

Stephen Ambrose WWII History Class Project
University of Wisconsin--Madison

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Fred Grimm
Submariner, Navy, WWII
1996

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
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Grimm, Fred (1924-2003). Oral History Interview, 1996.

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Abstract:

Fred Grimm, a Milwaukee native, discusses his thirty-eight month service in the US Navy during World War II as a radioman 2nd Class and submariner aboard the USS *Gabilan*. Grimm covers his training, subsequent to his December 1942 enlistment, at Great Lakes Naval Training Station, radio school at the University of Chicago, and submarine school in New London, Connecticut. He considers Hollywood movies among the factors influencing his selection of military branch. Stating the difference between being a radioman and operating sonar, Grimm elucidates what it means to be “on station”; “Silent Running”; and why WWII-era subs were limited in their underwater operation. He considers the claustrophobic conditions on board; and the qualifications necessary to be considered a submariner, a status achieved on his second patrol. He conveys a sense of the tension when under depth charge attack. He recounts a friendly fire encounter with an American destroyer, and playing “cat and mouse” with an enemy sub. He reveals what constituted a fully-armed vessel; and touches upon the workings of the encoding and decoding equipment he operated. He evaluates the role of anti-Japanese propaganda. Grimm shares his reaction to President Roosevelt’s death, and the dropping of the atomic bombs on Japan. Grimm expresses his good fortune that he and the *Gabilan* survived its six patrols avoiding the fate of fifty-two subs never to return.

Researcher's Note:

This interview was conducted as coursework in Dr. Stephen E. Ambrose’s WWII history class at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1996. This work is the original transcript as typed by the student interviewer. This original transcript is presented on the following pages as typed by the student and may contain inaccuracies and typos.

Interviewed by Jonathan Paliwal, as a part of the Stephen E. Ambrose WWII Oral History Class Project, University of Wisconsin-Madison, 1996.

Transcribed by Jonathan Paliwal, 1996.

Abstract written by Jeff Javid, 2015.

Interviewer: Jonathan Paliwal
Interviewee: Fritz Grimm, Sonar, Radioman, 2nd Class

An Interview with a World War II Veteran

Paliwal: What was your position during the war; what did you do?

Grimm: I was a radioman when we were on the surface, running on topside, and on sonar when we were underwater, when we were submerged. Sonar being listening -- for enemy ships with their propellers. And when we were on surface I was taking messages that came to us.

Paliwal: Wasn't there a lot of sonar that was developed during the war? Or was it something that was already on the submarine when you began?

Grimm: Yeah. It was on there. It was a big sound head that came out of the keel when you were powered and when you needed it when you were submerged you could just extend it out. Picture a shaft with a ball on the end of it -- it came straight out of the keel -- something like her Dad (Beth Grimm, granddaughter) does when he goes fishing. Sound waves go out, but you listen to the sounds returned. Let's say there is a Japanese ship out there. You hear something but it's more like *shu-u shu-u* (imitates the sound heard on sonar). You report this to the captain.

Paliwal: Would that be the propeller cutting through the water?

Grimm: Yeah. Plus a lot of fish -- some of these fish make noise just like that so you have to establish whether its a ship or fish making this noise. Anyway, when that would happen, you'd call the captain up in the con tower -- sonar was up in the con tower. Then he would come up there and he would listen and invariably say *Take her up to periscope depth* -- which was sixty five feet from the surface of the water; that is what a periscope needed to be long enough to come out of the water and look around. And he (the captain) would look around and if there was an enemy ship then maybe we would begin an attack.

Paliwal: How would you be able to tell if there was an enemy submarine from periscope depth?

Grimm: You couldn't. But if the captain thought those were the sounds of propellers turning in the water, and after you had looked around 360° on the surface and found there was nothing up there . . . you could pretty much figure there might be a submarine in the vicinity.

Paliwal: How far away was sonar effective?

Grimm: I can't honestly say, I forget; but it was a good distance though.

Paliwal: Being a radioman, what sort of things would you do? Monitor transmissions, etc.?

Grimm: Anything that came out of, mostly out of Pearl Harbor. Messages . . . a lot of it wasn't for us.

Paliwal: Oh. Is this radio traffic?

Grimm: We would just do copy. Then there was certain times, usually at night, when you were on the surface -- when you were *on station* -- station being you assigned territory to stay on for roughly sixty days. You don't leave this assigned area for fear you might wander into another American submarine's territory and they wouldn't know if you were the enemy -- it could be touchy.
But you're assigned this area and you gotta come up at night to charge your batteries. Your batteries are . . . World War II submarines were called electric boats. They were called electric boats because while underwater you really used electricity from the batteries to run the motor which drives the shaft which drives the propellers. So you're constantly depleting these batteries and after they get down to a certain point they will go dead on you if you are down long enough. So now you have to go up to the surface -- which presented a problem once in a while because you didn't want to go *upstairs* if there was *company* waiting up there. But, if you stayed down too long and your batteries went that far, your propellers wouldn't even turn and you lost control of your boat.

Paliwal: Is that why you'd come up at night?

Grimm: We'd come up at night, Yeah. And the first thing we'd do is open up the hatches so you could suck air into the boat. Because when you start these diesel engines they sucked air. Must have been a safety feature. I think there would be an accident if you tried to start these diesel engines while underwater because they'd suck all the air in the boat. So, when we'd get to the surface they would start the engines. And the engines' sole purpose was not to drive the boat on the surface; it was to turn over the generators. And these generators, in turn, would generate electricity . . . you could put them on to charge a battery or to run electric motors which would drive the propellers. In any event, you are always electric motor driven. You could run the motors and put a charge on the batteries at the same time. So you're on the surface, on the top, and you could be using two generators to charge the batteries and two generators to run the motors for propulsion.

Paliwal: How often did you have to put in for the diesel, for the gas to run the engines?

Grimm: That is why we were limited to about sixty days. Outside of that time we'd be getting pretty low.

Paliwal: Is that about the life of your food stores as well?

Grimm: Yeah, yeah. Of course there would be limitations to the men too . . .

Paliwal: So, how old were you when you enlisted?

Grimm: I was 18. I went to Great Lakes (naval training school) and from there I went to radio school at the University of Chicago,

Paliwal: The Navy paid for this and put you through?

Grimm: Oh yeah. I don't know how they got the University of Chicago -- the

Navy just sort of took it over there for a radio signal school. Which, by the way, was a great place to be because you'd sit down and people would wait on you. They had these big dining rooms where the students used to be. Nice school.

Paliwal: Yeah -- I've been there -- last summer.

Grimm: Well, it used to be nice; I don't know how it is now.

Paliwal: The school is still great. The area across that park from the school isn't so good or safe though.

Grimm: I think that park area was called the Midway. And that is where we'd have to stand at attention for inspection every Saturday. It was the dumbest thing. The brass would come around and stroll by and it was hot -- he'd take a look at your shoes and their shine . . . But then I went from there -- they had a commander in the Navy who had just gotten back from war patrol in the Pacific and he was -- I guess we had no idea what it was all about -- but he was doing recruiting for submarine duty. Which, by the way, all submariners were volunteers!

Paliwal: Oh really!

Grimm: And we got extra pay just like the paratroopers.

Paliwal: Did they think there was more danger to it then or something?

Grimm: It was. It was. It was called hazardous duty or whatever.

Paliwal: Did they think the strain that would be put on sailors . . . being secluded was . . . ?

Grimm: Well, yes -- when we finally got to New London (?) and went to submarine school; I was 19 years old at the time, we had to go in and talk to this doctor as part of our physical. And I thought they were asking some dumb and rather personal questions. I guess one of the things they were trying to find out was if you were homosexual -- they didn't want you on a submarine where you would be in such close quarters. And also, to see how you would react mentally to this closeness, and whether you might *crack* under those living conditions.

Paliwal: Now, when you were on a submarine would they let anybody go up and and look outside if there wasn't any danger at the time -- just to relieve the claustrophobic tensions?

Grimm: No -- not when you're on patrol, on your station. The quartermaster, the officer on the bridge, and three lookouts would be up there when we were topside. That would be all.

Paliwal: So would you miss getting to see the sky, etc.?

Grimm: The average guy; the engineers, the machinists, the electricians, the radio-men (which I was), the torpedo men, etc. didn't get to see any daylight until we got off patrol and got close back to our destination.

Paliwal: So, it would be 60 days before you could even look outside the sub?

Grimm: Yeah. Before you even saw sunlight!

Paliwal: Did that ever really gnaw at you or anything?

Grimm: It didn't bother me. I missed it, you know; but you adjust. . . the electric lights sub (chuckle).

Paliwal: What about the other people, the rest of the crew? Were most able to adjust as well?

Grimm: If you were a look out, you went up at night. When you're on the surface, you go to your station and there you will patrol the boundaries of your station (draws a diagram of American patrol stations in the Pacific) looking for any Japanese shipping lanes. Any Man-of-War, cruisers, etc. come through here, its up to you to sink them. But like I said, you don't ever want to get out of here once you're on station because this guy over here (points to diagram), another American sub is patrolling here and he's on his station. But that was roughly 60 days.
Once in awhile, you'd get low on torpedoes and a submarine without torpedoes is absolutely no good. You can't do anything! You've got one 5" deck gun. That's not what a submarine is meant to do . . . stand up there and try to duke it out with a destroyer! Their guns can *out-range* you and you'd never be able to hit them anyway -- they've got bigger guns!
Now, if you got low on torpedoes, you'd call Pearl Harbor radio and give them your situation. On one of the patrols we made we were doing a lot of running around at night chasing enemy shipping and as a result, we started to get low on fuel and we were down to about eight torpedoes; normally we'd have about 24 on board. Sixteen torpedoes forward (in the front part of sub) and 8 aft (after) torpedoes. So I guess we were down to about 6 or 8 which could have gone in just one attack -- you usually fire four from up in front (not always). When you run flank speed chasing these guys, trying to get into a shooting position . . .

Paliwal: Um-hum. At the same time trying to make sure they don't notice you.

Grimm: Oh yeah -- yeah, because if they do suspect that you're out there, they're going to start closing in on you fast. That's where the radar/sonar man comes in. Radar says this guy is coming on to bury you real fast. That means they've got your number and they're heading for you!

Paliwal: Were you ever in a submarine that had depth charges dropped on you?

Grimm: Oh yeah. Once we were fired upon by one of our ships!

Paliwal: Tell me about that one!

Grimm: If you watch submarine movies, a lot of people they kind of convey the fact that hearing depth charges is like hearing thunder outside your house. It is not! Pretend you are playing hide 'n seek and you hide inside a

garbage can (metal) inside your garage and now some guy with a hammer comes along and **WHACKS** it! **Grr r RR r m !** That is what it sounds like.

Paliwal: Would the submarine shake?

Grimm: Yeah, yeah. Just to give you an idea of what it was like; the inside of a submarine was lined with cork to keep it from sweating because it gets awfully hot. And when you have to dive real quick, you shut down all these engines and everything shuts down for what they call *silent running*. So therefore they put this cork wherever they can. And when these depth charges detonate, pieces of cork fly off and its pretty scary. Nobody talks; it gets very silent and everyone just sits around and you have the feeling everybody's praying. You wait, listening as each charge gets closer and you try to/ not to imagine what the scenario would be if it hit and one of those giant welded seams on the sub opened up and the ocean came poring in!

But actually, if you're in a submarine you live in your own casket -- this is what you are going to die in -- you're in the casket already if anything goes wrong. But . . . you are not alone, there are 80 other guys. So, if this thing really ruptures and the water pours in, well, you can isolate this compartment. Each compartment is isolated and water tight; but if you don't have time to react to that and you'd taken a couple of real good hits, you'd fill up with water and be going down.

Paliwal: Did your ship ever get damaged?

Grimm: Yeah, we got . . . I'm trying to think. The superstructure, that's the top part that you see on the submarine, but it's not the actual water tight part of it; we could see that part of it had, ugh -- been pushed in. We were fortunate though in that we were never in any really severe danger -- we never took on any water.

Paliwal: Now what was that you mentioned earlier about bring fired upon by one of your own ships?

Grimm: On our last patrol -- and I say our last patrol because we didn't know the war was going to be ending. You know the history of us dropping the bombs; one on Hiroshima and another on Nagasaki?

Paliwal: Um - hum.

Grimm: So we didn't know it, but on our last patrol we were doing life guard duty right outside of Tokyo.

Paliwal: Is that so that when ships were attacked you'd come up and pick up the survivors?

Grimm: Not the ships. The aircraft.

George Bush was one of the downed fighter pilots picked up in the Pacific; but not by us, by one of the other American subs. He was a lieutenant at the time. Who could have known he would become President; I'm sure even he had no idea. At any rate, that submarine's entire crew was invited to the White House during his presidency!

Prior to that we were rendezvousing with a destroyer. So, I remember I had the radar that night. We were on surface charging batteries when I picked this thing up on the radar screen and I called the captain up. He came up and said "Oh yeah, that's OK, that's all right, that's the USS whatever". Everything was cool. He went back down below and we continued charging batteries. All of a sudden -- **DIVE! DIVE!** What the hell's going on! The look outs come flying down. What's happened?! That USS ***** was firing on us -- thought we were a Jap sub!

Paliwal: Did you try to radio them?

Grimm: No, no -- there was no time. We just dove. They weren't thinking: "Well, that is a submarine; could it be American?" He, the captain of the destroyer, was court-martialed; but that was later on. Meanwhile, we got down and we had flares you could fire from underwater. And this flare, I don't know how many different colors it comes in, but you better be right when you fire it as to the color. That color, chosen by the day and the time of day when you fire it, is what tells the other ship that you are friendly, one of theirs, and what the hell do you think you are doing firing upon us. That ended the attack.

Paliwal: What would it sound like when a torpedo went by? Is it like in the movies (makes a whistling sound)?

Grimm: I don't know, I never heard one! (everyone laughs)

Paliwal: Did you ever have an encounter with another submarine?

Grimm: We did in fact. For not too long a period -- maybe 3 or 4 hours. We were both submerged; we'd listened and I'm sure they were listening for us too. It's really a cat and mouse game. And ugh -- so we were trying to track them; and finally the captain said "I'm getting sick of this; let's get out of here". So we pulled away. We didn't want any part of it. You don't know what you are doing. You know they are out there and you figure they know you're there too -- but there is no way of tracking each other except with sound. You don't want to wait till they lock on you and fire a torpedo, because there's not much you can do at that point; on the surface you can zig and zag, but submerged, your mobility is vastly decreased -- you can hardly evade it.

Paliwal: When you were training in Chicago, did a lot of those guys you were trained with end up being shipmates?

Grimm: No.

Paliwal: I thought maybe given the circumstances of submarine life that the crew would need to be pretty "tight" with each other and that they (the authorities) would not keep reshuffling crews but try to keep them as an intact cohesive unit.

Grimm: Oh -- well, when you put a boat into commission they have a nucleus of -- depending on the size of the crew, at least one or two -- like torpedo men who had been out to sea before -- maybe even in the navy before the war started. We had a chief radioman who was what you call *qualified*. When

you first come on board a ship you are not a *qualified* mariner. But we'll get to that later. I really don't remember the size of the nucleus of experienced seamen, but you couldn't put to sea with a bunch of greenhorns.

I *qualified* as a submariner on my second patrol. In order to qualify, one of the officers would take you through the boat from the forward torpedo room to the after torpedo room. You had to know every other guy's duties. I had to know how to fire a torpedo; I had to know how to start up a diesel engine; I had to know how to do the maneuvering room, that's where they set the speed for the propellers and the direction of the ship -- so when the captain said "flank speed" I would know which levers to move to kick up the electric motors and set the rudders on the correct course . . .

Paliwal: So you could all "cover" for each other?

Grimm: Right, right -- the thing was, being a radioman, you couldn't require all these guys to suddenly learn the Morse code. So that part they couldn't do -- but they did have to know the headphones, the transmitter and they showed them, though not too much, the decoding machine and encoding which was always under lock and key in the radio shack. So if we wanted to send a message out this machine had sets of wheels and it took the message as you typed it and out would come the encoded message in blocks of 5 letters. So, no matter what you'd type, these wheels would turn and these blocks of letters emerged -- it looked like garbage, but it was in code. It was reversed for incoming encoded messages -- you'd type the "garbage" into the machine and out would come sentences.

Paliwal: So you had to know the correct settings for these wheels?

Grimm: Yes -- and it kept changing. Security.

Paliwal: OK. It sounds similar to the German enigma machines; 10 million possibilities; they thought it was unbreakable.
What year was it when you enlisted?

Grimm: December of 1943.

Paliwal: So this was 2 years after the Pearl Harbor attack?

Grimm: Let's see, I graduated high school in 1942 -- the Japs attacked Pearl Harbor when I was a senior in high school.

Paliwal: It's a common question, but what were you doing when the Japanese attacked Pearl? What was your reaction?

Grimm: I was at the Colonial Theater on Klee (sp?) Street. It was a Sunday afternoon. They just stopped the cameras, turned on the lights and the theater manager came out and told everyone that the Japs had just attacked Pearl Harbor. That was the start of it.

Paliwal: Was there a murmuring in the audience?

Grimm: I think some of the older people got up. But then they turned the lights off again and started the cameras and we went back to the movie.

- Paliwal: They just put the movie back on? (laughs)
- Grimm: But then the next day was Monday and we went to school and the principal wanted to see all the Seniors in the auditorium. He said, *I know a lot of you fellas think the best thing you can do for your country is go down and enlist; do your part* -- this was a popular war. *But the best thing you can do is finish your education -- you are one semester away. Get your diploma.* I did that.
What made me go in in December 1942 was they said that they were going to close enlistments. This meant that until that time you could sign up for whichever branch of service you wanted -- the Army, Navy, Airforce, or Marines. After December 1942 you'd have to take what they give you. Before this time I often wondered which branch of the service appealed to me. What do you know about any of it except from dumb movies -- so bad.
- Paliwal: Did you see *All Quiet On the Western Front* and did that influence you?
- Grimm: Yes, yes . . . the old one. The army seemed like heavy packs, dirt, throwing grenades -- that didn't sound good to me. And I didn't want to be a Marine -- those guys go through *****. I had tried to get into the airforce, but they wouldn't take me -- I didn't weigh enough. I would qualify now (laughs).
Anyway -- so I said Navy -- that's the outfit for me. They even have nice clean white T-shirts, they eat like civilized people with knives and forks. They even have movies -- hell, that's better than the damn battlefield.
And then I got in and they wondered why I went into submarine duty. Well, that's another story; what does one know about war? I'd seen some of these U-boat movies, and these guys in the subs were always sneaking around, putting this little periscope up and then they shoot these damn torpedoes! And the guys in the ships topside are sitting around playing and all of a sudden *Whomp!* they don't know what hit them. So I decided to be one of the sneaky guys.
- Paliwal: Do you think you'd make the same decision today?
- Grimm: I think so -- I really do.
- Paliwal: I was thinking in light of -- well, I don't know the American sub casualties, but German submarine crews had a 75% mortality rate.
- Grimm: That's part of the end -- the aircraft had ways of detecting subs.
- Paliwal: I was going to ask you that -- was that a big danger for you guys?
- Grimm: Well, aircraft were just absolutely . . . you didn't wait for nothing. If any one spotted any aircraft you got down in a hurry. If you were on the surface and an aircraft was spotted, you couldn't wait to see if it was friendly.
- Paliwal: Would it be like fighter squadrons coming after you or could it be just like reconnaissance planes?

- Grimm: It could be anything. If they only had one bomb and you were sitting there -- you were a dead duck.
- Paliwal: Could they see submarines submerged?
- Grimm: Well, that's what I understand happened to the German U-boats and why they got it so bad at the end of the war. They had a way of detecting them, but I must confess I don't know much about it.
- Paliwal: I heard that sonar on the boats couldn't tell much about the depth of the subs; just the location. But by the end of the war that ability had improved dramatically to the detriment of the German submarine fleet. Was that universal or just with the German subs?
- Grimm: No -- cause on our side we were winning the war. The U-boats, they were having a field day just sitting out there waiting for the convoys. I don't think they even had to track these things. With 50 ships in a convoy, it was like shooting ducks in a pond.
- Paliwal: Did any of your brothers fight in the war?
- Grimm: I have two younger brothers. My brother Joe went into the Marines in June of 1945 and in August 1945 the war ended so he barely got out of boot camp. And then George . . . they were still drafting and George went into the Airforce.
- Paliwal: After the war?
- Grimm: Yeah -- but neither of them ever saw action.
- Paliwal: Since you are of German descent (his father came to the US in the early 1900's at the age of 12), did you have a preference as to what theater of action you were in: Europe or the Pacific?
- Grimm: I don't think so -- because I had nobody that I knew. I heard of guys that had brothers and even parents who were still over there. I think it is factual; but some of these guys went over and actually ended up killing some of their own relatives, unknowingly. They found out after it was all over. They actually killed their own brothers -- it was like the Civil War.
- Paliwal: Yeah, it actually happened. So, it wouldn't have bothered you to be told you were going to kill Germans instead of Japanese?
- Grimm: Well, I think I actually would have preferred the Pacific and the Japs as enemies because it was a fight based on this vengeance thing: Pearl.
- Paliwal: Did you notice anything like they talk about now, about how bad the propaganda against the Japanese was back then? That it seemed more a racist war on our side?
- Grimm: I don't know. I never had a hatred. I just figured these were guys just like me -- only they were born in Japan. They had to go to war. In our war,

on a submarine it was so impersonal; you never saw anybody. You just sank a ship.

Paliwal: I suppose that made it easier?

Grimm: You just sank a boat with 100 men on board; they were gone.

Paliwal: Would you ever pick up survivors?

Grimm: No, we didn't/ There were cases where they did. The closest we ever came -- we ran into a fishing boat. And we didn't want to waste a torpedo. So, we went to the surface and broke out our 5 inch gun and that's when we found out we had a lousy gun crew (laughs) and the thing was still out there. The reason we fired on it in the first place was they had a radio and transmitter and we didn't want them to alert the Japanese navy to our location. It was probably too late now, but to make sure it didn't happen again we had to get rid of them.

Mrs. Grimm: Tell him about all the flyers you picked up.

Grimm: This was on our last patrol, like I said.

Paliwal: These were from those Tokyo raids? So it was like in March then?

Grimm: It wasn't long after it that the war ended, so it had to be in July. I know we'd come back from five war patrols. We got as far as Pearl Harbor and we were to go back to the States for a 30 day leave. So some of us were on deck when we came into Pearl and the band starts to play *Anchors Aweigh* -- a captain with four stripes comes on board -- its a formal thing -- we're all standing at attention. And this captain comes on board and shakes hands with our captain and has a few words with him and we can read our captain's lips as he says *What!* And from his face it looks as if something is wrong, something bad. So it turned out that we were going right back out instead of home for thirty days. If you don't think there weren't superstitious feelings. We'd made 5 patrols; we were still here; and it turned out 52 of our submarines never came back off patrol. Whether they malfunctioned, or whatever happened to them -- they never returned.

Paliwal: Do you know if many of them were able to accomplish more than five missions like your sub?

Grimm: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. I think 12 or 15. You see, they were already in commission when the war started. So from Dec. 7, 1941 they were at war; and they got the word on the radio -- *Sink all Japanese ships!* Whatever it is: carriers, tankers, man-of-wars, freighters -- Shoot! So these guys got started early. The Gavalon wasn't commissioned until 1943. So, we were really freaked out on that last patrol (our sixth). Most of them had a feeling . . .

Paliwal: That they weren't going to be coming back?

Grimm: If they could have just gone home first and then come back out and started from scratch again.

Mrs. Grimm: Tell him about when Roosevelt died.

Grimm: When Roosevelt died . . . I wasn't alone but most of the guys really took it hard. And at the time I remember it felt like things were going good -- the war in Europe was over, Hitler was dead, Mussolini was dead, now Roosevelt's dead and who the hell was Harry Truman. And of course he decided to drop the bomb. Now, years later, I try to search my soul and no matter how I look at it I think he did the right thing. And I do believe it saved lives on both sides.

Paliwal: Now, did you find out pretty shortly after it had happened?

Grimm: Yeah -- we went from this "life guard" duty to Saipan which is part of the Mariyana Islands in the Pacific. We pulled in there and we're getting the latest "scuttlebutt" from the guys on the dock and we don't believe them when they tell us that we dropped A bomb (one plane, one bomb) and it destroyed an entire city -- we can't believe it until our captain tells us topside as we stand at attention.

Paliwal: So this was after Hiroshima, but before Nagasaki?

Grimm: Yeah. I thought, the war is over! Why don't these guys surrender? Then we hear -- they dropped another one! (hushed tones)

Paliwal: I take it most of the people in your crew were pretty relieved to know they'd be going home?

Grimm: Sure. It seemed that now unless something tragic would happen, we'd be going home and consider ourselves lucky -- 52 of them guys (subs) never came back.

*A note of interest:

Fred Grimm was a "plank owner" of his submarine. He was never transferred off the *Gavalon*. When she was commissioned in Groton, Connecticut in 1943 he was assigned to her. She made five patrols and when the war ended, she returned to the States, back through the Panama Canal (same way she'd gone out) and was decommissioned in Newport, Rhode Island. Fred Grimm was with her each step of the way.