

## Preface

This oral history is unusual as there is an eight-year gap and two interviewers. Regina Akers of the Naval Historical Center first met Captain Beardsley when he was visiting the Naval Historical Center in 1990 and sat down with him to discuss his experiences as a Q-boat sailor. A program implemented at a time when the war in the North Atlantic was not going well for the United States and its allies, Captain Beardsley discusses his role and provides interesting insights to this countermeasure.

After a span of eight years, Captain Beardsley, a member of the Naval Historical Foundation, responded to a survey to participate in the Foundation's oral history program. At the same time, fellow NHF member and Professor of History at William Paterson University Suzanne G. Bowles, also expressed interest in participating. Because Dr. Bowles already knew Captain Beardsley as a member of the Northern New Jersey chapter of the Navy League, it was an ideal match. During the session with Dr. Bowles, Captain Beardsley discussed his duties as Commanding Officer of USS *PC 1140* and USS *PCE-R 858*. USS *PC 1140* served in the Atlantic and Mediterranean in 1944. The ship served as a control ship for the invasion of Southern France. Captain Beardsley was then ordered back to the states to command USS *PCE-R 858*, a ship designed to pick up survivors from sinking ships and perform other missions. En route to participate in the invasion of the Japanese home islands, he reached Hawaii when news of the Japanese surrender broke.

The Foundation thanks Captain Beardsley for taking the time on two occasions to record his World War II experiences and Ms. Akers and Dr. Bowles for conducting the interviews. The Foundation also thanks Janice Smith, a former staff member with the Foundation's Services Division, for transcribing the interview.

David F. Winkler  
Oral Historian  
July 1998

## Captain Franklin H. Beardsley, USNR (Ret.)

Captain Franklin H. Beardsley, Jr. USNR (Ret.) was born on 11 October 1914 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He attended and graduated from West Chester State College in 1938 with a B.S. in Secondary Education. He then taught junior and senior high school in Springfield, Pennsylvania and studied education at the University of Pennsylvania until 1941.

Captain Beardsley joined the Navy in September 1941 through the V-7 program and trained at the USS *Prairie State* in New York City. As a college graduate, he was eligible to earn a Reserve commission. He joined at this time because he was liable to be drafted and wanted to take the initiative as to his type of military service. He was still in his 4-month training program on the *Prairie State* when the attack on Pearl Harbor occurred and he was commissioned in January 1942. He married Amy Louise Street on 21 February 1942.

After communications school, he served briefly on the *Massachusetts* before being transferred to the Q-ship *Big Horn*.

After thirteen months aboard the *Big Horn* he attended subchaser training school (the "Donald Duck Navy") and was appointed CO of the patrol craft *PC 1140*. This ship saw service in the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Mediterranean, and participated in the invasion of southern France.

In late 1944, Captain Beardsley was ordered back to the US, took more ASW training and was given command of the *PCE-R 858*, similar to the patrol craft but with added berths for medical evacuations. This ship was to take part in the invasion of Japan, but had only reached Pearl Harbor when the war ended.

After returning to the United States, Captain Beardsley served briefly at the Philadelphia Naval Hospital and was discharged in April 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. He then served eighteen more years in the Reserve and retired with the rank of Captain.

Again a civilian, Captain Beardsley worked at the Insurance Company of North America as an instructor and Supervisor of College Relations from 1946 until 1952. During that time he again took courses at the University of Pennsylvania. He then served as a Personnel Director for the American Metal, Ltd. (1952-57), Great American Insurance Company (1957-59), and Commercial Credit Corp., (1959-65). He spent his

last fifteen years working as Principal and Director at Wart Howell Associates, Inc from 1965 to 1980. He studied at the graduate school of business at New York University.

Active in several professional associations, Captain Beardsley held presidencies with the North Jersey Council, Navy League; Northern New Jersey Chapter, The Retired Officers Association; Association of Executive Recruiting Consultants; and New York Personnel Management Association. He also was a Vestry person at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Mountain Lakes, New Jersey. A resident of Boonton, Captain Beardsley and his wife Amy had three children: Barry D., Bonnie, and Wendy, of which the first two survive.

## Subjects Covered

### **June 7, 1990**

Background information—Duty before *Big Horn*  
Reporting aboard as the Communications Officer  
Mission and armament—Thoughts on decoy duty  
Deception techniques—Description of crew  
Communications ashore and within convoy  
Replenishment—Leave ashore  
Mission of April and May 1943  
Attacking a U-boat  
Life on a Q-ship—Typical day—Morale

### **March 9, 1998**

Joining the Navy—V-7 program—*Prarie State*  
Memory of December 7—Assignment to USS *Massachusetts*  
Assignment to Sub Chaser School after *Big Horn*  
CO of PC 1140—Training—Caribbean duty  
Hurricane  
Atlantic convoy duty—Rescue at sea  
The Med—Escort duty—Mines  
Invasion of Southern France—Station vessel  
Port visit to Marseille—Reassignment  
CO of PCE-R 858—Transit of Panama Canal  
Flying off a carrier—End of the war—Returning home  
Duty at Philadelphia Naval Hospital—Reserves  
USNR Assignments and Active Duty for Training

