

**Edward J. Glowaski
Veteran**

**Michael Russert
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New York State Military Museum
Interviewers**

**Interviewed on July 30, 2005
Saratoga Springs New York**

Q: Okay today is 30 July '05, we're at the New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs, and we're conducting an interview; my name is Wayne Clark, and for the record, sir, would you please state your name and your date of birth?

EG: First name is Edward, middle initial is J, and last name is Glowaski.

Q: And what is your date of birth?

EG: 12 24 20.

Q: And whereabouts were you born?

EG: New York City.

Q: And is that where you grew up and went to school?

EG: Yes.

Q: Okay. And what did your parents do for a living?

EG: They owned an apartment house.

Q: And do you remember where you were and what your reaction was when you heard about Pearl Harbor?

EG: Yes, I was employed by the American Locomotive "Alco" - American Locomotive Company- in New York City at the time and that Sunday I - I was quite an ice skater so that Sunday I was waiting on line to do some ice skating in the New York City Center which was part of the 1939 World's Fair. And there was quite a rumbling while waiting on line, and when we got in to the ice skating rink, PA announced that all men in service should report to their stations immediately. I didn't realize what happened until I got home and obtained the info from the radio.

Q: Were you drafted or did you volunteer?

EG: I was drafted.

Q: How soon after Pearl Harbor?

EG: Soon after Pearl Harbor, I registered, of course with the draft board, and since I worked for the American Locomotive Company we were doing a lot of the fence work such as parts for Liberty ships, doing the piping for oil refineries, and also establishing a plant which produced a product to replace rubber. And so the draft board decided that my work at the American Locomotive was important so they gave me six months to ferment, they gave me another six months to ferment, and then another six months to ferment, and then three months, and then two months, and then one month, and finally, I was drafted into the service on October.

Q: Did you pick the Navy or did the place you in the Navy?

EG: They gave me a choice of various services, starting with the Marines and the Air Force, and finally I selected the Navy.

Q: Any particular reason why you chose the Navy?

EG: As a kid, I liked building Navy boats, and at that time the popular science was a very popular science of a very popular magazine, and there was an individual by the name of Theodore Gomme (sp?) who drew plans of various naval ships in a very very small scale to fit in an eight-and-a-half by eleven magazine. And I built aircraft carriers, destroyers, four-stackers, I even brought the models to school as an exhibit. That's how I got involved with the Navy, why I selected them.

Q: Whereabouts did you go for your initial training?

EG: I went to Sampson Naval Base in New York State.

Q: What was the training like?

EG: It was a six week period of training. It was mostly discipline, marching, shots, and taking tests.

Q: Was it your first time away from home?

EG: Yes.

Q: Sampson, at the time, that was a fairly new training base, wasn't it?

EG: Yes.

Q: Did you sleep in beds or hammocks or...?

EG: We slept in double beds, one above each other.

Q: And did you get to fire any weapons while you were at Sampson?

EG: No, I did not.

Q: Once you completed your training at Sampson, whereabouts did you go from there?

EG: I went to Little Creek, Virginia.

Q: Okay, and what kind of training did you receive?

EG: That was the amphibious base, I went to a Coxswain school there and there was a lot of seamanship courses, and knots tying, various types of knots.

Q: For those who might not be aware of what a Coxswain does, can you explain that for us?

EG: Well, a Coxswain is the one that is in charge of the top side, from the main deck and above, and all of its functions, maintenance, various anchor details, gangway details, being chargeable for our watch which include seamen that would be in a quartermaster and steer the ship.

Q: So basically you had to be a jack-of-all-trades.

EG: For as far as topside is concerned, yes.

Q: Now how long were you there?

EG: I would probably say about three or four months I believe.

Q: And where did you go from there? Were you assigned to a ship, or...?

EG: Yes, I was assigned to a ship in Quincy, Massachusetts. After being in Little Creek I was given a two weeks leave and from there I went to Quincy, Mass. I was quartered at the Wells Fargo building, which is a Navy receiving station in Boston, and we picked up our ship at the Falls River shipbuilding yard in Quincy, Massachusetts.

Q: Was that a new ship?

EG: Yes.

Q: So you're what's known as a plank holder?

EG: Yes.

Q: And the name of that ship was?

EG: The USS LST Channel five.

Q: Okay. What does LST stand for?

EG: Landing. Ship. Tanks.

Q: Okay.

EG: It was the largest amphibian ship in the United States Navy.

Q: Alright. And did you go on a shakedown cruise?

EG: The shakedown cruise, yes, was from Quincy, Massachusetts, down the east coast, and down to Little Creek.

Q: Okay. Any problems at all with it?

EG: Well we hit heavy seas. And most everybody on board ship got seasick. For some reason, I didn't. And a lot of equipment on topside became loose because of the heavy seas and the rolling. And we had to make sure everything was secured. It was a rough trip, for the first trip.

Q: Now was that still 1943?

EG: 1944, April. The ship was commissioned.

Q: Okay, and once the shakedown cruise was completed, whereabouts did you go from there?

EG: We were assigned to be training flotilla to train nucleus LST crews so they would pick their ship and thence proceed to - I think quite a lot of the crews that we trained partook in the D-Day invasion of France and also quite a few picked up their ships and partook in the various island invasions in the Pacific. We were really a floating school for nucleus crews.

Q: Okay, were you involved in the D-Day invasion at all?

EG: I was not.

Q: Okay. Most of this training that was done, was that primarily on the east coast?

EG: Yes.

Q: And how long were you involved in the training aspect, was that for very long?

EG: Six to nine months.

Q: Okay. And then where did you go from there?

EG: After which we were fitted with pontoons on the side of our LST, and we had two additional small boats secured to the bow of the ship - at the bow of the ship. And we had an LCT, a Landing Craft Tank, which is a smaller amphibious craft, secured to our topside. And from there, we - plus sixteen-inch shells in our tank deck, filled completely with shells. And we headed south, stopped off at Cuba, GTMO Bay [Guantanamo Bay], then it's down to Colón, [Panama], where we waited a few days before we went through the canal, and then to Hawaii for a short while.

Q: Now when you reached Hawaii, could you still see evidence of the attack Pearl Harbor?

EG: Not really. I didn't see any of it, no.

Q: And you were just in Hawaii for a brief period of time?

EG: A short period of time, yes.

Q: Okay. And where did you go next?

EG: And then we stopped off at the Caroline Islands.

Q: Okay, At the Carolinas did you pick up any sort of equipment or drop things - drop supplies- off, or what exactly did you do?

EG: Not yet, we were there as a stopover. And then from there, we went to the Marshall Islands. Ulithi was part of that - part of the Marshall Island group. It was there that we had the LCT slide off of the deck into the water. Of course, also Ulithi Islands was part of the largest Navy Anchorage at that time in the Pacific. And it also was used as a recreational place for the sailors to have some fun. We go ashore and play softball and-

Q: Like an R&R [Rest & Recuperation] center.

EG: Yes, and we were permitted to drink beer, and that was... and it was there that my future brother-in-law, who was on the USS Sabine, which was the AL 25 oil tanker. In that vast amount of ships there, I contacted him through the signal department there. He came on board my ship and we had dinner. It was quite a coincidence.

Q: Must have been a nice reunion.

EG: Yes, and then she was much older at the time but he -a couple of years older- and he was [unclear] that when he - when he got home, he passed the word around that we were all well, so that was comforting.

Q: Now what was his name?

EG: Michael Frank. F R A N K.

Q: Okay, now you mentioned that the LCT slid off the deck, did it sink?

EG: No, the ship was tilted by adjusting the water ballast and the LCT could carry two tanks and some personnel. It slid at an angle, and it was on, probably, 12 by 12 timbers, and it was secured to the deck by cable. And the boatswain made with a hatchet, it took one good swing at the cable, broke the cable - a part of the cable- and the ship just slid into the water. And we had the LST crew onboard our ship during the entire trip, so they took over on there.

Q: Okay, and whereabouts did you go next?

EG: We went to the Philippine Islands. We were at Manila, were out at Dulag, and a couple of other-

Q: But, primarily what were you doing?

EG: We were getting ready for the invasion of Japan. Which never happened because the [unclear]-

Q: So at this point, this is late 1945.

EG: Yes.

Q: Do you remember where you were when you heard about the dropping of the atomic bombs?

EG: Yes, I was on my ship in one of the small staterooms, one of the small compartments, and I was developing some film at that time and we heard about it.

Q: What was your reaction to that? Did you have any idea what an atomic bomb was?

EG: No, I had no idea. But, as days went by and we found out more about it -the power of the bomb and what it did- we thought it would be the end of the war.

Q: Now, let me go back a little bit. Do you remember where you were and what your reaction when you heard about the death of President Roosevelt?

EG: We were probably out in the Pacific somewhere. [Pause] We had assassinations in the history of the United States before, and the continuity of the government continued and there was no interruption, and I thought that the same thing would hold true then. That the government would run smoothly and efficiently as it did before.

Q: Now, soon after they dropped the bombs, of course, the war ended. What was it like on the ship after that? Was there a lot of celebration?

EG: Yes, there was jubilation... the dropping of the bomb? Or after the-

Q: After the war had ended.

EG: When the news of the ending of the war arrived, I think all the ships in the harbor, all the fireworks they had -flares and all kinds of mechanical colorings- were shot up into the sky from all the ships. It was like a Gala celebration. They all partook at the same time.

Q: Now did you get to go into Japan at all?

EG: Yes.

Q: How soon after the war ended did you go into Japan? Was it right away?

EG: A few weeks after the war was over.

Q: What was that like? Did you actually get to go off the ship onto land?

EG: Yes, my first viewing of Japan was Mount Fuji. It just protruded above the clouds and you could see it from a distance. We landed at Yokosuka Naval Base and we were part of the occupation forces so we were allowed to leave the Naval Base. Just for a few hours -twelve o'clock until four o'clock we had to be back- and we stayed at the naval base.

Q: Did you have any interaction with the Japanese people?

EG: After a while, we were permitted to walk the streets. And I noticed that any sailor that was smoking would flick the bud in the street and then the Japanese

would be right behind us picking it up and salvaging the tobacco. And when I would stop in at the Red Cross for a cup of coffee in the morning, the little Japanese kids would be outside the canteen, and I would always give them a cookie and a buck or so because they were really in bad shape. And most of them did live in tin huts which were just two by fours, the five-gallon gasoline cans were flattened out and nailed, and that was their shelter. When I would walk the streets, the soldiers would either face the wall with their back to me, or they would walk in the street to allow me to pass as reverence -I wouldn't say conquering- that we were there as occupational forces.

Q: Now how long were you there for?

EG: I was discharged in the March of '46. I would say February or March of '46.

Q: Okay, so you spent quite a bit of time in Japan.

EG: Yes.

Q: Did you get to see more of the country, or were you just in the same area primarily?

EG: No, we rode their railroad system. We spent some time at an R&R camp, I visited a huge statue in Kamakura, which the Japanese, I understand, adored or prayed to. I just forget the name of it.

Q: Now, did you get to see Hiroshima or Nagasaki at all?

EG: No, I didn't. But we did take hikes into mountains, and in the process of doing so, we would meet the Japanese doing the same thing. We were very courteous to each other and very polite.

Q: After you left Japan, you went straight back to the States?

EG: I came back on the USS 169, I think it was the Golden Gate troopship, and landed in Seattle in the state of Washington. From there, boarded a troop train -it was Northern Railroad routes- to New York City, Lido Beach in Long Island, which was my discharge center.

Q: Once you got out of the service, did you take advantage of the GI Bill at all?

EG: Rather belatedly I did, yes.

Q: Did you use the fifty-two twenty club at all?

EG: I only used it for about two weeks.

Q: You said you did make use of the GI Bill, what did you do? Did you go back to school or...?

EG: I was talked into taking the ICS course -the international correspondence school course- in Scranton, Pennsylvania in mechanical engineering. I took that

under the GI Bill, and that was very time consuming, a lot of homework - especially doing a correspondence course and doing most of the work at night- and I completed about eighty-five, ninety-five percent of it. And I was not aware that I would receive a degree, it was just the fact that I had attended it -I would get some certificate- but not a degree that would be accepted by society. So I went back to school when I was forty, forty-five, to a community college and I got an associate's degree in construction technology.

Q: Did you join any veteran's organizations at all?

EG: No, I did not.

Q: Have you ever attended any reunions?

EG: I attend a reunion every year, which is the LST association reunion. This year it's being held in Norfolk, Virginia. It's because it gives you an opportunity to visit a different city in the United States every year.

Q: So you've maintained contact with some of the fellows who you were in the service with.

EG: Yes.

Q: How do you think your time in the service changed or affected your life?

EG: Well, number one I would have not traveled as much as if I didn't join the Navy. It made me more mature to the ability to take orders and the ability to give orders. There's a wonderful feeling that a hundred twenty-eight people from the United States would get together and work as a unit, with one objective, and work as a team.

Q: Did you have any photographs or anything that you wanted to show us?

EG: I have a picture here of myself which would appear in the LST. [Shows picture] Which is a picture that the LST association wanted -a before and after.

Q: Now that picture before, was that taken at Samson?

EG: That was taken in New York City, after my boot camp.

Q: Now is there anything else that you've got there to show us?

EG: [Flips through pages] I have a copy of a discharge card. [Shows picture]

Q: Now, I forgot to ask you, did you ever get to see any USO [United Service Organization] shows when you were in the service?

EG: At the Ulithi Islands, a big-time band, Dick Jurgens, entertained us. He was very prominent in Chicago and he played quite a lot in the Palmer House, one of the hotels there. That was the only US show that I saw.

Q: Okay, is there anything else you would like to add to the interview?

EG: Yes, I have a picture here of my ship. [Shows picture]

Q: That is a pretty good-size ship, isn't it?

EG: Yes it is. It was really a floating warehouse. With no keels, flat bottom, being an amphibious ship.

Q: Now did you experience any of the typhoons at all?

EG: I experienced one, yes. And I was in the wheelhouse at the time. The waves were so massive it would just [gestures waves crashing into a ship]. [unclear] I mean, 60 feet high, when they hit the bow of the ship -water weighs around sixty-two and a half pounds a cubic foot- and when it hit the deck when I was in the wheelhouse, I was just like placing a hacksaw blade on a table at one end and vibrating it. The ship would go up and down. And at times I wondered whether the ship would still be intact, but the ship was all welded so there was a lot of elasticity and a lot of give-and-take. It really took a beating, and I was in the wheelhouse, in charge of that section that was on watch, and I had the wheel at the time. And the captain would give the orders "Left full rudder", and I would say "Left full rudder, captain". And I steered the ship so it was full left rudder, and about a minute or so later the captain shouted down "Goddamnit Glowaski, I said left full rudder!", and I said "Captain, it is full left rudder", and we were going right in the opposite direction, so I think through the captains maneuvering -because he was a Mustang-

Q: What do you mean by the term "Mustang"?

EG: Mustang is an individual that joins the Navy, is an enlisted man, has come up through the ranks to become an officer. So, before the war was over, he was a retired Quarter Master Chief, and when the war began he was asked to come back and he was made the captain of our ship. A very wise choice, he was a good captain.

Q: Okay, anything else you'd like to add?

EG: No.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much for your interview.

EG: My pleasure.

Q: Now, do you recall what happened to your ship?

EG: Yes, after the war was over and we were stationed in Yokosuka Bay, we were ordered to go to Hokkaido, which is the northernmost island in Japan. [Pause] To return personnel or supplies... but we beached on the southern tip of Hokkaido, and the surf was so severe that quite a few LSTs beached, but the surf was so severe that the tail end, or the stern, of the ships were banging into each other. And our port rear end -that's the left side- was so heavily damaged that it just tore the skin of the ship apart so you could see the inside of the ship. And we went

back to Japan, it was decided that the ship was not worthy anymore and all the items that were salvageable were salvaged, and the ship was towed out, and I think it was either sunk or was used as gunnery practice, and it's down on the bottom of the sea somewhere. These ships -about a thousand or maybe more than a thousand- were built, but they were not built in consecutive order. Certain shipyards were given a consignment of ships numbers nine hundred to nine fifty, and in other parts of the United States, it was different numbers. So, the ships were not built in numerical order, but about a thousand plus were built -and they were all expendable- and they served their purpose during the war. Most of the ships were destroyed, others were sold to other foreign governments, and in particular, Greece -an LST was sold to Greece and it was used in their Navy, and they found it expendable, and it was rusting. Sailors that stayed onboard an LST decided to get together, and they bought the ship from the Greek Navy, and against the Coast Guards will, they brought the ship back across the Atlantic; and now it is the only one I know that is still in good condition. These headquarters are stationed in Mobile, Alabama, and if you're a member of an LST, you could volunteer, drive down, or visit Mobile, and perhaps donate one week of your time refurbishing the ship. A lot of electricians, boilermakers, welders, iron structural men, would work onboard ship and put it in shape.

Q: Okay, well thank you very much.

EG: You're very welcome.