

EAST CAROLINA MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW #24.024

Dick Evans

USS *NORTH CAROLINA* BATTLESHIP COLLECTION

June 23, 1976

Interview #1

Interviewer is Capt. Ben Blee

[This is Ben Blee. I'm on the battleship. It's June the 23rd, 1976, at the reunion. I'm interviewing Dick Evans; he served in the battleship from May of '44 until well after World War II. Dick, first of all what division were you in?]

I was in "E" Division.

[What was your job in the "E" Division?]

I was primarily. . . . I worked in the "E" Division forward distribution. I was the division yeoman for several months. Then I went to the "Power Gang" after that.

[I see. Where was your battle station most of that time?]

In forward distribution.

[I see. Can you remember any of the officers of the "E" Division of the Engineering Department?]

Yes. I remember Commander Mooney of course. Our first division officer was Brittain . . . Lt. Brittain. He was relieved by Lt. Starkey when we came out of Bremerton Navy Yard. I remember Starkey very well, because one day he picked up the phone and threw it at me.

[Why did he do that?]

He didn't like the way I was making up the roster.

[Were you the division yeoman then?]

Yes.

[He kind of lost his temper, huh?]

He lost his temper.

[Do you have any recollections of any of the combat operations of the ship . . . anything that sticks out in your mind?]

I remember the time that we lost a load during air defense. I was on watch at forward distribution. In about two seconds later around twenty thousand people showed up down there to find out why we had lost a load.

[Did you know?]

No, but we got it back on the line.

[Was that the time of the typhoon or something else?]

No, that was not the typhoon. . . . I was also on watch at that time when we lost the forward turbo board. Tommy Matthews was on watch at the forward turbo board and he had to kind of get away from it, because it blew up.

[What was cause of it blowing up?]

We took salt water. They routed the intake ducts for air over the switchboard and they'd drip salt water down on the bus board and of course it shorted it out.

[Well, it must have been that heavy seas from the typhoon washed over the deck and came down the ventilation ducts. Is that it?]

Right. That's what happened.

[You were, of course, during combat when the guns were firing and so on, you were ordinarily at forward distribution, is that right?]

Right.

[What do you remember about being down there during battle and not being able to see what happens? What kind of thoughts went through your mind?]

The main thing I thought about were the two five-inch ammo (?) rooms both port and starboard of the forward distribution rooms.

[Well, you mean like what would happen if something went bang in there?]

Yeah!!! (laughter)

[Well, I can understand that. Did you feel that when you were down there you had much of an idea of what was going on topside or not?]

Well, yes, because I was on the sound power phones to the . . . I think there were about ten or twelve other stations from the electrical division and some of those guys were topside. So, I usually heard more than anybody else did about what was going on.

[Then, you had the job of telling the other guys down there in forward distribution what you were hearing?]

I guess if I felt like it. Yes.

[Yes.]

[Note: Apparently the rest of the audiotape was taped over before it was donated to the Special Collections Department to be transcribed.]