. I was up on the con, or up in the pilot house. And I dropped the letter. Of course, I was upset. I went down below. And I'd been on report for some reason. I don't know why, but I was on report and the old man, Olsen, when he had heard that I had lost my brother he came to me and asked me if I'd like to go ashore and I did. He let me go ashore. I remember that. I don't know why I was on report, but I...I was isolated to

the ship. I couldn't go ashore for some reason or other. Something I had done wrong, who knows, but he let me go. I think it was in Plymouth. He let me go ashore and think about things.

Linda: What did you think about?

Harold: Oh, just....naturally I was sad to hear...he was a bomber pilot, a good one. He made the first daylight raid over Berlin. The Yanks bombed Berlin in the day time and the British planes would go over at night and bomb. And my brother led the first group of bombers over Berlin. It came out in the paper here at home. I was pretty proud of my brother, Chester. Yeah, I was sad when I knew I'd lost him. It was just...just the time it took the letter to get there. It was only maybe eight or ten days. I was there in England when he was lost and I didn't know it.

Linda: Did that make you start thinking about your own mortality?

Harold: No, I never worried about myself. The old man...when we were heading over to Normandy...Eisenhower came on the...they had a tape of him, so they broadcast that all over the tape....all over the P.A. system. He was telling us what a great venture we were on and all this. Olsen came on after the tape from Eisenhower and he said, "Now, fellas", he says, "just remember one thing. If we get sunk and you get down to the bottom," he says, "run like hell until you get out." That's what he said on the P.A. system. Oh, and he also reminded us that we had us...there was a 75% of the ships would not get back from the invasion. It didn't turn out that way, but we expected losses of 75%. But we made it many, many times, especially that first trip in. We also....one trip....the first trip back to England we took German captives...German prisoners aboard, probably 150 of them and took them back to England for internment. Just kids, but

they'd been picked up there on the beach and been captured and we took them back on our ship, 534.

Linda: Did you talk to them?

Harold: I couldn't talk German. They didn't really...they weren't very friendly. They weren't very happy. They didn't know where they were going or why or what was going on. But we took them back to England and I am sure they were put in the intern....I'm sure they were. The war was on...yeah.

Linda: What did you think when you realized that you were going to get to come back away from....I mean, things had....by the time you headed...the 534 came back to New York, it had calmed down a little bit over in....

Harold: Oh, yeah, everything was calm after the invasion, the first trip over. There wasn't any action except buzz bombs. Lots of those. There wasn't any...there wasn't any action...any danger unless it be a stray mine and you come...come down the channel some way and then that big storm that hit about a week after the invasion, a hell of a storm hit. We rode that out, but nothing like the Pacific, but still it was bad for the channel. No, everything kind of slacked off after the initial invasion and the tension was released except for the buzz bombs. That kept us awake all the time. They were...they were ugly, only because you couldn't do anything to control it. There was no pilot aboard. They were just buzz bombs just looking for a place to land. When the motors or engines would kick out on them they'd fall, so we'd hear them go over, you know, or we could even see them...a lot of them....almost all of them you could see. They go put-put-put-put-put-put and boy, we'd watch them go over and 'Keep going! Keep going! Fall on somebody else.'

Linda: Were they timed?

Harold: Yeah. Yeah. There were a few...I'm sure they were timed by fuel, the fuel supply, then they had a giro in there that was supposed to keep them on course. They would expend all the fuel and that's when they'd go down. They had them timed pretty well for London, for the docks and all that. One landed right next to the ship there in...on East India dock when we were tied up along side of it. One hit the...hit the...hit the warehouse there.

Linda: Christmas day you left to come back.

Harold: Yeah.

Linda: What a Christmas present!

Harold: Well, it was kind of sad in a way, because we were leaving the rest of the ships and all, but...yeah, we were heading home Christmas day, or least we were on...we were on....we were heading back to the states and I think we were at sea....I'm sure we were at sea on Christmas day. Yeah. I don't know. I remember it as being kind of sad that we were leaving our people there and we were the ones that were fortunate enough to get the hell out of there. All the tension was gone. Now it was back to our usual normal duty, which lots of times are just tedious, you know, and the action and the purpose and the reason wasn't really there anymore, but we still had these watches and this....four on and four off as I recall. I don't think we ever did get relieved of that. It was nice...I knew I was going to leave the ship when I got back to the states. I had already signed up to go as a nucleus crew and I knew then I would get...uh...I was accepted, because of my rank in signalman. They needed signalman for this new crew, so I knew I'd

probably never see the crew again, but I did get to see them again in Okinawa, there at Buckner Bay, caught up with them again.

Linda: Tell me about that.

Harold: Well, it was out in the Pacific. I went aboard the 1062 at, I think it....at....oh, there in Virginia, the big Naval base. Norfolk, Virginia. I think that's where I picked up the 1062 and fit right in....fit right in as a signalman and got along real well with the old man. We were buddies. Course, he was glad to get...what he called an experienced crew. All of us on this nucleus crew had to have overseas duty to qualify. SO then we sailed on out of Norfolk up...again, I think to...uh...Boston. And of all things they loaded the tank deck with Balantine Ale. \_\_\_\_\_....the whole ship was just....forklifts came aboard with pallets of Balantine Ale, filled the whole tank deck with beer...ale. We were going to Pearl Harbour to off load it. On the way across we'd go through the....through the....of course, this was on the 1062. This wasn't 534. But we'd go through the electricians....oh....compartments. And there was a hatch that opened out onto the tank, so we mined that Balantine Ale on the way over, in the Pacific. We had it....there was quite a bit of dunnage aboard. Every ship had a certain amount of dunnage, which were boards...2x4's, 2x6's and 1x6's, so we confiscated some of that and we mined this cargo of ale. We'd take a case or two out...or three...however high and we'd put up a board, one across and we mined it. We used the fire extinguishers to cool it. You just open it up and ssshhh and it'd be ice cold. So we enjoyed Balantine Ale all the way out to Pearl Harbor. No, I think we went to Anawetaak with it. I'm not sure, but we off loaded it and when they off loaded it, the whole middle just caved in when they got to it. The old man knew that somebody'd gone awry, but we were real careful about what we did. It was bottled. It was bottled. So we had to make darn sure it would

sink when we'd threw the bottles over. I remember one night we were...let me see...the war was still on and I smoked in those days. They had these chemical lighters. You didn't have to light a cigarette lighter, a zippo lighter, they had these chemical lighters. (Phone rings)

END TAPE

MAKINSTER INTERVIEW

TAPE 3, SIDE 2

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Harold: Well, anyway...during the war, especially where we were and we had to use, or didn't have to, but all we had was....if you smoked, we had these chemical lighters. You could just put your cigarette in and then hit the button and chemically it would light the cigarette instead of the flash. So anyway, I was smoking in those days and I was up on the con on signalman duty. I shouldn't really tell this story. We were on the sea somewhere. I don't know where it was, but no big problem to me. I had my rain gear on. It was a stormy night, ugly night, so I just slipped in and got a cigarette out and I got my chemical lighter and lit my cigarette. I enjoyed two or three puffs, you know. Oh, boy, it was good. Midnight watch, cold and miserable. Captain Olsen right behind me inside the con. I was out on the outer area. And when I finished my cigarette all I really wanted ....all I really dared to enjoy, because someone might smell it....I just took it out and I flipped it. It just made...uh....made an arch of ash or glowing ash off the side of the ship and down into the ocean. Captain Olsen saw that. "What was that?" You know, I couldn't tell him what it was, so I says, "Well, it's a spark came out of that....out of that vent there, sir." Boy, he called down to the auxillary room and he ordered one of the...one of the officers in charge, engineers, "Come on up to the con right now. I want to talk to you." So he just chewed that guy up and down. He says, "Don't you ever clean the carbon out of these stacks around here?" He says,

“There was a flame that just came out of that stack right there.” He says, “That’s the auxillary...” And I couldn’t say a thing. I just had to stand there and let him get chewed out, but I didn’t dare tell him it was a cigarette or I’d have been court marshalled. War was on. But I didn’t hurt anything. It was so....in my opinion....but it sure upset Olsen. I shouldn’t have told you that.

Linda: Do you think he ever knew?

Harold: No. He never did know. No. No. It came out of the auxiliary stack, because these boys hadn’t cleaned the carbon out of it.

Linda: People have told me funny stories about how they kind of did little shenanigans or something and then something would result, you know. They’d say like...uh...Olsen...uhm....Norris was telling me something about painting the thing and he didn’t like the color and then he painted it a real ugly color, so Olsen goes, “Well, okay, paint it back the color you want it.” You know, you guys just did....I mean, go figure. You were a bunch of eighteen year olds.

Harold: Yeah, just kids. Most of us except Franks and Stockdale. They were probably thirty. Another thing that....well, no, I won’t record that. I was going to tell you about that fellow that got in trouble. They came aboard and took him off the ship. That was the 534 and he went to prison for it and that’s sad.

Linda: I wonder who that was.

Harold: I don’t know who....it should be in the....it’ll be in the log, because they’ll have to report that he was taken ashore.



Linda: Yeah, when I read these logs I.....

Harold: Yeah, it'll be in there. It'll be in there.

Linda: When I finish doing what I need to do with them I'm going to ship them to you and you just read them and then when you finish you ship them back to me.

Harold: Oh, I thought this would be the only chance I'd have. I just got to the good part.

Linda: Yeah, I know you did, but I got to take it with me tonight, so I'll ship it to you when I finish them, okay? And then you can read them. Read them at your leisure and then send them back to me.

Harold: Oh, boy. Sure. All right.

Linda: Okay, now you're in the Pacific and you're on the 1062 and you saw something happen and you didn't know what it....

Harold: Oh, we were in the...in on the invasion of Sapin, Taenia and then we went from there to Okinawa for the Buckner Bay invasion. We went into Buckner Bay. I recall vividly an LST on the beach burning, heavily burning. Didn't know the number, couldn't see it at that time.

Matt: I hate to ask...can you start by telling her, "I was on the LST 10....

Linda: 1062.

Matt: In Buckner Bay. Just start the story that way.

Harold: Oh, okay. Alright. I was on the LST 1062 and we went into Buckner Bay for that invasion as the same as your 534 and I saw this LST burning fiercely on the beach. I didn't realize it was the 534 until the next day. We were ashore. We'd gone in to beach also. The next day I got out my long brass and I took a look and it was the 534, so I talked my captain into letting me take a small boat over to visit the 534....we could....the 534 was on the beach, the bow was dry on the beach and the stern was sitting on the bottom, but it had probably ten feet of water around it, probably ten or twelve feet of water around it. So I could take the small boat and go in along side and they threw a ladder down for me and I climbed up on the 534 and there was old lady Holt to greet me. I'm sure that Henry was there too and a bunch of the old timers....Sarres, all the crew that hadn't gone ashore or weren't hurt and there was a hell of a hole in the ship just forward of the con. A hole as big as....probably thirty feet across. You could see right down through the ship right down in the bottom to the water. Every....all of that whole crew was good natured, you know. I mean, they were cheerful about things. I went down below and said 'Hi' to all the boys that were there that I could. I stayed aboard about, probably a half an hour. Talked to Eddie Holt and Sarres and, I think French was still aboard. They were glad to see me, because we had gone through a few things over there in Europe and it seemed....it seemed ironic, so to speak, that we'd be at the same beach, you know, together again, 'cause I hadn't seen them anywhere else in the Pacific except there in Buckner Bay and there they were. They'd been hit by a Japanese suicide plane. I didn't actually....I saw it burning. I saw it burning real hot and heavy, but it was later in the day then the....then the....I remember the plane attack. That seemed to me like that was in the morning around eight or nine o'clock and it was two in the afternoon when I noticed the ship burning briskly. It was the 534 sunk. My ship. Then I thought, "Oh, my gosh! The guys were aboard. How lucky I was that I wasn't on board." But apparently no one

on the con got hurt or killed, but you'd have thought they were in grave danger the way that tank deck blew. All my good memories are with the 534, very exciting days and the challenges. I wished now I'd have stayed aboard, probably, but I made some friends and had some experiences on the 1062 also. It was a newer ship and I was a second class signalman, so I had a little push. I had an excellent captain. We worked together very well. A lot of challenges when you're a signalman, quarter master also. Henry....Henry's job was coxswain. He was on that little...on our little...the LCDP's, I think we called them, made out of plywood. They had a diesel engine in the back steering wheel. He'd be on there taking care of things and getting us where we wanted to go to go ashore.

Linda: Somebody told me he was pretty good driving those little boats. I believe it, because he was really good like that kind of thing.

Harold: Yeah. Yeah, he had a knack. Well, he knew currents and he knew wind and he understood torque on motors and engines. Yeah, he was a good one. Yup.

Linda: How do you....when you think now, I mean, you have in your life done so many miraculous things with the Shrine, with the Elks, with your family...looking back, I mean, are you like really proud that you were a part of World War II or how do you reflect back on that time?

Harold: Oh, I was extremely interested and excited about the fiftieth anniversary of D-Day. I couldn't see enough of it. I have a tape now of the invasion of Normandy. I have that tape and I'll run that every now and then just to watch and our ship's in that tape....on that tape. I can't specifically....out ship, 534....I can't specifically see the numbers on the ship, but I remember vividly the profile of the beach and the buildings that were ahead of us on

the beach. We were there when that picture was taken and it showed probably fifteen or twenty LST's all lined up and other small boats. I wouldn't have missed it for anything. I wouldn't have missed it at all. You bet I'm proud of it. I still have the flag that we flew in Normandy. I was a signalman and I have the access to the pennant of bringing...raise it and lower it whenever it was proper. When I left the ship I took that flag, put it in my seabag and I have...still have it and when we went into Tokyo Harbor in August of '45 I raised that flag. I put that flag up on the halyard, the same flag that went into Normandy I had...I still have it. Every Fourth of July hang it out on my porch. It's kind of...48 stars on it. Yeah, I'm happy that I was a part of it, the greatest military event in the world's history. Probably never will be repeated in that magnitude. All those ships and all those men and the purpose and the reason for it. I'm sad that I lost my brother, but we all lost people. But, no, it was a historic event that I was a part of, in my small role. We didn't think we'd get back from the beach. We had the thought going into Normandy, at least I did. I felt, "Well, this...the only way I'm going to get out of here is to swim or be picked up by another ship or whatever..." I had no idea, but I thought that we were probably not going to be able to get back. They had us psyched into that thought. That was interesting. I hadn't yet really met or really married my wife, so I had no connections back here at home, you know, that I had to worry about. Made some friends in England. Enjoyed every opportunity that we had to see and observe. Oh, we went into Scotland. When we...when we arrived in England we came around...we didn't go directly into...into one of the ports in England. We went into Scotland. As a signalman we tied up to buoys there. We didn't drop an anchor. We tied up to buoys big round steel balls that had a facility where you could hook on to them and then we'd tie up to those. So the signal came from the beach to my ship, 534. Of course, you gave our call letters and I gave them a King 'Go Ahead'. The first word was SHEW. And I read it. I got

it, but I wouldn't record it. I mean, my recorder was there and I wouldn't....when you receive a word and you understand it you flash back, just a flash back. That means, 'I understand. Go ahead with the next word.' So here came...I didn't flash, so he sent it again, the signalman on the shore. And it was SHEW. And I wouldn't flash, so finally, he sent us a third time real slow. Dit-dit-dit, dit-dit-dit-dit, dit-dit, daa-daa. Well, I called it out to my recorder. I said, "Well, here it is, S-H-E-W." And I flashed cause I had it. I didn't know what it meant, but I had it. Then the next word was 'No.' N-O. I flashed back, 'cause, hell, I got that. Then it was L-I-T-E-S. That was incorrect spelling as far as I was concerned, so I didn't flash. Well, he sent it again. I flashed. L-I-T-E-S. Then ANCHORED, A-N-C-H-O-R-E-D. ANCHORED WHILST. So the message was SHOW NO LITES WHILST ANCHORED. And it was S-H-E-W NO L-I-T-E-S WHILST, W-H-I-L-S-T. And he had to send that three times before I'd flash him back. I remember that.

Linda: Did he just not know how to spell?

Harold: Well, it was your Scottish brogue or whatever. He was....I guess, that's the way they speak over there, I think.

Linda: Oh, Okay.

Harold: There's tires, you know, automobile tires is spelled T-Y-R-E-S. It isn't T-I-R-E-S. It's T-Y-R-E-S.

Linda: That's a funny story.

Harold: Well, anyway, I finally flashed back. The E-boats were hitting the channel pretty heavy in those days, German boats. They'd make it all the way

across the Atlantic from the submarines and then get over there and the E-boats would get them, so we were always on watch. We had four on and four off for that. General quarters just ...on the drop of a button we'd call general quarters. Real nervous. One night coming across the Atlantic the ships that they were torpedo....or \_\_\_\_\_ a submarine, the signal was a white flare, real bright white flare. They'd fire, it'd go up in the air probably a thousand feet, way up and then a parachute would bring it down and...the white flare. that was the signal that either they were attacked or there was a submarine sighted. So we'd been hit two or three night sin a row, as I remember. This one night I was on...up on the con on signal watch and...I don't know who was the officer on the deck. It might have been Sarres. I'm not sure. But anyway, I reported, because I saw a white flare dead ahead about...oh, at ten o'clock, just a little bit off the starboard side. Bright, real bright. I took my binoculars and looked and I could see the parachute. I could see the smoke coming off the flare. It was cloudy, misty clouds and they'd part and then they'd drift back. So I reported a flare at...oh, 1-0 or whatever it was, a degree off the starboard and the officer of the deck he called down to the old man, called down to Olsen, rang the general quarters and here came Olsen. All the whole crew had to get up and go to the guns and go to all their stations. Olsen came up and, "Where? Where's that flare?", you know, and it was still there. I said, "Right dead ahead, sir." He took his glasses and he looked at it and he says, "Makinster, don't you know...."....uh, what the hell star was it...."Don't you know Venus when you see it?" I says, "Sir," I said, "I can even see the smoke and the parachute." I could. And so could the officer of the deck, Sarres, I think it was. So he secured general quarters, chewed me out appropriately for causing all that alarm, but we were gun shy in those days. I did see a flare, however, it was a star. But I could imagine the parachute and the smoke coming off the flare. I can see that. That

was, of course, clouds drifting. That was interesting. Olsen didn't care for me too much.

Linda: Did you ever end up in the brig?

Harold: No. I was busted once in New Orleans. I went from New Orleans over across the river to whatever the name of the city was across...I've forgotten now...Mobile or somewhere...and missed the ferry coming back to get back on the ship in time. I had to wait all that night and the first ferry out was, we'll say seven in the morning or something. I managed to get on that and I was late getting back to the ship. I was AOL. I was...I think I'd made third class signalman and I was busted down to first class seaman. Olsen busted me. And I stayed first class all the way over the Atlantic, all the way over to England I stayed first class seaman, signalman, stryker. I mean, I was a good signalman. I was. But I was a first class seaman. I finally got my third class back and then I managed to get second class on the 1062. I was....they had room for a second class signalman, so I made the...I had the experience and what I needed, so I was elevated to second class signalman and if I'd of signed over for four years after the war when I was eligible to be discharged, they would have...they promised me I'd be Chief, but I didn't want to stay. I wanted to get on home. I enjoyed very much being a signalman. It was fun. It was a challenge.

Linda: If I'd have been your captain, I would have given you a rank higher. I'm proud of you.

Rita: Are you done yet?

Linda: Do you have anything else you want to say?

Harold: Well, just 'm sorry that my memory won't allow me the luxury of remembering all the crew. I remember Henry Alvers, because of his 'Coming, Mother!', you know. He was a little fellow like me, always alert and sharp, excellent small boat operator. Sarres, of course, a dear man. Concerned, compassionate...

Linda: Don't do your hands. Sarres...

Harold: Oh. Sarres was a concerned and compassionate. When he came aboard he was almost as green as I was when I went aboard first. We worked it out pretty well. He was a gold braid, however. You know, he'd just gone through his...I suppose they called them 'Sixty Day Wonders' in those days, but he was a good man. Stockdale was a challenge. French had the crew scared to death. He was very officious, extremely, which we had to have in those days. You had to have discipline and you had to be scared of somebody, so you might as well be afraid of French. Olsen was a...I forget where we were, but we had an addition to the crew. About...we took on four...four crew members, brand new fellows, came up the ladder, saluted the flag and this one sailer...I forget what his rank was, he was rated, he had a crow on his arm. I think he was right handed, so he must have been a gunners mate or something, but he came aboard and saluted the Ensign and then he looked at Olsen and said, "Oley, how ya doing?" and stuck out his hand. And Olsen....Hrmmm-hrmmm-hrmmm. You know, they were old buddies from years ago. Olsen was embarrassed, because he was used to being...oh yeah....'Yes, sir! No, sir!" and all this and being humble, you know. He just stuck his paw and then, "Oley, how ya doing?"  
(Laughs)

Linda: Took a couple of breaths out of Olsen.



Harold: Oh, yeah.

Rita: Quit wiggling your fingers.

Linda: Can you salute?

Harold: You bet.

Linda: Yes, sir!

Harold: Yes, sir.

Linda: Do you remember Ed Overstay?

Harold: Yes. Overstay, he was a signalman. Oh, yeah. He was a pet. He was a pet of Olsen's. Ed was from.....Overstay, you bet I do. He was...if I remember right, he was from....uh...oh, no....Overstay....

Linda: He's in Florida now.

Harold: Overstay. I'm sure he was a signalman.

Linda: Yes, he was.

Harold: And he was a pet of Olsen's.

Linda: Yes, he was.

Harold: He's the one that...Olsen told me, "Makinster, go below." And he'd call Overstay up, that evening I was telling you about. Overstay lived on the...uh...as we went through going up to Boston on the 534....

Linda: Rhode Island.

Harold: Yeah. We went around the Cape Cod. There was a short cut. We didn't have to go around the Cape we went through this canal. He lived...his folks lived right on the edge of that and when we...he just got excited as he could be when we were going through there and he got...climbed up on the con and, "Hey! Hi, mom! Hi, dad!" Overstay. You bet I remember him. You bet. He was a good signalman.

Linda: We interviewed him two weekends ago.

Harold: Oh, did you? Really? Yeah, he was...he was...we were the only two on the ship, Overstay and myself. That's why we had four on, four off for months plus...plus general quarters, sunrise and sunset, and then whenever someone saw a star and they wanted to claim it...why...there'd be general quarters.

Linda: Maybe you'd get a star named after you. They can do that now. Okay, so, anything else you want to say? Oh, I wanted to ask you....what do you think of when you're looking at those deck logs? I mean, you are really interested in those deck logs.

Harold: Well, I'm trying to recall certain events that I know are recorded that I participated in. I know they had to be recorded. And I just got to June 5th and 6th and we were in Nipswitch or Horowitz, somewhere in that area. I was very interested in that. The other names of the crew. Yeah, it's history. It's fifty years ago or better. It's all done in thier handwriting and some of them haven't survived, some have. It's history. It's like going back and reading a diary or something. It's neat. I'm surprised you were able to get it and get the transcript or the copy of it, and they still had it.

They still have it, so, yes, it's very interesting to read that, because it takes me back to where we were and what we were doing. Some of the handwriting indicated that we had rough...rough weather, rough water and I remember some of those rough waters that we went through, especially when we went up from Florida up to....from Pensacola up to Boston. We went around through that, they call it the...some kind of a triangle.

Linda: Bermuda.

Harold: Bermuda Triangle. Extremely rough currents in there. I never did get seasick. In fact, I climbed...I wasn't supposed to do it, but I climbed the mast and got up in the crows nest and rode that crows nest through that rough water. The bog would come up and land on....and the next wave would just shake back and that mast would just go joop-joop-joop, but I hung right on there. I was excited. No one ever knew that I went up that mast, but I did. I went up and stayed, oh...probably a half an hour up on the top...up on what they call the crows nest, just a little platform you'd hang on and ride it out. First time I'd really been to sea.

Linda: And you were eighteen.

Harold: Yeah, I was eighteen. Just a kid. Hadn't even got to the point where I thought I knew it all. That came a little bit later.

Linda: Thank you so much. This has been great.

Harold: Oh! Well, I hope so.

Linda: And, Rita, thank you. I mean,...

Harold: I hope so. You came a long ways to...we put Matt to sleep.

Matt: No, actually, this was really fascinating. I'm speeding.

Harold: This will be the best part.

Rita: Sit on it.

Linda: What is it? Ask him.

Matt: Can you tell Linda...you're eighteen years old...why...what...what made you feel like you were there? Why did you think you were there? Were you just trying to survive? Was it because of a greater cause? What...what was going through your head for why you thought you should be there at war on the LST? You can tell Linda.

Harold: Well, yeah, I was just a kid, but I knew the importance of this particular operation, and everybody knew we were going to invade. We all knew that. We just didn't know when. And I was really happy to be a part of it, to be a part of that experience, proud to be aboard, proud to be on a US vessel in foreign waters. I had a...while I was aboard the 534 on those four on, four off and then general quarters every morning and every evening, no sleep at all. No sleep. I had a breakdown, physical breakdown actually. I just run down and they took me ashore and I went into the hospital there at...Queen Ann Hospital in South Hampton. Like...I think I said before, I slept for twenty....or thirty-six hours before I woke up or before they got me up. I stayed another day or two, faked an I.D. so I could go downtown and have a beer. I didn't have any dress blues. You weren't supposed to be down in South Hampton, or anywhere I'm sure...in England, without proper...without a proper dress, the American sailors, which meant dress

blues. I didn't have any dress blues. All I had was my dungarees, my Navy shirt. Anyway, I got picked up in South Hampton. I snuck out of the hospital and I had a fake I.D. with a fake...with a fake name and a fake number, one of the boys on the 534 made it for me. I think it was one of the pharmacist mates. He was making I.D.'s for us, no picture on it, but just the name and the number.....(Tape speeds up)

Linda: This is the flag, Harold, that was on...at the....

Harold: When we went into Normandy. You bet it is. Yeah. You bet it is.

Linda: When you went into Normandy.

Harold: And I took it, folded it up and put it in my seabag. Then when we went into...uh...I kept it. When we went into Tokyo on the 1062 I put it back up on the halyard.

Matt: Can you move your chair a little bit to the right.

Linda: Matt wants to get a picture.

Rita: We fly this every Fourth of July, honey, out on our front yard.

Harold: Number 10. Size.

Linda: Forty-eight stars. Tell us about that.

Harold: Oh, well this is the flag that flew on the 534 when we went into Normandy. Then I obtained it when I left the ship. I put it in my seabag and took it

with me and then I took it out on the 1062 and when the 1062 went into Tokyo Bay...

Matt: You got to hold it really still why you talk. I'm sorry. thanks.

Harold: I saved it in my seabag and when we sailed into Tokyo Bay on the 1062 I raised it again, so it flew in Normandy and it flew in Tokyo Bay and now I use it every Fourth of July. I display it at my home.

Linda: That's great.

Harold: It's got the 48 stars as you can see. I'm real proud of this.

Linda: I'm happy to see that. I mean, my dad witnessed this.

Harold: Oh, yeah. Absolutely.

Linda: ....think that I would see the same flag that was flyng on the ship at Normandy. This is...

Harold: This is...this is on...this flag was flying when we went into Normandy. You bet it was. It was the only pennant we had identifying, of course we had the letters on our ship, USS LST 534, but this was our...this was the flag.

Linda: What was the personality differences between the 534 and the 1062?

Harold: Oh, a newer ship. The 1062 was a newer ship, had IFI on it, which was a aide for identification that we didn't have on the 534. It had the filters on the signal lights on our flashing lights. It had filter you could...you could use a flashing light at night. That was developed later in the war and you could flip this hood over the light and then turn the light on and signal ship,

you know, that you wanted to talk to. No one could read it unless they had certain goggles on. They had to have...it was a green light, as I recall, which you had to have special goggles to read the light. So it was a way to send a visual morse code flashing light signal without it being seen by the enemy. We had that aboard. We had a lot better radar, much better radar than they had on the 534.

Linda: So, in a way, you guys on the 534 were like this sort of a calamity of a crew where you were all these, you know....sophisticated guys over here. Is that the difference in the personalities?

Harold: Well, it was a newer ship. We had better quarters, better food. We were in the Pacific. They had a lot...in my opinion, they had better conditions in the Pacific, warmer weather.

Matt: It's lower...can you and I just flip it up, just how it was. How it was fine, okay.

Harold: How it was? Okay.

Matt: And just do one of these things. Ready? And up, up, up.

Harold: Oh, okay.

Matt: ...rotate the monitor....

Rita: Yeah, let all of the stars show, because we all know what stripes look like.

Matt: Okay, you can keep doing what you're doing. It's really cool. Couple of moves off of that.

Linda: We're making the flag wave.

Harold: Oh, okay.

Rita: Yes, he doesn't want you to lay it down.

Linda: Let me get over on this side and do it, Matt.

Harold: I could stand on a chair and cause it to happen.

Matt: Well, don't lift the hand so high. That's the only.

Voice: Wait a minute.

Matt: That's great.

Linda: There's a lot of wind this day.

Rita: Just a tad bit higher.

Harold: No, he said not so high. I don't know whether we're on audio or not.

Linda: Well, we're not going to be...the audio is not going to be....

Matt: Okay, whenever....you in there too.

Linda: ...you have gone and gotten this....oh, this is great! Harold, you have made me so happy. Now, just don't stand. Oh, okay....it's a little bitty thing and then you press here....(Picture taking session)...you'll get copies of all of this. This is great. I mean, I just can't believe this. This is Normandy. Can you imagine?

Harold: Yeah, it was. It truly was.



Linda: I mean, when you think...this is it....this is the flag.  
(More miscellaneous talking, picture taking)

Matt: Can you tell Linda about how you feel about being an American.

Linda: Proud to be an American?

Harold: Oh, yes. I think all veterans of any particular war that we fought are plenty proud to be an American.

Matt: Better yet, can you tell Linda what it means to be an American.

Rita: As opposed to what you saw when weren't an American.

Harold: Well, it's....to be an American is to enjoy the privileges that we have and to be able to raise our children in this country where there's no poverty, so to speak....that is, that I am aware of...freedom and just thank God that I am an American and my family are here rather than over there during those days. We've enjoyed a peaceful existence for two hundred years or better. Let's hope it always stays that way. That's all I can think of, Matt, at this time.

END OF INTERVIEW