

Narrator: Allen Odette

Interviewer: Jessica Williams

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(0:00:11 – 0:00:31) Jessica Williams: Today is September 14th 2016. I'm Jessica Williams of the Intrepid Museum, and we are here in Charleston, South Carolina, talking to Allen Odette. He served on board *Growler*. So thanks Al. We appreciate your talking to us. Would you mind just introducing yourself and telling us about your connection to *Growler*?

(0:00:31 – 0:01:29) Allen Odette: Okay. My name's Allen Odette. Everybody calls me Al. I was on the USS *Growler*. I started on there 1961, August, when we were in dry dock. We were increasing the height to the sail, and changing periscopes, and just doing a lot of work so that the ship could operate, snorkeling properly, because it was -- had a tendency to porpoise up and down. So they were doing a lot of work on that and a lot of other work while they were in dry-dock. And so, that's when I first came aboard. I stayed on the *Growler* until just before it became decommissioned, and it was decommissioned in 1964, I left in 1963, towards the end of the year.

(0:01:31 – 0:01:40) Jessica Williams: Great. I'm going to definitely ask you more about that dry-dock work in a bit, but backing up a little bit, can you tell us a little bit about where you're from, what your childhood was like?

(0:01:41 – 0:02:08) Allen Odette: Okay. I was from -- [I grew up in Naperville, Illinois, leaving home in 1959.] -- right now I'm living in Menominee, Michigan. My work in the past has taken me all over the country. Just -- I've lived in California, Mississippi, Missouri twice, North Carolina, Wisconsin, and now we live in Menominee, Michigan.

(0:02:10 – 0:02:13) Jessica Williams: Great. Yeah, you've definitely gotten around.

(0:02:13 – 0:02:15) Allen Odette: Yeah, we have.

(0:02:15 – 0:02:19) Jessica Williams: What motivated you to join the Navy?

(0:02:22 – 0:03:42) Allen Odette: I lived in Naperville, Illinois, and our postal carrier was in the reserves. And I got to know the guy; he was also a lifeguard at the public beach. I got to know the guy pretty good. He was a weight lifter and he did stuff that, you know, I kind of admired. And he just kind of talked me into going into the Navy. I didn't go in right away, I went in the reserves, and then about a year later, then I went out to California to make my name out there. Unfortunately, the United States was in a kind of a recession at the time. I couldn't find work out there, so, I knew I was going to go active anyway, so I went active in Oceanside, California [intended to say, San Diego, California]. And because I hadn't completed all the requirements, they sent me back to boot camp. It was my second boot camp. I originally done a stint in, that summer in Great Lakes but I still hadn't made seaman, so they had me go back into the full 13 weeks of boot camp. And that's how I got into the Navy.

(0:03:43 – 0:03:46) Jessica Williams: How did you feel about going back to boot camp a second time?

(0:03:47 – 0:04:08) Allen Odette: It didn't bother me. Just, unfortunately it was right around Christmas, so, and I spent Christmas in boot camp and – but it never really bothered me, you know. I was, been on my own for six months or eight months, and it probably was like a home for me.

(0:04:10 – 0:04:13) Jessica Williams: What was boot camp like for you? Some memories from that time.

(0:04:13 – 0:04:51) Allen Odette: It was cold. This was San Diego. It was cold. Everybody was catching colds. I was fortunate that I didn't, but they'd keep us out there and march us around, and it was just a lot of grunt work. You know, they were just trying to get us disciplined. We did stuff like go out to a rifle range and fire an M1, I guess they were M1s, and just got us familiar with guns, and then I never saw a gun again in the Navy. Well, except I had to carry one when we were doing top site watches but never fired it.

(0:04:53 – 0:04:57) Jessica Williams: Did you find it – how was acclimating to military discipline for you?

(0:04:59 – 0:05:28) Allen Odette: Uh . . . I probably had some times when I was a little rough. I was kind of a maverick (laughs), I guess I still am, and, you know, I didn't always obey the rules,

I'd skirt them, but, I got along. I mean I always got good grades when I went to military schools, and . . . I got along and I suppose I adapted over the first year or so that I was in.

(0:05:29 – 0:05:32) Jessica Williams: If you were, you know – your nature is to be maybe a little bit rebellious . . . (noise in background)

(0:05:32 – 0:05:34) Matt Francis: Sorry, pause for two seconds.

(unrelated conversation not transcribed)

(0:06:13 – 0:06:13) Matt Francis: Good to go.

(0:06:13 – 0:06:29) Jessica Williams: Okay. So what I was about to ask was, so if you have maybe a bit of a rebellious personality, was there anything in particular about Navy discipline that was – that was tough for you or made you frustrated?

(0:06:31 – 0:07:18) Allen Odette: The marching. You know, I was not fond of being in – in a crowd of people and just having to, “You do this, you do that,” exactly, you know, and if you didn't do it quite right then you do it over again. Something like that or . . . I was fortunate because I was a recruit petty officer, which allowed me to get out of some of the grunt stuff like mess cooking and stuff like that. But I pretty well got along with, you know, the system, although I'd do my own thing, but I'd get away with it.

(0:07:19 – 0:07:26) Jessica Williams: Good. When – at what point did you decide that you wanted to volunteer for the submarine service?

(0:07:27 – 0:09:27) Allen Odette: I had been going through a number of service schools. One was the Mark 37 which was fire control system, the Mark 63 fire control system. There was, oh, and basic electricity, and basic electronics; I went through that. When I got done with those service schools, for some reason, they were giving us physicals again. We'd already had one when we went into boot camp, and during that time somebody asked me if I had any interest in submarines. And just by coincidence, a month or so prior to that, me and another fellow, we were using the – I think they called it the service department [Allen Odette later noted it was called, Special Services], they had sailboats that you could sign up for and go out on the bay. Well, this guy that I was with, he knew somebody on the submarine that was tied up somewhere out away from boot camp [intended to say, away from the Naval Training Center], and so we sailed over to that submarine, tied up to it, and he had a buddy on there that he knew that took us down in the boat. At the time, I never was aware of it, but that was really

illegal; we shouldn't have been doing that. (laughs) So that kind of got me interested, and they asked me if I had any interest in submarines, and, you know, "Sure," you know, "Can give it a try." And then we went through a series of tests. They had a psychologist ask, "Why do you want to go on a submarine?" My best answer was, "It pays better." And so that's basically how I got on.

(0:09:29 – 0:09:40) Jessica Williams: A lot of our visitors are curious about the psychological questioning or training or things that you guys had, so what – do you remember what else was like that – what else happened during that evaluation?

(0:09:42 – 0:10:42) Allen Odette: Just the, they gave us a pretty detailed physical. I mean they looked in my ears and eyes, and I guess they were – I don't know what the ears would have to do with it; I suppose changes in pressure or something like that. The psychologist was probably the, you know, the one thing that they screened us out. Some guys, you know, might've been claustrophobic, and those guys did go. Then they do additional screening once you get into submarine school. Put you through a pressure tank. It's a bunch of guys sitting on a bench on either side of it, they close the door and then they put pressure in this vessel and, not all the people stayed in there. (laughs) I mean they'd get pretty panicky, and then they'd let them out and those guys were done. I guess that was about it.

(0:10:44 – 0:10:47) Jessica Williams: Did you find anything particularly difficult in submarine school?

(0:10:48 – 0:11:43) Allen Odette: No, not really. I mean you had to remember basic designs of submarines and stuff like that, but that was – it wasn't too bad. It's just . . . nobody, very few people got kicked out because they, you know, the training, other than the physical things like the pressure tanks and all they had us go through. You had to be able to go through a training tower, where they had this tower, column of water in this big tank, and you've probably heard about it, where they put you through a hatch in the bottom of it and you're supposed to hold your breath, go in the tank, and then as you're rising, just let your breath out. And they had guys on either side of the – divers on the other side [clarified by narrator, divers on both sides of the tank] who were watching in case you panicked or something like that.

(0:11:45 – 0:11:47) Jessica Williams: What did that feel like? I've always wondered.

(0:11:48 – 0:12:25) Allen Odette: Well, as a kid I was a swimmer. We had a large public swimming pool about two blocks from our house, and we spent all our summers in the water. And so, you know, I was pretty used to being under water. I never had a doubt that, you know,

I'd have a problem going through that, because, you know, there's a lot of new stuff like going into a pressure tank and going up but, it was – it didn't really bother me.

(0:12:26 – 0:12:44) Jessica Williams: I guess this is backing up a little bit. This is more of a general question but, and we talk about – a lot about how the submarine service in the Navy is all volunteer. So I'm wondering if you could – for somebody who doesn't understand what that means, if you could explain the volunteer nature of the submarine service?

(0:12:45 – 0:13:24) Allen Odette: I guess you have to like it. You know there's some mystique to it. Not everybody can get in. [It's an elite service.] And then, you know, just, after you've been in the submarine service for a while, you get to know people and you get little groups like the one that we've got today, I mean, we've been together for 50 years, and . . . just a bond – bond that you just don't lose.

(0:13:25 – 0:13:38) Jessica Williams: Yes, that's definitely evident spending time with all of you. Great, so you made it through submarine training. Was *Growler* your first submarine?

(0:13:38 – 0:14:13) Allen Odette: First and only submarine. The *Growler* was pretty interesting because it was different than other submarines. We had, in our group we had five submarines, the *Growler*, *Grayback*, *Halibut*, the *Tunny* and *Barbero*. And even those submarines were different but they had a different purpose. They were all to fire missiles at the Russians if the Russians got out of hand.

(0:14:14 – 0:14:28) Jessica Williams: So, yeah, I'd like to get back to that part a little bit or to ask that question again I guess. So for somebody who has no idea, what was *Growler's* role in the Cold War? How would you describe it?

(0:14:30 – 0:15:25) Allen Odette: Well, we were posing a threat to the Russians that would keep them from doing bad things to the country. You know, they had a lot of the same stuff we did, but submarines were pretty much undetectable then, and so we were able to get within easy missile shot to some of their bases – their submarine base up in Petropavlovsk. I can't remember the name of the other one, another one up in that area, but, we were ready to destroy those. And fortunately it never happened. And that's kind of scary because I know if we ever did have to fire our missiles, they would detect us and, you know, they'd find us and we'd be gone.

(0:15:26 – 0:15:30) Jessica Williams: How much did you think about that when you were serving on the boat?

(0:15:31 – 0:15:45) Allen Odette: Some, but, you know, not a lot, we didn't dwell on it, I mean it's not something that, I think especially being a young kid, you just don't worry about stuff like that. So, it's just kind of routine.

(0:15:45 – 0:15:52) Jessica Williams: And did you at the time – what were your thoughts about the Cold War, about the Soviet Union?

(0:15:53 – 0:16:25) Allen Odette: They were bad guys. We were good guys. We were smarter than they were. We had, you know, more resources than they did. And we felt like if we did ever have to do our thing with the missiles, that we would come out on top. Maybe not as a group, you know, as a particular submarine we might not make it but we know that the US would.

(0:16:26 – 0:16:36) Jessica Williams: It's interesting to think about, that the country might be victorious even if you guys personally might be lost in that effort.

(0:16:37 – 0:17:23) Allen Odette: Oh, yeah. But we were part of, you know, the whole system. Everybody had their thing to do. I was trained on my missile guidance system, once the missile was launched, then, you know, we took over and we would point it to the target. But everybody – I mean everybody had a role to play in that. The mess cooks, the auxiliaries, the electricians, especially the guys that worked on the engines because they were not the best engines in the world. I'm sure you've heard about that.

(0:17:24 – 0:17:29) Jessica Williams: We have and we're going to definitely ask some of the, ask the enginemen more details about . . .

(0:17:29 – 0:17:29) Allen Odette: Yeah.

(0:17:30 – 0:17:32) Jessica Williams: . . . the nature of their struggles with those engines.

(0:17:32 – 0:17:39) Allen Odette: Yeah. Excuse me. I'm getting one of my cataract reactions.

(0:17:39 – 0:17:53) Jessica Williams: Yeah, it is what it is. So, I'd like to talk more about controlling the missile. Did you – but first I guess, did you do much training on land first before you came aboard *Growler* for your . . .

(0:17:53 – 0:19:48) Allen Odette: Well, I went to school at Great Lakes. That was a six month school, which was pretty extensive for, you know, for somebody that was committed for –

actually I was only committed for two years. I wound up extending for two more years and then another couple months for a, [my last] deployment. But we were practicing at Great Lakes – how the radar pointed, and the computer, which they called a computer back then, it was just really a box with a bunch of relays in it, how that thing worked and what would happen if it failed. We got to be pretty good at detecting problems while we were operating the system. Once I got on the ship and we were operational and then we, yeah, we had – we shot some of the red missiles which were practice missiles. And they would get the missile prepared, get it on the launcher, and they would – it would be launched and then we'd [acquire it on our guidance radar and] take over. And once we got the missile in the air, we'd go over our target and then we – we would say that was, you know, the place where we would – somebody would push the button, captain, I guess, would push the button, and it was supposed to go down but in this case with the red missiles, we had a chase plane that was controlling the missile from there [intended to say, we had a chase plane that took over the missile from there] and they would take it into an airstrip and land it, sometimes, didn't always work.

(0:19:49 – 0:19:51) Jessica Williams: Was there a time when it didn't work?

(0:19:51 – 0:21:07) Allen Odette: Yeah, yeah. Well, a couple times. One launch we had – they called it a hung slipper. It was once the missile was – well, during the launch they had JATO boosters on them, they were rockets that were tied [intended to say, connected] to the missile, and then once the rockets were expended, then the missiles [intended to say, slippers] would supposedly come off [detach] and drop into the ocean. Sometimes that didn't happen, and you get – one of them would be – would hang up, and the missile would go off course and you wind up losing it. That happened on the first – I think the first launch that I was involved in. We did other practice runs that were successful after that, but the missiles were – this was pretty antiquated technology, and, you know, things didn't always work the way you wanted it to. And I suppose, you know you think about it that, you know if it were a real event, you possibly could've lost a real missile, which wouldn't have been good.

(0:21:09 – 0:21:35) Jessica Williams: So, I want to talk more about the details of controlling the missile, but we'll back up and do a little bit of Regulus 101. Because part of the – part of the point in talking to all of you is to get basic explanations for things that our visitors are curious about. So, I guess we'll start with super, super basic, which is, can you describe what was the Regulus missile?

(0:21:36 – 0:22:47) Allen Odette: The Regulus missile was basically a jet airplane . . . didn't have a pilot [intended to say, without a pilot]. I don't know what, can't tell you exactly what the dimensions were but it was probably – in my mind it was about 30 feet long and perhaps had a

wing span of 25 feet. It also had a compartment within the missile where the bomb was. I can't tell you exactly where it was in the missile, would've been amidships I suppose. It just looked like basically, very much like an airplane, except there was no pilot in it, and we had the means to launch it and then control it once it got into the air, as a pilot would. Then once it got to where we wanted, we'd push a button and make it go down and do its thing.

(0:22:48 – 0:22:53) Jessica Williams: And how was – how was it controlled? What was the system for guiding the Regulus missile?

(0:22:53 – 0:23:22) Allen Odette: They had what they called an AMBPQ-2 system, which was a radar that would send out coded pulses to the missile. The missile would receive a pulse and, you know, it would tell you to turn left, turn right, change altitude, dive. That's about all I can really think of that it would do.

(0:23:23 – 0:23:30) Jessica Williams: When you were getting ready to launch a missile, was there any initial information programmed into it before it launched?

(0:23:32 – 0:23:33) Allen Odette: No [not that I recall].

(0:23:33 – 0:23:36) Jessica Williams: So all the control that (inaudible) was in flight.

(0:23:35 – 0:23:55) Allen Odette: Right. Yeah. And of course, you know, if it had a warhead on it, it would be armed before the, no, we'd send a code to arm it. I forgot about that, yeah we, it was a code that was sent out.

(0:23:58 – 0:24:04) Jessica Williams: Were you involved in the launching process at all, or did your role really start once it was in flight?

(0:24:05 – 0:24:45) Allen Odette: No. On the submarine, the guidance center was on the port side; the launch, or the missile center, was on the starboard side. We were together, and there was a wall between us, a bulkhead. But we knew each other, we'd go out . . . we were a team. We'd go out and drink beer together, so you knew the other guys. You know, as you can see that, this group that we're with, that everybody knows each other.

(0:24:50 – 0:25:16) Jessica Williams: Excellent. So, I want to walk through some of the – clarifying some of the process of the guidance aspects of the missile. So the missile, you know, other people are getting the missile out on the launcher, checking it out, arming, well I guess

you're arming the warhead by sending a code. At what point do you take over? Was it right after it launches?

(0:25:16 – 0:26:09) Allen Odette: Yeah, it's on its own for just a few seconds [intended to say, it's on its own for a while]. The radar's turned on during launch [but not radiating], during the actual launch process. The radar's been warmed up and everything, but actually sending pulses out doesn't happen until it's actually in the air. And then the radar would follow the missile, the missile would have a transponder on it which would send the code back to the radar antenna, and then we'd receive it down in the missile guidance center. And then once it was launched, then we would tell it by code: left, right, up or down, or . . . dive.

(0:26:10 – 0:26:17) Jessica Williams: So you're describing being in the missile center. What did the controls look like that you were standing in front of?

(0:26:17 – 0:27:26) Allen Odette: Boxes with lights and buttons. We had a plotting screen; it was two feet by three feet. It had a deal [intended to say, It had a device] inside that would, every few seconds it would strike the screen and show up a dot, and then you'd see a series of dots as the missile went on. And so you'd have a visual presentation of what was going on with the missile. They had – we had a radar monitor, actual screens, so we could see where the missile was pointed, and how its progress was going. We had just a lot of other stuff there that controlled the synchros and servos and whatnot which fed information up to the radar screen and to the antenna itself where we could send out a pulse to tell it what to do.

(0:27:27 – 0:27:36) Jessica Williams: And when you mentioned sending codes, how exactly where you doing that? Was that a matter of pushing buttons or numbers, or was it . . . ?

(0:27:35 – 0:27:59) Allen Odette: No. It was automatic. We'd go into a tracking mode, and the system would tell it that you're on track or you're not on track so you need to make a correction to go on the center of the beam.

(0:28:01 – 0:28:05) Jessica Williams: Did you do much testing or practicing with the missile off *Growler*?

(0:28:06 – 0:28:42) Allen Odette: Um . . . I'd think that – while I was on the *Growler* we probably fired five practice missiles, may have been more. As I recall, it was fairly limited, because back then those missiles cost \$300,000, give or take, and at that time \$300,000 was a lot more than it is now. It was, you know, do the math and it was probably four or five million dollars now.

(0:28:44 – 0:28:55) Jessica Williams: You alluded to this earlier a little bit but just to ask the question again, you mentioned the difference between the red ones, the red birds and the blue birds. Can you just say that again?

[Narrator's Note: I'm not very clear on details of this. I don't remember ever being in the hangars seeing live, blue missiles. Just the red, practice missiles.]

(0:28:56 – 0:29:21) Allen Odette: Well, there's just a very vivid differentiation between the blue birds and the red birds. One was practice and one was the real thing. The real thing did not say "US Navy" on it; practice birds would actually say "US Navy."

(0:29:22 – 0:29:28) Jessica Williams: So the blue ones, they were just entirely blue with no other markings?

(0:29:29 – 0:29:37) Allen Odette: Blue and white. Oh, you've seen the display on the *Intrepid* there. That's exactly the way they looked.

(0:29:38 – 0:29:52) Jessica Williams: Yeah, I remember what they said, I was curious to check this against what – how ours is currently painted. And when you would do – when you were testing the missile, was this primarily out of Pearl Harbor, so pretty close to port or . . . ?

(0:29:53 – 0:30:17) Allen Odette: Yeah, we'd go off Barbers Point, because I think that's where the missile was landed. And I think that there was a facility off of Kauai but I don't remember too much about that. Barbers Point was the one place I do remember.

(0:30:18 – 0:30:39) Jessica Williams: And when you were testing the missile, was the attempt to try to make the situation as similar to what it would be when you were launching, were you at periscope depth and then came up and everybody doing their job? I guess, how did the environment map to what it would've potentially been like if you had to do this for real?

(0:30:40 – 0:31:52) Allen Odette: Well the, the ship had to be surfaced in order to fire a missile. And you weren't using the radar; it wasn't being pulsed at the time. Once they got the missile taken out of the hangar and onto the launcher, they'd get that ready, they'd close the doors to the hangar, and then spool up the engine, get it going, and, you know, get it all ready to blast off. We'd launch while we were surfaced, it would go in the air, and we'd take over, ship would dive, and just the antenna would be sticking out, doing its thing, guiding the missile as it went toward the target. Again, if it were a practice missile, there'd be a chase plane and they have the ability to control it like, remotely.

(0:31:53 – 0:32:26) Jessica Williams: Great. I think those are my primary questions about your job and the guidance and, other ones may come up. But I'd like to talk a little bit – back to some more general things about life onboard and about the submarine. Actually, let me ask first about – so you mentioned that when you joined the crew, *Growler* was in dry-dock. And you talked about this a little bit but I'm wondering if you could go into more detail about what work was actually happening onboard at that time.

(0:32:26 – 0:33:30) Allen Odette: All kinds of work. The insides were torn up because they were changing periscopes to match the height. Periscope's a pretty complex item. The radar mast on the AMAPQ-2 [intended to say, ANBPQ2], that had to be increased in length; they added 10 feet to the height of it – and the snorkel. So everything throughout the ship was being torn up. You'll see some of the items that I have to give you; one of them's a fire permit. I had to stand fire watches while we were in port. They would throw – cover up – there'd be a welder, you know, he'd be welding something, so there'd be a fire extinguisher right there, and, you know, in case there was a problem, something caught on fire, we'd be able to put it out or call somebody and get the fire out.

(0:33:32 – 0:33:42) Jessica Williams: And, so I'm curious to know about your first patrol on *Growler*. How long did that – when did that happen after you joined the crew?

(0:33:43 – 0:34:35) Allen Odette: [Narrator's Note: My 1st patrol was in February 1962, and ended in April 1962. My 1st dive on *Growler* was November 1961, as referenced below.] Um . . . I want to say it was . . . it seems like it was the, like November we went out. You're going to have to check the records on that I guess; I'm not sure I can tell you exactly. Once we did take the, you know, once the, all the overhaul was done, we took it out for a test dive. Went down to, as I recall 750 feet, which is a lot for, you know, a submarine back then. Was there something you wanted me to add to that?

(0:34:35 – 0:34:42) Jessica Williams: Oh, no, that's good. I realize it was a bit of an open question. So how long approximately was *Growler* on patrol at any given time?

(0:34:43 – 0:36:56) Allen Odette: Um, not quite three months. It was a long time to go on station. It took, 10 days, two weeks, to actually get on station. And one of the other ships in the squadron would've been on station and we'd go up there to relieve that ship, but, it was 10 days or two weeks to actually get up there and then come back, and in the process we refueled, either Adak, Alaska, or Midway Island, which is one of the last islands in the Hawaiian chain. I don't know it's probably 1500 miles from Pearl Harbor, where we were based. And then we would get on station and we would just go around in circles and . . . My job there, also besides,

you know, working on the guidance equipment was to stand ECM watches, Electronic Countermeasure watches. My job was to listen for various radars and there was all kinds of – most of them were benign. It was a radar that could've been 50 miles away or 100 miles away, and we just, because of the nature of radar signals, it could be bouncing off the ionosphere and coming back and doing weird stuff. We'd have to be able to tell whether it was a threat to us or not, if it was another ship that was close by. They could go undetected from sonar if they were dead in the water. But still have their radar on looking for us, so we – there was a little bit of danger in – if it could've been a Russian radar ship of some sort looking for us. So, that's what the ECM stuff was.

(0:36:58 – 0:37:02) Jessica Williams: Were there any occasions where you detected Soviet radar that was . . .

(0:37:02 – 0:38:05) Allen Odette: Yes. Yes. I can't give you a specific instance but, it happened fairly frequently. Because they knew we were somewhere in the area, and they were always looking for us, and they had submarines out there, also they were looking for us. We did have one experience that I'm sure you've heard about where we surfaced. And it was very foggy, we surfaced to get a look around, and it happened that there was a Soviet cruiser very close to us, within hundreds of yards, didn't have its radar on. Had it had its radar on, we would've detected that before we surfaced. The officer of the deck spotted it, (laughs) and we quietly snuck out of there. Stuff like that happens.

(0:38:06 – 0:38:10) Jessica Williams: What was the response in that moment?

(0:38:10 – 0:39:02) Allen Odette: I was scared. Somewhere around that time, there was – one of our crew that I know he doesn't come to these reunions but I still have contact with him, he asked me if we had depth charged, had been depth charged, and I said, "No I don't think so." Sonar at one time had detected explosions, and so we kind of guessed that, that might've been some sort of a sounding device where they put maybe grenades or some sort of explosive device in the water and used that as part of their long-range detection. Bob Harmuth could tell you a little bit more about that.

(0:39:04 – 0:39:08) Jessica Williams: (inaudible) ask him about that. How long were your ECM watches?

(0:39:11 – 0:39:13) Allen Odette: I think they were eight hours. [intended to say, four hours.]

(0:39:14 – 0:39:18) Jessica Williams: And where were you doing that? Was it in . . .

(0:39:18 – 0:40:25) Allen Odette: It was right in the control room. In the control room there, we had the radio room, we had the sonar, we had the, well, the ECM, that was right next to the diving stand. And then there was the navigation where we, the quartermaster would be plotting our course. Oh, they had the torpedo launch computer, that was the stuff that “Andy” Anderson, that he was responsible for. He and I were kind of separate one, he was torpedoes, I was missile. And then they had the helm, and the diving planes was there, and of course the periscope, and then the manifolds to cover the dive when we vented the tanks and the main ballast, and added ballast, and up and down type stuff.

(0:40:27 – 0:40:31) Jessica Williams: How many other people were involved in missile guidance along with you?

(0:40:33 – 0:41:28) Allen Odette: Oh, we had a chief. We had -- at least for a while we had a first class. He would be kind of like the group leader. And then there was a couple third class -- third or second class, either electronics technicians or fire control technicians. And then there was an officer that was over the -- one was over the guidance and then an officer over the missile itself. There was -- you said how many people? I think we probably had seven in our group. That sometimes changed. There might've been five at one time and maybe nine another time.

(0:41:29 – 0:41:32) Jessica Williams: That's a fair number given the small size of the crew.

(0:41:33 – 0:41:59) Allen Odette: Yeah, I think it was probably more like, chief, first class . . . I took over; I was second class when I took over from the first class, “Bud” Lien, he was the first class. And Ron Spain, Jerry Capps, so yeah, probably five would be, five or six would be a fair number.

(0:42:02 – 0:42:20) Jessica Williams: Excellent. So, I want to get to a little bit of just sort of life on board -- we may come back to some of these things, topics, as well. So when you were about to head off on your first patrol, what were you thinking and what were you expecting about being onboard the sub for three months?

(0:42:20 – 0:43:09) Allen Odette: Well, first time we'd go out to sea, the only thing I was worried about was not getting seasick. Because the ship would be rocking and rolling. We wanted to make sure the equipment was working, because we couldn't -- one thing that we didn't want to do was turn the radar on unnecessarily while we're at sea because that would be an instant detection by, if there's Russian trawlers or, you know, bad guys about, they'd detect

our radar right away, so we had to be careful about that. And we had a device, looked like a flashlight, that we could turn on to see that the radar was working.

(0:43:09 – 0:43:10) Jessica Williams: Pardon me for one second.

(0:43:13 – 0:43:14) Allen Odette: You're going to have to ask that question over again.

(0:43:15 – 0:43:28) Jessica Williams: Sorry about that. (Allen Odette laughs) I was hoping it wasn't one of you guys trying to call me. Oh yeah, so I think my initial question was, what were things that you were expecting about your patrol, but you're talking about trying to be quiet with the radar?

(0:43:29 – 0:44:02) Allen Odette: Well we had – we ran, as much as we could, we'd run on surface because we could travel better. And plus when you're diving you've got to either run snorkeled or on batteries, and batteries only lasted so long. And snorkeling was difficult because you'd have to maintain a pretty close depth. So we'd run on surface as much as we could.

(0:44:04 – 0:44:06) Jessica Williams: Were you mostly running on surface at night?

(0:44:07 – 0:44:41) Allen Odette: Mm-hmm. Yeah. It depended on the conditions, whether we would snorkel or . . . when you're transiting you don't want to be running on batteries, you know, as little as possible. And, if you were running submerged, then you'd be constantly taking the charge out of your batteries, so you'd have to -- that had to be carefully monitored and . . . really preserve the charge as much as they can.

(0:44:44 – 0:45:11) Jessica Williams: One other -- even though I said I was going to veer away from work-type topics, I do have another question, which is, so you mentioned that one of your tasks was doing ECM watches. But of course, we know that *Growler's* big picture mission is to wait to potentially launch the missiles. So was somebody always kind of waiting in the control area in case there was a call to launch this thing?

(0:45:14 – 0:46:37) Allen Odette: That would've been through the radio room. There would be a signal, I can't tell you just exactly how it worked, but there would be a signal transmitted to the radio room, the radio room would get the captain I'm sure first and then the missile officer and the guidance officer. They would be notified. I suppose that, you know, if there were a launch command, that everyone would be alerted, and they'd sound the alarm and everybody'd go to missile stations. We did practice; we practiced that a lot. We get pretty excited when,

even if we knew it was practice. Sometimes we didn't know it was practice. But there were other exercises that we did like that, like collision or radar contact, dive, and that kind of thing . . . fire, have a fire aboard, you don't want a fire on a submarine. There's no place for that smoke to go.

(0:46:39 – 0:46:54) Jessica Williams: Yeah, yeah. Thank you. So, before you – you know again you're heading out for the first patrol, what were you anticipating about life on board, about living with this crew for three months?

(0:46:55 – 0:47:46) Allen Odette: How not to get bored. If we weren't specifically working on equipment or cleaning up or stuff like that, play cribbage, we'd play cards, watch movies, sleep. Up to that time I'd never slept 14 hours before. If I didn't have a -- if I wasn't on ECM watch, sometimes they would --- when they were transiting, they would let some of us just, you know, do what you wanted to. I can't imagine sleeping 14 hours but I did. (laughs)

(0:47:49 – 0:47:53) Jessica Williams: So you mentioned trying to stave off boredom. Did you feel bored frequently?

(0:47:54 – 0:50:22) Allen Odette: No, I don't think so. I think we found stuff to do, you know, playing cards or stuff. I drew maps. I just had an interest in navigation, I suppose. I would've found being a quartermaster, that would've been a kind of a neat job, because you're always looking where you're going. Yeah . . . one time, I said I was, I stood ECM watches, one of the cruises I was on the SINS, ship's inertial navigator, and they had -- the SINS was up in the navigation compartment. There was that, there was the LORAN-A, LORAN-C. They had a couple plotters just to track the course of the ship. It was doing the same thing that the quartermaster was but, with the SINS it was much more accurate than, you know, than just using a compass and using -- the LORAN-C was a piece of equipment that -- there were radio stations around the world that we could receive, and through timing and the pulses from those different stations, we could determine pretty accurately where we were, but all those things didn't always work, and so there was a lot of redundancy. SINS at the time was new, and it would crash every once in a while. So we had to rely on other pieces of equipment. The SINS was, when it was working was probably the best means of navigation. I had to stand a whole cruise though, up there, and I was -- it was kind of boring. I mean, you have to plot where the ship was and doing a lot of the same stuff the quartermaster was. But I found that pretty interesting when I first got into it. And to this day -- you know, I like using a GPS. That would've been a wonderful thing back then because there was no such thing. And I've carried that with me up to this day.

(0:50:23 – 0:50:28) Jessica Williams: Yeah, it is really interesting. It's an interesting problem the Navy had to solve, both for navigation but also for . . .

(0:50:28 – 0:50:51) Allen Odette: I don't know if I included it in that stuff I was going to give you. I've got a map that I, I drew, of a world map. I took days and probably weeks drawing that thing but – I'll show it to you if I've got it – you might be interested in it. That's what I did to, you know to, relieve boredom.

(0:50:52 – 0:50:55) Jessica Williams: And you were qualifying on this at this time as well.

(0:50:56 – 0:52:28) Allen Odette: The first cruise that I was on, when I first, when we were, after we got out of dry dock, that was – oh yeah, I didn't get a lot of sleep then. We had to study the ship, and we had to do things like – you'd get a question like, "Well, can you blow sanitary tank and make it go through the drinking fountain?" You could do that theoretically, but, I mean that got people thinking, you know, if you did have an emergency, that you would understand how these systems worked. But we had to get each department would have to sign off on you, so you knew. Like the engine room, you'd have to know how to run the engines. You have to know how to blow the sanitary tanks, where you dumped your waste at sea while you were underway and -- or garbage. You had weighted -- they had these mesh bags that, put the garbage in and then they had these lead weights. They'd shoot them out the – they called it a GDU, garbage disposal unit. And we'd have to learn all that. Learn how to shoot the torpedoes. So that, you know, in an emergency that you could fill in, and take over if somebody got disabled or something.

(0:52:29 – 0:52:33) Jessica Williams: How did the qualification process go for you? Was it long or short or difficult?

(0:52:34 – 0:53:50) Allen Odette: It was uh . . . it wasn't too difficult. You know I'd have to get, I was worried about my final quals, but I guess during the process of learning that the – the chief of the boat had to sign off on you, and during the process, they would watch you; I mean the chief of the boat knew what was going on. So, when you finally, he would take you through the boat and ask you questions about, you know, "How do you blow main ballast?" Or, "How do you transfer ballast from one trim tank to the other to right the ship?" Get it on an even keel. He'd ask you things, take you through the whole ship and ask you questions as you went. But he'd know whether you were going to pass or not. There weren't too many people that didn't pass, because they, first of all they screened us pretty carefully before we went on the ship, and there was no dummies there; there were very few dummies. We might call them dummies, some of them, but they weren't -- good guys.

(0:53:52 – 0:54:01) Jessica Williams: Do you remember anybody who struggled with this or who people thought maybe was more on the dumb side?

(0:54:02 – 0:54:17) Allen Odette: Yeah, there was a, I can recall one guy that -- they took him off the ship and he wasn't allowed to be a submariner. He went onto the tin cans.

(0:54:21 – 0:54:23) Jessica Williams: It's part of the process, right?

(0:54:23 – 0:54:27) Allen Odette: Sure. Yeah. That's part of the screening process.

(0:54:29 – 0:54:37) Jessica Williams: Speaking of the crew, in general, how did people get along or relate to each other on board?

(0:54:39 – 0:55:13) Allen Odette: Generally everybody got along. Sometimes there would be some rivalry between the guys in the back, the guys in the engine room or, even some of the torpedomen -- there'd be conflict. But it was, just, good, fun rivalry. But some people took it to heart, but it never really caused any problems for the ship.

(0:55:14 – 0:55:20) Jessica Williams: Can you describe what some of that rivalry might've been like or how it manifested itself?

(0:55:21 – 0:56:44) Allen Odette: Oh, well, the guys in the back, the enginemen and the machinist's mates, they had to hot bunk. The ETs and the FTs and quartermasters, they had their own bunk. And that created some problems because there weren't enough bunks for everybody. So they had to share, not at the same time, but they'd swap on and off. That was probably one of the biggest things. And the guys in the back kept the ship running. And we had times where we were down to one engine. As I recall, that engine failed also. We had just battery. Officers have to tell you a little more about that. But, you know, and sometimes, guys would go out on Hotel Street and have a little too much to drink and they'd have some sort of an issue would come up with a, maybe a girlfriend or something, yeah. Just, like, just normal culture for the Navy or for civilians.

(0:56:45 – 0:56:53) Jessica Williams: Was there anybody that you remember who you did not get along with in the crew or, did you get into it with anybody?

(0:56:53 – 0:57:57) Allen Odette: Yeah, I got into it with . . . Horseman; he was a big engine guy. He'd get a little wild when he was drinking and, we had got into, you know, I'm not a big guy, and we got into it on the dock. He was coming, I was going, and I guess the rivalry because of

bunks or, who knows, you know, maybe that they perceived the guys up front were taken better care of than they were. They did work; they worked very hard. And sometimes, you know, if – oh, and if something broke back there, the guys would fix it and they would take their normal bunk time, and they had to work over. That happened occasionally. That's probably the biggest rivalry.

(0:57:59 – 0:58:02) Jessica Williams: That's interesting, the idea of, yeah, who's doing what work.

(0:58:05 – 0:58:38) Allen Odette: Well sometimes their people would, I mean the guys in the back would think that their work was more important than keeping the ship surfaced or keeping it -- having the ability to navigate was, sure was important, but it was important that, you know, if we couldn't launch or if we couldn't guide, you know, our mission was useless. Yeah, that created some rivalries.

(0:58:42 – 0:58:49) Jessica Williams: How was discipline handled on board *Growler*, as far as if somebody stepped out of line?

(0:58:50 – 0:59:28) Allen Odette: Well, they could be given a bad rating. They could have to do extra duties. They could be given a captain's mast. I didn't see too much discipline exercised though. I had my own situation, where I misbehaved and, you know, I wound up having a captain's mast. But, it didn't -- that's the only one I ever heard of.

(0:59:29 – 0:59:37) Jessica Williams: So you're the honorary example of somebody who had a captain's mast on board *Growler*. Could you tell me about that? What did you do and what happened?

(0:59:39 – 1:03:16) Allen Odette: Oh golly. Let's see. Well, we made a trip to Hotel Street and -- this was after hours, I couldn't get -- no buses were running so I hitchhiked back. Some guys from the Army base—I never can remember the name of it. The Army base that was past Pearl Harbor. [Schofield.] They gave me a ride, and somehow we got in a little argument, they didn't like me, so they, instead of dropping me off at the sub base gate, they let me off in between [gates], which kind of made me mad. I went up to -- went back and went to the guard station to go on, board the ship, and they asked to see my ID and I showed them my ID and, I don't know, I gave them a big ration I guess, and they didn't like that. Because I wasn't sober. So, they took me into their little, it was like a jail, took me in there, asked for my ID again, and then they called the duty officer to come and get me, I guess they were going to let me go, but they put me in the clink, and I didn't like that. I didn't like that at all, so, for some reason I took my

wallet [intended to say, ID card] and put it in my sock, and I put my shoe on over it. And they came back and they asked me for my ID again. I said, "Well you've got it." And, "No, we don't." I said, "Yeah, you guys took it." And so they wound up strip-searching me for, everything except my socks. Here I had my wallet [ID card] in my socks. So they had me put my clothes back on, they went around to look back where (laughs) they were. And whoever their boss was told them to strip-search me again, except this time they took my socks off and they found my wallet [ID card] in there. So, they wound up writing me up, which was – I guess the officer of the deck was called to come and get me, and he wasn't the nicest guy in the world. So I wound up having a captain's mast out of that, which – the captain put me on probation, I didn't get a good rating, instead of a 3.8 or 4.0, I got a 3.4, which really was not that bad. But I was put on probation so I had to behave myself for a while. By the way, when I got discharged, when I was getting separated, the yeoman, [Mel Grosz,] who was going through my file with me, he ran across this captain's mast, and he pulled this paper out, and he says, "You don't want this, do you?" I didn't – if I wouldn't have – if they would've left that in my file, I wouldn't have gotten a good conduct medal. So, I said, "No, I don't, no, let's get rid of that." (laughs) So he threw it away. So the record says I've never had a captain's mast. So, that's an example of the discipline.

(1:03:17 – 1:03:33) Jessica Williams: That's funny. It's funny that they would just – I mean, I guess at that point you're leaving – to just toss the paper, and it sounds like it was more – I mean, perhaps it wasn't the nicest behavior but you weren't, it wasn't the worst (Allen Odette: No, it was . . .) the worst thing, you know, you're being difficult in a drunken moment.

(1:03:33 – 1:03:34) Allen Odette: Yeah.

(1:03:36 – 1:03:40) Jessica Williams: So, *Growler* was in port at the time. Where did the mast take place?

(1:03:40 – 1:04:22) Allen Odette: In the wardroom. I don't remember who -- the yeoman was in there, the captain, my officer, and the officer, Bill Gunn, he was the one that wrote me up. And, I think that was it. Executive officer would've been in there, who at the time was Bob Owens. And he said he didn't remember that. But I was, you know, all the time I was in that really bothered me that I had that captain's mast, and I'd like you to ask the other guys if they remember anything about that because anybody I've talked to said they didn't even know about it.

(1:04:23 – 1:04:29) Jessica Williams: How does the mast actually, are you standing in the room and everybody else was sitting at the table?

(1:04:29 – 1:05:04) Allen Odette: Yeah, yeah, I was standing. I was at one end of the table, and the captain was at the other end, and then these other officers were on the side there. I was interrogated, I was chewed out, and I probably embarrassed my officer. I think that was George Playdon. Have to ask him, see what he says. He's not here this time, but -- I'm sure I'll see him one of these days.

(1:05:05 – 1:05:21) Jessica Williams: And one other question about that was what -- so the incident happened and now you're at this captain's mast. What was your demeanor during the mast? Did you just answer the questions and let it go or were you trying to explain yourself? What did you do?

(1:05:21 – 1:05:49) Allen Odette: I was, I guess I was a little defensive because those guys abused me (laughs), which, you know, I deserved it I'm sure. And pulling that thing over on those guards at the gate there wasn't the smartest thing to do. (laughs) I guess I was a little bit defensive; I tried to explain myself but it didn't work. I deserved the captain's mast.

(1:05:51 – 1:06:10) Jessica Williams: Thank you for telling that story. Let me see how we're doing. Okay. So we have a few minutes left. I'm wondering if there are any other particular memories or stories about life on board *Growler* that are particularly memorable for you?

(1:06:10 – 1:06:12) Allen Odette: Have you heard about the gooney bird story?

(1:06:13 – 1:06:18) Jessica Williams: People have mentioned the gooney birds, but we always like to hear stories in other ways, so tell the gooney bird story.

(1:06:18 – 1:08:29) Allen Odette: Okay. Well, again, drinking, and we're at Midway Island. That's the only place in the world that gooney birds -- they're some sort of an albatross. But, a bunch of us went to the EM Club and did our thing that sailors normally do, kept coming back. We had a fascination with the gooney birds because they were funny when they landed. Some of them would just tumble. There was a story of somebody getting knocked off a bicycle. A gooney bird came in, knocked him, you know, they were just clumsy birds when they were landing. So, then there were nests around there, and apparently the gooney birds nested for quite a while, and they had the young ones in there. And Jerry Capps and I were coming back from the EM Club and we decided we want to carry one of those baby gooney birds on the ship. So, I guess it was Jerry, could've been me, but I think it was Jerry, put the baby gooney bird in the shower, and there's a door on it. I don't know if there were potatoes in there on top, on the bottom of it or, where we normally would store stuff when we went on a cruise, but somehow we got to sea and that gooney bird was discovered, and the captain wasn't -- Captain

Henderson was not very happy about it. A lot of people were interrogated, and he made a big deal on the 1MC which is the speaker system that goes throughout the ship. And we stopped the ship and let that baby gooney bird go. Hopefully he made it back to momma. But there's other stories, and maybe there had been other people that brought gooney birds aboard. That was one that I will never forget.

(1:08:30 – 1:08:38) Jessica Williams: That's funny. You know I've heard people talk about watching them land and stuff, and drinking at Midway, but I don't think I heard that anybody tried to bring one, bring one on board.

(1:08:39 – 1:08:44) Allen Odette: Oh . . . Capps did. (laughs)

(1:08:45 – 1:08:46) Jessica Williams: That's pretty funny.

(1:08:47 – 1:08:49) Allen Odette: I don't think that the captain thought it was funny.

(1:08:51 – 1:08:52) Jessica Williams: But no captain's mast for that.

(1:08:53 – 1:09:04) Allen Odette: No. Well, no. I probably deserved – probably deserved more than I got on my captain's mast, but I didn't get caught.

(1:09:07 – 1:09:17) Jessica Williams: That's funny. Any other memorable stories, either funny ones or not-so-funny ones from your time on the boat?

(1:09:18 – 1:09:21) Allen Odette: Do you want to hear about me diving off the sail?

(1:09:22 – 1:09:29) Jessica Williams: Oh, that was you? Okay, yes, tell me that story because I know -- Bob Harmuth had told me that somebody had jumped off the sail. I didn't realize that was you.

(1:09:31 – 1:11:00) Allen Odette: **Dick** and Jerry Capps and I, this was Midway Island. We were the only – there was a pier out there. We were the only ship within sight. We came back after dark and decided to go swimming. Jerry didn't want to go swimming, I did, so I took my shirt off. I don't remember what I had (laughs) below but I must've just had dungarees on. Took my shoes off and then went up on the sail and dived off it. And that sail was like 40 feet up. I was a swimmer, you know. When I was a kid, we had diving stations in a local pool and I was pretty good at it. But the big problem was there's tanks on the side of the ship that I had to miss, and apparently I did; I'm here today. As I recall, I did it twice, and the second time I got hurt, tore

up my shoulder. I didn't want to -- I already had that captain's mast, and I didn't want to let anybody know about it, I didn't want to go see the corpsman. So I wound up with a torn-up shoulder there for, well, quite a while.

(1:11:01 – 1:11:02) Jessica Williams: So this was at night?

(1:11:02 – 1:11:19) Allen Odette: Yeah. It was at night. Oh yeah, and when we got up in the morning and looked out there, there was all these sharks swimming around there. They weren't big sharks but they were, maybe, like that, and obviously nothing happened between me and the sharks.

(1:11:20 – 1:11:22) Jessica Williams: And was the shoulder injury just from impacting the water?

(1:11:23 – 1:11:23) Allen Odette: Yeah.

(1:11:24 – 1:11:24) Jessica Williams: Yeah.

(1:11:24 – 1:12:09) Allen Odette: Yeah. No, I didn't -- never hit the saddle tanks. If you've ever been up on the top of the sail, on the bridge, you see how far out that is . . . On one of our visits to the *Growler*, I went up there with one of the other guys; I just couldn't believe it could be done. Now maybe the ship was . . . it had no weight on it, so the depth to the keel may have been less when the ship's tied up alongside the *Intrepid* there, but it sure looked to me like it was way out there. (laughs)

(1:12:10 – 1:12:22) Jessica Williams: Wow. Yeah it's funny, we just, in fact -- mere hours before I got on the plane to come here, I was giving people a tour of *Growler*, and we looked at the sail, and I said, "I heard a story that somebody actually jumped off this sail and . . ."

(1:12:22 – 1:12:23) Allen Odette: Didn't jump, dived.

(1:12:23 – 1:12:44) Jessica Williams: Yeah, yes. So, thank you for telling that story. Wow. Oh, that does raise another question that I meant to ask you. Somebody had told me that the medical, locker, I guess, was in missile guidance. Is that correct? Is that where the corpsman kept . . . where did the corpsman keep his stuff?

(1:12:44 – 1:12:52) Allen Odette: I don't remember. I do remember -- being in a cabinet. I can't remember where it was.

(1:12:54 – 1:13:08) Jessica Williams: I'll inquire of others. So, let's see. I guess I'll ask, one more, any other stories? I have a couple more kind of concluding questions for you, but anything else that spring to mind from your . . . ?

(1:13:09 – 1:13:21) Allen Odette: I'm 75 years old, and I'm probably remembering 100th of a percent of (laughs) what started in my little head.

(1:13:22 – 1:13:53) Jessica Williams: Well that's a good – we appreciate all the detail about your work and about some of the, you know, relationships with other people and stories and things. So we talked before about your thoughts about *Growler's* mission at the time, right, your thoughts about the Soviet Union and everything else. When you look back on it now, what do you think now about what you were doing back then, about what *Growler's* role was in this much bigger global conflict?

(1:13:57 – 1:14:46) Allen Odette: I think it was the right thing to do at the time. You know, looking back, any use of nuclear weapons was not, was not right. I guess, that's my biggest thought about it is that, you know that, even whether a nuclear weapon is delivered by airplane or missile or submarine, you know, it's . . . it's not a good thing. Back then, yeah, it was, you know, we thought that we'd beat the Russians, if we had to. Now, you know, so many countries having nuclear weapons, you know, just one getting dropped is going to be a problem for everybody.

(1:14:49 – 1:15:02) Jessica Williams: And, you know, now of course *Growler's* a museum, so our visitors, every day, thousands of them, walk through those corridors that you guys served on board. What do you hope our visitors take away from seeing *Growler*?

(1:15:03 – 1:15:33) Allen Odette: Oh, the way we lived for, months at a time. It was, the deterrence was, at the time was noble. It was the right thing. I despair anybody thinking that we were bloodthirsty guys, you know, trying to stir up trouble. We were trying to protect the country.

(1:15:35 – 1:15:57) Jessica Williams: And . . . I had another question but I lost it. I'm going to now turn to my colleague Matt back here, see if there's anything else he wants to ask since he's been listening closely to all of this, too. No. Okay. Man, I'm totally blanking on what the other thing was I was going to ask you . . . ?

(1:15:58 – 1:16:01) Allen Odette: Did I tell that story the way you heard it?

(1:16:02 – 1:16:24) Jessica Williams: . . . Let me think for one second. It was another, sort of, like a museum kind of question . . . Oh yes, this is the question I had. How did your service on *Growler* affect the rest of your life and your path after it?

(1:16:27 – 1:17:34) Allen Odette: I guess there's – well there's a degree of discipline, although I wasn't the most disciplined person in the world. Technically, the stuff that I did on the *Growler* was related to my future life. I was interested in electronics, and I carried that on throughout my life. I'm a technical person, and, you know, I think that the *Growler* influenced that an awful lot. I like to see new stuff, you know, I was one of the first people on the block that had a computer, and I used it to my advantage. I'm sorry that we didn't have computers back then, real computers. You know, obviously that we get together as a group, influenced us, all of us.

(1:17:36 – 1:17:44) Jessica Williams: Yeah. It is, as you were saying before, it's just amazing that you guys continue to have these gatherings.

(1:17:45 – 1:18:08) Allen Odette: Even, you know, there's another group here, on the destroyer tender. They don't have the cohesiveness that we do. I've talked to a lot of them. By the way I told one of those guys I had been the captain of the (laughs) *Growler* (laughs), and he believed me there for a while. I had to retract my statement. (laughs)

(1:18:09 – 1:18:12) Jessica Williams: Good to know you're still having fun with other sailors, even . . .

(1:18:12 – 1:18:16) Allen Odette: Well those are the dumb ones. We're the smart ones. (laughs)

(1:18:17 – 1:18:33) Jessica Williams: Yeah, you're not the first to say that, for sure. So the last thing we usually do is we kind of zoom in for a close-up, but is there any other final things that come to your mind before we sign off?

(1:18:35 – 1:18:47) Allen Odette: Well, I enjoyed the *Growler*, I enjoyed being with the folks that I know that were on the *Growler*, and I respect them all.

(1:18:48 – 1:19:04) Jessica Williams: That's great. So, yeah, if you would not mind doing, just a close-up, and you can just like relax and look over this way. This is just in case, you know . . .

(unrelated conversation not transcribed)

(1:19:43 – 1:19:48) Matt Francis: So just tell a little bit about, maybe, your family.

(1:19:50 – 1:21:25) Allen Odette: My family. Oh, I've had two marriages. My first three kids were -- or first two, I had twins, when I was in college. I was also working fulltime and also putting my wife through college. She was working on her master's degree at the time. The twins are both very successful. One owns a restaurant; the other one is a dean at a college in Baton Rouge. The next one, my youngest son, he went in the Navy, spent 20 years there, and he got out about five years ago. And he's got three kids, grandkids, so, I've got eight grandkids. (Jessica Williams: Nice, nice.) And then, my first wife and I divorced, and a year or so later I remarried, married Denise. We had a baby that was totally unexpected. She'd been fixed. I'd been fixed. And that wasn't supposed to happen at all. But she's a doll; she's got three kids. So I wound up with eight grandkids.

(1:21:25 – 1:21:25) Jessica Williams: Cool.

(1:21:26 – 1:21:28) Allen Odette: I'm very proud of them all.

(1:21:28 – 1:21:33) Jessica Williams: Yeah, yeah. Very nice. That's great. Cool, all right.

(1:21:33 – 1:21:34) Allen Odette: We're all done?

(1:21:35 – 1:21:37) Jessica Williams: First successful interview. Thanks, Al.

(1:21:37 – 1:21:37) Matt Francis: And that's a wrap.

(End of interview)