

Haleigh Zamora, Ryley Mejia  
Period 3.

Colly O' Gorman  
U.S Navy Submarine Force  
1943 - 1946  
Interviewed in 2018



Columba Broome

O'Gorman

People who have fought for their country have lived through experiences that nobody can ever imagine. World War II started in September of 1939, but the United States didn't join the war until December 7, 1941. The United States joined the war after Japan bombed the U.S. Navy vessels in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor to prevent the United States from interfering with the Japanese's conquest to capture the Dutch East Indies and Southeast Asia. The attack brought much attention to many young men at that time. Some men were drafted from the draft and others were able to volunteer. 19 year old Colly O'Gorman volunteered in October of 1943 for the United States Submarine Force.

Colly O'Gorman is a World War II veteran who was born on January 22nd, 1924 in Manchester, Connecticut. O'Gorman is the oldest out of his siblings, he had a sister who is 2 years younger than him, a step-brother, and a step-sister. All his siblings have now passed away. O'Gorman volunteered to join the military at the age of 19. He joined the U.S Navy and served three years from the year 1943 to 1946. The United States had already been in the war for two years when he joined the service. O'Gorman had to do six months of boot camp in San Diego. Since the beginning He was very excited to enter the submarine. In his basic training, he had to learn how to be independently operate a submarine just in case of any emergency. All 233 men that were to be in the submarine force were qualified to know the basic knowledge of a vessel. In

case he had was the only man alive. O’Gorman also had to go through physical training as well; he stated that after his training finished, he was in the best shape of his entire life. After he finished his 6 months of basic and physical training, he was sent to Honshu, Japan for his deployment, and that is where he spent most of his time in the submarine.

O’ Gorman was in a submarine called the Quartermaster; around 80 other crew members were also on that same vessel. He and his crew members would go on runs to Japan between 45 - 60 days and then return to Hawaii where they would stay at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel.

O’Gorman explained that when they went on runs, they wouldn't see any type of civilization in the ocean where they spent most of their time. When they were submerged in Hawaii, he was very excited to finally see “light for the very first time in 60 days”. Everyone who worked in the submarine were his friends, they all had to learn to communicate and trust one another, that’s one of the most important things to learn when you are with the same people for 60 days straight.

They all had “each other’s back” as Colly stated, and that’s exactly how they got along. They all figured if one messes up, they all had to take the blame. In the submarine, they had 9 compartments. If one compartment caught on fire or started to fill up with water, they would isolate that compartment so it would not spread. One of Colly’s scariest experiences was when they had to dive down to 300 ft and when they did; they didn't realize that one side was filling up with water. The water was making the submarine heavier making it impossible to stop diving.

Before they hit the ocean floor which is thousands of feet below, they managed to make the submarine lighter and they were able to have the vessel float again. It was his scariest experience he had ever gone through in the force. One of the missions they had to do was chase enemy gunboats. They used a surface gun to take out enemy boats, and afterwards they would pick up the survivors and interrogate them. There they had the opportunity of knowing some more

information to help them with knowing the status of the enemy. O’Gorman would work for 4 hours and then have a break for 8 hours and his cycle would continue from 4 hours on, 8 hours off for 24 hours, and that would go for all the crewmen. During their break, they would go to the galley. That is where they would eat and tell stories, talk about what they would miss from home, which Colly said were “the girls”. He loved the food they served; they would eat eggs, steak, and more. According to Colly they had the best food, in the military. When it came to the evening, their job was to surface charge the batteries so the submarine could still work. One of Colly’s most memorable experiences during the war was seeing the atomic bomb. Right after the first bomb was dropped in Hiroshima, the United States dropped the second atomic bomb in Nagasaki. Colly then watched the plenez from his perscoro The war then ended, and Colly was very happy to go back home to the United States. In the month of February, 1946, Colly’s service ended in New York on the USS Ling.

O’Gorman explained his service in the navy as a positive outlook, he was glad he was back in his hometown of Manchester, Connecticut. He then moved and stayed with his aunt and uncle in Waterbury, Connecticut. He went to Washington, D.C. and applied at the Catholic University of Washington D.C. O’Gorman then transferred to Loyola University which is located in Los Angeles. There he talked logic, or reasoning. After six months at Loyola University, He then attended the University of Southern California. O’Gorman was able to graduate with a bachelors’ degree in communications. After graduate school, he got into social psychology. He always enjoyed school, learning and being able to teach. After attending many universities, graduating with a bachelors’ degree in communications, and all his experiences he went towards the teaching route, and became a teacher’s assistant.

Once college was all said and done, Colly started his life with his first wife. He was married to his first wife for twenty years, and had 5 children. He got married for the second time with his second wife for twenty years. After teaching, he knew he was going to go into some sort of business; he was able to get into a business that dealt with industrial real estate. It is a four generation business, with his great grandfather in law, brother in law, him and his son Shaun. That business brought an opportunity, and he was a contributor to one of the first books written about industrial revolution.

O' Gorman spent 3 years of his life to fight for his country and to be able to keep our freedom and independence. After the war, 22% of the submarines that had gone to fight never made it back. O'Gorman was one of the men that were able to come back and be a survivor and be able to tell his stories for the rest of his life. He found his service in the submarine force very positive, and it also had a positive impact on his life. Throughout the 72 years after the war, he only attended a few reunions. In the first few years after his service had ended, reunions were more productive because there were still many men that were able to attend. Now, no reunions of WWII Salvors are scheduled because of the men getting older and not being able to go, and some not living. O'Gorman believes that if the United States had not fought as hard as they did and defeat the enemy, "we would be speaking Japanese or German". According to Colly, the Japanese were "warriors" and some of the best fighters. If not the best, He learned from his experience he was able to recognize everybody's bravery, and compliment the enemy. At the age of 94, O' Gorman to this day is living like any other citizen, driving, and working in the family business. He is proud of his country and our freedom.