

Interviewer: (The men were talking before the actual interview began) Too complicated I will feel free to step in and say I've got another question or something like that.

Krauel: Shorten them up as much as I

Interviewer: Well I mean you don't have to do that you don't have to do that. It's just that it's easy to get off track and it's really my job to make sure that we stay on track. That's the role that I play so in that respect don't take offence if I say tell me about something else.

Now the interview starts

Interviewer: This is December 29th well it's the 29th now 1999 and I'm conducting an interview with Mr. Edward Krauel about his experiences in WWII and I think I would like to start with the question where were you and what were you doing when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor?

Krauel: I was home in Toledo working at Service Combustion at the time when the war started or was declared when Pearl Harbor was.

Interviewer: Pearl Harbor was on Sunday.

Krauel: Right

Interviewer: And do you remember listening to the radio when Roosevelt spoke that night?

Krauel: I'm pretty sure I do.

Interviewer: Were you expecting this in anyway did you think that war was coming?

Krauel: No no no not that at particular time.

Interviewer: Okay what was your job at Service Combustion?

Krauel: I was time keeper for the shop taking care of time for all of the employees out in the shop.

Interviewer: Okay and what product did Service Combustion make?

Krauel: It made furnaces gas furnaces for everything.

Interviewer: And is this the place on Door Nebraska?

Krauel: No it's on Door Street.

Interviewer: It's on Door Street.

Krauel: Yeah by well across from the cemetery out there.

Interviewer: About how big was the factory?

Krauel: Pretty good size.

Interviewer: A thousand people?

Krauel: I think so I'm not sure yeah we had quite a few people because that's I just did the shop and there was a scale crew and then they had a lot of salesmen that went out a lot of different places to sell the furnaces on outside the plane. This was the main plant.

Interviewer: Were you doing any defense work yet? Was Service Combustion doing any defense work yet?

Krauel: Not yet exactly but right after Pearl Harbor then they started before I got into the into the war myself. Because that was in 41 and I didn't go into service until 42.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: In 42

Interviewer: For the next did you were you drafted then in 1942?

Krauel: No in a way yes and no.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: My number came up that I was supposed to go into the army but I wanted the navy so I enlisted in the navy when the time came.

Interviewer: And did you have what was your particular motive for wanting to go into the navy?

Krauel: I guess I wanted it ever since I was a little kid. I just liked the water I swam a lot I belonged to the scouts I went out to scout camp and I was a lifeguard out there. And it just seemed that I that was what I liked to do.

Interviewer: That makes sense that makes a lot of sense. Um how did the work change at Service Combustion after December 7th?

Krauel: Well we started to get in to make furnaces for defense plants and stuff like for the shells the casing and that. In fact what I remember was a laughing matter they had made I didn't recall it anymore but I know they had a couple of furnaces that they made for Russia. But they never got to Russia they got blown up or at least that's what I heard at the time when they were sending them across well naturally probably the Germans got them I don't know that much.

Interviewer: Sunk by a submarine or something like that.

Krauel: Yeah something like that I heard that they didn't get there.

Interviewer: When you when you went into the navy where did they send you and at about when I mean when was this and.

Krauel: You want the dates and everything that I went in?

Interviewer: Roughly

Krauel: Well it was late 42 I think it was September 42 roughly. And I went to Great Lakes for my boot camp and then from there they sent me I wanted to be a either a carpenter or a store keeper because that's what I did first at Service Combustion. When I started out there was office boy in the parts department not the parts department but the literature stock rom in that. But then they sent me to radio school and I didn't like that so I got out and then I got well I'll say drafted but got assigned to the PT boats in Brooklyn Navy Yard and then from there's where I went overseas and went to the war.

Interviewer: Okay let's back up a minute. When you went to the Great Lakes Naval Center how long were you there approximately?

Krauel: I think it was nine weeks because it was short. They was pushing them through pretty fast.

Interviewer: And this was I suppose in October or November of 42?

Krauel: Well I went in when I went in I went there and I got my basic training done in the first part or the last of January because I had a boot leave which and I had to be back there on the 5th of February. Because I didn't get a chance to stay home for my birthday.

Interviewer: Uh huh what did basic training consist of at Great Lakes Center?

Krauel: Well a little bit of everything combat learn how to take care of yourself and see whether you could swim or not. And show you the lines of the boat and I was a little bit ahead of them in tying knots and that there all of my boy scouts did me a lot of good. And I also was in Sea Scouts which was helpful to me for knowing the parts of the boat and everything.

Interviewer: Did they train everyone together in other words people who were destined to be on a battleship people who were gonna go to

Krauel: Yeah yeah in the boot camp you had I can't remember now how many but it was a good crowd and then after you got your boot training everything was the same for everybody. But then when you then they assigned you to different places different branches and that at that time.

Interviewer: Were you there with friends or was essentially everyone a stranger when you got there?

Krauel: Well there was a few from Toledo that went in with me that I knew but then after the boot camp why we parted and naturally got all new friends and made friends like that.

Interviewer: Did they were the recruits from all over the country?

Krauel: Our bunch was mostly from around this section.

Interviewer: Midwestern's

Krauel: Yeah because the ones that came from the west coast went to I think it was someplace out there.

Interviewer: San Diego

Krauel: San Diego or something yeah San Diego I think that was the place at that time out there.

Interviewer: And on the east coast I suppose they went to Rhode Island maybe.

Krauel: Norfolk Virginia or

Interviewer: Yeah Norfolk Virginia

Krauel: Yeah like that because that was a big one or there's another place but I can't recall the name of it right now.

Interviewer: Okay after you completed your basic training and started more advanced training how did they select which specialties which

Krauel: I don't know they just picked you from I guess what you did there and then you put in for what you wanted to do.

Interviewer: And they try to match the two up?

Krauel: Yeah they try to match it but sometimes they don't match them right. That's the navy or the service for you they come put you in a spot where they think you belong and you don't like it. Like they put me in radio school and I couldn't I don't know why they stuck me there because I just couldn't sit there and listen to the da da da all the time.

Interviewer: Uh you were you were graduated from high school by this time several years before this time.

Krauel: Oh heck yes four years before.

Interviewer: Were most of the people that you were there with had they also graduated from high school?

Krauel: Oh yeah they were all in their early 20s everybody was around that because they all were well 20 to 25 I'd say.

Interviewer: And would it be possible to say that because would it be possible to say that the standards of the navy were possibly a little higher than the standards of the army?

Krauel: Yes they were higher.

Interviewer: Because because everyone would go into the army

Krauel: They was drafted to the army and then when you was drafted it was automatically for the war.

Interviewer: Now you didn't get the carpentry that you wanted and you didn't what else did you ask for?

Krauel: Store keeper

Interviewer: Store keeper and you didn't like the radio?

Krauel: No I couldn't sit there.

Interviewer: Uh how did they decide on being a cook and how did they decide on the PTs?

Krauel: I was drafted for the PTs because in the navy they put you in the outgoing unit which is like a stockade we'll say and if they need so many men for this ship they'll come there and ask for whatever number they need then they ship you to that ship. And just happened the luck that the squadron I got into in PTs they needed some men so I was in Philadelphia Navy Yard at that time and they just went and drafted so many guys and we went up to the Brooklyn Navy Yard which was the main base for the PTs and that's how I got in the PTs. And I sure enjoyed it a lot that was the best thing I got into.

Interviewer: How did you did you ever go to cooking school?

Krauel: No I had cooking school at home from a good cook my mother.

Interviewer: And did they know that you already that you already had cooking experience?

Krauel: No how I got it you want me to tell this?

Interviewer: Sure please yes

Krauel: Well I when I got onboard this boat why and we got over to New Guiney why in the jungles there was no place to go to have and there were these little 2 by 4 boats they were only 80 foot long and 20 foot across the beam. And they had 12 men 10 men and two officers the first ones did and I just I always liked to cook at home and being that I lost my dad while my mother was working I kind of piddled around and I also had a semester of it in school in high school for home ec for boys it was.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Krauel: And but I just always did like to cook so I used to work with the cook that was aboard the boat and we'd go out scrounging for food because we had very little space to carry a lot. And then I used to nights the guys used to like it and I used to make donuts for them and they loved that so. And when it came time to give me a rank my skipper asked me he says I want to give you a rank but I don't know what to give you he says what do you want? I says how about cook and that's how I got my cooks rank and I went right on cooking in a couple of boats and the base course and everything else and it was a good duty.

Interviewer: So there was one person designated as cook per boat?

Krauel: Right but at that time when I got my rank we had two cooks onboard the 190 boat which I was on because I was a seaman when I got on it and worked my way up and that's how I got my second class petty officer.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: And worked up there and then being that I was called back for the Korean business and I was assigned to an LST and put in charge of a galley. I won't tell you more.

Interviewer: Okay let's back out a little.

Krauel: Okay

Interviewer: When you went to Philadelphia to the navy yards there

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: What was the purpose of were you being trained there?

Krauel: No just waiting to be shipped out for something.

Interviewer: Okay and what about Brooklyn was

Krauel: Well Brooklyn the main base where you picked up the PT boats. The PT boats were made built in other words across the bay in Baytown New Jersey at the Offal Boat Company. And naturally when they get the boat made why they would ship it across to the Brooklyn Navy Yard. Which they would outfit it with all of the guns and all of the equipment and everything else. And then assign it and commission it and give it a name or a number.

Interviewer: Did you know what a PT boat was before you arrived there?

Krauel: Oh a little bit in a way I heard about them in boot camp but I never really saw one yet until I got to the Brooklyn Navy Yard and they signed me to well I was assigned to this one boat.

Interviewer: Was this considered desirable duty?

Krauel: Well yes in fact it was really voluntary. You volunteered for it because it was hazardous duty and it was considered you were expendable.

Interviewer: Yes yes yes the famous phrase that you were expendable. Um in comparison with service on say a destroyer or a cruiser or a battleship or a submarine how dangerous was service on a PT boat? Is it possible for you to make comparisons here?

Krauel: Yeah it was hazardous it was worse on there because we get in so close to the shore line that the Japs would take puck shots at us with their riffles. And we could even smell you could even smell them cooking if they were cooking anything. And you could almost count the palm leaves on the trees because we'd be in so close and if we made a torpedo run we were so close to the big ships that that was our point and it was hazardous. In fact I guess we're lucky that some of us guys are still here now.

Interviewer: Uh you spent some time in Rhode Island isn't that correct?

Krauel: Yeah that's was our PT base was at Bellville Rhode Island. And when I came back from my first tour of duty over there with squadron 12 I after you was over there for 15 to 20 months we thought that the duty was so hazardous that they thought we'd get R&R. Sent us back to recuperate and then put us on another squadron and the main school if you want to call it that at base was at Rhode Island and that's where they trained the men and that's where I cooked for 3500 on the base there.

Interviewer: Did you so you didn't go to Rhode Island before your first tour of duty?

Krauel: No no

Interviewer: How did you go to the South Pacific?

Krauel: Well we left well when the time came we left Brooklyn Navy Yard on a train a tanker. They'd take the boats on top in racks on top four boats at a time and we'd went down to through the Panama Cannel to Coca Sal no Coca Sal was in the Berobie not Berobie that's when we were over there I can't think of the island. I was on the pacific side of the locks in the cannel. And we had what we call shake down and that's when we take the new boats and put them through everything to kind of shake them down and see if they will hold together in fact. Then when the time came why they'd put them back on tanker down there and sent us over to Brisbane Australia and that's where they took us off by big cranes a big crane. And then we go from there up to New Guiney and then we started our duty up there at New Guiney all the way from one end of New Guiney to the other end. And then that's when it came time we put in over 15 months then they decided to send us back the ones that were the first ones.

Interviewer: Okay uh approximately when did you arrive in Brisbane Australia? Sometime in 40

Krauel: Three

Interviewer: Three

Krauel: The squadron was commissioned in I think it was April

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: Of 43 which is the first part and I think because we got up there probably June July maybe and started patrolling around August I think. And from first place base we were at was Berobie River in New Guiney. And that's where we operated out of for quite a while until then we'd move up a little bit at times. And we did our duty from Berobie River to along New Guiney and quite a bit out to the New Brittan Island which was one of the main places Japs had their rabul main station. And we were trying to take that and that's why we operated along the shorelines there stopping barge traffic.

Interviewer: Okay um I'd like you to talk about two terms that are associated with this. And the first term is the slot do you know the expression?

Krauel: Yeah I think you are talking about the I don't think I ever got into that that was over if I'm not mistaken that was over in the Salmon Islands.

Interviewer: Guadalcanal

Krauel: Guadalcanal and that was before I got over there. But I remember the slot that's where the Japs would sneak up all the time and but I heard about it but I don't know too much about that duty over there.

Interviewer: So the Battle of Guadalcanal was concluded by the time you got there?

Krauel: Oh yeah they had moved.

Interviewer: But the practice of how the PT boats operated was established really during the Battle of Guadalcanal wasn't it?

Krauel: Probably was that I know of but they established themselves all the time and made them known because the Japs hated PT boats.

Interviewer: The other term I wanted to ask you about I think was used in New Guinea it was called the Tokyo Express.

Krauel: Well that came that would be coming down the slot too they used to call it the Tokyo Express that was well a squadron of their large ships destroyers and probably their cruisers they would be like our cruisers I don't know what they call different one and they'd come down there. Would come down the slot that would be the Tokyo Express they called it that was just a nick name that the ones around there gave that when they'd come down the slot.

Interviewer: Were there sailors on your PT boat who had seen combat at Guadalcanal?

Krauel: No we were fresh

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: All of us were freshly never had any combat until we went out on our first patrol. When we went out on our first patrol that was our baptism of fire that they called.

Interviewer: Now the Berobie River was on the southern coast of New Guinea is that right?

Krauel: What was that the Berobie River?

Interviewer: You said if I'm pronouncing this correctly the Berobie River.

Krauel: No I said you mean I said it?

Interviewer: Yes

Krauel: It was the Merobie River

Interviewer: Merobie

Krauel: Yeah Merobie

Interviewer: Okay the Merobie River

Krauel: Yeah that was on

Interviewer: On the south coast?

Krauel: No no that was on New Guiney well everything was let's see yeah that was the southern part there was like a little inlet that you went into and you went up a river a small river. And it was over and that was the best place to go because the Japs couldn't find you I mean the planes would go over there because it was so dense and the trees hung over the river because it wasn't real wide river it wasn't real but. And we'd sit up there and then that's where we operated from at first.

Interviewer: Um you were operating in a place that's not very far from the equator.

Krauel: It was north of the equator.

Interviewer: But the heat must have been intense.

Krauel: Yeah it was it would get to 110, 120 during the daytime. Then it would go down into the 60s at night. It was like going from hot to cold and it was you could really feel at 60 degrees it might be 60 degrees back here but over there 60 degrees was like it was cold. We would have to sleep with a blanket or a sheet on us to kind of keep warm.

Interviewer: What about mosquitos' insects

Krauel: Yeah there was plenty mosquitos around there we had to sleep with mosquito netting because we would sleep up on deck because the crew's quarters would get mighty hot below. So we'd put cots up and mosquito netting and sleep up on deck.

Interviewer: Um did you ever contract malaria?

Krauel: No I was lucky I stayed away from that I didn't get it. There wasn't I don't think anybody on my boat got malaria. We kind of pretty well stayed away from it I don't know why but I guess the mosquitos didn't like us.

Interviewer: Do you think it was the mosquito netting or

Krauel: Well it probably was at night and all just I guess just our I don't know I can't say why we didn't get it because a lot of few of them got them got malaria. But we did take what they called Atabrine tablets which were for malaria and for that.

Interviewer: As a preventive measure?

Krauel: Yeah it was it would turn everything yellow. It was a yellow pill and it you'd sweat it out and your sheet would look yellow. Somebody would look at it and think you had a disease but it wasn't.

Interviewer: Um what was your first experience of combat on the PT boat?

Krauel: Boy that's oh boy there's a lot the first one was probably we'd just went out. The first time was some of the older fellows went out with us to kind of show us the ropes a little bit.

Interviewer: In another boat?

Krauel: A couple of guys would go on our boat with us and kind of instruct us our first time out and tell us different things in that there.

Interviewer: Were these night patrols or day patrols?

Krauel: Night

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: You'd go out all night long and because the Japs I'll have to tell you this one why we went night patrolling was because the Japs didn't have heavy equipment that they could send their reinforcements their ammunition and their supplies and that up to the forward lines. And so the only way they could do it was by barge traffic and they did that at night because if they did it in the daytime the air force would get them. So they relied on the night patrol to bring their stuff up at night and their men and everything. And that was our job to go out at night and stop the barge traffic.

Interviewer: And is it fair to say that at least at the beginning they were the better night fighters?

Krauel: Well maybe yes I don't know about night fighting but they were pretty well down on New Guinea they were pretty close to the southern part of New Guinea because they were after Merobie. Is it Fort Merobie?

Interviewer: Port Moresby

Krauel: That's it Fort Moresby that's what I'm trying to say. That was the biggest town I'd say and that was on the, that would be on the west side of New Guinea. They were trying to get there and that's when they finally stopped them and moved them back up.

Interviewer: Did you serve at this point with any Australian or British soldiers?

Krauel: Mostly Australians we'd take them in for landing parties because we could get in so close because we only drawled five and a half foot of water. And now we'd take a scouting party in and drop them off at night and maybe pick them up in two or three days. Arrangements were always made and they'd go in there with natives they had educated natives which were in the connected with the army with the Australian army and they'd strip down just like a native. And they'd go in and mingle in with them and the Japs would think that they were just natives that they had doing work for them and

Interviewer: Were these was this part of the coastal watchers?

Krauel: No no this was right from the never got into any coastal watchers that we got.

Interviewer: Weren't they also natives who observed the Japanese?

Krauel: Well natives with always with one or two Austailian or somebody who knew that section that was because there were a lot of plantations there before the war. And I don't know what kind of plantations coconuts or whatever it was but they would take and were the ones that did the coastal watching. But I never run into any of them the only ones I run into were the ones we took up there for scouting parties and then pick them up and bring them back. And they'd tell what was going on and that's how we knew what the Japs were doing.

Interviewer: Okay let's back up a minute to we were talking about your first patrol and how more experienced people went with you on the first the first time that you went out. Um how far would these go what kind of distance from your base camp are we talking about?

Krauel: Quite a few miles maybe a hundred miles two hundred miles. They used to have about three patrols one they call the northern patrol, the southern patrol and one in the middle you know. They would go different lengths and always in two different boats and they'd be patrolling a certain section all the time at night.

Interviewer: And what were you looking for particularly?

Krauel: Barge traffic.

Interviewer: Barge traffic

Krauel: And anything on the shore that would show us that they had their camps and we'd strafe the beaches and start sometime hit one of their ammunition belts and blow it up.

Interviewer: Did you have to operate with lights out.

Krauel: Yes not lights at all and if we went below deck we had red lights down there and everything had to be shut we didn't have any windows in those boats. And there was a couple on the chart room and those were painted black nothing was even supposed to light a cigarette.

Interviewer: So you were as good as invisible to the Japanese?

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: But that means that you must have had people who were skilled at using radar.

Krauel: We had a radar we all could operate in other words in plain language when you're on a PT boat there's 12 of you. You had to know not just what your rank was maybe my rank was a cook but I had to know how to operate all the guns take them apart put them back together. Even the torpedoes because I fired well I was assigned to fire one torpedo when we'd used it and also the guns and do everything. We had to know everything that was one thing about being on PTs sailor you had to know everything not just one thing. You'd be able to steer the boat in case one if that particular guy got hit or something when you were on a patrol you couldn't you had to go and take over.

Interviewer: Did you have a medic onboard?

Krauel: No we all were kind of with first aid.

Interviewer: And everyone knew how to read the radar as well then?

Krauel: Well yes they had to yeah.

Interviewer: Were people frequently lost?

Krauel: No we never lost anybody.

Interviewer: No I mean lost in the sense that you didn't know where you were.

Krauel: No we usually knew where we were I mean we had to because some of that water wasn't charted and we did a lot by our little small radar.

Interviewer: Well I was thinking you know you're operating by radar you're operating at night you're operating without lights. Obviously the opportunity to get lost is very great.

Krauel: It's a funny thing how you know where you're at I mean it's funny to think about it out there but you kind of have a sense of I don't know what you want to call it a sense of where you're at.

Interviewer: A sense of direction.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: How far from the coast were you generally could you usually was the coast usually visibly on your patrols?

Krauel: Yes because we was close that's where we had because those barges didn't go very far out. So we were always in close to them because if we didn't see some of them and they saw us well it was tough because they could see our wake. Because we call what you would call roosters tail with that phosphorus water being would show up being it was salt water it shows up. And our boats pushed up a pretty good wake at the end when they'd go through even if they were going at low speed which we'd creep along at low speed with our mufflers we had mufflers that we could muffle the sound of our exhaust. If we got if they saw us and we had a battle naturally we'd open up our mufflers because we could get more speed with the mufflers open. But we were in very close.

Interviewer: How many patrols in an average week how many patrols would you make?

Krauel: Every other night.

Interviewer: Every other night

Krauel: Yeah so that's quite a few patrols.

Interviewer: That is quite a few patrols. What was the typical patrol like I mean did you typically encounter Japanese barges?

Krauel: Sometimes no sometimes we'd go out and we wouldn't find anything and other times we'd fall into it we'd really have it and we were lucky we even came back.

Interviewer: Now what about the radio let's say you were on patrol and you encountered Japanese barges on their way to destination to reinforce a Japanese position.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: Would it be your responsibility to attack the barges

Krauel: Yes

Interviewer: Or would it be your responsibility to radio someplace else?

Krauel: Our to attack we kept radio silence unless we were when we went out no radio between the two boats unless we were sighted and had you know with Jap barges and we were attacking them. Why then we could call once we were known but we'd sneak in there without the other boat usually always knew where we were at but we wouldn't have no contact with them through radio unless we you know made a run on some barges and the Japs knew we were there which didn't matter to be silence.

Interviewer: What kind of vessels towed these barges?

Krauel: They were under their own power they had engines they were just like these barges we had you know where the front drops down you know.

Interviewer: Higgins boat

Krauel: Well there was a Higgins boat too but I don't know what the barges but they had barges well some didn't have drop down they were just more like a bolt just like a

Interviewer: Like a landing craft

Krauel: Yeah like that be just like a landing craft I didn't think about that. But it had an engine in it that they putt along with.

Interviewer: Weren't some of them towed?

Krauel: Not that I know we never run into any towing ones but I think they I heard that there were some that were towed too by these other ones they'd have barges they'd tow them with another barge had the engine in it. I think they did now come to think about it but we never run into any of those that I can recall yet.

Interviewer: What kind of escort did these barges usually have?

Krauel: None they didn't have no they were all on their own. They'd just come up out as far as they weren't very far from shore and when we'd attack them why they'd try to make shore wherever they could to get out of our way.

Interviewer: Did you ever encounter destroyers or cruisers?

Krauel: Not too many because we were just for barges at the time we didn't get into big stuff because big stuff didn't come down there where we were at they couldn't it wasn't that deep. Because we never well I won't tell you that story.

Interviewer: Well maybe some other time you can tell me that story.

Krauel: I want to tell that sooner because I don't want to let that story out. I'll tell you later whenever that is and then you can go from there.

Interviewer: Alright um about how many Japanese troops could each barge carry?

Krauel: Oh quite a few we never counted them but they sometimes were loaded down with quite a few probably 15, 20.

Interviewer: And were these generally reinforcements for positions that the Japanese already had along the New Guinea coast?

Krauel: Either that or else they were moving out. Because I know one time it wasn't us but one of our boats went was out and they run into I think it was about four barges and they were calling out that it was a company that was moving out when they run into it by accident. And it was a company that was moving out they were moving up back and they run into it by it was an accident they didn't even know it I remember that.

Interviewer: Now the fight for New Guinea was long and hard and bitter and time consuming. Did you understand that you were essentially part of a larger strategic trust by Douglas McArthur and Admiral Halzic to you know clear the south pacific of these people?

Krauel: I suppose so I mean I never thought about that because we were there to well we were assigned there because you see Admiral King was in charge because we were assigned to I can't think of the name of the number of the fleet. But we were assigned to that connection with it but well I don't know we weren't with them but that was what the pacific assignment was. But we never accompanied any of the big ships.

Interviewer: Okay what was the maximum speed of the PT boat of any of the PT boats that you were on?

Krauel: Well about forty knots we could go.

Interviewer: Forty knots?

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: That would make you the fastest thing in the water.

Krauel: It was it was PT boat was considered the fastest thing that they had when they opened up opened it up they skimmed right along. They were made that they kind of planed I forget they planed and that's what made them so fast the way they were operated I mean built that they stepped up like a step underneath them. That they'd when you'd go

Interviewer: The faster they went the less contact they had with the water.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: And the more you'd get the hydroplaning effect.

Krauel: Yeah something like that.

Interviewer: Did the Japanese have anything comparable to this?

Krauel: No not that I know of.

Interviewer: Um so in a sense their barges were at a considerable disadvantage in terms of speed mobility armament I take it.

Krauel: Yeah they weren't so speedy not as fast as us because we could swing around hit them three or four times before they'd even have a chance because our boats were maneuverable. Because with the three engines we could put one forward one engine forward and one back and turn on a dime.

Interviewer: These boats were also made out of wood?

Krauel: Yeah about three quarter inches thick they wasn't very thick.

Interviewer: And for all intents and purposed that means they were not armored.

Krauel: No no

Interviewer: And that means that any

Krauel: Shell could go right through it

Interviewer: That's right

Krauel: Yes I'll tell you a story it didn't happen on our boats. But one boat the Japs came over and bombed it and the what I was told the bomb went through in fact it went through the galley it went through the deck and out the side. Went right straight through it and never blew up.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Krauel: The bullet went right through it I don't know how true that story is but that was one that was told and I believe it because I seen a few that had shells that shells went right through them.

Interviewer: What kind of wood were they made of?

Krauel: Mahogany

Interviewer: Mahogany?

Krauel: Yeah they say plywood but plywood boats but they were two layers of mahogany they were three quarter inch the plank was three quarter inch thick and I think they were around six inch wide. One would go one way slanted down then the other then they had like an airplane in between to keep water out you know like that. Then there was another one on the outside went the other way so they were only not very thick two inches would be even saying too much about an inch and a half maybe.

Interviewer: Was this because they were meant to be light and fast and maneuverable?

Krauel: Yes yeah they were meant to be for the speed and light that they could get in close to because they only drew five and half foot of water.

Interviewer: So for that you could go up into swamps couldn't you?

Krauel: Yeah go into pretty right up on the beach with the nose.

Interviewer: Correct me if I'm mistaken but later versions were later versions made of metal?

Krauel: No

Interviewer: They were always made of wood?

Krauel: Always made of wood they were all even the other model there was a Higgins boat and they were all wood all made of wood. I don't know what the other ones were made of I only know the Elko boat because that's the boat I was on both times. And that was supposed to be the better boat of the bunch.

Interviewer: Okay um what was your first experience of combat like?

Krauel: I hate to tell you in plain language.

Interviewer: Go right ahead.

Krauel: It was it made you like you wanted to crap your drawers.

Interviewer: Of course you lose control of your bodily functions of course.

Krauel: And you are scared in a way.

Interviewer: Of course you're scared.

Krauel: But you know dog gone well you can't let them go and get you. Because if you get scared and let them get you you'll get your butt shot off.

Interviewer: No that's right.

Krauel: And so you had to go and keep your wits in other words.

Interviewer: I mean all of this training was partly about having these these functions kick in even though you are scared witless.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: By what's going on that you're well enough trained so that you can do what you have to do regardless of that.

Krauel: But you do think and if you don't when you go out and you're having battle like that and you're thinking well this is it that you might not come back.

Interviewer: Sure

Krauel: In other words I mean you've got to look at it that way it's you hate to look at it that way but it's there and they hope I ain't gonna tell you that but you know right up there (nodding toward the wall).

Interviewer: Sure

Krauel: That was the worst one I thought I wouldn't see you guys on that one you know that.

Interviewer: When did the Japanese start firing back?

Krauel: Right away as soon as you'd are you talking about barge traffic?

Interviewer: Yes

Krauel: Usually as soon as we started on there well they'd try to naturally fire right back afterwards after they got their wits back together in other words. And found out there was something coming naturally they'd start firing.

Interviewer: But they didn't really stand a chance at firing back.

Krauel: No

Interviewer: Given your speed.

Krauel: No because we had bigger guns at the time. We had 50s and 20s and 37 and then later on some of our boats had 40 millimeters. And we were like small gun Goodwin boats.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: Because we went and put on extra guns when we got over there.

Interviewer: Okay that's a good point. Could you describe how armed how the kind of armament that you carried on a typical PT boat?

Krauel: On my boat when we went out there we had two 20s one on the stern and one on the bowl.

Interviewer: Okay those are 20 millimeter guns?

Krauel: Twenty millimeter guns we had two turrets with twin 50s.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: We had four torpedoes.

Interviewer: Okay two turrets with two turrets twin 50s. Turrets that means it goes around yes?

Krauel: Yeah well you'd spin them around yourself. The turrets was just like a you know what I mean where you sat in there and you had the gun was up there and it turned on a pivot just so much.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: And that's where you aimed it.

Interviewer: And you were primarily this was primarily antiaircraft?

Krauel: Anything

Interviewer: Or anything?

Krauel: Anything

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: And then we had the 4 four torpedoes and then on the stern we had we had I forget how many we had duck charges too. And we had a smoke screen generator that was the main thing that when we got over there that's what the boat consisted of when we went over. After we got over there we took the 20 millimeter off the stern and put on a 37 millimeter which was a bigger gun. Then we mounted a couple 30 calibers machine guns single on the between the two torpedoes on each side and besides that we had wed get guns of our own. We all had 45s and that was the main thing then later on they found out that they could use a little more guns on there and later boats they reinforced the stern and put on a 40 millimeter. Which mean it had increased the men par on there of two more because it took four of them to operate that. You had a pointer a trainer and a loader that was on this because it turned on a pivot of its own. And then you had to have a passer that would pass the ammunition from the deck up to the loader because he couldn't get off. He had to stay up there in order to put the load that 40 millimeter. That put us having more power. That was the later boats when they made the newer boats.

Interviewer: When you would attack a Japanese barge what was they typical outcome? In other words did you fire a torpedo at it did you

Krauel: No no they wouldn't because a torpedo went to deep and we only had them for big ships.

Interviewer: So you'd use the turret gun or the 40 millimeter?

Krauel: Yeah all of them all the guns onboard the 50s the 20s the 37s and well whatever side we went on well some guy would grab that 30 caliber and start strafing the barge.

Interviewer: Did the barges explode?

Krauel: Well if they had ammunition if it was an ammunition barge yes they'd explode. But the ones that had men in it and everything else they wouldn't. Although we'd sink them because they did have at first the first barges when we got over there didn't have much armament on its side. Later on they started to put armament on those barges to kind of protect their supplies and stuff.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Krauel: But the first barges they didn't you could sink them or pretty well mess them up. The shells would go right through them and everything.

Interviewer: And they would sink fairly quickly?

Krauel: Huh

Interviewer: They would sink fairly quickly?

Krauel: Well sink in the water because it wasn't very deep. Sometimes it would just sink down because they were shell flat bottom and naturally they didn't that's why they used them because they didn't come too far off the road. Maybe about 100 feet or so just about like from here to the road out her.

Interviewer: Uh huh um did most of the soldiers in these barges drowned did they make it to shore or were they shot?

Krauel: We'll say half and half. Some of them might make it and other ones didn't make it. And it was a mess I mean it's well it's hard to talk about it now. I mean you don't like to talk about things like that because you didn't believe in killing but you had to there.

Interviewer: Of course you had to.

Krauel: That was something that and then they'd get in well I don't want to tell you all the gruesome things that could happen because we'd be running around that with our boats and hacked up a few of them with the propellers you know. That were dead like that I mean that's thinks we don't like to talk about I mean I'm telling you that but I don't say that out because

Interviewer: Sure I mean there's going to be bodies floating in the water.

Krauel: It's it gets you after a while and that's why back you see a lot of the men don't like to talk about it when they come out. I know we talk more about it at our reunion you know because we are with our own.

Interviewer: And you've all been through the experience.

Krauel: Yeah that's why well just your sisters that know what happened to your dad because I didn't tell them hardly anything and they what they found out and what you've found out now was.

Tape switched to another interview with Mr. Krauel.

Krauel: Last time I had my gasses on.

Interviewer: That doesn't matter. Finally okay we were talking about your experiences in New Guinea in 1943. And what was the number of your squadron?

Krauel: Twelve squadron 12 Ron 12 they called it RON 12. That was the abbreviation for Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 12 that's what it really means.

Interviewer: And um how many squadrons were there all together or don't you know?

Krauel: Yeah there was at least 40 because when I come back out of squadron 12 I was put later on I was put into squadron 40.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: Forty went up to the Philippines but they never had any combat because that's when the war was officially over. So we never had any combat so but there was over 40 at least squads I think 41 or 42 squadrons. The last couple of squadrons were never put together completely.

Interviewer: Okay um do you have any idea of roughly very roughly how many people served on PT boats in the Pacific during WWII?

Krauel: Yeah quite a few thousand I'd say because there was we had let's see we had ten boats and there was 12 men to a boat so there was. Because in our reunion we still have over seven hundred coming to the reunion after all these years. So

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: There was quite a few in the thousands.

Interviewer: And you were saying you operated two boats per patrol.

Krauel: Usually mostly

Interviewer: Um when you established a base generally how many boats would be anchored at that base?

Krauel: The whole squadron at Berobie we had two squadrons. There was squadron 21 and 12 and then there was other ones. I don't know exactly but when we got up to Wendy at the top why there was quite a few. And but after Wendy I don't know too much because that's when I came back to the states.

Interviewer: Okay when you say Wendy does that have a proper name?

Krauel: Yeah near Wendy its' I'll have to get it for you I can get it but that was what we called it and it sticks in my name.

Interviewer: Is that also in New Guinea?

Krauel: Yeah that's up it's a little island just top of New Guinea at the northern part of New Guinea at the end of New Guinea way up when you get off of New Guinea it was just a small island that we took over from the natives and made it into a big base. It was one of the bigger bases it was called it was named after one of our skippers that got killed. And Taylor Camp Taylor they called it.

Interviewer: Okay um you went out on patrol every other night in an average week how often would you see combat?

Krauel: That depends you never could really tell what you was gonna run into because you were out shopping in other words for barge traffic. To stop it from the Japs brining their supplies and reinforcements and stuff like that down because that's the only way they could get it down to their lower bases. And along New Guinea because it was dense forest jungles in other words forests and that's what we because we never knew what we'd run into. It all depend on the Japs whether they were and what we could see on the beaches and that there. We saw sometimes you'd see a fire they'd maybe make a fire or you'd see a light on there so you would straf it. Then maybe it was a base and that but you never knew because it was pitch black and you couldn't you couldn't see too far when it was pitch black like that. You just could go by noises and it was the funniest thing to watch different colored blacks, browns and that to see whether it was to see where their barges because you kept looking. And I think that's what screws up your eyes because you're like trying to focus your eyes to see the dark spot whether they are moving or not.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Krauel: Like that yeah

Interviewer: Um what other kinds of encounters did you have with the Japanese besides barge traffic?

Krauel: Well it was mostly barge traffic we'd and then taking scouting patrols. And dropping them off at certain points where they figured out because we worked with the aircraft. And if the aircrafts that went out on patrols would see something like a base or something where it was out they would tell us or tell our officers and that there. And they'd get together and we'd go out at night because it might be a big barge base or a base that would get supplies and stuff like that that's how I could say.

Interviewer: Was this the navy pilots or were these army air core?

Krauel: It was the army air core with the navy that army air force. That's when they were a part they weren't separated I don't think they were separated yet you know because

Interviewer: No into a spate air force no that's right.

Krauel: Because that was too early it wasn't like it is now where the air force is separate and the marines are separate and that there. The marines and navy more or less were together out of the same just a different division but under the navy in that's and the air force that's why we always was close to an air

field. And then another thing why we were close to an air field because with those boats we had to use the same gasoline that the air force used 100 octane gasoline because those are high powered engines.

Interviewer: How much of a fuel tank did you have?

Krauel: Three thousand gallons.

Interviewer: Three thousand gallons.

Krauel: They were it was in three tanks see the two side tanks were a little over a thousand each and the one that laid in the bottom of the boat was around 900 and something. But it added up closely to 3,000 gallons of gas and we used most of it on one nights patrol.

Interviewer: So it would give you a range of a couple hundred miles?

Krauel: Over 500 miles.

Interviewer: Five hundred miles?

Krauel: Oh yeah they would go I figure 500 hundred miles. There were a couple of times we come back and we were running back on the fumes.

Interviewer: Did the Japanese have any patrol boats or anything like that to patrol the coastal waters?

Krauel: Well we never run into anything like that patrol boats. Their bigger boats couldn't get in that close to us because it was the water was too shallow and the reefs and everything because there was a heck of a lot of reefs over there. And coral and all that stuff that they couldn't get into they had to stay out in the deeper water.

Interviewer: Do you think this was poor planning on their part? I mean if they didn't have this just strikes me that they should have had something equivalent to what they had.

Krauel: Yeah it seemed like that that they should have but I don't know. Sometimes we think they wasn't as smart as they thought they were because we outdid them with supplies and stuff that was the main thing that I always thought. Because we had supplies and brought stuff over like bulldozers and big heavy equipment and that we had we that we made our own airfields that they didn't. Because they didn't have that's why they had to use the barge traffic is because they didn't have bulldozers and that that they could go on shore and go through the jungles and knock down the trees and everything.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: Did you ever were you ever called up on to rescue downed pilots?

Krauel: Yeah once once a pilot when we had this big combat that the close to 40 Jap planes came after us. Why we were supposed to have coverage by the air force and they run into problems on the way to get a spot. But it started out to be it was supposed to be a big barge base and turned out that it was

lucky it wasn't many barge base were all out of barges because otherwise we wouldn't be here to tell about it. Because we would have been out of ammunition and everything because we were almost out of it and the one pilot was he was shot up and he couldn't bail out so he patty caked near our boat. And we went out and rescued him and got him out and brought him ashore and that there. I'm not sure but on our boat and took him to a hospital.

Interviewer: This battle you're talking about with the Japanese this was in New Guinea also right?

Krauel: Over New Britton Island.

Interviewer: Oh New Britton

Krauel: New Britton Island not New Guinea. We were went over to Cape Closter I think it was and around Arrowy or something right in there. And for this base that we were supposed to because the air force said there was a big base and we went there to investigate. And it was too close to Revolve to their main that's what I got the idea because they sent out these we don't know if the plane some say the planes were sent out on a patrol. And when they spotted us they decided to come after us being that they saw the two boats down there. We were coming back to our base and we had a heck of a time calling the air force and they were coming and they run into the problem. And that's how this one pilot got shot up and he just couldn't get out until he crash landed. He didn't crash land he landed made a pancake landing in the water like they do and got out before the plane sunk and we picked him up.

Interviewer: How um how often would you come under attack by zeros?

Krauel: Oh every once in a while but not this many. This was something that they couldn't figure out why they had so many planes coming after two PT boats at that time. Otherwise you might get a half a dozen at times that come over when they would be patrolling. Usually they would only get us in the morning or else they'd hit try to hit our base more or less because we weren't out our boats weren't out during the daytime.

Interviewer: Right you were at night.

Krauel: Yeah we were out just night patrolling and that's they'd come maybe a base where we were at and bomb us and do that but they didn't come after I don't know they were afraid of the PTs. They all of them double boats and I don't know what else there was a lot of names they called us but they didn't like to I don't know there was seemed to be scared of us for some reason or another.

Interviewer: Well it sounds as if they didn't have any effective counter measures.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: Against the PT boat because if you were hard to spot if you operated at night that meant you were hard to spot.

Krauel: Well they didn't have any night fighters in that no planes they didn't put planes up at night because they didn't have the well we didn't either because they didn't have the night fighters at that time to with radar or anything like they do now you know that they can spot. They get up there at night and they can just see everything that goes on but back then in the 40s they didn't have that stuff.

Interviewer: Um were you aware in 1943 that McArthur was slowly but surely making progress in clearing the Japanese out of New Guinea?

Krauel: Oh we probably was we never heard too much about him except

Interviewer: But from your point of view did you recognize that you were moving up the coast?

Krauel: Yes yes yes we were moving because we kept moving our bases up like when we started at Merobie River went to Finch Haven and Melanie Bay and right on up that coast. And I think we went and then right on up the coast and then to Finch up to Wendy because that was the last base that I was at before I was sent back home for my leave and for recuperation.

Interviewer: I know that PTS played a role in the defeat of the Japanese in the Philippines.

Krauel: Yes that was long before that was when they first started and that's where they got their ability and McArthur saw what they did and pushed it to have the PTs more built. And I don't know how to say it but you know what I mean.

Interviewer: Did he escape from the Philippines on a PT boat?

Krauel: Yeah yeah two PTs that was Buckley they were up there and he decided to well if you read the one book I forget what it is but he decided to come back to Meese sent down to a base. I forget the name of the base I'd have to look it up on a map. But from up there Creador where he was at the PTs brought him down to an airfield so he could fly back to Australia because they wanted him back there. Then Buckley came back to go over there to the states with McArthur was behind it to increase the PTs. Because he found out what the PTs could do because they raised a little bit of heck up there in the Philippines you know. And they torpedoed a couple big ships up there and that's what McArthur saw what a PT boat could do and he made them and he was set on PTs.

Interviewer: Did you ever fire the torpedoes from your boat?

Krauel: No I never encountered just one time we almost did but we almost hit our own destroyer because we were out and the way I get it the destroyer wasn't supposed to be there. Because we always knew who would be in such and who would be patrolling and if there was any of our own bigger ships and we had recognition signals that we put out and challenge the ship and see what they sent back. We challenged this one we were just getting ready to and he didn't answer and didn't answer and we were getting ready to fire a couple of torpedoes and he finally answered us. Because he don't know how lucky he was because he might have gotten a couple of fish right in the side of him. That's the only thing the only time I ever remember that we come close to firing our torpedoes because we were in so close for barges. Later on we I think we did no we kept four torpedoes because some of the boats would only carry two torpedoes because they were in there because we didn't have to use them to much. They were hard to get because we had to use the after a while I changed the torpedo tube to a torpedo rack and changed the torpedo to the ones that the aircraft. That's another thing why we had to be near an airfield because we used their torpedoes they their planes used because it was a shorter it was a Mark 13 and it was shorter and it more explosive power it had a bigger head on it.

Interviewer: Uh huh when your patrols went out to look for barges what did you worry about?

Krauel: Whether we were going to come back or not.

Interviewer: Yeah but specifically what could go wrong.

Krauel: Well sometimes that engine would conk out because they had I don't know too much about the engines because they were big engines and they had to be overhauled ever so often. And sometimes they weren't because we didn't have the equipment over there and stuff you know for it. Sometimes they'd get blowed up and everything and they would clunk out or else if we hit a reef or something like that that would tear the devil out of the bottom. Or get bombed or strafed by the by our patrol mostly when we were coming back from a patrol. That's the only time we were because that was early in the morning and it was light and then at that time as soon as they day break they would send out their planes. Planes would go out like for patrols and air patrols and that's the time that we were well sitting ducks.

Interviewer: Yeah the most vulnerable because you were visible at that point.

Krauel: We were visible at that time and there was a lot of times that our planes would be going on patrol and they'd watch and they'd always know if there was a patrol coming back. And I guess they kind of watched for us and kind of helped us because a lot of times when they'd be going out and they'd see us down there they'd swoop down on us and try to give a little wave with their wings. Like say or they'd tip on their sides and the pilot would look down and wave to us back there and they'd kind of look over us too see that we got back. And if we got back and our territory close to our territory we wouldn't have to worry too much because the Japs wouldn't come down there we were down in our own territory.

Interviewer: Did you ever I was thinking with all that aviation fuel onboard um the situation must have been very flammable.

Krauel: Oh yeah

Interviewer: Did you ever witness an explosion?

Krauel: No no we were just lucky that we never had we were lucky that we never had. The only one time on the one boat that I was on after I had got transferred to another boat being I was cook you know and they got another couple of boats in. So I was put on there for the cook they needed a cook on it so I was on it and we got ahold of some bad gas one time. We had they took us out with a barge and we had to pump it all out and clean the tanks out because I don't know where they got it but I remember this one time we got some bad gas that had water or something in it. I don't know what it had in it because I didn't I never had to do that cleaning of stuff like that when we were in port or in at the base or that there or something because we'd all have our own jobs to do then.

Interviewer: Um did you did you have dealings with the natives like bartering for chickens or bartering for a hog or things of that nature?

Krauel: No they didn't have much that was the thing they kind of depended on us for giving them things because they never had too much stuff there. And we kind of helped them out a little bit that was about it. The only time we'd get we'd just maybe go to CBs there were CBs over there naturally helping building the airfields and that there. And a lot of times and the marines were there we'd go over there and try to bum some food from them because we didn't have too much at first. But then later on when

we got up farther we started to get a little bit better because we didn't have we didn't have to big a refrigerator and we had only a two burner hot plate and when we cooked we had to have the generator on in order to cook because it was only a 24 volt stove and lighting and everything. So you had to try to bum stuff from other companies who had more stuff because they had roofers and stuff where they could take care of the stuff. And then you'd run out of it because you didn't have that much to carry it you'd try to get all you could for food.

Interviewer: What kind of since you were on a night shift basically how much food was required?

Krauel: Well at night not much maybe we'd just have sandwiches and that and coffee and coco and something like that. The cook would go down he was on the only one allowed below deck at that time because see when we'd go up on patrol we'd shut our water tight hatches and compartments that. And well the galley was just below the chartroom so you was could get to it easy and usually just a cooker or somebody would go down there. That's about all a lot of the time you just had but a lot of times during the night you never had much to make a meal or anything you just had maybe some snack or something a lot of times. But a lot of times it was maybe just coffee or coco or something like that just to keep yourself something in you keep you awake.

Interviewer: Did you um did you have to keep silence when you were on patrol?

Krauel: Well yes kind of low I mean you didn't have to be quiet and not say anything but you couldn't bellow out or yell like that. Well we knew that and we wouldn't do it you know we wouldn't kid or say anything that somebody would laugh out loud because it carries at night especially like that when it's quiet. You'd be surprised on the water how something like that and the same way with no lights or anything on there and we wore dark clothes out there never t-shirts like we did in the daytime why we'd try to keep dark stuff you know so there wouldn't be a reflection. Because a lot of times if there was especially if there was a good ole moon out that was a bad part because that would set you out there and besides our water our lesson in the water out there would get kind of you had to take it easy where you were just going so you patrol really slow in your section. You wouldn't open up the engines unless you was discovered in other words.

Interviewer: You were out for what 12 hours at a time 10 hours at a time?

Krauel: Well just about all night go out about a lot of times oh depending on where we had to go you know and we'd go out from 5 o'clock on and come in from dusk to dawn we'll just say. It would depend on how it was you know.

Interviewer: Did you find it difficult to stay awake all night for I mean did the men in general find it difficult to stay awake?

Krauel: No when we were on just patrol we were on an hour and off an hour. We could kind of crap out and maybe get a couple of winks. You'd be surprised you would it was tiresome and you kind of would fall asleep a lot of times for and then you'd get woke up when your watch come. And the only time you didn't have that was when you were in GQ which means general quarters. When everybody had to be at all their guns and their spots when we'd find something in there then they'd have a like small buzzer bell I forget what we had you'd get everybody out and yell general quarters because we had kind of a small PA system out there like that. Because to report stuff the only kind of talking we did was like on the stern I would have the earphones and a phone and I would report what we could see form the stern of

the boat to the cockpit. The same way with the ones up in the bowl that were look outs they'd tell one party and the one party had a phone on that they saw something and we'd report it to the cockpit. And then the skipper and the exec was in the cock pit and then they'd check it and see what it was and decide what to do.

Interviewer: How did you cope with the boredom of spending that many hours basically looking?

Krauel: Oh you get kind of used to it I guess. We played a lot of cards pinochle maybe a little poker and then if we after we got up to Wendy was a bigger island why we could go ashore then. And I mean it was a big one but at Merobie River there was nothing to go you had just one spot where you could take a shower and do washing and you'd have to have a little dingy. We had a little dingy aboard that we'd take it but when we moved up a little bit we had was it Fitch Haven or after Merobie? Merobie was the worst place and that was dense plane I mean you couldn't hardly you had to tie up to the tree on the side of the river because they overhung and everything. And oh a couple of times I know I did and a couple of other guys we'd walk through the jungles and sometimes there were paths and that just look around but there was nothing to see. Nothing but trees and over brush and all that stuff but when we moved up and got bigger bases well a lot of times we had they had movies and that then but that was when we didn't think the Japs were around. But if we heard washing machine Charlie would come which is a plane that they send Japs would send up that sounded like a washing machine it was loud just to keep us awake and on our toes and not that we would well I'd say wouldn't sleep really. Because well if you heard it they'd sound general quarters or GQ and you'd get up and have to run the ones that were on the shore they'd run to a foxhole. We never had no foxholes to run to.

Interviewer: What kind of things did you do in your free time when you weren't on patrol?

Krauel: Well just a lot of times we'd if I had a lot of free time because I didn't have Paul and I used to go out and try to go to the different like I said the CBs or something and bum food and that there. And we'd go to maybe a native village around there go look and see how they lived and it was educational really and kind of to me that's what to see how they lived and that there. Because you hear about it over here and you talk about it and you see it at school you know they talk about the natives and all that but you don't really believe it or you don't think there's anything like that until you see it for yourself like.

Interviewer: How much time did you spend say writing letters?

Krauel: Well any chance you could get because it took a while sometimes to mail them. I wasn't much of a writer I'd just write something to tell Ma that I was okay and everything like that. Because there wasn't much you could tell because they were censored and some of the guys their letters they'd say too much and they'd look like a sin I mean. They'd cut out all that stuff because you couldn't tell them where you was at you know and locations and all that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: Who regularly wrote to you besides your mother?

Krauel: Oh a couple there was somebody down at the church that wrote to me and I think that's I can't think right now but that was mostly form

Interviewer: Cousins, neighbors

Krauel: Well I don't know because I didn't have Clara was the only cousin I had and the only no I don't was Uncle Pete living or not? But my aunt being a deaf mute she didn't write or anything like that and I don't know if Clara wrote to me or not. But down at the church there different ones would write letters and that and that's all I can remember right now.

Interviewer: Because they recognized how important getting mail was?

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: Did you spend a lot of time daydreaming and imagining what people were doing back home.

Krauel: Well as far as you could say you did that I mean I can't just remember now if I did but I probably did. Was thinking about home and I guess you do I mean that's natural I guess.

Interviewer: Sure

Krauel: I mean you know I mean to think about home and what you'd be doing if you was home and well but when us guys we all had jobs back home and we'd think about that.

Interviewer: After your first tour in New Guinea you said you had an opportunity for R&R.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: And didn't you go to Australia also?

Krauel: Oh yeah they this was before the R&R back to the states. Why they decided to give us the whole boat sent them down to Sydney Australia for two weeks and more or less to that was our commander and our commander and we would go through thick and thin for him. Because he's the one that had respect for us and treated us good that's Harley yeah Harley.

Interviewer: Farley

Krauel: No Harley, Harley was the commander Farley was my skipper.

Interviewer: Oh okay

Krauel: That's how I got him I was have to stop and think because I get them screwed up because there's a Harley and Farley and they're all pretty close. But Harley he's the one that I see at the reunion yeah. And he thought a lot of it and if it wasn't for him our squadron was pretty good because he got us a lot of equipment that other squadrons didn't have. I don't know whether he had an in or something but he must have had something with because he got a lot of stuff. And he's the one that had that to send us down there for just a two week leave to get us away and change our attitude and our minds and that and get our minds on something else besides up there. And then later on naturally I guess it was normal form 15 to 20 months why they started to because we had more they could do that. But probably the first batch that went over there like at Guadalcanal and all of that they probably didn't have it because they didn't have too much equipment at that time.

Interviewer: Uh huh and but that's how we came home and then went to Melville Rhode Island for the base there and spend some time there. And naturally I was assigned to the galley there which was serving everybody and it was a big one.

Interviewer: When was this do you remember when you came back for R&R?

Krauel: It was around I think I was here over October of 43. I was home here for my 30 day leave and I think we left there the way I got there Sam got me the information in that there because I was put on boat 150 afterwards and left there in August. Was taken off and put on the base and I don't think we must have left there around September around four weeks or so that they sent us back to the states so it was right around there. But I was home here for October because I was home here for 4th of uh Halloween because being that I'm working for Service Combustion they had a party out there and well naturally I went back to visit them being I worked there I went back to visit the bunch. And they were glad to see me and they told me about the party and I went to the party out there so that's why I kind of know it was over at that time that month.

Interviewer: Was this 43 or 44?

Krauel: That was in 44.

Interviewer: Yeah I was gonna say because you only went out in 43.

Krauel: Yeah it was 44. Forty three was when we went there in August and August was April was when the squadron was put together and we got over there and I don't know just exactly because we weren't able to get our log. Somehow our log from the first part of over there was lost because Sam wanted them and it was the log started and the only part of the log they could get from the you know the place what's that place in Washington where they have all that kind of stuff?

Interviewer: National archives

Krauel: Yes because I wrote there because Sam wanted it for history you know to get our squadron because they are writing a book on the squadron. And he wanted the information because you know he's our historian and he and I wrote and got it but when I looked at it, it starts where I left off when I left. So when I was I couldn't find it I was interested to see you know back then but somehow that part of the log got lost.

Interviewer: When you got back in August in the fall rather in 44 that's about the time that McArthur was recapturing the Philippines.

Krauel: At the time I yeah

Interviewer: Roughly yeah the fall and the winter of 44, 45.

Krauel: At the end of it yeah.

Interviewer: So in other words you weren't there for that part of the operation?

Krauel: No I don't know anything from we'll say the end of 44 say September of 44 to the first part I think I forget when it was it was the first part of 45 when I was sent back over there because I was over there when the atomic bomb was dropped. And we were up at I forget I'd have to look that up where we were at and because we didn't get because they were gonna have the way we got it they were gonna have a big invasion that's when they were gonna invade part of Japan or some islands up there. And they were getting everybody together so we don't know what had happened I know they had mentioned that if that would have went through the American's would have lost almost 200,000 men. Because it was gonna be one of it would have been a worse battle so that's why when they dropped the atomic bomb I know a lot of people say they shouldn't have dropped that. But they don't realize what would have happened if they wouldn't have and how many men they would have lost and how it would have you know turned around.

Interviewer: Were you based in the Philippines in 45 then?

Krauel: Yeah yeah Samarra I think it is. Is that a place Samarra up there?

Interviewer: Is it on Luzon the northern island?

Krauel: Yeah it's on one of the big islands up there.

Interviewer: Not too far from Manila?

Krauel: No it's a ways from Manila yet. And it was right there on the islands because there's a lot of little islands the Philippines are made up of a bunch of islands. And that there and this one island is where we were at and see we had a we had to go to place where they had equipment to I'm trying to think yeah we went right in there I think I'm trying to think where in the devil we went. That's kind of faded because there's not much there and that like when I was down to the New Guinea and that there this was like good will tour afterwards. We just took tours around to the native villages and pulled up to some of the huts you know. They were more educated than the other natives were I mean they would talk they could talk kind of English and that there and they could talk with us. And they were glad to see us and all that.

Interviewer: Well by this time the Philippines had been cleared of the Japanese.

Krauel: Yeah pretty much yeah

Interviewer: So in 45 you didn't see is it true is it fair to say you didn't see much combat in 45?

Krauel: Yeah yeah no combat our squadron wasn't no combat. It will be in the book that we didn't have no encounter with anything it tells where we were at over there but we never got into well the war was over.

Interviewer: Uh huh

Krauel: Because I know I was put on cooking on the base and this one day I, I don't know how it was I was looking out and I thought I saw flares and God everything going up you know. Like 4th of July you know and I thought Jesus Christ what did they send that stuff up for God the Japs will know where we're at. Here it was the war was over with then that was they were celebrating from the different ships that

were out in the bay you know it was funny. And from then on we didn't we pulled our orders out of the safe because when you'd go over there you'd have a destination where you'd go like a town. And then from there you'd find you'd pull out your orders to find out what you was gonna do and where you was going and that there afterwards. And that's how we knew it was kind of gonna be an invasion of Japan and I don't know what we were gonna do I mean we didn't that never came out what we were gonna be in on that invasion.

Interviewer: Of the southern most Japanese island.

Krauel: Yeah something up there I don't know if it was one of the islands just below it or where it was because that was something you don't think much about because it ain't nothing. It's just a goodwill tour then I mean you might as say you was on a site seeing tour because you didn't have no

Interviewer: What you mentioned earlier that your unit received a Presidential Citation.

Krauel: Yes

Interviewer: And was this for service?

Krauel: Yeah it was for the fact that the big battle that we had with all those Jap planes that was part of it that brought it on that they found out what the PTs could do. Because well it started out when we got over there in 43 to a certain date in 44 was between the date certain dates. And that's why only the men that were assigned to the squadron at that particular time have it on their record that they have the citations. The other ones the replacements that came in afterwards they could wear it as long as they were in the squadron but once they left the squadron or got discharged and that there it doesn't stay on their record.

Interviewer: Well they weren't really there for the service that it was given for.

Krauel: No that's what it was it was for something that you did and it was that the whole squadron got it wasn't just for us alone I mean the whole squadron got it because they really raised hell with the Japs. And stopped a lot of the well the barge traffic and the Japs had to move back up towards north.

Interviewer: It sounds to me though I mean you made the distinction sort of before and after the originals and the replacements.

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: But in another way couldn't you also say there's really three here? The first group would be those who fought at Guadalcanal the second group would be New Guinea and the third group would be the replacements.

Krauel: Yeah something like that but this here citation and everything was just for the squadron where we went I mean. And then squadron 21 got it too because we were working together from Merobie River on up. The two squadrons and that's why they the two squadrons got it, it isn't for I don't say that the ones at Guadalcanal didn't do a darn thing but it's and I don't know why we got it but they just said that we outstanding that you've got to do something outstanding. And they said that quite a bit of it was for that battle with the Jap planes too that put it on for our squadron. I don't know much about

squadron 21 because that's another squadron you know that's just like you don't you know the guys but not like your own your own bunch is like a family and you keep together more with them guys.

Interviewer: How many casualties did you have in your squadron?

Krauel: Not many we had one that got killed and then this I think if I can recall right only two. I think I don't know too much about Taylor because he was a skipper of another boat and then this Cottom he was on one of my buddies boats and he's the only two that I know of that got killed.

Interviewer: Were they killed by enemy fire?

Krauel: Yeah I think they were I don't know that much about them because they were on another boat. You didn't know a lot of times what went on another boat too much. But I don't know too much about Taylor I know about Cottom because Perry Al Perry and I were pretty good buddies and he and I and Paul Yanks came back when we came back from our 30 days leave for the R&R we came back together. And that's how I knew and Perry I see him every time but we were close.

Interviewer: When you when you encountered these zeros how was your speed your best weapon or was it those turret guns or what was it?

Krauel: Well everything like that but we spotted a green squabs. See over there in the tropics you get these rain squabs every so often it comes they come and go. And we saw this up ahead and we knew there was a rain squab and we made for it and we stayed in there. And naturally while you're in there why the planes can't come in there and that kind of helped up too afterwards. But that was awhile afterwards because they figured that we were under fire and had this battle for about 45 minutes. That's what they say until we found that rain squab.

Interviewer: And did you shoot any of the zeros out of the sky?

Krauel: Well we I think we got credit for about six of them. Four of them we got a couple more but they couldn't take credit for them. Its juts impossible because they when they they were on fire or they were streaming smoke they went down over the mountain we didn't see them crash and the only ones we could I think we really only got credit for four that we saw that came down in the water you know. And we saw did we see I don't know I can't remember this if one of them bailed out or not. But we never went to pick them up because we wanted to get our butts out of there fast the heck with going after somebody like that because they were still bombing us and everything.

Interviewer: Of course this could have just have been a coincidence that they spotted you and went after you.

Krauel: That's what we thought too afterwards some of them say they were going out they weren't after us but they saw the two boats heading back and naturally they came after us. Because at first we thought when we saw them up there in the sky we thought they were our squadron our planes until they come down. Then we saw there was red tomatoes on the side of their wings and we knew that wasn't our planes for coverage and that was supposed to come back because this was a special mission. What I just get it was a special mission they never had it before like that and they went and was supposed to was supposed to have air cover to bring us back because we waited so long. It was around 8 o'clock, is that off (talking about the camera).

Interviewer: No I think it's still recording I just wanted to check. How would you describe the moral of the men in your on your boat?

Krauel: We I don't know we just kept together I guess you do you know that you have to and we were like a family I mean when you've got just twelve men there on my boat after a while they got more well they didn't get too more than 15 or maybe 16 when they put that other gun on. But they never had too many because you didn't have the room for anymore because you only had eight bunks up in the crews quarters and then you had ours only had two back in the day room. And then later on on the new boats when they had to put more on they put four in there so that made 12 there plus the yeah twelve plus two for the exec and the skipper. They had a small stateroom the skippers stateroom was maybe about this size surprising it was pretty good size. And the exec was a little smaller because he didn't have to have as much equipment you know and records the records were more or less kept with the skipper.

Interviewer: Were any of your personal friends killed or wounded?

Krauel: No we didn't get nothing on our boat. None of ours except just one time we the one fellow he got got some shrap metal off of a torpedo that had a hot run. We were gonna fire this one time we were gonna fire these two and they stuck in the rack and he didn't get out of there fast enough. And that's the only time but he didn't get killed or anything he just got some shrap metal. But nobody we were lucky that nobody on our boat ever got hit or anything like that. It just seemed somebody was with us the guy upstairs must have been looking over us you know I mean that's the way you felt.

Interviewer: You know what you've been talking about the radar and night operations it's always struck me when you read did you know about the story of PT109 at the time?

Krauel: Yeah

Interviewer: Why wasn't someone paying more attention to the radar?

Krauel: I don't want to go into that story.

Interviewer: Alright

Krauel: Because it was he was lying too I'll just tell you this much he was laying too with his engines in idle. And that's why kinda between you and me why he got don't spread it around too much

Interviewer: Sliced in half by a

Krauel: Yeah because he couldn't get because see those engines are operated almost separately. The Motor Mack that's on duty usually the head one sits in a chair down there and they've got three levers in front of them. They are the gear shifts like and when they go and put the levers up there in drive he has to pull each one of them to engage the engine. And when you're if you're laying two a lot of times like we did to watch for to see if any traffics coming we did that you know we'd just coast and lay two. You wasn't supposed to keep them in neutral because see it takes too long maybe it only takes ten minutes or so to put it because you've got pull each one severalty which takes time. And that's what I was told was happening and after that you'll see that if you take that tape that I've got of PT boaters that you know was on the history channel? Well you was that

Interviewer: Yeah I saw that yes.

Krauel: That will tell you in there and after that they said nobody lays two with their engines in neutral. You keep them in gear so that when if you see anything you can pull those levers and take off.

Interviewer: Yeah take advantage of your speed.

Krauel: It would be just like you would an automobile like my automobile out there got stick when I sit with it in gear I mean in neutral with my foot off the clutch and just sitting there it takes you a little time to push the clutch in and get it into gear.

Interviewer: Okay

Krauel: That's about what it was and that's although I've got to give him credit he took care of his men.

Interviewer: Absolutely

Krauel: Of course that's the one good thing as far as that I never knew him and that there. I know everybody asked me did you know Kennedy I said well maybe I did but he didn't he was just an officer at that time because he wasn't president them.

Interviewer: Sure just an ordinary guy.

Krauel: Just an ordinary guy and oh Kennedy yes you'd say you were with the Kennedys because we had a couple guys that were we had two Vanderbilt's in our squadron and that so. I knew Alfred Vanderbilt and George Vanderbilt those were the two that were in there and we knew who the Vanderbilt's were naturally.

Interviewer: I'm gonna shut this off in a minutes but I wanted to ask you if there was anything that you would like to put on this tape that I haven't asked about. You know anything that strikes you that I've just completely omitted.

Krauel: You've kind of hit everything being that well your pretty close you know I mean you ain't no reporter that doesn't know anything because you know all of this stuff. You've heard it before from a kid up and ever since you was a little and so you might hit it all the questions you asked me you axed me a lot of the questions I know that you knew I mean about it. Because you heard some of it

Interviewer: But is there anything I missed?

Krauel: No I don't think you missed hardly anything that I can think of right now. I mean sure it was something you've got to think of I know I just think I feel happy that I'm here. I guess I wasn't supposed to be because I didn't know I always said to my mother you know how mothers are they well you know that how mother is.

Interviewer: Sure

Krauel: They worry about their kids and she worried about me and when this big thing happened they had a big piece in the paper the one day and the reporter down there called her up the next day and

said to her have you got a son Edward Krauel? And well I don't want to put that on you but she just about crapped her drawers

Interviewer: Of course

Krauel: You know I mean what what what

Interviewer: Oh sure sure

Krauel: Is he oh no don't don't he's alright but he was in that battle because they didn't have no names in that big piece here because they don't put them in until they you know the next of kind knows about it.

Interviewer: Right

Krauel: And so he told her and he says being that I was from Toledo they wanted to put in this extra little piece that I was in so he squared here away. But that was one of the things I used to say to her I says Ma if I'm supposed to go that way I'll go regardless of where I'm at. If I'm there or here because there's a couple of times like this I don't know if I told you this before or not but this one time when being that I was the stern like stern lookout and I had the earphones on and everything and I reported everything to the Bill Berry he was our the head gunner and crew chief. He was on the stern gun always and he was a crack shot and the other fellow was a bigger guy than me he was a loader and I always had the earphones on with a big helmet on you know to report everything to the and then pass ammunition to the loader. And then that was because I was a cook and I could leave and go down below maybe get coffee and pass it out when we were on GQ. And I had there was a box there was a hatch that went down in the engine room there and there was a box on each side good size one and I used to stand on it all the time you know for so I could be up a little bit taller. Being short why it would give you a little height I could see farther you know and I always stood there when I was look out and that there. And after we had a battle that night and encountered some Japs I guess and I don't know we did a lot of firing and after we got into port back to base why the we'd go Paul and I'd go down and get something to eat breakfast or lunch or whatever you want to call it at that time of the morning. And they'd clean up the casings and all that stuff you know they'd clean up the deck and all that stuff because they'd be laying all over. And they called me up they said hey shorty come up here

Tape ended