

Edward Loomis
Veteran

Philip Leonard
Interviewer

Interviewed at the
Hoosick Falls Historical Society

Narrator: Where do you live?

Edward Loomis: Behind the cemetery on Home Street.

Narrator: Have you lived in Hoosick Falls long?

Edward Loomis: Quite a few years, since 1933. I was born in North Bennington and I moved with my family down here to live with my sister.

Narrator: Where did you go to school?

Edward Loomis: I started in school at Classic St. School in North Bennington, and the following year I transferred over to the 8th grade at St. Mary's".

Narrator: Before Edward went into the service, he "peddled papers mostly".

Edward Loomis: As a young lad I graduated from St. Mary's in 1939 and then I went down to sign up in the Navy...but at that time (he clears his throat) they weren't taking too many of us and especially the thin fellows...they wanted the Husky men.

And so I waited and I went to work in the undergarment for 2 years. And then I joined the home guard down here in NYS Company C. And I joined the Navy in 1942. Where I worked I went from making \$9 a week at the undergarment to \$40 a week. (Which was quite an increase at that time. Which was quite a lot of money!)

So then I joined the Navy. And I went in with Carl Cunningham and Bill Shurdon and went into Samson which is out in Geneva, New York, on the Lake. It was real cold weather out there. We went through boot camp out there.

Of course, they asked us what we would like to do in the Navy, as in regards to our future. So I said I liked that electrical work. So they sent me to electrical school in Samson. I went to the first electrical school in Samson, the "G" unit. I was in charge of a company there, due to the fact of my experience with the home guard. Because I assume it's mostly from Norm Spat who mentioned me in his interview.

And then after graduating from electrical school at Samson, I got a rating of "F", in the unit F, engineering unit, which means 'below ship' as an electrician, "an apprentice". Then I was assigned to a school in Norfolk and after graduating from there got into the outgoing unit.

I picked up a ship down in Galveston, TX. We put the USS Snowden DE246 into commission down there. From there we went on a shakedown cruise into the Caribbean, at the Gulf of Mexico. We went into New Orleans and we got into a hurricane. Then we had to go into Bermuda to do a little repair work, after going through all that.

And from there we picked up a ship in Charleston, SC. We went down into Cologne, Panama and subs were chasing us all the way down of course, subs all the way into the Caribbean at that time.

Then we came back into Charleston again, and went, to, uh... the Azores. There are Wolf packs all around the Azores. We had a convoy all the way over. We dropped that off and they scattered around the Casablanca and into the Meditterian.

Then we did a little bit of sub-chasing around the Azores, which was quite a place where all the ships that come from the United States at that time. We sort of congregated around the Azores and uh, we took into the North Atlantic after a Wolfpack. It was quite rough and we took a 42degree, almost over, "ya know" (he flips his right hand over, as if showing us the boat, tipping all the way over).

Then we got back into NY and then the owners come through. They were looking for anybody who wanted to go to school. And I was quite interested in that. Because, at that time, in the 30's there wasn't much of a chance for people to get a higher education. So I consumed all the education there. I went to a diesel electrical drive school in Cleveland, Ohio.

From there, I went back down to Norfolk again. And I did a little school work there. Then I got another outgoing unit and I went down into Miami. From Miami, I picked up another ship, Destroyer DE Brennan, DE13. All we did there was to educate the officers in regards to sieging and chasing subs and we did some target practices to get them educated to that point. We did a little fishing, in Dry Tortugas (he chuckles), which is between Key West and Havana. That was a prison for the assassin for President Lincoln. And of course, some of Indian chiefs were in prison there.

Well I stayed on that ship a little bit long. I asked for a transfer off of that ship within a month, because I didn't care too much for that kind of duty. I like to be on the go all the time.

So they shipped me then, to Lido Beach, Long Island. From there, I had to go or course, from Lido Beach, to Camp Bruno, California, in an outgoing unit out there. From there to Treasure Island, in Frisco, and from there to Hawaii.

Narrator: What boat did you get on?

Edward Loomis: I got on a transport. We were to ship from the outgoing unit. I was assigned to a Fleet Hospital 112 that struck a hospital, on Okinawa. We didn't know where at that time.

Narrator: But you were an electrician and a diesel person? Is that what your job was?

Edward Loomis: I was an electrician all the way through. Matter of fact, on the Snowden DE 246, I was in the inner communications unit down in the ICUC room. I took care of all the communications aboard ship; the gyro compass and all that.

Narrator: I'm sorry to interrupt, I wanted to make sure you were on a ship.

Edward Loomis: On the Brennan, I took care of the generators and also the control of the ship. I was in the motor room in the afternoon. I was in charge of that.

Narrator: Where did the boat go?

Edward Loomis: The boat went all through the Caribbean, chasing submarines and schooling the officers and seeing to the armament and everything else. When I was shipped out of the outgoing unit in San Bruno, I got aboard a transporter, the Alma, I think it was, I can't remember the name of it.

At any rate, we stopped at Pearl Harbor, picked up a convoy and that ship that we were on was a high speed spearhead for transporters. I think it went around 38 knots, and that's fast! And we're all navy! No Army, no marines, nothing, just Navy.

And from there we went to Pearl Harbor and picked up a convoy. Of course, by convoy duty you have to go the speed of the slowest ship in the unit. And, of course, zigzagging all the way. We stopped at Lechia ana way tac and there were Nui atolls in the Pacific.

Matter-of-fact, Saratoga was bombed over there after the war. And from there we went into Okinawa and Buckner Bay. Of course, things were really happening, ya know, at Buckner's Bay, every night, every morning, and every night again. Then we got into a unit there that was going to build this hospital. The first thing I did was get out of work. I didn't like this working detail, in the day time. So I volunteered for the guard duty at night, which was a good call for keeping away from work.

And then I volunteered to go with the 7th Army division. Some of the fellows that had been whacked near us and we used to go out and do a little wiping up. And then I got burnt on Okinawa and I had to go to the SHA 7 hospital. Since it wasn't healing they sent me to the fleet hospital in Guam.

Narrator: Do you mind telling us how you got burned?

Well it was on a weapons carrier and we were pulling in to this big, wide area the Navy had. There was a little bit of activity there, with us scrambling off at a vehicle, there were 7 or 8 of us in the vehicle, and of course, I was the lucky one and landed right in the big tub of boiling hot water. My hands and my buttocks, and my ankles were burned. I had to go in the SHA 7 Hospital in Okinawa. And it wasn't healing, so they sent me to the fleet hospital in Guam.

Then the day before they were to do the skin grafting the doctor's came through and they looked at it and said it looked kind of pinkish; so they consequently put off doing that sort of job on me. Actually it was hard to heal. Which was a good thing.

From there, of course, the war was over, and then we were shipped to New York. (I could have been flown all the way to NY but I didn't like flying). I flew all over Okinawa and Guam and I didn't like that? Seeing the, wings go up & down. I'm Navy, ya know", chuckles...

So at that time, when I was in the hospital there in Guam, they let out some prisoners from Japan and China, and they were in bad shape, real bad shape. One fellow, I used to play ping pong with. He was a nice man, and he lived in Connecticut. So I says to him, "why not take my flight back to NY. You've been away a long time; a lot longer than I have. You take my place on that plane. I'm going to go back on ship."

So he took that plane to NY and I took 19 days to go from Guam to Pearl Harbor. (He laughs with the Narrator).

I was fortunate then. Because I got onto the Saratoga, the Flat top. The flat top was going flank speed in Pearl Harbor; they were trying to make a record, I guess. Before they did away with the ship, because the Saratoga had been through a lot. We landed on San Francisco, and then I shot back into Lido Beach, Long Island, to be discharged.

Narrator: When did you get discharged?

Edward Loomis: After 3 years. Let's see, I went in on Navy Day and we came out just about Navy Day in 1945.

Narrator: And now you are out of the service?

Edward: Yes, I am out of the service. I took a job as an electrician job. With Jon De G Wan. John was a tremendous man, a good mechanic up in the paper mill near the land on the North side. And I worked for him for a while and he says to me one day. "Ed, I got another fellow working with me. He said it's not going take him as long to be an electrician as it took you".

So I said to myself, 'It ain't going take me that long.' Finally I said I was going to go to something else. So I went to work for Joe Bradley. I worked for him for 10 years and then I went into business for myself. And that's what I did until I retired in the last couple of years.

Narrator: And you got married?

Edward Loomis: I got married in 1942.

Narrator: So in other words, Marie was a Navy bride?

Edward responds in agreement "she was a Navy bride. So that's 57 years now. I don't know how she puts up with me..."

Narrator: So you got married before you went into the Navy.

Edward Loomis: Yes, I got married just before I went into the Navy.

Narrator: How many children did you have?

Edward Loomis: I had 3 boys and 1 girl.

Narrator: Do they live around here?

Edward Loomis: The oldest boy is a mathematician and majored in Business Administration. He graduated from a small college out in Ohio. Also, he graduated with a Master's degree at the American University in Washington. He works for the government's defense department.

My #2 son spent some time in the Air force for 4 years. He came out and went to work at the postal service. So he's a postmaster and lives in the area.

My #3 son, is working for the postal service and he's a supervisor in Albany, in section center.

My daughter lives in Saratoga. She works for a dental firm out there, in Clifton Park.

Narrator: I remember your children, we used to live across the street. (Edward smiles in agreement) Narrator continues...so now you're retired and you're doing some work here and there. Is there anything else you would like to say about Hoosick Falls?

Edward Loomis: "I came back here, so it must say something. And the people are here. Actually it's a nice place to grow up."