Aug. 10, 2007

Dear Sirs,

I made myself available for a personal interview per phone call with Wayne Clark. Aug 10 - 11^{00} am was the date and time set aside. I cancelled a doctor's appointment for that time.

After waiting till noon I contacted Mr Clark via cell phone and he was surprised that I wasn't contacted previously that the interview was called off and apologized for the inconvenience.

However at my age 82 - I have many problems including skin cancer and prostate cancer and go for treatments each week and haven't ~~got~~ much time for interviews so I hope the enclosed info will suffice.

Thank you

John F Potanovic

P.S. Continued success with projects.

John F Patenaude - Additional Info:

Part II - Service History

Attended boot camp, Newport R.I. - Then assigned to Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa - naval engineering course. Diesel Electric - Battery and Gyro classes.

After graduation - Volunteered for submarine duty and assigned to New London Sub-Base.

After graduation assigned to USS R-6 - Atlantic Patrol. Various duties from lookout, helmsman, pump operator and then duty in the engine room.

Assigned to new construction USS Archerfish - Portsmouth N.H. Duties included lookout helmsman and duty in engine room. Promoted to the Auxiliary Gang - Duties included high pressure

air compressors hydraulic system, air conditioning and refrigeration maintenance and in general all pumps throughout the ship, also included plumbing and sanitation - Started in this assignment as a Mo mm 3/c and worked my way up to 2/c and then 1/c

Main post was in the Control Room at the air manifold - Right in the middle of all action during battle conditions surface or submerged. A great thrill for a young kid believe me, it made a man out of you very quickly. The responsibility was tremendous. I was very fortunate to remain on the Archerfish throughout the war (7 war patrols) and decommissioned the boat in April 1946 in Mare Island before I

left the Navy when my enlistment was up after 4 years. 21 yrs of age. I joined the Regular Navy and not the Reserve. The Reserves were dismissed after the War was over. I had to stay in till my enlistment was up.

Wars Locations etc.

My first experience under fire was in the Atlantic aboard the R-6. We were operating with destroyers in a training operation. We would dive and they would "ping" on us trying to find out where we were as the U-Boats were in the area and this would add to their training if they came upon U-Boats. As we surfaced one day a friendly plane assigned

to the Naval Air Base in Quonset Point, R.I. observed us and apparently thought we were a U-Boat and dropped a bomb on us. Thank God it missed and exploded nearby. Our Lookouts began waving an American flag wildly and our signalman began sending messages that we were friendly and the plane dipped his wings and flew off. Our R. boats were shaped like U-boats so we have to give the pilot the benefit of the doubt. When we arrived in New London our skipper was livid and reported the incident. Cooler minds prevailed however and the pilots apologized and later threw a nice party for us at a hotel in New

London. Close call but not our time to go.

I was later detached to Sub School for refresher classes and just before graduation I made a liberty in New London and as usual hit the bars and drank my fill of beer and I had enough and was heading for the railroad station to get a cab for the 3 mile ride to the base. I met a Coast Guardsman and he told me about a new drink called a "Zombie" and talked me into trying one. I think I had two. "Zombie" is a mixture of several liquors and is served in a large frosted glass. Kind of a citrus taste. I finally left and got into the taxi with about 6 other sailors. I had the drop seat directly behind the driver. Before we left he emphasized

that the cab was brand new and would be the last car he could purchase till the war ended. In fact it had wooden bumpers as all chrome went to the war effort. I fell asleep as soon as we started but about 1/2 way to the base someone asked the driver to put the heat on as he was cold. As soon as the warmth hit me I felt sick and before I could tell the driver to stop I threw up all over him and his new cab. He immediately stopped and ordered all of us out on the lonely road and he headed back to town to clean himself and his new cab. Of course everyone was cursing me as we trudged in the cold back to the base about a mile away. I finally got to the base, fell asleep in my uniform and when reveille sounded

at 6 am I was still groggy but managed to shave and get into my dungarees and at 6 30 marched out to the drill field for exercise before chow, We all lined up and when the instructor began with "jumping jacks" I apparently went down into a heap and was carried away to sick bay. When I came to a doctor asked me what happened and I had to think quickly and said I had a few beers with a pork chop dinner ashore and he quickly diagnosed me with ptomaine poisoning. I was dehydrated and they kept me in sick bay for about 5 days and when I was released and went back to classes my class had graduated and I had to make up last time with another class.

Lots of my shipmates in the graduating class

were assigned to the new sub Dorado in port and ready to go out on patrol in the Pacific. The boat went out of New London and on the Atlantic side of the Panama Canal it went down with all hands lost either from a bombing by our own planes or a torpedo from a U-boat. The reason was never confirmed to my knowledge. If not for the "Zombies" I would probably have been part of that crew!

In a few weeks I was assigned to new construction the USS Archerfish SS 311 and stayed with her for its' 7 war patrols and its' first decommissioning in Mare Island, Ca. 1946.

The Archerfish received the Presidential Unit Citation for its exploits on the 5th war patrol off Tokyo Bay when it confronted the Japanese aircraft carrier (72,000 tons) and 5 escorts. A chase resulted starting at 9:00 PM and finally at 3:00 AM 4 torpedoes were fired by Archerfish and the Mighty Shinano was no more. This sinking gives Archerfish the distinction of sinking the largest ship sunk by any means in history.

The Archerfish was present on the scene of 4 major battles in the Pacific among them the Battle of Iwo Jima where while on lifeguard duty rescued a downed U.S. airman from the carrier Franklin. Our Captain assigned him to lookout duty on the

bridge during the battle but not before he talked the C.O. into lashing his Mae West life jacket to the bridge deck. He wanted to save it as a souvenir. In short time our radar picked up a plane about 9 miles away a few hundred feet above the water heading in our direction. The C.O. ordered the airman (Johnson) to keep an eye on it and as it continued on course towards us Johnson said it was one of ours and then as it was a mile away the Captain and our other lookouts shouted it was a Jap plane they could see the rising sun on its fuselage. The crash dived just as he strafed our cooking fires and dropped a large bomb very near us that when it exploded nearly

lifted us out of the water. The Captain was very irate to say the least and ordered Johnson to below deck duties, also ordered his Mae West deflated and thrown aboard as when we dove the bright yellow color was visible through the clear water to aircraft and served as a bullseye for them. He said to Johnson, "No wonder you were shot down, you don't know the difference between friend nor foe." We learned much later after the war that Johnson went on to become a Rear Admiral before he retired and just died recently.

The Archerfish had patrols that included Tokyo Bay, Saipan, Palau, Marshall Islands, Marianas, China Sea

Philippines etc.

Under fire we were all nervous and up tight but very well trained to withstand the rigors of battle. The first depth charge sounded as if you were in a metal container and someone struck it with a sledge hammer. You could tell how close a depth charge would be by the sound of the detonation. The louder the click the closer the bomb. During one close encounter I thought we were finished as we received a total of 124 depth charges lasting all day. It was quite a harrowing experience especially for a teenaged kid. You became a man very fast and no matter what your faith you learned how to pray.

I think our submarines and the officers and crew were superb compared to others. However many thought German U. Boats were built better and had better equipment. That's a matter of conjecture of course. We went aboard Japanese subs which were much larger especially the I-class which had ~~a~~ seaplane hangers aft of the conning tower - The plane folded up when placed in this hangar. The catapult ran from the conning tower aft to the stern. These large subs were used as freighters to carry supplies to the islands they still had in the Pacific.

Whenever any animosity arose between the crew while on patrol there

officers or crew were transferred at the completion of the patrol. There was no room aboard for disharmony whatsoever. About 15% of the crew was transferred for various reasons after each patrol. Some of the reasons were sickness, new construction, schools, family problems at home, chronic seasickness, and in a few cases mental stress from the rigors of battle - Many couldn't take the close quarters for months at a time - We were true brothers believe me. You couldn't find any better.

In re: Commendations medals etc -

The Archerfish received the Presidential Unit Citation - With this ribbon

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I can wear a star attached as I was a member of the crew at the time of the citation (Sinking of Shinano) -

Submarine Combat pin with stars for 7 war patrols.

Medals and ribbons for serving in American and Asiatic Pacific campaigns

Victory Medal WW II -

WW II Occupation Medal

Navy -

Navy Combat action ribbon

Good Conduct Medal

Medal for Merit (NY State)

Conspicuous Service Medal NY State

Philippine Liberation Medal w/ star.

I mentioned Chief Charlie Spritz (Spritz's Navy) as submariners in New London were called. He was one tough hombre believe me especially to a skinny 17 year older. He was tall broad and tough. He was also certified as a Navy Salvage diver. As students we stayed clear of him as he could spot a minor violation a block away. He also ran the base brig where minor violators were sent. Major violators were sent to Portsmouth Prison in N.H. which US Marines guarded. The base brig was guarded by US Navy personnel.

While aboard the R-6 I went on liberty and overstayed it by 5 hours. Fortunately I was assigned to the boat and had a

Captains mast and not a General Court Martial. I was sentenced to 9 days bread and water in the base brig. Every 3rd day we were given a full meal - We were in solitary confinement, one man to a cell and allowed out for a shower, to wash our clothes and bathroom break each day. It was very lonely and degrading as when we went for our meal every third day it was under armed guard in a group with "BRIG" stamped on our uniforms and hats. Everyone had to stay clear of us marching to and from the brig. Quite an experience and Chief Spitz was the boss of the brig. No one not even the guards crossed him. What an impression

he made on this sailor and I know upon many thousands of others.

I made many close friends aboard the Archerfish and after the war several shipmates ran reunions throughout the country every 2 years. I attended at least 12 and our last one was a few years ago in Manitowoc, Wisconsin where only 6 or 8 showed up. Many of us have passed on or due too infirm to travel but I do keep in touch with several by E-mail and phone. God bless them all. Our numbers are dwindling each day - I wouldn't give up the experiences I had in WW II for anything. What a generation.

Education and Employment
Addenda after WWII
Enlistment was over -

On April 6 1946 I was discharged at Lido Beach, L.I. after a 6 day train ride from San Francisco, Ca where I left the hospital and Archer Fish. -

Came home and as I was the oldest of 8 siblings I didn't hang around long before I looked for a job. Applied for a position as assistant engineer aboard a tug boat in the Hudson River vicinity of Tarrytown NY (now the site of the Tappan Zee Bridge), The Maritime Commission was in charge of storing and Maintaining hundreds of old Liberty ships that saw service in WW II

And this site became known as the "Mothball Fleet" At least 300 ships were tied up side by side in columns in the widest part of the river (3 miles wide at that point) - In time many ships were sold to foreign countries, used for grain storage, towed to the James River, Virginia etc. As the numbers dwindled the remainder were eventually tied up near Jones Point opposite Peekskill as the bridge was going to be built.

I then took a Civil Service Test for the Yonkers Police Dept, passed and was appointed Dec. 1947. Went to the NY City Police Training School, graduated and was assigned to the 4th Pct as a Rookie in Yonkers. Married Raised 6 Wonderful Children - Rose in the ranks

to Sgt. Lt. and finally Captain - While a police officer attended Delehanty Institute and various training schools to further my education. I received my GED upon leaving the Navy - as I left high school in my junior year to join the Navy -

Retired from the Police dept as Captain, 28 years and 27 years of service and took 4 of my 6 children to Florida where I secured a position with the Brevard County School System as a Security Investigator in the Internal Affairs Division. Retired from there after 12 years service and at 62 went on Social Security.

Moved to Raleigh, N.C. Remained there for 12 years and returned to

My after 12 years as my wife had several surgeries and we wanted to be near our boats and extended family as we reached the "golden years". Oh yeah!

Married 60 years to the same woman. 6 children, 7 grandchildren. That's it!!!

Persons I remember best
(Cont'd)

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Addendum on persons I
remember best from my service

#1 Hershel "Dusty" Lighter
my boss in the Auxiliary Gang
aboard Archerfish - He went on
to become a CPO in our gang. He
was a pre-WW II sailor and came
from a Kansas farm, humble
beginnings, dirt poor and joined
the Navy during the depression
(circa '36) He was assigned to
surface craft and then submarines
and made several war patrols after
Pearl Harbor bombing and was then
sent to the states to new construction
Archerfish. During our first war
patrol we had aboard 4 or 5 of
the crew no officers, who had
war patrol experience - this was
out of 75 men. So you can see
most of us got our baptism of
fire on our 1st patrol. "Dusty"
took me under his wing, got me
out of the Engine Room and
gave me responsibilities that

I never in my wildest dreams thought I could handle. He saw my eagerness to learn everything about the boat and was a role model for me and the 2 other guys in the Auxiliary Gang. I am still in contact with him. He lives in Virginia and is still going at 90 yrs of age.

#2 Also in my group of friends is Benny Maiorana from L. I. He was an electrician and was aboard Archerfish for the first 4 patrols and was later transferred to Trumpetfish. We met after the war at a reunion in New London, Ct and have remained close friends talking on the phone and visiting from time to time. He is like family. Comes to our weddings etc.

#3 Next - Carl Wilhelm from Sandusky Ohio who was my throttleman when I was his alley in the Engine Rm. He remained aboard for all the 7 patrols and was instrumental

in arranging our reunions after the war. Also like family. Still in contact with him.

#4 Bernard "B.T." Gibbons a MoMM 3/c from Boston. On the boat for the last 3 patrols. Remained friends ever since. In contact by phone.

Henry "Hank" Tyah MoMM 1/c pre war Navy. 2nd in command in Auxiliary Gang. From Milwaukee, Career Navy. Retired after 25 yrs. Hosted 2 reunions in Milwaukee. Passed away a few years ago. God bless him.

#5 Leo "Doc" Carter originally from Michigan, now in Florida. He was our pharmacists mate for the last 4 runs. He is now the Archerfish WWII historian & the Archerfish has a web site. In poor health but a gamer.

These are people I am in close contact with now,

expecting Zych of course who is watching us from Heaven I hope. Not many of the original crew left - We send Christmas cards to each other including widows. As I mentioned previously we are like family even though we only spent a few years together.