

Interview with George Marquis

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Interview # 1: August 5, 2010

Interviewer: Jerry Smith

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Smith: My name is Jerry Smith. It is August the fifth, in Mattoon, Illinois, and I’m interviewing George Marquis. It’s my pleasure to do so. This is part of the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library’s *Veterans Remember* Oral History Project. Good morning, Mr. Marquis.

Marquis: Good morning.

Smith: Could you tell me when and where you were born?

Marquis: Yes, I was born in Des Moines, Iowa, January 27, 1925.

Smith: Did you grow up in Des Moines?

Marquis: Well, a little town, it’s kind of a suburb—Mitchellville, Iowa—for the first twelve years of my life, and then we moved to Des Moines.

Smith: Oh, okay. Did your family move to Des Moines for work?

Marquis: Yeah. My father was a physician, and so he moved there to practice medicine.

Smith: And I assume your mother was a stay-at-home mom?

Marquis: Yeah, she was a stay-at-home mom.

Smith: Okay. When did you leave Des Moines?

Marquis: Let’s see, I graduated from high school in ’42, 1942, and I started college at Drake University there in Des Moines and then joined the Navy during that

time and left college. And I joined the Navy in May 8, 1943. And that's when I left Des Moines.

Smith: What caused you to make that decision, to leave college and join the Navy?

Marquis: My father had gone into the Navy as a lieutenant commander, so at that time I was full of patriotic feelings, and I joined the Navy.

Smith: Well, that's great. Why did you choose the Navy? Because of your father?

Marquis: Yeah, he was in the Navy.

Smith: And what made you decide on submarine service?

Marquis: Well, after I went in the Navy, I went through boot camp at Farragut, Idaho and then went to torpedo school at Keyport, Washington. From there they took you and interviewed you and see if you could pass several minor tests, and then they interviewed you and said, "What do you want, subs or submarines." And I guess at that time in the war there in '43, they were losing quite a few submarines, so they needed people. So I took it. (laughs)

Smith: That's quite different from a surface ship. Were you concerned about being enclosed?

Marquis: No, no. They put you through quite a bit of psychiatric questioning, and then they do some testing with pressure tanks on you, and I guess if you pass that and don't scream like some of the guys did, why, then they take you. So.

Smith: When you first went to boot camp, can you give us a little description of what that was like?

Marquis: Well, it was mostly drilling, and by drilling I mean they'd take you on a parade ground like a football field and just work you. You know, that and a rifle range or gun range.

Smith: And when did you start being trained as a torpedoman?

Marquis: Well, it was after I was done with boot camp at Farragut, and I don't remember the date, but boot camp at Farragut was twelve weeks.

Smith: Not a lot of water in Idaho, I don't think.

Marquis: No. (laughter) No, in fact, it was Coeur d'Alene. That was a lake, big lake. We did a lot of rowing and that type of thing.

Smith: Did any of your fellow soldiers at boot camp end up at the same place as you did?

- Marquis: Yeah. A couple of them, we kept track of. Several of them flunked out from the submarine end of it and ended up with the surface craft.
- Smith: Oh, did they? Okay.
- Marquis: Yeah.
- Smith: Did most of the fellows in boot camp end up in the Pacific, or...?
- Marquis: Yeah, of the ones I knew, they did.
- Smith: We talked about special training. I guess at this point, if you can kind of lead me through your experiences from when you first encountered your boat and... It was the USS *Bergall*?
- Marquis: Yes. I was what you'd consider a plankie. Now, a plankie is a person that is assigned the boat originally and stays on it. You know, it's one of the original owners type thing of the boat.
- Smith: So you were assigned there when it was christened.
- Marquis: Yeah.
- Smith: Okay.
- Marquis: I was assigned there. It hadn't even gone down the waves yet. And I was assigned to it, and... What did I start to tell you? Oh, I'd tell you about a plankie I was a plankie in that I started with the boat and I stayed with all five war patrols, and then it was the end of the war when I got off, so I was one of the, I guess, lucky ones to stay on there. But they sent me from Keyport, Washington, where torpedo school is, to New London, Connecticut, where the submarine school is. And we went through submarine school. There was a lot of emphasis on pressure tanks, putting you through those, and making you escape out of a big silo-like tower full of water. They'd take you in the bottom and make you go up, and you had to go up a line, and every now and then on the line, every few feet, they'd have a ball hooked on there, and then you were supposed to time yourself so you didn't go too fast or you'd get the bends. So you'd go up that line, and they'd have Navy frogmen in there swimming around, and if you got to going too fast or anything, they'd grab you and hold you up.
- Smith: Were you on scuba tanks or just holding your breath?
- Marquis: We had what they called a Momsen lung. It ended up being a little bag that hung right under your chin, and you had a clothespin to close your nose off and a mouthpiece. You wore that and used that to escape.
- Smith: Oh, that's primitive compared to now, isn't it?

Marquis: Yes, yes, very.

Smith: Good grief. I guess you survived that okay.

Marquis: Yes, made it through that.

Smith: Were you a good swimmer, I guess, as a kid?

Marquis: Yeah, yeah.

Smith: What do you recall about the first time that you got on the *Bergall*?

Marquis: Oh, it's kind of imposing. You know, we'd been on other boats on training there when we went through sub school. We knew we were going to be assigned to it, and, you know, as something of your own, you wanted to make sure it was done right, and so you checked a lot of things where on the other boats you didn't.

Smith: The *Bergall* was obviously brand new at that point. Was it more sophisticated than the training boats that you were on?

Marquis: Yes.

Marquis: As a matter of fact, they sent a bunch of us down to Key West, Florida, and put us on R boats, which were World War I-type submarines. And what we did was we acted as decoys down there in the Caribbean for sound men that were training on sound gear to try and get you.

Smith: So like SONAR or...?

Marquis: Trying to find you when you were submerged. And so I spent several months down there with that.

Smith: Were you there at the christening of the *Bergall*?

Marquis: Yes, and the commissioning party and everything.

Smith: Who was your commanding officer?

Marquis: Captain Hyde, Johnny Hyde.

Smith: Was he on the boat the entire time that you were?

Marquis: Yes.

Smith: From beginning to end?

Marquis: Yes.

- Smith: That's great.
- Marquis: Yes.
- Smith: How many sailors were on the boat?
- Marquis: Oh, it varied, but usually most war patrols it was around seventy, about seventy guys.
- Smith: Pretty close quarters, huh?
- Marquis: Yes.
- Smith: Have you seen the German submarine up in Chicago?
- Marquis: Yes.
- Smith: How was the *Bergall* compared to that, size-wise?
- Marquis: Very similar.
- Smith: Yeah, that's pretty tight quarters up there.
- Marquis: Yeah. And *Das Boot*, *The Boat*—and I guess it's been a movie, too—it was fairly accurate.
- Smith: So the boat left Connecticut and headed for the Pacific.
- Marquis: Left Connecticut and headed for the Pacific. We had a couple interesting things happen on the way out. Down around I think it was the Mona Passage—anyway, down around Cuba and down in there, there was an American plane that had run out of gas or something they had to ditch, so we picked up three American flyers and took them down to Panama and left them down there when we went through.
- And after we got through Panama, halfway to Pearl Harbor, we made a trim dive one morning, and with a submarine, you have what they call an induction tube. It's a big tube where the air comes in that you use for your diesels. And we dove with that main induction open, and of course all the water pouring in sent us down in a big hurry. It's actually what happened to the *Squalus*, the submarine, back in 1939, and they lost most of the guys off that. But that's what happened to us. But we had an old chief who really knew submarines, and he knew right away what happened, that the main induction hadn't closed, so he got it manually closed himself, so that stopped our dive because we went on a big dive right away, flooded the thing.
- Smith: Did that cause damage to the diesels?

- Marquis: Yeah, so we had to stay in Pearl Harbor there an extra time while they fixed that.
- Smith: Okay, so that occurred somewhere when you were in the Pacific.
- Marquis: Well, yeah, it was between Panama and Pearl Harbor. It was in the Pacific.
- Smith: Okay. Did you get to Pearl Harbor under your own power?
- Marquis: Beg pardon?
- Smith: Did you get to Pearl Harbor under your own power?
- Marquis: Yes, yes.
- Smith: Do you recall the date when you first left Pearl on your first patrol?
- Marquis: Yeah, we left on our first patrol on September 8, 1944.
- Smith: And what was your objective?
- Marquis: The (laughs) objective was the shipping lines between Saipan and the French Indochina coast. And so that's where we went. You get stationed in a certain area, and you go around that area, just keep going around, around, and up and down in it and all that, hunting for ships.
- Smith: So you were sinking Japanese military as well as transport?
- Marquis: Yeah, yeah.
- Smith: Were you successful on that first...?
- Marquis: Yeah. I forget how many we got, but we got several Jap ships. The other thing I think that really scared me more than anything is the continual Jap planes and submarines, playing tag with them. You know, we'd see a submarine, Jap submarine, and we'd start tracking it, he'd see us, and he'd dive. Then we didn't know where he was. So then we'd have to dive, and then he'd surface, and we'd track him for a while, and then we'd go up and he'd go down, and then we'd go down, and then he'd go up and we'd go down. And diving on a submarine is—you know, so many things can happen. It's like an airplane landing and taking off, so.
- Smith: Were you ever engaged in battle with a Japanese sub?
- Marquis: No.
- Smith: They were probably as pleased about that as you were.
- Marquis: (laughs) They were as scared as we were, probably.

- Smith: I bet. (laughter) (pause)
- Marquis: Yeah, I don't remember how many ships we got on that first patrol.
- Smith: Anything else interesting on the first patrol that you'd like to tell us about?
- Marquis: No. We stayed in Saipan for a couple days because that was when we took Saipan, and then after we went on patrol, when we went back, we went to Perth, Australia. We were out of Perth then, so...
- Smith: So once you got to the, what, South China Sea, you were kind of based in Australia?
- Marquis: Yeah.
- Smith: Okay. How long was the patrol, approximately?
- Marquis: Let's see, we started on September eighth, and it ended November eighth. Two months.
- Smith: That's a long time.
- Marquis: Yeah.
- Smith: How long did it take to refit the ship or re-provision the ship?
- Marquis: Well, the second patrol, we started on 12/2, so that was just about a month.
- Smith: About thirty days.
- Marquis: Yeah.
- Smith: Yeah. I guess just minor repairs and...
- Marquis: Yeah, stores.
- Smith: Did sailors on the first cruise also go on the second, or was there an exchange of people?
- Marquis: No, they take a certain percent and take them off and put them—they have a ship, and they rest them up, so a certain percent of the crews get transferred off, and then they get some relief crew; you get new guys on.
- Smith: Now, you were a new recruit. Were a lot of your fellow sailors on the *Bergall* veterans?
- Marquis: They were new.
- Smith: —veterans of other submarines?

- Marquis: No. We had a few, but not very many, that were veterans of other submarines.
- Smith: So you had a whole boat full of trainees, huh?
- Marquis: Yeah, yeah.
- Smith: Except for the captain, I assume, anyway. (Marquis laughs) I guess he probably knew what he was doing.
- Marquis: Yeah. You know, he was only in his twenties, his late twenties, and to have that responsibility. He was a Naval Academy guy.
- Smith: Ah, from Annapolis.
- Marquis: Yeah. So he was regular Navy, but he was one of these soft-spoken guys that when he talked, you'd better listen.
- Smith: But he was only ten years older than most of you.
- Marquis: That's right, that's right. So then we went to our second patrol, and of course that patrol was one that we got all the press about because we took an eight-inch shell from a Jap cruiser.
- Smith: Yeah, tell us about how that happened.
- Marquis: Well, we left Perth, Australia, and we were supposed to lay mines in the Gulf of Siam, and we had our after torpedo room full of mines to shoot out torpedo tubes.
- Smith: Aft is the rear of the boat.
- Marquis: Yeah. And so we got to our station where we were supposed to start laying them, and it was late in the day, and we were on the surface, and we saw the masts of other ships over the horizon, the lookout spotted them. So they started tracking them, and they decided they were Jap ships, and the captain said, you know, we could lay mines anytime; here's our chance to be a hero. So we waited till nighttime, just stayed away from them until nighttime, then made a run in on them. And it was two Jap cruisers, and the captain had them lined up overlapped when he fired, and he fired six torpedoes out of the forward torpedo room and got a hit on each one. And one of them, he must have hit a magazine or boiler or something in it because it blew it up and blew it apart.
- Smith: Good grief. How far away were you when you fired the torpedoes?
- Marquis: About three thousand yards. And (laughs) they knew we were there. I talked to one of the lookouts who was up on the periscope platform; it was nighttime, we were making the attack on the surface; we weren't submerged. He said

they had a searchlight on us—could have read a newspaper on the bridge. The first salvo, they got us with an eight-inch shell that went right through the forward torpedo room and made a round hole, nice eight-inch round hole where it went in, and then it tore the whole side of the boat out when it went out, so we couldn't dive or anything.

Smith: But it didn't explode, though?

Marquis: No. They fire those in, like—they'd fire them in sequence. They have armor-piercing, tracer, and high explosive, and we got the armor-piercing. We didn't get the high explosive or I wouldn't be here. (laughs) We got one of the others was the one that went through. So immediately, why, you know, we turned away from there, and the captain put all engines on propulsion, which gives us a little speed, and we hauled out of there and tried to evaluate the damage done. All the lines in submarines are on the outside of the wall, they aren't in the wall, so we had all these pressure tanks, pressure lines, and electrical cords sparking. (laughs) It was a real mess.

Smith: Just like the movies.

Marquis: Yeah, that's right. And where it went through, I've got a piece of the arming(thing off of the shell, because where it went through it, there's two bunks in the overhead in the forward torpedo room, and it went right through there, so I got a hunk. I was standing underneath it when it went through.

Smith: Good grief. Was anybody injured?

Marquis: No.

Smith: That's incredibly good luck.

Marquis: Yeah. We had started reloading. We had fired six fish and then we started reloading when we got hit, so then we got out of there. The captain, you know, radioed in and told them what happened and they radioed back and said go on this island down in the South China Sea, the natives are friendly, and they'd send another submarine up for us. Then the captain took down all the radio masts and aerials because he wanted to maintain silence; he didn't want any planes or anything to find us. And so they didn't know—no one knew where we were, and we ran into another American submarine, the *Angler*, and they decided to take a skeleton crew, keep them on the *Bergall*, transfer everyone else off on the *Angler*. So we did that. We kept about twenty guys, on the *Bergall*, and the rest transferred to the *Angler*, and then they were going to follow us, and we were going to try to run it back to Australia.

Smith: So you stayed on the *Bergall*?

Marquis: Yeah, I was one of the twenty. I don't know why. (laughs) But we had the torpedoes all rigged with high explosives so we could blow it up, because they didn't want the submarine taken into their hands.

Smith: Oh, so you were ready to scuttle the ship?

Marquis: Was ready to scuttle it. Had a line with a float on it with arm loops so that we could get off and get in the water and, you know, maintain some semblance...

Smith: Good grief.

Marquis: Yeah. And then it was about three thousand miles back to Australia, Perth, and it was all through Jap-held country. So we took off and ran from rain squall to rain squall, because we couldn't dive, and just ran her back that way.

Smith: Were you taking on water because of the holes in the hull?

Marquis: Well, we had mattresses and everything stuffed in the holes.

Smith: Okay, so you plugged the leaks.

Marquis: Yeah. The bilge [pumps] were running all the time to drain anything we got in.

Smith: What speed could you maintain under those circumstances?

Marquis: I don't know whether we were making fourteen, fifteen knots, something like that.

Smith: With three thousand miles to go.

Marquis: Yeah.

Smith: How long did it take?

Marquis: About a week.

Smith: Did it really?

Marquis: Yeah.

Smith: And you didn't encounter any Japanese...?

Marquis: We encountered a couple of Jap planes, but they didn't see us, so we made it back.

Smith: Luck was with you.

Marquis: Yes. (laughs)

- Smith: And all those guys that were taken off the ship after the repairs, were they back, or was it different groups?
- Marquis: Yeah, yeah. No, they came back on. When they got off they were allowed one pillowcase full of personal belongings; that's all they could take with them, and the clothes they had on. But this happened on the thirteenth of the month. I had mentioned that any time we were at sea on the thirteenth, something happened: we either got depth charged or a plane tried to get us or something like that. We played quite a bit of tag with Jap airplanes where they would drop bombs on us.
- Smith: Sailors are a little superstitious, aren't they?
- Marquis: Yeah. (laughs)
- Smith: That probably bothered everybody.
- Marquis: Oh, we were superstitious. If we had a guy that came from another boat—you know, he'd been on another boat—and that boat was still okay, he was welcome, but if they'd lost that boat and he'd got off, we weren't too sure of him, whether he'd... (laughs)
- Smith: Good grief.
- Marquis: Yeah. Whether he was a good-luck charm or a bad-luck charm.
- Smith: Speaking of superstitions, I know when you cross the Arctic Circle, they do some kind of a thing with sailors. Was that also the case with the equator?
- Marquis: Yeah, yeah.
- Smith: What's that called?
- Marquis: The... (pause) You have the international date line and the equator, the pollywogs and what's the other? I've got a card saying I'm the other because I made it across. We didn't go across; we went underneath. We weren't on top of it. But we had a regular ceremony, the guys that were pollywogs were the ones that had shellfish.
- Smith: Ah, okay.
- Marquis: Shellfish were the ones that had been across before.
- Smith: They'd been initiated already.
- Marquis: Yeah, they'd been initiated already. Some of the initiations, I understand, on the surface ships get pretty rough.
- Smith: Can you describe what happens?

Marquis: No, I stayed out of it. A couple officers got into it pretty bad, but I stayed out of it. I can't remember all they did. It was like a hazing for a fraternity in college.

Smith: And the repairs were all accomplished in Perth?

Marquis: Yeah. We thought we'd go back to the States, but it wasn't so. They repaired us, and then they sent us out to make a deep dive and see if it leaked. They put a new hatch on the loading hatch. So we went out and made a deep dive to about five hundred feet and checked it to make sure it wasn't leaking.

Smith: Then off on another patrol?

Marquis: Yeah, then off on another patrol. The next patrol, we were the first submarine to carry what they called "Cutie" torpedoes—they were just little stubby torpedoes; they weren't the big long ones like you see. But they had hydrophones in the head, and they'd go toward the sound of the ship's screws,¹ so if you could fire them and make the ship lay dead in the water, then there'd be a better chance of hitting them with a torpedo or something. .

Smith: They were acoustic.

Marquis: Yeah. So we were the first ones to carry that, and we got a hit with the first one that we fired in the Kari Mata Straits down by Bali, and it was a patrol boat that we got. Interesting that you're supposed to be dead in the water below a certain depth so that the pressure will set off the acoustics in this Cutie, and we were going all ahead one third, and the guy on the JP sound gear was tracking it after we fired it out of the forward torpedo tubes, and he said all of a sudden he flipped down the switch to the conning tower, (laughs) and he said, "Jesus Christ, captain, that thing's following us." (laughs) So the captain threw the rudder over and swung away from it and shut down everything in the boat so we weren't making any noise to draw it. We got by with that, and it went around us and went up and hit this patrol boat.

Smith: Oh, good grief.

Marquis: Yeah.

Smith: Pretty effective.

Marquis: Yeah, yeah. That's the only time we used it, but we were the first ones to carry it, I know. Others did after that; they carried it after that. That was the third patrol, and also on that patrol, I know we really—the Japanese aircraft pretty near got us a couple times. One time we took some depth charges from a Japanese destroyer and we took 185 depth charges in one sitting. We would

¹ Screws: sailors' lingo for propellers

keep track with those stick men, you know, four, keep track of how many depth charges we'd get.

Smith: How did you avoid them, just go as deep as possible?

Marquis: Yeah, we (laughs) hit the bottom of the bay, and all that went to the surface so they knew right where we were, so then they just stood up there and just beat us. But after a while, they—we heard later that American airplanes flying from the Philippines had driven them out. I guess they had orders to drive them off if they see them because there's probably American submarines there.

Smith: No damage?

Marquis: No, no. The deck on a submarine is slats, you know, so water can get between them, and some of those were fractured; we had to replace some of those deck slats and all from the concussion they had.

Smith: Did you get leave anytime during these periods?

Marquis: Oh, at the end of each patrol they take you off and take you to a hotel and give you a week's leave before they take you back to the boat. Yeah, because they have a crew, relief crew, that every time you come back, why, the relief crew just comes in and takes over and checks everything, like a mechanic, so they want you out of there.

Smith: So your leaves were mostly in Australia.

Marquis: Yeah.

Smith: Did you go out into the countryside?

Marquis: Well, Honolulu too. We stayed at the Royal Hawaiian and all that, but...

Smith: Tell me about when you were in Pearl. That was, what, three years after Pearl Harbor, the attack. Do you recall if all the damage was repaired at that point or...? Obviously the *Arizona* was sunken still, right?

Marquis: Yeah. I'll tell you, we didn't get off and get much liberty to get around like we did in Panama and Perth, Australia, where we spent a lot of time on leave. But at Pearl Harbor, we didn't get much leave at all, and I don't know whether it was because we were in a hurry to get out to station or whether it was because they hadn't cleaned it up. I don't know.

Smith: Any stories to tell about the fourth and fifth patrols?

Marquis: Well, we picked up some American flyboys that (laughs) had been shot down. They had been on a run from the Philippines over to French Indochina, and

they were on their way back and got hit by anti-aircraft, and we picked four of them up. They'd been in a raft for several days, a rubber raft, and they were in bad shape from exposure. But we put one up in the forward torpedo room and one in officer's quarters. We put them throughout the boat. (pause) The one we had up in the forward torpedo room, after we got him on board and got him in a bed, in the sack, the bunk, we went to dive, and the klaxon sound² and the boat got a big angle on it and started down. He come up off that bed, the bunk, and (laughs) says, "What happened?" And we told him we was making a dive, and he said, "I'd rather get shot down ten times than make one dive on one of these," he said. "This is scary." It is. It's really scary when you dive.

Smith: Well, you can train for it, but the real thing is something different.

Marquis: Oh, man. So I know on the fourth patrol, we got those guys, and the fifth patrol, we got more ships, and I forget how many. Can't remember.

Smith: Where were you when Hiroshima was bombed, and Nagasaki?

Marquis: Oh, on the fifth patrol, we hit a mine, and it develops that they think that mine was one of America's mines that we'd (laughs)—not us specifically, but someone, the British or someone, had mined this area, and they think that's what we hit. But anyway, we hit and it screwed up our reduction gears, the propulsion that propels a submarine. So we had to answer on one screw—there's two screws on a submarine, and we could only work one, so we kind of went like this (laughs) and went back to the Philippines, and they said they couldn't fix it, we had to come back to the States. So it was right near the end of the war we started back to the States, and I think it was four days after we got back, something like that, they bombed Hiroshima.

Smith: So you were in Pearl Harbor at that time.

Marquis: Yeah, yeah.

Smith: I'm sure everybody was—

Marquis: Yeah, very happy, yeah. (laughs)

Smith: I would assume your guys, if you did sink ships, it was grounds for celebration on the boat.

Marquis: Yeah, yeah. You know, it's kind of weird to me that we'd get Tokyo Rose—we could get her on the radio. And, you know, when she uses a name—"Hey, the *Bergall*, we know you're out there"—it's kind of scary.

Smith: Oh, no kidding. How do you think she got that information?

² The klaxon makes a very loud and insistent repeated horn sound.

Marquis: I don't know. I think it's great the naval intelligence, you know, if they can call—and they'd do this—they would radio us and they'd say, "Two days from now, go to this longitude and this latitude. There will be two Jap ships going by." And we'd go there and wait, and sure enough, on that day, here comes the ships. Now, how'd they know that? This is naval intelligence, our naval intelligence, which was great. Because that fifth patrol, we got a hit on the battleship—I think it was the fifth—and I know they sent destroyers after us, and they were the fleet type big destroyers, and they dropped some depth charges that really rocked us. I'm telling you, (laughs) you talk about an earthquake. And the captain came on the intercom and said, "Those were thousand-pounders." They came right down the wake. The captain fired at the battleship, and then he wanted to see if he got a hit, so he stayed at periscope depth, you know, looking, and he says those destroyers came right down the wake of the torpedoes. They could see the wake, and they came right down to where we were. They didn't stay because they were an escort for the battleship. We were lucky they couldn't stay around or they might have played havoc with us.

Smith: Yeah. Did you get a hit on the battleship, do you know?

Marquis: Yes, we got a hit, and I don't know how much they gave us at tonnage. They give you so much in tonnage.

Smith: Oh, they tracked your success?

Marquis: Yeah, yeah.

Smith: I know on some of the World War II airplanes they had a number of encounters, especially the fighter planes, I think.

Marquis: Yeah. We had a battle flag that had all the ships we got. I'll show it to you. They sent me a copy of it. A guy made a copy, exact copy, of it, the son of the guy who made the original, so.

Smith: Were you able to stay in touch with your family at all?

Marquis: No, just letters, and I guess—so my folks told me that several of those had been cut.

Smith: Censored?

Marquis: Censored. And the officers on our boat were the ones that censored them; those were the censors.

Smith: Where was your father during this time?

Marquis: He was at the naval base back East, in New York.

Smith: So he stayed in the States.

Marquis: Yeah, yeah. He was at Great Lakes, Great Lakes Naval Station, and New York. I think the interesting thing is to show you about keeping track of guys is after I was out of the service, I was in college, and this gunner's mate that was a friend of mine from the boat, he and I paled around. He was from Rochester, New York, and he kept telling me, "Come on back, visit me," he says. "I'll fix you up with a real tomato." (Smith laughs) I was working in the wheat fields out one summer in Kansas, and it rained so much that we didn't get much wheat cut, so I took off and went back to visit him, and he introduced me to this girl, and so we got married a year later.

Well, on our honeymoon, we took a trip by car up through the New England states, and this one night we ended up at New London, Connecticut at a motel. That was by a sub base, and I'd been there, so I was trying to impress my new wife, so I said, "Do you want to see a submarine?" She says, "Oh, yeah." So the next morning, we went down to the sub base, and they had Marines on the gate, and I had an inactive Naval Reserve card—it was nothing more than an identification card. Well, the Marine told me what I could do with that card; he wasn't going to let me in with it. (Smith laughs) So I asked him, "Well, do you know Johnny Hyde?" He said, "You mean Captain Hyde?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "He's commander of the sub base." And I said, "Well, I want to see him. I was in the service with him." So he goes in the guard shack, and then when he comes out, he's got a different demeanor entirely. "Sir, can I help you? Can I get you down to the lower sub base? Do you know how to get there? Here's a pass for your car, and go to this building." So we drove down there. I told him, yeah, I knew, I'd been there before. So we drove down and got the red-carpet treatment from Captain Hyde.

Smith: Oh, personally.

Marquis: Yeah. He'd left instructions that anyone that ever served with him got to see him, you know. God, he cried. (laughs) But he turned thirty on the boat. On his thirtieth birthday I think we were going through the Panama Canal or something. We celebrated, I know.

Smith: That's a great story about taking your wife.

Marquis: Yeah, yeah. He was actually at a captain's mass when we first got there, and his secretary brought us coffee and sat and visited with us until he came. So. I don't think he thought I would ever make it. I told him I was a graduate from college and I was in graduate school. He thought that was great. He just died here I think it was just two years ago.

Smith: What'd you think of the food on the submarine?

Marquis: Great.

Smith: Was it?

Marquis: Oh, yeah. They really did a nice job with the food.

Smith: They took good care of you.

Marquis: Yeah. We had a baker for our ship, a Navy cook is what he was, but he spent all night every night baking pies, cakes, and bread, so we had that stuff fresh every day.

Smith: So in all the times you were there, you were never injured or...?

Marquis: No.

Smith: What was your rank when you went in and you came out?

Marquis: Torpedoman third class. That's what my discharge papers say.

Smith: Well, here's a question you might not want to answer. What are some of the pranks you would pull on the other sailors?

Marquis: (pause) I don't know—I don't know if there were any.

Smith: Was the morale good?

Marquis: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Smith: So you were a tight unit and liked your commander?

Marquis: When we came back, after we had hit that mine, we came back to Pearl Harbor, and halfway there, the captain I know came on the loudspeaker, and he said, "Everyone who can get a nice tan between here and Pearl can be topside when we pull in up there." Because a lot of these guys, the motor machs and some of these guys are white as can be. You know, they never get out. (laughs) Like I was a torpedoman so I stood watch and was a lookout and all that. But—what did I start to say? (laughs)

Smith: We were just talking about morale.

Marquis: Yeah. Oh, so the captain said anyone that could get a good tan could be up topside when we got in. I talked to a guy later who I knew was on a sub tender that we tied up to when we went into Pearl, and he said they even announced over the loudspeaker on the tender to come look at this submarine coming in and look at the guys. (laughs) And, you know, we weren't in [whites]—they show them in whites lined up, you know. (laughs) Not our ship. What a bunch of jerks! You know, cutoff dungarees and sandals, that's all they wear. And one officer, prospective commanding officer, they always take a guy that they're going to give a submarine to, they make him go with another

submarine for a patrol or two. And one of those guys once told the captain, he says, "You got the lousiest crew I ever saw there," you know. And the captain says, "They get me there and get me back." He says, "I'm not going to make waves." (laughs) So the guys did very much what they wanted to.

Smith: When you were mustered out, where did that occur?

Marquis: Lido Beach, New York.

Smith: Oh, so the sub came back to the East Coast.

Marquis: Yeah, came back to New Hampshire and New London up there.

Smith: And you were mustered out there, and then...

Marquis: Yeah. I was trying to see when I got out. March 16, 1946, Lido Beach.

Smith: And then headed back to Iowa?

Marquis: Yeah. Hitchhiked back.

Smith: Did you?

Marquis: Yeah. I got paid mileage. I forget how much, but I know I got paid mileage, and I thought I'll save that money, so I hitchhiked. You know, being in uniform that time I had no trouble getting back.

Smith: I'll bet, yeah.

Marquis: Yeah.

Smith: And then back to college?

Marquis: Yeah. I started out at Drake before the war, but when I came back, I went to the University of Kansas and graduated from there and then went to graduate school there.

Smith: What was your degree?

Marquis: Master's degree in microbiology.

Smith: Wow, really?

Marquis: Yeah.

Smith: Did you utilize that in your professional life after?

Marquis: Yeah, I worked for Abbott Laboratories, pharmaceutical company. I did research and development.

Smith: And where were you based?

Marquis: In North Chicago, Illinois. I was mostly in on the hepatitis and AIDS testing programs where they made kits that, you know, they'd screen people with them.

Smith: And you retired from Abbott?

Marquis: I retired after thirty-eight years with Abbott.

Smith: Wow, that's a good long run.

Marquis: Yeah. (laughter)

Smith: Yeah, that's great. And what brought you to Mattoon?

Marquis: The children. We had three kids, one in Urbana; one in Charleston, Illinois; and one in Rolla, Missouri; so Mattoon seemed to be in kind of the center. And we really didn't have any family or anything left up at North Chicago, Illinois, so.

Smith: I know that your boat has a website and an organization of sorts. Have you participated in any activities with them?

Marquis: Well, we've gone to a couple of reunions, but other than that... I originally helped him get started. The guy that (coughs) started our Web site is the son of a guy that was on our boat, and so he came to me. He had found out about me from another person back East, that I had been on the *Bergall*. (pause)

(pause in recording)

Smith: Okay, just to wrap up, Mr. Marquis, any advice or wisdom that you'd like to pass on?

Marquis: No, I kind of feel today like I'm part of Israel or something because I think all the guys should spend a year or two, one or two years, in the service, kind of like—I think that's what they do in Israel now, they have to serve for a year or two. I think it's good that, you know—I think it's just good for the person.

Smith: So you think your service had a positive impact on who you became later in your life?

Marquis: Yeah, yeah, I think so. You learn a little respect, too, which sometimes is not so great nowadays. But that's my age; that's being old.

Smith: Well, there's nothing wrong with that. (Marquis laughs)

Marquis: Yeah, I guess that's about it.

Smith: Okay. Well, I thank you again. It's been a pleasure.

Marquis: Thank you.

(end of interview)