



Jack Gabler Oral History

Date

August 23, 2017

Primary Maker

Jack Gabler

Medium

MTS, PDF

Description

Jack Gabler served on board the submarine USS Growler (SSG-577) as a sonarman third class, SO3, from 1963 to

1964. The Intrepid Museum recorded his oral history interview on August 23, 2017. See transcript for complete interview. Below is a summary: Gabler began his interview by stating that he had initially planned to become a veterinarian. However, a chance meeting with a U.S. Navy recruiter resulted in him joining the Navy. Gabler then discussed boot camp, which he described as a “real eye awakening moment.” He also recounted his introduction to the submarine service, stating that submarine sailors came to speak with the recruits and ask for volunteers. Gabler then explained that, after this meeting, he went to a sub tender where he took a pressure test and ate a phenomenal meal. This meal, combined with the importance of the submarine force and the hazardous duty pay, helped him decide to join the submarine service. Gabler then continued to discuss boot camp. He described the social atmosphere of boot camp and explained how he arrived at boot camp feeling naïve and left knowing much more about life. He also recalled how he met his wife through a friend from boot camp. The interview then briefly shifted to the topic of submarine school, and Gabler stated that he attended a new sub school in San Francisco. He learned the basics of submarine operations and was trained on a device resembling a simulator in order to learn how to operate a submarine’s bow and stern planes. After conversing about sub school, Gabler discussed his time aboard Growler and spoke about his initial duty as a mess cook. He also explained how Chief of the Boat Lister took him under his wing, and how Scotty, a first class sonarman, began to teach him about sonar. Gabler then discussed sonar and the importance of sonar to the general operation of a submarine. The interview then shifted to the topic of life aboard a submarine. Gabler stated that acclimating to life on board was easy for him. However, he noted some difficult events that unfolded, including when the crew learned that President Kennedy had been assassinated, when Growler snagged and then dragged a fisherman’s nets, and when the sonar shack flooded during a test dive. As the interview continued, Gabler provided additional information on how sonarman identified sounds and what procedures they followed if they heard a potential threat. Gabler then briefly noted his qualification experience and the crew’s downtime in Pearl Harbor, before discussing his time aboard USS Ulysses S.

Grant, a Polaris missile submarine. He also made comparisons between Ulysses S. Grant and Growler. Gabler ended his interview by recalling Growler's decommissioning and stating what he hopes visitors will take away from their experience aboard Growler. Extent: 9 media files, 31 page transcript

Dimensions

96 minutes