

Foe Recalls War Action Against JFK

Editor's Note — In a World War II skirmish, President-elect John F. Kennedy's torpedo boat was rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer. Kennedy was 26 at the time and his adversary, Lt. Comdr. Kohei Hanami, was 34. In this story, as Hanami told it to Gene Kramer of The Associated Press, the ex-skipper recalls the 1943 incident and gives his views of Kennedy today.

By KOHEI HANAMI
TOKYO (AP)—It stuns me to think how close we came to destroying the new president of the United States, John F. Kennedy, one black night in the Pacific during World War II.

I can remember that night very clearly. It was about 2 a.m. Aug. 1, 1943. My ship, the Amagiri, was returning from a supply mission to our troops in Kolombangara, in the Solomon Islands.

It was a starless night. Rain threatened and visibility was poor. I stood on the bridge, straining to see as we moved northward up Blackett Strait.

I had ordered battle alert, since we were under constant harassment by U.S. planes in the daytime and by night raiders and torpedo boats at night.

Suddenly we spotted an object churning up white waves about 1,000 meters to our starboard. I realized it was a torpedo boat and cried out, "Ten degrees turn, full speed ahead!"

Such "crash strategy" was supposed to be the best way to meet a torpedo boat attack. Our destroyer moved headlong toward the smaller boat at 30 knots.

We crashed right into it. I saw the enemy ship break in two with a tremendous roar. White gasoline flames shot out.

The torpedo boat disappeared in the dark. I knew that at least one half and probably both halves sank. The commander of that torpedo boat happened to be John F. Kennedy, but of course it was not until years later that I first heard his name.

I thought probably no one aboard the small boat survived. The thing for us was to get out of the enemy's theater of air superiority as quickly as we could. Although the collision smashed the Amagiri's bow, damaged its screw and caused some flooding, we were able to run for Rabaul at 24 knots.

The next year I was relieved of command in March because of illness.

After the war, I settled down on my family farm at the Shikawa. Lack of sleep from constant bombardment and overwork had been too much. I came down with tuberculosis and was an invalid for four years.

In 1952, still on the farm, I was flabbergasted to get a letter from Dr. Gunji Hosono, chairman of the Japan Institute of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo. It said that the torpedo boat smashed by the Amagiri had been skippered by Congressman Kennedy, then visiting Japan, and he wanted to meet me.

I was tremendously moved by Kennedy's friendliness to a former adversary. I could not reach Tokyo in time to meet him, but I wrote him a letter, congratulating him on his daring attack and wishing him success in his campaign for senator. In his reply Kennedy agreed with my view that the United States and Japan should cooperate as friends.

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Teddy's Kin Cusses Plan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alice Roosevelt Longworth showed mighty little interest today in a suggestion that a unit of a proposed cultural center here be adopted as a living memorial for her father, the late President Theodore Roosevelt.

T. R.'s outspoken daughter told a Washington Post reporter: "The hell with the cultural center as a memorial. I flee from thinking about things like that. It has nothing to do with a memorial to my father."

Mrs. Longworth, 76, was asked to comment on a proposal to dedicate part of Washington's planned \$75-million cultural center as a memorial to her father.

Neill Phillips, chairman of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City, suggested it in a letter to members of the Theodore Roosevelt Association, which is considering designs for the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial.

Mrs. Longworth has said she thinks Theodore Roosevelt Island in the Potomac River here should be preserved as a wildlife sanctuary with only a modest type of memorial to her father.

Turtles do not have teeth, but their jaws have horny edges that can cut hard substances.

