

## Morris John Gooch Oral History Transcript

**Dean Wetzel:** So, let's start off with your oral history. Let's just start with a basic background information on you, where you were born, any family members served, and those things. And then just a little bit about any brothers or sisters you may or may not have.

**Morris John Gooch:** I was born in Monroe, Michigan, 1951. My father was stationed at the West Point Military Academy as an instructor. And, he received orders to Korea and, with him moving to Korea, my mother moved back to Monroe to have me and my younger brother. -my father served in the Navy and in the Army. prior to World War II, he served in the United States Navy. And when, at the outbreak of World War II. He enlisted into the, the army with a mid-service transfer, which is something I don't really know a lot about, but he went from one service to another. He, achieved the rank of, Sergeant First Class, served, as I said, both in World War II and in Korea, and was wounded in Korea. He drove a jeep over a landmine. And, so he was, sent back home after that and went on. I've had three uncles that served in branches of the military. -I have a great uncle that died in World War I as a soldier in, Europe. And,- I have a brother who served in the Marine Corps. And I have a son who served in the United States Navy as a corpsman.

**Dean Wetzel:** Okay, so the military lifestyle is not new to you.

**Morris John Gooch:** Not at all.

**Dean Wetzel:** That can be easily said. -now, when did you join? Was it right out of high school? Did you wait a few years?

[00:01:55] **Morris John Gooch:** No, I had a short break between high school, graduation and joining the military.

**Morris John Gooch:** -took some college courses and stuff to see if that was going to be something I wanted to do. -Amy and I were just friends. Boyfriend and girlfriend at the time, and she went to Eastern Michigan University while I explored what I wanted. And then in September, I went down and enlisted with the United States Navy.

**Morris John Gooch:** I tried to enlist in the Army. I wanted to be a paratrooper. I was told that they were phasing out the paratroopers, and what I really wanted to be was a tank jockey. Which meant somebody who rode around or drove around a tank, and I wanted no part of that. So, I talked to the Navy recruiter about the Navy's SEAL and UDT program.

**Morris John Gooch:** And decided I wanted to enlist in that program until I found out that all I was going to do was do push ups, menial labor and stuff like that for a long time before they would let me do anything real with guns and bombs and explosives. So very quickly at bootcamp, I decided to change that.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so, I went in as standard U. S. Navy grunt. I served at Great Lakes. That was the bootcamp that I went to. I graduated from there in December of that year. and, took basic leave, went home to Michigan, spent some time with, Amy and family. Went back early because I was told that was the best way to get the best duty assignments and stuff.

[00:03:40] **Morris John Gooch:** Only to find out that was stupid. Never go back early. But unknowing that, I went back and I served at Great Lakes, Chow Hall, where all the flags and officers ate as a mess cook. Caught pneumonia. I wound up being hospitalized and then put in a bunk for, a few days until I got over that.

**Morris John Gooch:** And then, reported to Basic Electronic and Electricity School there at, Great Lakes. Basic Electronic and Electricity was necessary because while I was in boot camp, I went to the screening after I had turned down, going UDT SEAL. And the classifiers were trying to get us to, what did we want to do?

**Morris John Gooch:** I said I wanted aviation optician, aviation instrument, aviation machinery repairman. And they said, you have four choices. What's your fourth choice? And for the life of me, I couldn't think of anything. And so the classifier said, have you ever thought about submarines? And I thought, Yeah, I remember the old Silver Sides, show, run silent, run deep type stuff where he comes crashing to the surface and I think it was the pickerel that slid back down into the water and stuff.

**Morris John Gooch:** But, that popped it in my mind and I remembered that my dad had been on submarines when he was in the Navy. And so, I volunteered saying, put that down as my absolute last choice. But at the time I found out anybody who breathed the word submarine was instantly a submarine volunteer. And so I got back to, my boot company, and the company commander asked me what I had chosen, and he started laughing, and explained to me the facts of life about volunteering for submarines.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, I reported for my submarine physical, had absolutely no problems or anything with any of that. And then found out I was going to be a torpedo man striker. And at the time I did not really know what that was because I wanted electronics. Something I could use when I eventually got out of the military. They had other plans. That offered me sonar men but I didn't want to do that. -I became a torpedo man striker. hat was a -very fortuitous choice. It was an extreme blessing as far as I'm concerned hat wound up being the case and my winding up becoming a torpedo man. While in basic electronic and electricity

school, I found out that as a torpedo man striker I could go to Vietnam, which was going on at the time, and I could ride the riverine force and ride the patrol boats and all those kind of goodies.

**Morris John Gooch:** And I could even achieve a skipper. meaning I could be a commanding officer on my own riverboat. And I thought that was the coolest thing in the world. Do something like that. So, a friend and I decided we were going to fail, be an E school and, go become heroes in Vietnam. I got caught having flunked the exam by a master chief who had looked at my previous test scores and figured out that there was no way I could go from the scores I had to that score on something that previously to all of my -labs and everything else I had rated very highly yet so he Started to chew me out up one side down The other told me I would spend the rest of my life on a tin can as a torpedo man and Diego Garcia and I didn't even know where the place was But everything that he said about it made it sound like it was going to hell.

[00:07:25] **Morris John Gooch:** And I wanted no part of that. As would be expected, I graduated with honors from the school. Got my nose to the grindstone and did very well. As a result, I stayed as a torpedo man. My friend went to Vietnam and died there when his riverboat was hit by a mortar. Sad part of life, but there, by the grace of God, went to

**Morris John Gooch:** I graduated from, B. E. and E. school. And was supposed to be assigned to a diesel submarine out of San Diego. Was very excited about that, until at the last minute, I was called into the office and told no I was going to. Torpedoman A school down in, Orlando, Florida. And then I was going to launcher school for missile, FBM, missiles. And was very unhappy. But, not having any choice in the matter, I went to Orlando and attended, Torpedo man, a school and, learned all about what I was going to be.

**Dean Wetzel:** going back just a little bit here. When did you enlist? What year was that?

**Morris John Gooch:** 69 (1969)

**Dean Wetzel:** 69. And then going through all of this school and I'm guessing this wasn't a very quick process, even if the Navy really wanted you through it quickly. How long did all of this schooling take roughly?

**Morris John Gooch:** Wow. Actually, I went through more schooling than was expected. Basic electricity and electronics was like a 12 week program. I don't remember exactly how many weeks, but it seems memory was something like 12 weeks. Torpedoman A school, was I think close to three months in Orlando, Florida.

[00:09:21] **Morris John Gooch:** And then from there I was sent to Virginia Beach, Virginia. which was where they taught, Torpedo Man Launcher School. And, that was so that we were both capable of working in the torpedo room, with the torpedoes, of course, and we were the, mechanics, that you might call us, with the, fleet ballistic missile submarines, with the Polaris, and eventually the Poseidon and the Trident, missile.

**Morris John Gooch:** that school was, I think somewhere around, again, another 12 weeks or so. it was late in the, summer of, yeah, late in the summer of 71, or no, 70, that I, completed those schools and then, - was given my first duty assignment. Perfect. Okay. Once I graduated from launcher school, I was given my first assignment, which was the USS George Washington, SSBN 598.

**Morris John Gooch:** And, it was one of the first fleet ballistic missile submarines that was built and commissioned. They actually took the hull of a submarine named Scorpion. Split it

in half, and put a missile compartment in it, and then recommissioned it as the George Washington. The submarine that subsequently was built, named Scorpion, has its own history, having been lost in the Atlantic.

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah, that was something that always stuck on our minds, we were riding around with a keel that had a welded Scorpion on it, but,

**Dean Wetzel:** what was your guy's mindset with that? Sure, we all hear of, its goods, military equipment, or military training.

**Morris John Gooch:** we were in the shipyard. We were in Charleston Naval Shipyard.

**Morris John Gooch:** And it was a complete refit. So that meant that they changed out the reactor core, all the ship's batteries, everything. And so, we really didn't think a whole lot about that until it was time to go to sea. -so we spent a year, in the shipyards there from the time I got there. And it was a boring time.

[00:11:34] **Morris John Gooch:** It was a very dangerous time for me, because personally having that much free time, it got me in trouble. I, was starting to drink and I started to drink excessively. And as a result, I wasn't doing the best of my duties and things. As a matter of fact, I was told by the chief of the boat. -at one point that if I didn't change my attitude and if I didn't change my ways that I would not be re enlisting in the Navy.

**Morris John Gooch:** Which at that point in time I had, started to be asked about, considering whether or not I wanted to continue in the Navy or not. we stood lots and lots of fire watches. Duty consisted of, going, carrying a big ol CO2 bottle. what we would call 80 pounders. They weren't 80 pounds, but they felt like they were 80 pounds.

**Morris John Gooch:** I think they were like 80 cubic feet of CO2 or whatever. They were the big CO2 extinguishers. Down onto the ship, down inside some hole somewhere where a welder was cutting or welding. So that if a fire was started, we would supposedly put that fire out before it would spread to the rest of the ship and there would be any casualties involved.

**Morris John Gooch:** We were in a Portland Starboard duty station, which meant that we served one day on, one day off. And on the day off, that is when we were expected to learn how to do maintenance on the equipment that we were being assigned. Of course, being in the shipyard, there was very little of that going on at the time.

**Morris John Gooch:** I served on there and like I said, I picked up a bad view of the Navy at the time, simply because it was nothing that I had expected, nothing that I had looked forward to. Here I was thinking I would be at sea and, I was in fact in a barracks and if I wasn't doing maintenance or fire watches on the ship.

[00:13:37] **Morris John Gooch:** I was doing clean up and duty in the barracks, trying to keep it clean and presentable with inspections once a week. That wasn't the life I wanted at the time.

**Dean Wetzel:** Now, did the prospect of serving under the water, that ever scare you? Cause like to me, like when I was on ship, I just hated being even above water.

**Morris John Gooch:** It wasn't even fun, but I could not imagine going underneath it. As a matter of fact, one of the most enjoyable things I did while we were at sea, was clean a torpedo tube. And in cleaning a torpedo tube, you start at the, -the door, the breach door, and you wipe down the torpedo tube as you crawl to the other end of it, and then you take a

bucket of fuel oil with you, and then you wipe all of the tube as you back out of that torpedo tube.

**Morris John Gooch:** The torpedo tube is twenty-one inch in diameter. So that's only about so big of a hole. And at the time I fit beautifully. Today, I'd be a plug as opposed to a, as a torpedo, but what was so cool about it was when we did that at sea, we had to set special conditions. So in case of flooding or anything of that nature.

**Morris John Gooch:** But I could go to the end of the tube and the guys would shut the breach door while I was inside there. And I could lay there and I could listen to the biologics that were out in the water all around us. So, you could hear clacking sounds, you could hear all the sounds that you can imagine out at the end of that submarine.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so, it was really cool. Very dark, cold, but, peaceful and no, I was never bothered by going to sea on a submarine.

**Dean Wetzel:** What was the deepest you ever went?

**Morris John Gooch:** Classified.

**Dean Wetzel:** Classified. Fair enough. I understand. Now, did you, so a lot of people think of, Vietnam era, Or even in general, after World War Two, the Navy is just nothing more than transports. We both know that's a little different. But did you ever have moments? And I have it listed here as Soviets, but that wasn't our only sole threat. That was just the biggest one. Did you ever have any close encounters? Any times where you might have thought this is it? We're going in?

**Morris John Gooch:** not really in terms of a threat of losing life.



**Morris John Gooch:** But, our purpose was to be a deterrent. To be a deterrent on a fleet ballistic missile submarine, that meant that you went to sea and disappeared. You floated around out there carrying sixteen nuclear war headed missiles along with torpedoes and nuclear war headed torpedoes for the purpose of retaliating if the Russians or anybody was to attack the United States.

**Morris John Gooch:** And there was always a Soviet trawler. that was stationed somewhere outside of where we were stationed that would monitor us going in and out of port. There were a couple of times where we had situations where operating out of Charleston at the time, that we had to play fun and games with the trawler so that, we lost them and could continue on with our patrol. Over the course of my career in the Atlantic we had a couple of unique situations develop in the Mediterranean. We were in the Mediterranean on one patrol, the skipper, Commander Donald Nepper at the time, had a particular, I don't know what you would call it, maybe fear. of a Russian vessel parking itself over top of us.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, we would not be able to launch our missiles. And so, he had us practice a rather unique drill. At the time, I was a petty officer and was working in the torpedo room. And working in the torpedo room, I was given the task of wiring a Mark 14 5 torpedo. with a hard right up rudder and plane. So that when the torpedo left the tube, it would immediately go out in a circle and come around right over top of us.

[00:18:01] **Morris John Gooch:** And his philosophy was that if somebody did, we would fire -that fish would go out, we would immediately take a hard port steerage way And get away from him while that torpedo came around and hit him, sinking him and getting him out of the picture. And so we practiced that drill. It was part of the Cold War drama that was going on. -that was part of the excitement of that life. But during that time frame there were a

lot of fun things that happened, a lot of good things that happened. We operated out of Rota, Spain. So out of Rota, Spain, we had a chance to take, liberty and, go see a bullfight and learned not to cheer for the bull.

**Morris John Gooch:** That was not a good idea. The, the locals thought very poorly of us in doing that. and to be careful about what they called a good wine. Because there were wines that they offered us and that we drank that gave us massive headaches and hangovers. So, I don't know what was in that wine, but we learned about them.

**Morris John Gooch:** That was also, stretching the time. I had gotten liberty while stationed at Damnick, Virginia for launcher school to go home on leave. And that's when I proposed to Amy and asked her to be my wife. And so, I was 199 pounds was as brown as that couch over there. Body surfing every single day because we had second shift classes and a love in life.

**Morris John Gooch:** Six months later of two cases of beer a night with my roommates, I went home to get married at 266 pounds. So there was a big change that happened in there, but we were stationed in Charleston. Part of my civilian life was very ugly during that time. I got involved in, -a motorcycle club and, we won't talk about that part of the life.

**Morris John Gooch:** But, the next step of that was we having gotten out of the shipyards. We did our WSAT and DESO. WSAT was a weapons systems acceptance test. We went to Puerto Rico. And we got to enjoy that beautiful Caribbean water and everything until I stepped on a sea urchin. I wound up with, several dozen spikes in my foot that months after that testing and being back at shore, she was still pulling out of my feet, because they were so embedded. -but we also did what was called DESO. demonstration and shakedown operation with our missiles. And I got to launch three Polaris missiles, which was a very exciting time.

but actually, when you go down there, you normally don't fire missiles, but in this case, they had a special operation going on, and so they had us test fire, these missiles.

**Morris John Gooch:** My wife was pregnant with our first son, And, I was doing patrol out in the Mediterranean, out of Rota, Spain. We were home ported in Charleston, but they would fly us to Spain. We would board the ship and then we would do our patrol. We had a gold and a blue crew. So three months you were on it, three months you were off it. I got, the weapons officer came in because I was doing an oxygen charge for the ship. And he relieved me on watch and told me the captain wanted to see me in the wardroom. That is not good news. Okay. When the weapons officer, not another enlisted man comes up and says, you're relieved of the watch, the skipper wants you in the wardroom.

[00:21:51] **Morris John Gooch:** You begin to sweat. And so, I did. Yes. As I walked into the, wardroom, the first thing you did is you looked at me and he said, what'd you name 'em? And I had no clue what he was talking about. And he looked at me and he obviously saw the dumb look on my face. And, he said, your wife just gave birth to a son.

**Morris John Gooch:** Congratulations. Oh, that was so cool. I went back and finished my watch. And the next day I went and got so drunk they had to carry me back to the ship. But we celebrated that with fine fanfare and all of my guys were extremely happy, both for me. Because at that point in time, life was turning to the better side of being it.

**Morris John Gooch:** I was achieving rank. I was doing well. And I was enjoying my time in the Navy then. That was, it was becoming fun.

**Dean Wetzel:** let's maybe dive into something that a lot of people don't know about subs.

What was like, the day-to-day life? It's like Hollywood paints it as like you slept in the same rack and everybody was really quiet, and I have a feeling that's not the case.

**Morris John Gooch:** That's not the case. That's not the case at all. First of all, you go to sea with more men than you have beds for them. Okay. So, we have this thing called hot bunking and hot bunking is where you sleep in the bunk for your period of time. You get out and another man crawls in. So, if you had an eight-hour watch.

[00:23:18] **Morris John Gooch:** You'd go on your watch and while you were on watch, this guy's sleeping in the bunk that you just vacated. When your watch was over, you did your work, you did whatever you had to do, and then you went to sleep because he had to get up and go do his maintenances, or he was going on watch, and so you rotated this.

**Morris John Gooch:** I learned quick that I could take a blanket or two, throw them between two torpedoes in the torpedo room. And I had a private bunk for as long as I wanted and very comfortable on the boot. It was a little noisy because of course, it's a torpedo room and stuff. Although we were quieter than most because the sonar dome surrounded us.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, any noise we made in the torpedo room would pick up on a sonar array. And so, we had to run as quietly as we could up there so we wouldn't interfere with the sonar. But, sleeping in the torpedo room on a torpedo was a fun and unique experience. And I enjoyed that. But your daily routine rotated around three 8-hour periods.

**Morris John Gooch:** You had an 8-hour watch. You had an 8 hour, what was called maintenance free time. Actually, we call it qual time, because that's when you were doing

your qualifications to earn your dolphins. Your dolphins were the symbol of having qualified submarines and has been in service since before World War two.

**Morris John Gooch:** So it's -unique and a very special thing and required. If you could not qualify the submarines, you were kicked out. As simple as that to the surface. Maybe you went have a good life. Goodbye, you're gone. -and then the other eight hours was normally bunk time. Okay, so that was the normal scheduled routine.

[00:25:04] **Morris John Gooch:** In between that, you had battle stations, you had casualty drills, you had, - special, -watch ops and things like that, that, that would go on, - you had all of the maintenances that you had to do, -in the torpedo room or back at launcher, because all of those pieces of equipment have to be maintained. You have special things that had to be done if you were carrying nuclear torpedoes, because there was a special security system, the 4FZ, which was on torpedoes, so you had to monitor pressures and temperatures, excuse me, and things of that nature. But those were normally done during your maintenance time.

**Morris John Gooch:** If you wound up with a piece of equipment that broke down, then you worked until that equipment was back up and running. And so if it took you 12 hours to do it, you spent 12 hours working on that project until it was done. And the only way you got out of that work was if you had to go on watch. And then usually poor sucker would get stuck having to continue standing watch, which would sometimes be me, while the maintenance was done until the job was completed, and then you'd get relieved by the other individual. meals were extremely good. Food was the thing on a submarine. It was designed to help keep morale up. And so we ate very well. We would have steak and lobster nights. We would have some of the best roast beef in the world that was done by our cooks and stuff. And some of these cooks were graduates of culinary schools and stuff like that the Navy had sent them to

and then put them on these submarines so that they could take care of us the way that they did.

**Morris John Gooch:** So that was all good except for you ran out of food. Meaning you ran out of lettuce, you ran out of any vegetables fresh, so you wound up now going over to can. Milk was fresh for the first couple of weeks and then it's all out of a can. -you had those types of issues, but otherwise it was very good.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so they served four meals a day. Breakfast, lunch, supper, dinner. And then they had what was called mid rats. So that would happen at midnight so that the guys on the shift changed. before they went on watch and stuff. We lived on coffee. Okay. coffee was like drinking plasma as far as everybody was concerned.

**Morris John Gooch:** And, later on in my military career we had a very disappointing patrol when we had run out of coffee. But, the, that was the normal. Battle stations were both done by drill and by situation. If we were in a place or a time when we had to pick, we had discovered that there was a, Soviet out there, whether it be another submarine or a trawler or whatever, we would go to, battle stations.

**Morris John Gooch:** Running silent as they would call it where everybody who is off watch and not doing something critical was sent to bed So that they were quiet and then everybody else did as little as they could to make any noises and things that in some of the movies where they you know, everybody is quiet and then the guy drops the scissors or the pocketknife or Whatever and everybody just shakes and shudders because sonar up there hears that And the moment they do, they can find you in the water.

**Morris John Gooch:** And the object being that they drop depth charges or whatever on top of you. -so you would do that, but at times, if you were qualified, it could get boring. Most of the time it was not. Qualifying meant that you went through and you learned every system on that submarine. To the point that I could call out a name of a valve and you could tell me exactly what that valve was, what it isolated, and where it was located, even down to this type of valve it was.

**Morris John Gooch:** So if I said, like a MG, 432, that would tell you -that was an isolation valve for a gauge on a pressure. gauge, located on a missile tube. Okay? And you could tell me exactly, if I ask, you could tell me how far off the floor it was, the deck, or what was the closest object to it. If I ask you a question in qualifying, you are a molecule of air, you are located in machinery two, the ship has just begun to snorkel.

[00:29:57] **Morris John Gooch:** How do you get to the fresh air? How do you exhaust it from the ship? And so you would have to go through and you'd have to talk about every single compartment, every valve, every vent line that you would go through in order to be pulled into the diesel and then exhausted out through the exhaust and go up the snorkel mast and out of the ship.

**Morris John Gooch:** You'd have to be able to tell what depth you were operating at. You would have to know how far above the water surface the mast was, and all the different things and issues about it. How, when, -a wave would go over, the valve would automatically shut, so that it would, and you've got a situation where, -you're backing up exhaust.

**Morris John Gooch:** -how do you deal with that? You are an electron in the torpedo room. How did you get there? So now you have to be able to explain how you generated electricity from the engine room and be able to explain everything that they wanted to know about the

electric turbines that were back there, or the steam turbines that drove the electric generators and everything that was back there, all the way through the ventilation system to get to the torpedo room.

**Morris John Gooch:** If somebody was to say something, I'm the coffee pot in the wardrobe. How do you electrically isolate it when it catches on fire? You would have to be able to say, you'd go to panel blank at this location and turn off breaker number seven, or breaker number whatever it was. -they would, you'd learn all those things.

[00:31:33] **Morris John Gooch:** As a matter of fact, even now, I could draw you the trim and drain system on -the Thano Green, which was another submarine I served on. I remember that and it's implanted in my head. I can draw you the missile gas system for the missile compartment and put the valve numbers on it. Because I remember the valve numbers and stuff.

**Morris John Gooch:** That's what it meant to qualify. The reason you qualify was because when you're on a submarine and you're at sea your life depends on what you know and what your shipmate knows. And so, when somebody says that's fire in the engine room. You don't sit back and wait for the firemen to run back there, put the fire out and take care of business.

**Morris John Gooch:** You are the one who is running to damage control stations, picking up equipment, doing what's necessary to help put that fire out so that it doesn't spread through the rest of the ship or cause other casualties or conflicts. So you would learn where every piece of damage control equipment was, how it was to be used, and where, emergency situations were, how the emergency air breathing system worked, how decon equipment worked.



**Morris John Gooch:** You had to know all of that because your fellow sailor was depending on you if there was a situation. If you were in the torpedo room and were on watch, there was usually one man in the torpedo room. If there's a problem, the watertight door gets shut. That means you're the only man in the torpedo room to deal with whatever happens in the torpedo room.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, you better know everything about that room and everything about it means everything. I, today, I can remember crawling through the bilges to find where this fitting was, cleaning out Hot Safe, 2 71 oil out of the bilges of pump room one. because of potential problems that it would create if there was a fire and stuff.

[00:33:37] **Morris John Gooch:** We have a sleeping arrangement in the Torpedo Room called Hanging Gardens, and Hanging Gardens was a number of bunks that were set up in a spot where they converted it over, and -we have a head up there. One of the patrols got clogged bad news. So the machinist mates were trying to figure out how to unclog this toilet bowl in the torpedo room.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so the pump station for sanitary one was down in the pump room in the torpedo room, and they were down there working on it. And normally you would pressurize the tank. You'd secure all the valves, everything that was going into the tank, you'd be securing those. You'd shut those off. And then you would put a pressure in the tank and you open two hull valves, which means then that air pressure pushes all of whatever is in sanitary one out overboard, so the submarine took a poop.

**Morris John Gooch:** That's basically what it was. It was all pushed out and that was the end of it. They got the wise idea that, we could reverse that. And if we reverse that, we could, unclog the clog, and it would take care of it. You have safeties on that system, and one of the

safeties on it was a relief valve, so that the ship never pressurized the tank above a certain level.

**Morris John Gooch:** And, because of the obvious potential for damage, or backflow, whatever. And, - That's exactly what happened. -they chained the relief valve shut when they found out that normal pressures wouldn't work. And so they increased the pressure using 400 PSI air as opposed to 100 PSI air. And the relief valve didn't lift.

[00:35:42] **Morris John Gooch:** But the clog did. And the way that they were doing that was there was a poor guy. who was up in that head and he had, control of the flapper valve, which was the toilet bowl base valve. And when you opened and closed it, that's what allowed whatever was in the toilet bowl to flush down to the sanitary tank.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, this poor kid was up there and he had this valve shut and they tell him, okay, creep it, creep it open. So, this poor kid pulled back on the handle a little bit. It didn't really want to move. So, he pulled back on a little bit harder and when he did, whatever was clogging the line decided it wanted to go that way.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so that tank was blown dry into the hanging garden's head, up onto the overhead, and then sprayed over all of the bunks. All of the equipment and everything else that was up there in Hanging Gardens. We had a bunch of midshipmen, on that patrol. And, a midshipman had my normal bunk up there. -because he was more important than I was, so they gave him my bunk.

**Morris John Gooch:** And, - He came down from Hanging Gardens. He was carrying his shoes, which were filled with effluent. And, - he was totally covered from head to toe. -with the worst stuff that you could possibly think of. And, with whimpering.

**Morris John Gooch:** Needless to say, the machinist mates wound up having to do a super field day on hanging gardens, and the corpsman then had them go back and do a sanitary clean on hanging gardens, and this midshipman did not ever want to go back to bed. The other one that was up there said when he heard a gurgling and boiling, The thing was to pull his covers over his head, and that's the only thing that saved him.

[00:37:54] **Morris John Gooch:** He pulled his blanket over his head, and his bunk was also filled, - but it was on top of the blanket, not on top of him. So -we had several of those types of experiences and things that now we look back and think are funny as heck, but at the time were extremely dangerous situations in effect. But, - we did that operating out of Charleston and, - actually being a home based in Charleston, South Carolina, and patrolling out of Rota Spain. -having completed that, the ship was reassigned. And, we were told that our new home port would be Hawaii. And so they moved the USS George Washington from Charleston, South Carolina. to Hawaii.

**Dean Wetzel:** Did you guys go through the Panama Canal?

**Morris John Gooch:** The ship did, but not me. -the reason that -was that the gold crew was on the ship at the time, not the blue crew, which I was a part of.

**Morris John Gooch:** -and so with my, we got to fly over and, get all stationed there. There was all kinds of messes with that household goods that got dumped off of a container ship out into the ocean. All kinds of things like that. Stuff that was stolen, stuff that was broken in our move, and things like that was just phenomenal.

**Morris John Gooch:** But when we got to Hawaii, the gold crew had to do an ORS. An ORS is an Operational Safety, Operating Reactor Safety Evaluation. Yeah, something along that

line. Examination, Evac, Evaluation. Yeah. It was nuke stuff, so as far as we were concerned, that's the butt end of the boat, you know the word I was going to use.

**Morris John Gooch:** But, the whole bottom line being that they had to pass this exam. And to pass that exam, they got all these inspectors, and they failed. That was the worst thing that could happen because that meant the ship was not operational. The ship had to go on stand down. Now there were submarines that were out on patrol who were hoping to come to home port because they were being relieved by the George Washington and here's the George Washington sitting tied up to a pier in Hawaii. So they couldn't. For the blue crew, that was heaven because all the time that they were working their butts off to pass the exam, we were on liberty. We were doing standard maintenance. Instead of us taking over the ship and taking it to Guam, we were having a fine old time. And, we got almost a month and a half, of free time out of that whole deal.

[00:40:44] **Morris John Gooch:** So, it was good for us, but it was bad for them. And everybody suffers because whether you are a nuke or whether you are a quartermaster, you're on that ship, you are training, you are cleaning, you are maintaining everything at top shape until you pass the exam. And eventually they did.

**Dean Wetzel:** when you guys are deployed, I know for us, we always just did a RAS (Resupply At Sea) at sea. So, I'm wondering if you guys did reses or resupplies at sea to get like mail, or how did you guys get mail?

**Morris John Gooch:** No. Mail is nonexistent on a fleet ballistic missile submarine. It's like I said, when you, we go out, submerge, and we don't surface again until 127 days later. And then we pull into port, spend three days turning it over to the other crew and fly home.

**Morris John Gooch:** Okay? Our mail system consisted of what was called family grams.

Family grams was a radio message that was sent to you, from the, home base in Hawaii. And you were given six of those per patrol. Amy had six opportunities to talk to me, no, to tell me what was going on because I couldn't respond to anyone that she sent.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so, what would happen is that she had 15 words. And that 15 words included who I was and love, Amy. So now you're down to 12 words, okay? Now you put into 12 words everything you want to tell your husband for that patrol. Oh, by the way, you can't say anything that would break his morale. Or cause him mental anguish.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, your dad died? No. You, the Navy would take care of that part. Okay? You couldn't say a word about it. Your dog died. Now, that'd be like, Charlie dying. If she wanted to tell me that. Oh no, absolutely not, because I might get depressed. The Navy had a program called the Personnel Reliability Program.

[00:43:06] **Morris John Gooch:** And it was designed to always monitor us to make sure that we were mentally sound and that we were capable of performing our duties and responsibilities under the pressure that we were. And so, they were always looking and watching it, things like that, to make sure that we didn't go off the rocker and do something crazy.

**Morris John Gooch:** I have experienced suicides, at sea. We've had guys who have become so depressed, that. it wasn't visible. We couldn't catch it in time. And the next thing got a dead man and had to take care of situation. You don't surface for him. You put him in the freezer. When you get back to port, then you take care of them. We did have one at sea transfer, -where we had a man who had appendicitis. Normally we would have a doctor on board, but because the military wanted to cut back on costs and everything else. They started

taking doctors off of the FBMs and instead just having a very qualified, surgeon qualified Corpman on board.

[00:44:12] **Morris John Gooch:** And so, your medical care was provided by this senior Corman. My favorite one was a guy by the name of stubby stubble field was his name. He was a hospital Corpman First Class who had been in Vietnam and had a silver star and he was a great guy. But a greatately, we had a guy who had an appendix and, the fleet decided that they didn't want to have him try to do surgery.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, what they did was, they told us we'd medivac him. And we killed him. And we put him in a Stokes, helicopter above us, sweeping with the ship. Perfect timing. I have the greatest admiration for those chopper pilots. This guy locked on to number two periscope and he rocked his helicopter in perfect innocent with the rolling of our submarine.

**Morris John Gooch:** And I think I can say where it was.

**Dean Wetzel:** I'd say you're fine. It's been 50 something years. Yeah. Sea of Japan.

**Morris John Gooch:** Okay. We were in the Sea of Japan at the time. But in any event, what happened was that, the when he took, we took a freak wave and the freak wave rolled the ship back before the pilot could compensate.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so the Stokes went into the water and that water is very cold. And by the time they got him up and lifted into the chopper, he had, he was dead, he had drowned. that I, yeah, I've seen a couple of other accidents like that happen in the military. We had a mooring line break and it took the legs right off of a chief, that was standing top side.

**Morris John Gooch:** -I've had torpedoes try to kill me, how we were working on 'am and stuff. -a lot of those exciting institute situations and things. But yeah,

**Dean Wetzel:** is it something else?

**Morris John Gooch:** We do not get refurbished at sea.

**Dean Wetzel:** No.

**Morris John Gooch:** Okay. When -you load all your stores while you're at port. And so at lower level missile, we would have cases three high of canned goods.

**Morris John Gooch:** So when you man battle stations missile down there, you ran on the top of those cans all squatted over so you didn't take the top of your head off on the overhead piping and cable runs and stuff like that. But that's what you had to do because that was our food. And then through the course of the patrol, by the end of the patrol, there was nothing down there anymore.

**Dean Wetzel:** Like I said, when we did RAS at Sea, it was insane. We would line up all the way through the ship and everything.

**Morris John Gooch:** Yep. The store's looting party was exactly that. Everybody manned a line, and the box went from one to the next, one to the next. And you'd hear the guys hooting and hollering and every so often a box would disappear.

**Morris John Gooch:** Because that was the canned nuts. Or that was, special Can of coffee. and so that is what we used to calm Shaw up on the Tinder to get the other stuff we wanted or needed.

**Dean Wetzel:** Now, I know the Navy has, some different ceremonies. One that I participated in was a shell backing ceremony. If, you have ever done anything like that on a show?

[00:47:19] **Morris John Gooch:** Yes, sir.

**Dean Wetzel:** Can you possibly go into that, what that was like?

**Morris John Gooch:** It was awesome. As a poly, It was a double. We were crossing the equator, and we were crossing the international date line. So, we were celebrating with both of them. I've got Blue Nose, Shellback, and the others. But the whole thing was that, we stripped our skivvies, and then we were paraded around and everything else, but we had to go visit King Neptune and his court. King Neptune was the senior most qualified, shellback or, enlisted man who had, crossed that boundary. And, both enlisted and officer went through the program. Now you could refuse. But if you did, an annotation was made in your service record that you refused. And all that. that process and stuff. And that wasn't a good thing. that's a bad mark. And for an officer, that's a promotion killer. So for those guys, they, as much as they hated it, they were standing right there in line with the enlisted guys waiting to go through this. So, the first thing you did was you went to the court and you had to be prepared to talk to the Royal court, to be prepared to talk to the Royal court. You were given a haircut. Their haircut considered full a handful of grease, axle grease, bearing grease, the most disgusting stuff they could find would come up and you'd get a handful of that blob on the top of your head and then rubbed all over the top of your head. That was your haircut. The next thing was to make sure that you would only tell the truth and speak the truth, in front of the King. And so, you were given truth serum, open wide, and you got a good healthy squirt of mineral oil. Yeah. Mineral oil normally doesn't go through you real fast, but it does go through you and creates a problem afterwards. And it tastes terrible. Okay. So, they did



that. So now you were prepared to go to the court. So, you would go up and they would do this whole thing. And there would be the, Oh, what the heck did they call him? He's like the chief master at arms. But anyways, he would speak about you to the king and then the king would pronounce judgment on you as to whether you were worthy or not to be a shellback. And of course he would ask you questions and stuff like that. And if he didn't like your answer. Then, you would receive correction. Correction was anything from a SWAT with a paddle to, another haircut, another tooth serum, something, to just remind you that you're totally under their control. Then you had to visit the Royal baby. And they normally took the biggest, heaviest shellback on board, preferably one with lots and lots of body hair. And he would sit there with his pagoda Buddha belly, and they would take an olive and they would put it in his navel. The cooks had been saving up garbage for the last four or five days and so they filled a trough with all of that. But all of the green garbage, like spinach or green beans or stuff, they would emulsify with more mineral oil and stuff. So that was this thick, gooey, and they were smearing all over the baby's belly, and then you had to go get it with your teeth. So here you are smashing your face into this hairy belly with this disgusting green goo and you get the olive and you have to show and present the olive. So you said there's olive in your teeth and I hate green olives to this day. I cannot stand a green olive. Even thinking about it now. But then when you finished all of that you had to swim the trough And come out on the other end, and then you would be designated as a shellback. And there were some other minor things that would go on in the process of it. But if you didn't stay submerged going through the trough, there was usually somebody up there with a big rubber hose. with more grease on it, who would swat you out of top of the head, or would take it and push you back down underneath it. So, they would, between the, in the mess hall, between the tables and the benches, they would line all of that with plastic and tape it so it made this huge bathtub. So, you slithered in on this end and got down and then you crawled as quickly as you

could on your belly. To the other end of it to get out of it and most of us could do that. But every so often there was that guy, who just had to stick his head up or who couldn't take it would stand up, but it was fun. Then you had to go down below and you had to clean yourself up. Once all of that was done, then you had to help clean up the court. So, all that garbage and all that other stuff had to be. Package and then kicked overboard through the garbage disposal unit. And, you had to scrub your head as much as you possibly could with salt water because there wasn't enough fresh water to clean everybody. So you use salt water to take a shower, to scrub the oil out of your hair and to get that And a lot of us gargled it until we didn't have the taste of the olive or the, mineral spirits, the truth serum in our mouth, and everything else, and then we wound up with -our shell back.

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** with that fun note, keeping with, like training and different things you guys may or may not have done, now, did you guys ever train with allied nations?

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah, we, we Would do things but not the way that you think about it in a normal military because fast attacks. Would do that with the fleet The boomer was out there somewhere Because again, we were a deterrent. We were not an attack force. We were designed to get lost disappear and that kept anybody from doing anything because you never knew where these 41 submarines were and Because if they're out there and you push a button, you've got however many submarines are out in our operational, say there's 25 of them out there, 25 of them launching missiles right back at you. So, we didn't do anything that brought publicity or attention to us other than the fact that we would know that there was a fleet operation going on in our area. But even that, we were not in it. We were out here because

fast attacks and destroyers might pick us up. Then we would either have to identify ourselves, which means the Russian would know.

**Morris John Gooch:** 'cause you'd have to do it by radar or not radar, but RA radio or some other communications means. And that was not good. Now we could receive, but we could not transmit.

[00:55:13] **Dean Wetzel:** Okay so can you maybe go into what you guys did then for morale? Because now with this much isolation, I'm sure it got real easy for people to get down on their luck or to start feeling.

**Morris John Gooch:** lots of movies. We had, we would go to see with enough movies so that you'd have, you could have a movie every night. A big library. Okay, we had lots of books and stuff like that stashed into every little cubbyhole so that you could read and things. food. Food was a big item. We had very good meals. And we had very good, cooks and stuff like that. So those were all designed to help maintain morale.

[00:55:53] **Morris John Gooch:** -we had guys who played guitars. very much. They weren't allowed to bring drums. They weren't allowed to bring horns or anything like that. But you could play an acoustic guitar. And so sometimes, guys would get together and they'd play the guitar and stuff. Card games. Pinochle, euchre. The only thing we couldn't play was poker.

**Morris John Gooch:** And that's because too many times guys would lose too much money. And now we'd have another problem. And so, we weren't allowed to play poker for money. We did. Okay. But we were smart enough to keep it down to like penny and nickel so that by the end of the patrol, the most a guy would have that he owed anybody was like twenty bucks.

**Morris John Gooch:** -and everybody monitored that. So, the moment we saw that a guy was starting to build up a little bit of a debt, he was stopped. You can't play anymore. You can play any of the other games, but you can't play poker. So there was a lot of that. Lots of games. We had board games and stuff like that.

**Morris John Gooch:** We could do cribbage. Cribbage was a fantastic time killer. We'd have tournaments. And so, we'd do that. We even had a dart board and darts at one time. But, when you're on a submarine and it's rolling around, sometimes that's a problem. People don't realize it, but a submarine on the surface is a round hull.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so, there's nothing to keep you from rolling around all over the place. So that's why we dive as soon as we pass the 60-fathom curve. These 60-fathoms deep beyond that point, we dive and we stay down there. But when we were down in the Caribbean, there was a hurricane going on down there and we were at over 200 feet depth and we were rolling side to side.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so, everybody was told that if they weren't on watch, that they were to turn to crawl in their bumps because that was the only way we could keep some guys from getting hurt. But I literally had one foot on the bulkhead and one foot on the deck as I was walking from the missile compartment forward.

**Morris John Gooch:** Now, when I got a little higher rank, I made chief petty officer. I took over other duties and responsibilities. I qualified as officer of the deck and the chief of the watch. And, that went to eight section duty. So that meant, I had to watch every 64 hours as opposed to every eight hours.

[00:58:18] **Morris John Gooch:** And so that was a whole lot more comfortable and stuff like that. But, of course, by that time, I qualified everything from the, torpedo room back to the machinery room. The only thing I couldn't qualify was for the reactor operators and stuff like that. But I could qualify everything else. So, I qualified as Seamen, Sonarman of the watch, Quartermaster of the watch, Machinist, maid of the watch, all of those.

**Morris John Gooch:** So that, I knew what they did and how they performed their watch duties and stuff. We had one patrol that almost broke the morale of the crew. We had a supply officer who was, who was being transferred. Now, when a Supply Officer is transferred, he has to balance his books. So that when he turns it over to the new supply officer, he has a set of balanced books for everything that the ship has on it, purchased and stores and supplies.

**Morris John Gooch:** This guy was a very poor manager of his resources. And so we went to see But every bit of the goodies in the freezer that you could think of, we had, steak, we had lobsters, we had prime rib, all the other goodies.

**Morris John Gooch:** but not enough coffee, not enough ketchup, not enough salt. And then he discovered his books were so far off that we ate nothing but chicken. So we had what was called the chicken patrol. We ate roasted chicken, baked chicken, fried chicken, dynamited chicken cacciatore. You name it with chicken and we had it for breakfast, lunch, and supper.

**Morris John Gooch:** Mid-rats would be left over whatever that chicken crap was. Needless to say, he got a very bad, review. Officer review from the skipper because even the skipper ran out of coffee. We were burning, chicory and stuff like that, that we had as herbs and stuff on board and stuff that, stuff we had brought on board.

**Morris John Gooch:** -and we were reusing coffee grounds. We were drying them out and then reheating them dry, try re roasting them as we called it, and then trying to make coffee out of that. So that we would have coffee on that patrol. The crew was just out of their gourds. Because you did have some guys who were addicted to coffee.

**Morris John Gooch:** And they'd say there's no such thing. I got news for you. You take a guy who's drinking a cup of coffee all the time, and now you take that away from him cold turkey. He don't do well. He doesn't do well at all. Not only did the supply officer get nailed, but of course, as I said, we tried, did everything we could possibly do, but there was a lock on the freezer.

**Morris John Gooch:** And I, I don't know how it works, but somehow or other, the skipper couldn't overrule him. -on that aspect of it. For some reason or other, he couldn't demand that the supply officer open that up. -Yeah, that was a bad patrol. The other thing that, what happened was that in that daily routine, once you were qualified, some of our officers qualified as, college professors.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so, we would take college courses while we were at sea. During my time in the Navy, I went to 33 technical class, schools, classes. As you might put it. And I also earned a bachelor's degree, four of them, an associate's degree, one of them, all because I had the free time to do it and to keep occupied.

[01:02:23] **Morris John Gooch:** I took every class I could. And then, of course, when we were back in port, we would continue. So I went to the University of Wisconsin, University of, - Southern California University of Washington, - Columbia, university of Virginia, State University of New York, - Cornell, I forget who else. Classes by proxy because that's where those officers were from and stuff like that and earning degrees and things.

**Morris John Gooch:** So that was a good thing. But all in all, I did seven patrols, went through, - three shipyards. I went from the George Washington, we offloaded our missiles and Bremerton or Bremerton, Spain or Washington, and then went down to Vallejo. in San Francisco, Mare Island, the shipyard there. And then once I completed that, we were there for a year, and I was transferred to Missile Technician C School in Dam Neck, Virginia, and my rate was converted from a Torpedoman to being a Missile Technician.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so at that point in time, I made First Class Petty Officer as a Torpedoman, And I made Chief Petty Officer as a Missile Tech. Once I completed my Missile Tech schooling, they gave me orders to stay on board and I started off as an instructor, then eventually became the block supervisor for the Missile Tech.

**Morris John Gooch:** So at one point I had over 700 students and instructors. That was cool. That was a cool time. Rough time, but a cool time. -Our youngest son, that was a wonder. We went from San Francisco, - to Virginia beach in the wintertime. And, my, my guys respected and, loved Amy to the point where they put a CB in our truck and gave me a map with every single hospital between Virginia beach and San Francisco. On the route that we were taking so that if anything would happen, I could get help immediately for her because she was eight and a half months pregnant as we're driving cross country in the winter time with our oldest son in the seat behind us in a truck. We had a jump seat. That's where he sat for the whole run.

[01:05:04] **Morris John Gooch:** Learned little things like shampoo freezes. Holley carburetors do not like watered gas.

**Morris John Gooch:** yeah, we got to Virginia Beach and it was 1977 in the year of the blizzards. We slept four days on the floor of the duplex we rented with no furniture because they couldn't deliver it because of the snow.

**Dean Wetzel:** I've got to ask just because of how iconic it is to the Navy. Did you get any tattoos?

**Morris John Gooch:** No. While I was in the Navy, I did not get a tattoo. Thought about it several times with the guys and everything else. But, we, for some reason or another, I never got a tattoo. For one, I was frowned on, at the time. You were still considered to be military property. -and so they did frown on getting tattoos and stuff like that.

**Morris John Gooch:** I also frowned on shaving your head so we couldn't shave our heads. We had to have hair when you're losing your hair. That's hard to do, but that was the only excuse you had for not having hair. -so no, I get, I got all my tattoos, when I was out of the Navy for almost 10 years.

**Dean Wetzel:** Interesting. Yeah. If you hear about the Navy and

**Morris John Gooch:** . Oh, yeah. Oh yeah. A lot of that's surface Navy, not submarine Navy. the submarine Navy, some guys had their dolphins tattooed on their chest. Of course, that's invisible. Nobody's going to see that until you take your shirt off. So that was okay. That's what I thought about having done.

[01:06:44] **Morris John Gooch:** I was thinking about having, my dolphins tattooed on my chest, as well as my FBM pin, my boomer pin. -but the problem with that is, for every patrol, you have to put another star on it. So I'd have to go in and have them modify the tattoo to put



us another star on it. And after you've done seven of them, the eighth one turns into a gold star.

**Morris John Gooch:** So now you've got a gold star on there and stuff. So there were games backwards and forwards on that kind of stuff. But no, I decided no, I wouldn't get a tattoo.

**Dean Wetzel:** Now, more so with your first enlistment, just because the pushback by American civilians with those that went over there, again, more of the Marine Corps and the Army from what I understand, but did your family ever experience backlash? Did you ever have to worry about that? being forward deployed?

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah, there were a couple of instances and stuff. We flew back from Hawaii through San Francisco, for vacation to see family and stuff. And, there were those. anti Vietnam people there, that, but we were in civilian clothes.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so there really wasn't anything that they recognized as, except for you're obviously military by appearance. But, it did have, a couple of people that looked like they were going to confront us, but that look that you can give them. Discouraged them. So they never bothered us or anything else like that.

[01:08:11] **Morris John Gooch:** My biggest problem with my family was that, the fear and the knowledge that if I ever had to push the button, cause that was my job as a launcher supervisor, I said, watch at launcher. And, when it came time, I had to make sure the missile tube and everything was ready. The missile was geared up and stuff.

**Morris John Gooch:** And then the weapons officer. Push the fire button and the skipper pushes the fire button and away goes a missile. So you got, suddenly you got 64, 000 pounds

of missile leaving the ship. That does all kinds of things with buoyancy and stuff. So, we had all the fun and excitement of taking care of that.

**Morris John Gooch:** But it was the knowledge that if I ever had to do that, my family was gone. And because my family always lived at ground zero. I was never stationed anywhere where be a submarine or a missile aimed at that would have killed my family. And so one of the motivators out there was the fact that Ivan wasn't going home to his.

**Morris John Gooch:** If mine was not here, he certainly wasn't going home to his. And so I had no qualms at all about launching a missile. We used to call ourselves the Department of Urban Renewal with underneath it, parentheses, massive, because that's what we did. -we would launch 16 multiple warhead, missiles, at the enemy.

**Morris John Gooch:** And you learn to live with that.

**Dean Wetzel:** it's interesting to hear it from you just cause you think of the front lines being infantry, -as a guy that was in the infantry, that's what everyone talks about. But that's not the case. Like the front line can be in the middle of the Pacific and your front

**Morris John Gooch:** line is in the head.

[01:10:00] **Morris John Gooch:** Okay. I absolutely agree with the fact that no war can be won without troops being on the ground and being on their property. I have great respect for those guys who, have to face incoming bullets and stuff like that. But I didn't have to worry about that on a submarine. -There were two things. There was no escape, and there was no survival. you can get wounded, on the front line, and a medic can patch you up, send you

back to a field hospital, or maybe to another hospital, and you might survive. on a submarine, if you were attacked, you were dead. You either won or lost. the battle or you lost your life.

**Morris John Gooch:** There was no wounded in action. so that mind is where that game is played and not everybody could handle that. We did have some guys who left the submarine force because they just couldn't handle the fact that, there was no escape. it's funny because in submarine school they teach you to blow and go.

**Morris John Gooch:** Which is the term they use for a submarine escape. You put on this hood, and then you're, you go into this tower of water at a hundred feet, and then you're released to go to the surface. The whole way up, you're yelling out, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho, ho. And the reason for that is because your lungs have got compressed air in them when you're at a hundred feet.

**Morris John Gooch:** If you hold that in, your lungs explode by the time you get to the surface. So you get the bends, nitrogen narcosis. That's where nitrogen is forced into your bloodstream. It goes to your joints, extremely painful. And then of course you die. I'd never operated in water that was only a hundred feet deep. -when you left out of the shipyard and you are out of the pier and like I said, as soon as you hit the 60-fathom. That's 360 feet. Once you cross that line, you submerge. No such thing as submarine rescue. Now, between there and there, if you sank, they could send out a DSRV, and they might be able to rescue you.

[01:12:18] **Morris John Gooch:** But they welded the escape hatches shut. And the reason they did that was because they rattled. And if they rattled, that was noise that a Soviet submarine could pick up on. The other thing was, is that when you were at sea, and if you were attacked, you weren't attacked by a bullet. You were attacked either by a torpedo, or a depth charge, or a depth bomb. If it's a torpedo, we had to have maneuvers, we had

countermeasures, and things like that. But it's just like you see on the movies. If you're out there operating in, in the water and that submarine finds you red October shows, the guy getting hit, several of the other movies show, the submarine getting hit.

**Morris John Gooch:** It blows a hole in you. The people tank fills up with water and you go to the bottom. There's no escape. You can't jump overboard and swim to a life raft. -you can't crawl deeper into a foxhole or anything else like that, that if you're attacked, if they know where you are, that's why we always hid, tried as much as possible to stay hidden, - that if you were attacked, that, odds are, you're a dead man

**Morris John Gooch:** and you learn to live with that. It's a fact of life. You can't live with yourself if you can't, because it would drive you insane. And it did a couple of people.

**Dean Wetzel:** Thank you for that.

**Morris John Gooch:** That's why we had their personal reliability program. Watch one another. When you see the guys starting to slip off the deep end, grab 'em quick, get 'em off the ship.

[01:13:56] **Dean Wetzel:** Now, once the Vietnam War itself ended, did you feel that the Navy changed like this cord?

**Morris John Gooch:** It did, and it sucked. There's no other way to put it. After Vietnam, what happened was is that the peacetime military gradually became what I call the chicken shit Navy. And the reason we called it was that was because our whole focus changed.

**Morris John Gooch:** Instead of us focusing on improving, and instead of focusing on, becoming more, we, they wanted us to focus on being physically fit. To being politically

correct to play all of the games that you went in the military to get away from in the first place. And so to me, from, what was that? 1979. When did we go to back up to Groton?

(Asking his wife Amy)

**Morris John Gooch:** Oh, yeah, that's right. 80. In 1980, I was ready to get out of the military anyways, and at 82 I did. I only had, seven more years to go to retire. I had served 13 years. -I had the records and the thing by that time, I, there was nothing else left for me to do. I was qualified to watch on a ship, so if I went to another ship, then all's I had to do was qualify there too, so I'd start all over again.

**Morris John Gooch:** But when You know, a submarine, going to the new submarine is just, is it in a different location, that's all. If it's the same class of submarine, everything's exactly the same. And so you walk on board, and you walk on the board spouting everything, and you're qualified. As a matter of fact, if you're a chief, you sit in the chief's quarters, and you pass around your qual card.

**Morris John Gooch:** And the other chiefs ask you questions, and they all just sign it right off, and you're qualified. Simple as that. You're expected to be that, but all of a sudden it was one. The Navy blues were gone. You were wearing nylon, which is extremely dangerous in an engine room. You were wearing a tie as opposed to.

**Morris John Gooch:** Oh, yes. Chief Petty Officer. You're our uniform included a tie. Even the enlisted man wore a tie. We all played that game, instead of having a Dixie cup, which is what we call our white hats. Now you're all in an officer's brim. So, you're dressed that way. We were being inspected all the time.

**Morris John Gooch:** We were doing calisthenics. We were going through PTs, physical training as well as physical testing. And all of this stuff, that's all. I didn't want any part of it. Psychologically, it was more painful being in the Navy, at that time than it was any other time that I was in the Navy, it was, and so it was time for us to get out and that's what we did.

[01:17:10] **Morris John Gooch:** Amy was the ombudsman wife for our crew. That's a history of itself. If you guys want to really learn about that military perspective, because our wives were in hell when we submerged, they could send us those six family grams. We may or may not get them. Okay. When a family gram came in, if there was flash traffic or anything else, it was erased and they did not retransmit.

**Morris John Gooch:** Okay. So you missed that one. Now, if that happens two or three times over the course of your patrol, you may have heard from your wife twice. She heard nothing from me. The only thing she had was, we went to sea. Meaning, we flew out, she didn't even know the day that we left Port submerged. Because that was classified too.

**Morris John Gooch:** The word got back to them. So, they knew. But the next thing they would hear was whether we were home or not. And when a ship was overdue, which we were on a couple of occasions because of casualties we had to fight at sea, we lost our rudder while on one patrol. And we steered back from the middle of the Pacific to, to Guam on the emergency propulsion motor.

**Morris John Gooch:** That's a VW that's dropped out of the bottom of a submarine That then puts you along to take you back into port. Because a hurricane sank a ship in the harbor. And we took it on the rudder to the point where it sheared off the rudder ramp cap and almost caused the loss of the ship. The vaporized hydraulics could have exploded.

**Morris John Gooch:** But our wives would know nothing about it until, we were overdue. And then after a few lengths of time When they've searched for us and can't find us, they pronounce us lost at sea. Amy's job was that she would be notified and then she would set up all the other wives on the crew and help them and to help them find out, be notified, and deal with the fact that their husbands were lost.

[01:19:30] **Morris John Gooch:** And there was one instance, when we were in the military that I could have easily gotten in deep trouble with the Commodore.

**Morris John Gooch:** He thought it would be nice to have this ombudsman's wives get together. So he brought up, wanted to bring them all together to talk to them, to encourage them, to tell them that they had open communications with his office and everything else and how great that was. Except for he didn't think about it. And so he thought it would be polite. It would even be honoring. If he sent a junior officer in dress uniform to the house to personally invite the wife, the ombudsman.

**Morris John Gooch:** I'll speak for Amy, but she could tell it herself, but she's on a ladder. Up at the second floor of our house, painting our home at the time. See, that's what a submariner has to rely on. A wife that can do anything she has to do. And here she is up there painting our house, when a black navy sedan pulls up in front and this lieutenant commander (Ask Amy) gets out of the car and starts walking over to her. And we're on patrol.

**Morris John Gooch:** You know exactly where her mind went. It's the notification. Of course, she almost falls down the ladder. How far down the ladder did you get before the guy figured out what was going on?(To the ground says Amy) She gets down to the ground and this looks again. The commander suddenly realized why she was as white as a ghost and was shaking.

**Morris John Gooch:** And of course, he immediately started backpedaling and apologizing and telling her, no, this isn't the notification, the Commodore wants to invite you and everything else. And then he immediately got the word out to the others so that whoever had not gone out, they were stopped too. But here she is getting that word, Hey,

**Morris John Gooch:** he's whining because he wants attention.(Dog in the room). But so we had those type of experiences while we were there, when we were in Hawaii, during our aren't our time. -we were on the beach, body surfing, scuba diving, took up all these different wonderful things and had a great time, learned that we don't ever want to live there. It's a great place to go visit, but you got to know where to go to visit. Otherwise, stay the heck away from Hawaii. It's a tourist trap. All the other issues that were there being stationed in Vallejo. Of course, we could see San Francisco and all the rest of the California coast. The shipyards in Mare Island don't exist anymore. They're gone.

[01:22:33] **Dean Wetzel:** Now, as you get closer to the end of your service and you eventually get out of being in the Navy, did you feel you were successful?

**Morris John Gooch:** Wow.

**Morris John Gooch:** When you ask that, are you saying it was successful in terms of my military service, or are you talking about successful in life to that point?

[01:23:04] **Dean Wetzel:** Is in, more in your military service, obviously, you decided you wanted to enlist for whatever reason, for whatever pushed you down that way. Do you feel that you lived up to that? Do you feel that you succeeded in your initial mission of what you wanted out of the Navy?



**Morris John Gooch:** I feel that I was. Till the end. Okay. The whole time that I was active, meaning in the shipyards or on patrol or going to schools. Those, I felt very positive about that, that I very much enjoyed. I still, to this day, I miss man battle stations, torpedo or man battle stations, missile. When that alarm, general quarters alarm goes off, your blood is instantly boom, and the adrenaline just floods through you.

**Morris John Gooch:** I miss that. We fought fires, real fires aboard the ship. We had a couple of instances where we had extremely dangerous situations. Like I said, the onetime where we shared off the end cap of the rudder, hydraulic ramp, that very easily could have been the loss of life and crew. Okay. With that serious, you vaporize hydraulic fluid.

[01:24:17] **Morris John Gooch:** That stuff is floating through the air and becomes extremely explosive. -that's one of the bombs that they built, a fuel effect bomb, is basically you flood the area with fuel and then you ignite it and so it blows up and it just incinerates everything in the environment. I miss that. I miss that adrenaline rush of those types of situations.

**Morris John Gooch:** I don't miss, hey chief, time for your three o'clock rounds. Meaning on duty, you got to crawl out of a nice, warm, comfortable bed. And walk all through the ship and make sure that everybody's awake on their watches. And that everything is okay. And that the submarine is still in port, tied up to the pier.

**Morris John Gooch:** Or is sitting, in a dry dock. In situations like that. And I absolutely do not miss, field day. Where we cleaned the ship or the inspections. And I detest what the Navy was when I left with that aspect of everything was political. Everything went from what you were capable of to what they wanted you to play at.

**Morris John Gooch:** And yeah, I think I would say I was successful. I, the fact that I got the education that I did, I wouldn't have gotten that if I hadn't been in the military. -the work, I had great shipmates. Some of them to this day I remember just as if they were sitting here at the table.

**Morris John Gooch:** I had others that I'm glad I'll never see again. But I knew that if we were ever in a situation, I could count on them, and they knew they could count on me. Because personality didn't count when you were on a submarine at sea. You did your thing. We harassed one another, endlessly. We were always ragging on one another, as we called it.

**Morris John Gooch:** We had one guy who always walked and held on to the lights when he was talking. It was his way of standing. Some guys stand with their arms crossed, whatever. he would hang on to the lights. One of the guys had a little stamp made up that said weight tested by Myers. And so what he would do is every time he would come back to the launcher, he'd find hanging on the lice, this little stamp that said weight tested by Myers and stuff.

[01:26:38] **Morris John Gooch:** So that, that was one of the ways that we, we bugged him because he wasn't doing it out of anything, but that was his way of being comfortable.

**Dean Wetzel:** Here's a little bit more of a loaded question, I feel. -maybe it's just because I'm a GWAT veteran. But how did you readjust to civilian life? Were civilians welcoming of you back? Was it hard?

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah, because I went to work for a military environment. When I got out of the military, I went to work for Raytheon as a senior field engineer. And the area that I specialized in was Nuke submarine construction. For So with Nuke submarine construction, I

was back going to General Dynamics and Newport News, which are the two places that built submarines and conducting sub safe inspections.

**Morris John Gooch:** And to me, that was special because sub safe is the thing that makes the difference between an okay job and a superb job when it comes to building something that has to endure what a submarine has to endure. We would inspect welds and we were the ones who caught the fact that some of the welders at Newport News and GE for that fact were actually putting welding rods in the seam and then welding over top of them. Logically that would seem okay because you know you're melting the steel into the steel anyways but what it wasn't realized was that you were also embedding the slag from that welding in that weld. And so, you had a weld now that was porous. You cut a hole in a piece of steel that's that thick.

**Morris John Gooch:** Okay. That you load batteries in and out of that you do reactor equipment in and out of and everything else. You weld that all back together again. And then that goes out to sea and that submerges past a thousand feet. Okay. Which is an answer to one of your questions, but you go well past a thousand feet to test depths.

[01:28:39] **Morris John Gooch:** And when you get down there, a submarine compress. One of the things we would do is that we were on the surface, we would tie a piece of string, line, from one stanchion to another stanchion, meaning an object down below that was solid, welded to the hull. And then we would submerge. It would go from being taught to where it would hang like this, when you got down to depth.

**Morris John Gooch:** Because the ship shrunk that much by the pressure. And then we would retie it. So now it's taut down there. And as it would go up, we would wait until it snapped.

Because the ship's expanding. And so it broke it apart. If those wells were porous, that meant they were not strong enough to stand up to that pressure, that expansion and contraction.

**Morris John Gooch:** And so you could lose a submarine, which is what happened to the Thresher. And it happened to the Scorpion. And so that's why, we were paying attention. And now that I was out of the Navy and I was working in that arena, that was a good thing. There were bad things about it. -now I had a two hour commute, to and from work.

[01:29:58] **Morris John Gooch:** -I had jumped from the frying pan into the fire because I thought I was going to have time now to be with my family. And yet, Amy would meet me at the airport and hand me a clean suitcase and I would hand her a dirty one. And I'd get right back on another plane. But that changed over time as I got out.

**Morris John Gooch:** So, there were some adjustments. We didn't suffer combat fatigue or anything of that nature, but we did have our little games and issues. There was one or two times where, you know, in the middle of the night you wake up and you suddenly think you're still on the submarine and that you've got to get to battle stations or something like that.

[01:30:38] **Morris John Gooch:** Mentally, that happens for a while until, it goes away. -but yeah, that, that was the adjustment. -and eventually we got over it. But I'll tell you what, it was hard on my family. It was very hard on my family. We were moving all the time. We moved 15 year or 15 times in the 1st 18 years of our marriage. Once we moved within the same month, 1000 miles apart. That's hard. That's hard on a family.

**Dean Wetzel:** Yeah, that did. Puts a lot of extra stuff out there, a lot of extra stress that doesn't need to be there when you're doing it.

**Morris John Gooch:** Absolutely.

**Dean Wetzel:** how are you supposed to start over when you know it's not permanent?

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** When you already know it's going to happen at any moment. It could happen this month, next month.

**Morris John Gooch:** Oh yeah. Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** One other thing I would like to ask as we get closer to the end here. mainly because you served during the Cold War. Yeah. as we enter 1990, the wall comes down, the USSR collapses, did you feel good about that? Did you feel like you did something?

**Morris John Gooch:** Felt like I was watching something on TV. That, you have a detachment because you're not allowed to be political. When you're on a submarine, you can't be a Democrat or a Republican or anything even like that. You can't even. Think in terms of who are you voting for? Because, and being a civilian in the nineties, - as all of that stuff happened, it was like, sitting in a high chair and just watching things play out.

**Morris John Gooch:** It was like being in a stadium. you're watching a football game that's going on down there. -it was great to see it happening. It was great to be a part of history, meaning. alive during that time frame, but no, I never felt a personal connection to the fact that, the Soviets were changing drastically. I don't think the world has really improved that much, so no.

**Dean Wetzel:** Would you have, so think a hundred years, think 50 years, think 150 years down from this interview? Someone's listening on the other end of this right now. What would be the one main message you would want off of your service for that individual, family member, not family member, to take away from this? What is one message, what is one lesson you would want to pass on?

**Morris John Gooch:** There's two aspects of it. One is that the human does not change. Okay? Man will always have to deal with the strife, that is going on around them. Whether you be on a submarine, whether you be on a, an aircraft carrier, whether you're on a bomber, or you're a marine on the ground, you still have to deal with the strife in the world around you.

[01:33:47] **Morris John Gooch:** -I don't believe that in a hundred years. That there will be any difference between what is going on today and what will be going on than because man doesn't change, but we'll be fighting different ways. We'll be fighting with different tools. We may be fighting in other places, but we'll still be fighting and you'll still have guys dying and you'll still have wives crying.

**Morris John Gooch:** And you'll still have a world that has changed. everybody talks about peacetime, but America has never had a peacetime. We've always been at war. we've had times of calm and rest between them. But I do not believe that if we were to stop the conflict right now over in, the Middle East, and if we were to eliminate, all of the conflict that's going on right now and all those other places where we're sending our troops, it won't be long before we're in another battle, in another war, in another place. Call it what you will, policing action, like Korea, or, whatever. Conflict like Vietnam, you are still going to have men dying.

**Dean Wetzel:** What might be the most important moment to you in your service, and then why would this be so important?

[01:35:32] **Morris John Gooch:** What was the most important?

**Dean Wetzel:** Or most important moments could be plural as well.

**Morris John Gooch:** I guess my proudest moment would be when I earned my Dolphins. Knowing what earning Dolphins meant and what it signified. I resented the Surface Navy getting the Surface Warfare pin. And the reason I did was because Dolphins, there wasn't a man in the Navy who didn't look at that and know exactly what that was.

**Morris John Gooch:** And for the most part, know what it took to get them. And suddenly now, every guy on the surface who rides a combat ship can do a little homework and he gets a badge like that. To me, it was worthless. I know that's not true, but at the time, that's the way I felt when they started coming out with that badge.

**Morris John Gooch:** -dolphins meant I was a part of an elite force in the United States Navy. One, because of the work that I did. Yeah, I was 18 and I'm driving a multibillion dollar ship, if I got angry and went like this would be garbage on the bottom of the ocean, just like that. and so there was pride and the fact that I earned my dolphins. There were other moments, in that time. When I earned the Navy Achievement Medal. When I was one of four in the entire Navy that was promoted to First Class. E-6. Because few were promoted, there wasn't any room for them. The joy of seeing the skipper's face in the wardroom when he told me my son was born. And it was my son, not our son. Okay. Because we were guys talking about something unique in our lives and he had Children. And so, he knew what that meant to him. And when he asked me that question jokingly, and then realized that I didn't understand.

**Morris John Gooch:** It was the look on his face. -at one point, this man that I thought was an excellent officer as far as being a commanding officer, but was pud as far as I was concerned on a human being, was amazing. His look on his face. We were equals in that moment of time. There are things like that. I could go on and on about those little bits and pieces like that, but I would go back and I would do it all over again. That I would

**Dean Wetzel:** What? My last question for you, John. Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered to this interview? I know we've talked about a lot here.

**Morris John Gooch:** We could talk about, things like what it was like on some of the unique patrols. We could talk about, some of the game stuff. We talked about, Comshaw on the tender. Jumping off the tender crane into the ocean, and, what it was like to see, ocean liner split in three places, pieces at Apra Harbor.

[01:39:04] **Morris John Gooch:** -it was being towed to Japan and when the typhoon hit, it sank it in the middle of the entrance to the harbor we had to go into to tie up. There were a lot of things going on at the time. We were five days late, getting into port. How boring it was going back on that emergency propulsion motor.

**Morris John Gooch:** If they didn't, if the shaft that held it down had broken off, we would have had no way to get back to port. We'd have been without any kind of motion at all. We'd have been sitting out there. we could turn the propeller, but we couldn't do anything this way and this way. So all we can do is keep going to the straight line until something pushed us in a different direction.

**Morris John Gooch:** There, we could spend hours and hours talking about those types of stuff, sea stories. -I could talk about some of the guys I served with. I served with some



absolutely great people. I was blessed in that respect. I also served with some duds. but I'm proud of the time that I was in the Navy.

**Morris John Gooch:** And I would, like I said, I would go back and do it again. I don't know how you would feel about that, babe, but, knowing now what I know, Oh, I'd give anything to take my knowledge. Now go back to 1969 and relive it all. It would not, we wouldn't be sitting here at this table. That's for sure.

**Morris John Gooch:** Yeah.

**Dean Wetzel:** I thank you, John, for your time. This has been a great interview. -I look forward to doing the transcription.