



# Orleans County Historical Association

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# Orleans County Historical Association

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The purpose of this project is to collect information about the historical development of Orleans County by means of tape-recorded conversations with people whose experiences reflect the county's growth.

These tapes and transcriptions will be preserved as educational resources and possible publication ( all or in part ).

I hereby release this tape and transcription to the Orleans County Historical Association.

Herbert L. Humphrey

Signed

Dec. 7 - 1982

Date

Understood and agreed to:

Sybil A. Hoffman

Interviewer

December 7, 1982

For the Orleans County Historical Association, December 7, 1982, this is Lysbeth Hoffman interviewing HERBERT G. HUMPHREY of 926-8 Lakeside Bluff, Waterport, New York, Town of Carlton.

- L Herb, would you start out by telling me where you were born and when ?
- H January 10, 1918 in the Town of Somerset, which is a town in Niagara County. I guess Barker's is the largest town in the Town of Somerset.
- L That's where the new power project is.
- H Right.
- L Would you tell me your father's full name and your mother's maiden name ?
- H Glenn Weaver Humphrey, and my mother's maiden name was Grace Mildred Edwards.
- L Now tell me a little bit about your early childhood, possibly when you started school.
- H As I say I was born in the Town of Somerset on January 10, 1918. I understand I wasn't cognizant of it, but we only lived there about 18 months and moved to a place north of Middleport called Torryville; in the north end of Middleport, North Hartland Street, a little settlement called Torryville which was outside the limits of the village of Middleport. I was about 18 months old when we moved there. I went to a country school for six years. A little one-room country school which is now obsolete. In the seventh grade I went into Middleport High School; it is now Royalton Hartland. That was in 1929, the time of the "Crash." I went through high school at Middleport, played all the sports. We weren't a large enough school to have a football team, but I played basketball, baseball, track. I graduated in 1935.
- Shortly after graduation I went to work for Niagara Sprayer Chemical Corporation before it ever became F.M.C., in the research department. It consisted of four people. Now there is probably two or three

hundred in the same organization.

- L Will you tell us what four people were there at that time ?
- H Oh yes. It was headed by "Doc" Dye. About everybody knew "Doc" Dye. George Smith, Audie Perry and myself were the four who participated in the research for Niagara Sprayer.
- L What sort of training, Herb, did you have to go into Niagara Sprayer ?
- H Basically none. I was born and raised on a small farm, knew fruit somewhat; and basically what we were doing was spraying certain blocks of fruit and taking counts. That's back when the chemicals were very sparse, few and far between. We had what we called "The Unholy Three". When it came to fruit we had Lime Sulphur, Arsenate of Lead, and Black Leaf 40 or Nicotine Sulphate. We were experimenting with some of our modern day chemicals at the time. I was instrumental in helping to develop Kola-fog which was the Niagara Sprayer's big money maker for years. They made a awful lot of money off from Bentonite Clay.
- L Were these early sprays or chemicals that you mentioned - - are any of them now illegal ?
- H Arsenate of Lead is illegal, it was abandoned quite awhile ago because of the arsenic and the lead content, both deadly poisons. None of the three that I mentioned are available as far as I know. Lime Sulphur went out a number of years ago and Nicotine Sulphate is still available in small quantities. What it was was the squeezings from the tobacco industry, from the stems and the leaves, and they formed a very poisonous juice. So people who smoke inhale what we used to spray on the trees and kill insects with, Nicotine.
- L Is there any particular reason they were hauled off the market - - government laws ?
- H Lack of use of it basically. Many other materials were proven to be much better, more easily formulated to kill a broader insect population range. They were good in their day, but still like everything else, a Model-T couldn't stack up to a Cadillac of the present

day.

L It isn't because anyone was actually hurt in the use of these chemicals, like with day to day farming ?

H Well, no not exactly. There are a number of stories about Arsenate of Lead, even how it was made pink. Because all Arsenate of Lead in later days was tinted pink, but when it comes out it's pure white, it looks like flour. During the Depression time Niagara Sprayer sent carloads of it south and some illiterates broke in the cars, thought they had flour and got poisoned. That was the story they told us that's why they made another step and tinted the product a pink instead of white as the way it comes out. No, there was no reason for it other than economically, I imagine that they had been abandoned.

L I'd like to ask you a couple of more questions while we are still here in the middle 1930's, it's away from the sprayer a little bit.

At the time that you got out of school how did you get back and forth to work ?

H When I graduated I went to work for Niagara Sprayer, the research department, I went on salary. The grand amount of \$18.00 a week. So I promptly bought myself a new car. I got a Ford V-8 for \$450.00, a brand new Ford.

L You certainly couldn't do that today.

H No you couldn't today but that's what it was. It was the first of the V-8's, I bought a new one and I gave \$450 for it, a little black coupe. Try it today.

L How long did you keep that car ?

H I had that car probably about three or four years. I stuck with the Fords. I had another one about three or four years, a Ford 60 which I gave to my father when I went in the service in 1941.

L Another thing I've forgotten to ask you in this early part of the tape. Would you give us the names of any of your brothers or sisters ?

H I have one sister, Velma Grace who is married to Franklin Houseman and at the present time still lives

in Middleport. She's about four years younger than I.

L How long did you work at Niagara Sprayer before your life changed ?

H I can always remember in 1939 they came out and started - - you had to register for the draft shortly after that. I worked for Niagara Sprayer until I went in the service which was in March 1941. One of the first bunch that ever went out of Niagara County. We left Lockport and went to Fort Niagara for three days and then promptly were shipped to Fort Eustis, Virginia. We dubbed it "Fort Useless", but it was Fort Eustis, down on the James River peninsula, just outside of Newport News in Norfolk. We opened up the camp. I say opened it up - - the barracks had been built and we were the first to occupy it.

L The branch of the service is the Army ?

H The Army. Went into the 3rd Battalion which was an Anti-aircraft or Artillery recruit training camp. This was in March of 1941. Went through Basic there and July 4, 1941, without as much as a three day pass, we boarded a troop train and headed for San Francisco. We ended up on what they call Angel Island, which is an Army base out in San Francisco Bay, just off the island of Alcatraz. We thought Angel Island was probably as bad as Alcatraz. We hung around there a little while and were put aboard a ship, an Army transport, the old "President Pierce", and ended up in Honolulu, Hawaii.

L How long a trip did you have on your luxury cruiser, "The President Pierce" ?

H About five days on the luxury liner, "The President Pierce".

Oh by the way, you entered the Army at that time at the great magnanimous wages of \$21.00 a month, for four months, and then you got raised to \$30.00. You also had to pay your cleaning, your laundry, your

haircuts, any incidentals out of it, and I know my first month's pay was something like \$8.00. And that's when I gave up smoking cigarettes and have never smoked one since. That goes back to 1941.

L (I think Herb is telling me something because I'm sitting here with a pack Kents in front of us.)

In today's life of polyesters and wash-and-wears and you are speaking of cleaning costs - - what were your uniforms made out of ?

H The old Army was wool. They went strong for your wool and a very good quality, there's no question about that. Your field uniforms, of course you had fatigues and khakis, but you were always issued a wool uniform for inspections on Saturdays. That was one of the great things in the Army, their Saturday inspections.

L You were walking around Hawaii in the middle of the summer in a full wool uniform ?

H No. When we left Virginia we turned those in and I never saw an Army wool uniform again until I got back in 1945.

L So you were in the lighter clothes ?

H The khakis, yes.

We landed in Honalulu, I can't exactly remember the date, but by the time we left Eustis in July and got there, it would probably have been three weeks to a month.

L So this would have been the early part of August 1941.

H We went into a camp and you were held in quarantine for approximately two weeks because they didn't want you to bring in some stateside diseases and whatnot over to the Territory of Hawaii. That's before Hawaii became a state. Everything was T.H. on your letters: "Territory of Hawaii." We were all draftees and they split us up to build up some of these other outfits. I think there was 18 of us that ended up in what was I Battery of the 64th Post Artillery, I.A. Well I along with 17 others, 18 of us total, ended up in I Battery which was Fort Shafter. Fort Shafter was approximately the north end of Honalulu where all we had to do was walk out the front gate and pick up a

bus. They were electric buses. They had a system where they were buses but they had electric grids and could go all the way through Honolulu down to Waikiki for the grand sum total of 10c, that was the fare. Fort Shafter was the Hawaiian headquarters. That's where the commanding general, communications, there was a M.P. contingent, and the anti-aircraft or A.A. outfit was located.

L Were you using 1941 equipment when you were with the artillery battery or were you using 1918 equipment ?

H We thought it was 1918 equipment. I know back in Basic Training they were so short of equipment that we had one 50 caliber machine gun for 1000 men to learn how to operate it and train on it. It had been put together and taken apart so many times I think if you threw the pieces down in a pile they'd automatically reassemble themselves. To go back a little bit, we opened up the camp at Fort Eustis and they brought us in some boxes which were stamped 1918 on them and we reached into a cosomolene and everybody pulled out a rifle that had been kept since 1918. The old 03 Springfield. So the equipment we had was few and far between. It wasn't much better when we got to Honolulu or a regular outfit. We were in an anti-aircraft outfit where we had these 37 millimeters which was quite a piece of junk by today's standards. They were glorified machine guns and if you fired three or four rounds, you might spend an hour taking it apart trying to extract the round.

L Were people ever hurt using this obsolete equipment ?

H Well the only people that were ever hurt - - I know we were out on a firing range with them once, and you had to put the gun in full recoil to extract the shell that had jammed. So we backed a truck up against the barrel, because the equipment we had couldn't pull it in recoil, and pushed the gun back into full recoil. And in going forward with the truck, they forgot that it was loaded, and they blew up an ammo truck. Put a shell right through the back end right into the motor of the truck. But as far as anybody being hurt, no.

L Maybe you were just very lucky.



- H We were lucky. Some guys got hurt a little, but no one got killed from that maneuver which was strictly against regulations.
- L So actually any armed forces in Honolulu or Fort Shafter in the early autumn of 1941 were not preparing for war, you were just stationed there, is that correct ?
- H That is it ! Peace time Honolulu was a ball, I tell you, and we had a ball ! We'd get up in the morning and have breakfast, make our bunks, maybe have a half hour of calisthenics or close order drill, and then everybody went off on some detail. You might catch anything from painting the rocks white to digging dandelions out of the baseball diamond. It was just a matter of finding a place that you could "goof off" the best. Nobody was really prepared, or preparing for war. We did go out about once a month or so and maybe fire the weapons. We might go out on a night maneuver and do some tracking, or there might be a plane pull a target sleeve and we would fire at that, but as far as concentrating down and training for what was to later come, no. I would say we were very, very ill prepared to fight a war. That was a big mistake the Japs made at the time. In fact I've read since that Admiral Yamamoto, who was the one who planned and instigated the whole attack on Pearl Harbor, wanted them to have some troops about there to land. Their big mistake was that <sup>they</sup> didn't have them because even though there was something like 60 to 70 thousand Army, Navy, Marine personnel, we were so ill trained that probably 10,000 trained troops could have over-run the island.
- L Without planes?
- H Without.
- L Do you think any of your leaders, the top officers, had any idea there was going to be conflict in the Pacific ?
- H I think they knew that the Japs were on the move, but they had no idea; ~~and~~ that's a controversy that has been argued for years and will be continued to be argued. That Washington or Roosevelt knew the Japs were going to attack Pearl Harbor. I don't believe so at all. I don't believe they had any inkling that there would be

the attack such as it was. They knew the Japs were on the move; they had put pressure on the Japanese nation and knew that she couldn't continue on and would not back up from the gains the country had made. But as far as an attack on Pearl Harbor, I think it was absolutely a surprise.

L This is quite strange considering there was a full-scale war going on in Europe at this time.

H Yes, and of course the Army as such was training more or less to fight that. The Pacific didn't have the ships, they didn't have the manpower, the personnel. True they had started to build up Midway, they had started to build up Wake, and they were sending some equipment and all to the Philipines, but they were just doing it piece-meal, by small dribs and drabs.

L Of the people who were in Fort Eustis during Basic Training, if there was some chance that they were going to Europe would they have received more training ?

H No, I don't think so. Everybody had what is known as a Basic Training, which is the basic things. They might have sent them to a more intensive training or with an outfit that was on maneuvers, or an outfit that was training more rigorously than we were, but as far as getting any of this at Eustis, no. All Eustis was was a Basic Training camp where you got your thirteen weeks of close order drill and facings some smattering of going on the rifle range and military life in general, but not any of the real intensive training that came later.

L Do you remember specifically what you were doing the week-end of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor ?

H Yes. I want to go back about five or six days before the actual attack. We were placed on an anti-sabotage alert, the battery was as such, which meant that we intensified the guard, all the equipment, and it was a big mistake, they later found like in Hickam Field where the airplanes were, they placed them all together more or less in a bunch so that they didn't need the manpower to guard them. We were on this anti-sabotage alert. I

know that as they intensified the guard. I know one night we were run out, like on a fire drill, about 2 o'clock in the morning, it was a practice session. They brought out ammunition, this is about five days before, because to see a shell or a machine gun bullet or anything in peace time - - you only saw that when you went out on the rifle range and then everyone of them was counted and when you got done they all had to be turned in. We broke out the ammunition, spent a day or two putting it in links for the 50 calibers and in belts for the 30 calibers. And about Friday, two days before the actual attack, they eased off the alert. We spent a half a day or better taking all of the ammunition out of the clips and out of the belts, putting them back in the boxes and took them back to the ammo dump which was nothing more than a crater. It was an extinct volcanic crater that had been tunneled out and kept under certain conditions, the temperature was constant, there was no chance of rusting of the ammo and they were able to keep it. So it was all sent back up to the cave again, the caves under the extinct volcano.

The morning of the attack, well the night before, the people in Honolulu were very sportsminded and I went to a high school football game, which was probably attended as any college game, at Honolulu Stadium. I can't tell you now who participated but it was a beautiful night. We got out probably about 10 o'clock and there was five or six of us going back to the Fort. We decided to walk back. A beautiful, balmy night in Hawaii. Of course the weather in Hawaii is usually pretty good. Once in awhile they will have some storms like they did here a couple of weeks ago. The temperature averages - - you take around 75 and go 10 degrees either way. Below 65 is a cold day and above 85 is extremely hot.

L Sounds like excellent weather for golf.

H Beautiful weather 12 months out of the year. But they do have their rainy season. They do have a lot of rain

located where they are. It has been said that Schofield Barracks, which is up in the central part of Oahu, somewhere on the post of every minute of every day of the year it's raining and I wouldn't be a bit surprised but what they're right. About half a dozen of us went back to the barracks. Of course in peace time you had a Class A Special Pass; you weren't restricted as to your hours, if you weren't on duty why you could be gone. So very few of the fellows ever stayed on the week ends in their barracks. But I was only a Buck Private at the time and didn't have a lot of money so I wasn't spending my times out too much.

- L It's nice to know you lead a good life while you were in the service and none of this "From Here To Eternity" foolishness.
- H I didn't have the money to. But we went back to Fort Shafter and the next morning we got up at around 7:30. You could 'sack in' if you desired. A lot of them were 'shacked up' in Honolulu and didn't bother even coming into the barracks. I hadn't been there long enough to know too many people but a lot of them would stay in Honolulu. There was a smattering, probably less than 40% or 50% of the whole barracks, or our whole battery, was present. Most of them never even got up for breakfast. But I, being an ol' country boy, got up for breakfast and there was probably 25 or 30 of us went in the mess hall and had breakfast, came out and was standing just outside the mess hall and we happened to notice that there were some planes moving in towards Pearl Harbor.
- L How many miles away were you at this point from Pearl Harbor ?
- H Probably in a straight line, as the crow flies, maybe two or three miles. Not that far from the harbor.
- L At this point would you have been looking across water, or a harbor or through the mountains ?
- H It was flat, very level land. Of course by road it would have been further, but we weren't very far as the crow flies from the harbor at Fort Shafter.

Somebody in our bunch commented at the time that those planes were flying pretty close to some A.A. fire. Of course that was not unusual at the time. The Navy might be testing out some of their guns. It was not unusual to hear fire anytime of day or night, even though it was Sunday. We started seeing some smoke. They said at 7:55 the first bomb dropped. This was probably five minutes after the first bomb dropped, about 8 A.M. We were in little, low, one story barracks and there was a fire ladder up the side. The barracks didn't need any heat or insulation, they were wide open. Three or four of us climbed up the fire ladder and were standing on the roof and were standing on the ridge pole of I Battery so we could get a little better view of the smoke and the action over towards Pearl when the whole end of E Battery disappeared. It just went up. Now there was no planes overhead so we assumed, and they said later, that probably the Navy was firing and one of their shells didn't explode at the range it was supposed to and it exploded on contact. Or somebody got nervous, which you're bound to do under those circumstances.

L How far away were you from this E Battery at this point ?

H We were in I Battery and E Battery you know was very close. I tell you, we came off of that roof without the use of the ladder!

As luck would have it our captain came down from where he lived in the heights above the camp. He was married and had a family and lived up there. And he said: "This is it." We had prepared positions. Now Battery I, or the whole 64th, was the only anti-aircraft outfit and it was stationed in and around the harbor, and we had Army prepared positions over-looking the harbor on the high points. As luck would have it, we were due to go on a three day maneuver the next day so all of our equipment, the guns, the trucks, everything we had to use on a maneuver was hooked up ready to move. It was ready to roll. The Captain says: "Get all you can of the personnel."

Because he knew there wouldn't be over a smattering of us, and we head for our positions. Our prepared sandbag position over the harbor. We were on a place called Red Hill. Now to digress a little bit, when we were over there two or three years ago and took a tour of the harbor, a viewing tour, you could see the Red Hill, which is nothing more than sort of a cliff. Reddish clay through the volcano many, many years ago grew up and this stands out. There's no vegetation on it, but it is reddish, more red than others, and it was known as the Red Hill. It was probably 25 or 30 minutes from the time that the first bomb was dropped until those of us who were there at the camp at the time jumped in trucks. We had, as I say, all our equipment, our field packs were rolled, everything was ready to go. And we jumped in our trucks and headed for our positions. Now you can see it was mass confusion at the time. Civilian cars, trucks, we met a few of the first ambulances, as such, bringing some of the Navy wounded and Army wounded to Tripler General Hospital which was also part of Fort Shafter. That was the main hospital and a part of Fort Shafter, Tripler General Hospital, one of the biggest on the island. We had a crazy, screw-ball driver who got us out there. I don't know how he got through the traffic but we got out there. By the time we got to our positions it was probably 45 minutes or so from the time of the first attack. The port was under attack for approximately two hours. There were two distinctive waves of planes. They sent half of their planes and then about an hour afterward the second half came in to "mop up." We had our guns, but we had no ammunition. In fact we didn't get ammunition for the 37 millimeters 'till about 2:30 that afternoon, and this was about 9:00 o'clock in the morning.

L You were just standing there behind sandbags, or crouching down behind sandbags ?

H Well we did or we didn't; how stupid could we get! We did have rifles and we did have rifle ammunition. For the old Springfield rifle, we did have those. There was probably 12 or 15 of us in the position I was at. We were too stupid to get behind sandbags, we found out later. We

were standing out there in the open and the planes were passing over us at maybe 200 or 300 feet, maybe 500 feet, and we were out there with rifles banging away at them as much as we could.

L Could you have hit a plane with a rifle ?

H We got credit for knocking a plane down that day. Now nobody will ever prove who did it. They later came around and gave the Battery, or Battalion, a citation for knocking a Jap plane down. Who did or how it was done, I don't know, we were just a firing as much as we could with the rifles. The Japs didn't loose that many planes. They actually only lost 29 out of 300 and some, the nearly 400 that they sent over.

L It was amazing that you were able to bring one down.

H I don't know how it was done, but we were given credit. Maybe it was more of a morale booster than anything to give the Battery or Battalion credit for knocking a plane down.

L What sort of a medal or you said citation did you get ?

H Well the Battalion got a paper, a big paper, that was framed and put out that they have given credit for knocking down the plane. This was quite a bit afterwards. I think it was just a morale builder as much as anything.

L Anything to help.

H I've always been asked: "Were you scared at the time ?" Well, at the time, no. You're fighting mad, you've seen some of the havoc done, the damage, I saw some of the guys come in - - we meet some of them on the backs of some Jeeps that were pretty well bleeding and hanging on to their arms or legs. I always liken it to the fact that if your house was burning, you could grab a piece of furniture and run out with it that took four of you to put it in place; and that's just about the way you are. Now I'll tell you, that afternoon, my knees didn't stop shaking for three or four days. After that we learned how stupid it was to be out in the open and firing at something too; because all they would have had to done was to trip those machine guns in the nose of the planes over and hit them and gotten 12 or 15 of us probably.

L I can remember hearing stories, maybe they were just

tales, that the planes were low enough that you could actually see the Japanese pilots.

H You could. Absolutely, no question about it. You could see the pilots. Of course they were in their goggles and helmets, their leather helmets, but you could make them out. Well you see these planes that go over now, the dusting, they only spray at a few hundred feet, and they were doing the same thing. They were coming in very, very low and making a pass at the fleet, dropping bombs, and starting their climb and we were not too far - - actually a little place outside the harbor called Pearl City. They had made their run on what they called "Battleship Row", which was the southern edge of Ford Island, which is the island in the heart of Pearl Harbor, and they weren't clearing the position I was at by only a few hundred feet, if that.

L Were they using machine guns or were they just about empty of their ammunition ?

H Well they had every type of plane there. They had fighters for protection, they had dive bombers, they had high level bombers and torpedo planes, so they had all. And they were strafing with machine guns, but they weren't about to hit a small little group like we were, luckily.

L If the Americans had been able to get their planes in the air that day, would they have been better equipped in the air than the Japanese were ?

H Well, of course what the Japs did first, before they ever hit the harbor. There's three fighter strips on Oahu and they hit those first and practically neutralized them. I understand they didn't get over 10 or a dozen planes into the air and by comparison the plane we had to the Jap Zero, it was rather an obsolete ship, it couldn't - - as we found out later in seeing some dog-fights, what we had in the P-38's, P-40's, the Zero was by far a better plane when it came to fighting in a dog-fight. Although some of our planes did get in the air and the few that got there gave a good account of themselves in knocking Jap planes out of the air. With all our concerted effort of ground fire and planes we only knocked down 29 Jap planes. They expected a loss of much greater I understand.

L From your position near Pearl City how much could you see



of the harbor and the burning ships ?

H We were directly above everything. We were on a high point of land, probably 500 to 1000 feet up above looking directly down into the harbor. So with all the heavy smoke and all the heavy fires and concentration it was just a mess of the battleships. Of course there were at the time approximately 100 ships in the harbor but the Japs were only basically after the battleships. It was since proven that the battleships were practically obsolete because later in the war it was mostly fought with carriers. And we had two carriers in the Pacific at the time but neither one of them, luckily was in the harbor. If it hadn't been for some rough weather one of them would have been in the harbor and it was not too far off shore when the Japs hit.

L Was that ship attacked at all ?

H No, not at that time. The Jap fleet, I understand, was at the north end of the island, they sent their planes in to neutralize our battleships and immediately scooted out and that's one of the Japs big mistakes is that they didn't make a second run because there was I don't know how many millions of barrels of fuel that wasn't touched; there was the ordinance shops that weren't hit. Within a matter of literally minutes, repair was going on for some of the ships that were damaged and hit.

L They must have had a spy system on the island prior to the attack?

H Oh definitely. They had a very, very high and elaborate system and knew just about where everything was. They had received notice, I think the day before or so, to what ships of ours were in the harbor. Even through the population of the island of Oahu or the Hawaiian Islands is made up of a high percentage of A.J.A.'s, American of Japanese Ancestry, I don't know of one instance or ever heard of one instance where any of them turned and gave information or turned against the United States even though their ancestors were Japanese. One of the black-eyes the United States has gotten and will have for a long time is that they immediately rounded up so many of them and literally threw them in detention camps. In fact there was an island off Honolulu,

we called it Sand Island, that was made from the pumpings out of the harbor and was literally a manmade island and they used that as sort of a detention camp for A.J.A.'s that they kept under guard. But none of them is known to have acted against the United States or shown any inclination to so.

L Of these internees on Sand Island, was it just the men or was it entire families ?

H Entire families.

I actually pretty well fell in love with the Hawaiian Islands. The weather is ideal. The lifestyle is slow and easy, no hurry. For the five or six months that I was there before the attack on Pearl Harbor we used to get an overnight pass, and about once a month you were allowed a three day pass. Of course you couldn't go back to the States in time like that. Between Honolulu and Waikiki, which is now all built up to high-rise apartments and shopping plazas and nothing but solid concentration, there was probably four or five miles of semi-open area. There might be a little "mom-and-pop store" as we might know them as, a Japanese store. But half-way in between was a place called Kau Kau Corners. There was a 24 hour a day restaurant there and a couple or three or four like little boarding houses. And one of them was run by this elderly Japanese lady, we all called her Mama-San, which in Japanese means mother: Mama-San. Being the 64th was an old time established place on the island, in fact it had never seen any stateside duty I understand; the personnel were mostly Regular Army. If you went on an overnight and wanted a place to stay you always went out to Kau Kau Corners, identified yourself as being from the 64th, and Mama-San always found a place for you. Of course we paid our bills and all to her, but we always could find a place to bunk on an overnight.

L Somehow Herb, I kind of have the picture in my mind of a short, stocky Japanese looking lady in a bright colored mumu.

H No, not exactly. She was small and very slight. She was elderly, grey-haired, but she was not heavy set. You find your Polynesians went more for that. The Japanese

were more on the slim, small, slight, slender type. She was very petite, small, and probably in her day she had been quite a lady but she took care of all of us.

To go back to December 7, 1941. The attack ended up at about 10 o'clock in the morning. The second wave they cleared out and I never saw so many trigger happy people as later, at night especially. I know we had to go get some ammunition; we didn't get it until about 2:30 in the afternoon for the 37 millimeters, and to tell you how well trained we were; we thought we'd loaded the gun, or put the clip of ammo on the 37, and get ready and somebody came around and told us we had the clip in bottom side up! That's how well we were trained. We did have the clip in bottom side up. We'd have jammed the whole thing if we had tried to fire it.

L Well you were under just a touch of stress that day.

H Rather. You remember a lot of it but you remember some of the crazy things that happened, not so much the blood, sweat and tears of what happened that day.

L You speak of later in the afternoon and the evening and the other members of the armed forces being trigger happy; were they shooting each other ?

H Yes ! Oh yes.

L Oh my.

H Anything that moved. Any sudden noise. Everybody was so on edge. As I said, one of the aircraft carriers was just off shore and she sent some of her planes in and even though everything was supposedly - - it was notified that they were coming in to Ford Island to land, there were five of our own planes shot down that night because somebody didn't get the message right and the planes came in and they cut loose. It looked the the 4th of July with all the rockets going off - - not so much rockets, 'cause that was later, but the tracer bullets and all. I don't think our outfit fired at that time so we weren't responsible, but five of our own Navy planes were shot down. They tell about one fellow who was on guard duty and everytime they sent somebody out to relieve him, he got so trigger happy he fired, and he spent the whole night on his own post, nobody would ever get out to relieve him. And of

course rumors were rampant. "There were parachuters dropping. They'd landed over on the other side of the island." There were more rumors and everybody was trigger happy and on edge so much.

L How long was it before you got competent information ?

H It was probably two or three days later before we really settled down and it looked like the Japs weren't coming back. I would say it was probably three days before we actually knew and could rely on what information we got.

L Was your Captain with you all this time ?

H Well I don't know. You see we were spread out around there and the Captain was in the C.P., the Command Post. We actually didn't have an officer at all with our gun position, it was just the sergeant.

L Where was he getting his orders from ?

H By telephone. We had phone lines spread between all of us. Radio wasn't used too much then, that came in later.

Of course we were under orders for radio silence anyway if we'd had one but it wasn't used 'cause we didn't know who'd be picking up or could pick up our transmissions; but we did have phone lines.

About two days later things had eased somewhat. Fires had been put out and in the harbor there was still some smoking and smoldering.

To digress a little bit and go back. Honolulu, they talk about it being a City of Lights. It was the city of light certainly and the next night to see everything totally blacked right out. The city, Pearl Harbor, everything was a total blackout; which was rather unusual.

L There still must have been some fires left.

H There were fires still burning in the harbor and they burnt for days later as well as torches. As I said earlier, it seemed like a matter of minutes, repair crews were on hand and things were going. Ships that nobody thought would ever float again or ever see any action were back in service in a matter of days if not weeks. I have a batch of slide photographs that were taken that day of some of the action. Like the whole bow of a ship blown off and it was back in service very shortly.

- L These certainly aren't pictures you actually took.
- H No way ! Who had a camera at the time?! These are some I've gotten later. I have some that I took when I was on a trip there three or four years ago of the Memorial to the Arizona.
- L That memorial is right over the Arizona, it is the Arizona ?
- H Right. The memorial is built in the shape of a bridge, of a ship bridge, but no part of it touches any part of the Arizona. But there is a flag pole there that is on the part of the Arizona and every morning the Marine guard goes out, raises the flag, and every evening it is lowered and that flag pole is attached to the Arizona.
- L In case anyone doesn't remember; the Arizona was a battleship ?
- H The Arizona was a battleship and the greatest loss of life was on the Arizona. There were actually about 3000 people killed and nearly 2000 of them were on this one ship. It blew up.
- L Did you happen to see that particular ship go down ?
- H No. Because the Arizona was hit in the first few minutes of the attack. That one I didn't see. I saw The Shaw and some of the others, but the Arizona, no, because it was among the first. That's why probably there was such a loss of life. It was something like 1775 men who lost their life on the Arizona which was the Flag Ship of the fleet.
- L Very possibly some of them weren't even up yet that morning.
- H Very possibly some of them weren't. They were just in the process of raising the colors on board some of the ships because it was about five minutes to eight that the first bomb dropped.
- The Arizona is at what was known as Battleship Row. There was three battleships of the nine there in the harbor that were totally lost. The Oklahoma, the Utah and the Arizona. The Oklahoma was turned bottom side up and was later righted and they were trying to tow her back to San Diego and they ran into a storm off Honolulu and she opened her seams, or one of the splits opened

again and they cut the tow line and then she sank. The Utah is still there, which was an old battleship that had been turned into a target ship and the Japs thought they had an aircraft carrier when they started clobbering her. The wreckage of the Utah and the Arizona are still there of the hundred ships. I will give the Japs credit for one thing at the time. Later some of the atrocities they pulled made you begin to wonder. We used to think "the only good one was a dead one" and we tried to make as many "good ones" as we possibly could. But there was a hospital ship in the harbor, the Solace, and it was anchored away from the battleships of course; painted white with huge red crosses on the top deck and on her sides, and no attempt, not one pass was made on the hospital ship. So I give them credit there. They did respect that. But of course they were after the big battle-wagons.

Three days afterwards we went back to our barracks and salvaged what we could. Shafter had not been hit except for a few - - as I said E Battery got hit and I think it was our own shells that did it. They had not attempted to bomb any part of Shafter, we got what <sup>we</sup> could in the line of supplies and that's the last time I saw Fort Shafter.

About two weeks afterwards they moved us on what they called a Sand Island. It was a manmade island, not the one off Honolulu; this is the one off of Midway. They called them sand islands because they're nothing more than the pumpings. From then on, for our outfit, what they had done - - I was in I Battery in the 64th - - they split the anti-aircraft up into individual batteries and they called them "bastard outfits". We weren't attached to any large unit. We would go in with any unit that was attacking. I went in once with the 2nd Marines, once with the 4th Marines, once with the 27th Infantry, and once with the 77th. We were attached to them. We got rid of the 37 shortly after that and we ended up with the 40 millimeters, Swedish 40, which was a beautiful

gun. Then we starting getting the M-51, which was quad mount or multiple mount machine guns. We were really loaded for bear later. At the time of the attack we<sup>were</sup> pretty weak and could have probably stopped a pheasant flying over as far as our fire power was concerned, but later we got really powerful.

L Was it treacherous getting from Pearl Harbor to Midway Island ? That's quite a ways.

H Oh no. As it turned out it wasn't. I've done a lot of island hopping with the Army after the attack. We moved westward and hit just any number of islands. Johnson Island, Howland Island, Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Tarawa, to name a few of them. There's a song that's sung, it crops up every so often about Christmas time, someone wrote it: "I'd Love To Spend Christmas On Christmas Island", it's down around the Equator. Anybody who ever saw Christmas Island, I don't imagine the one who wrote the song had ever seen it, you sure wouldn't want to spend Christmas on Christmas Island. It's a little coral atoll probably eight or ten feet above sea-level with a few scattered palm trees on it. I don't know but what they cut those down because they interfered with building the landing strip.

L How big of an island is this in miles ?

H By comparison, oh maybe a quarter of a mile by a half a mile, maybe a little less than that. As I recall it was a very small island. But someone had the idea he'd love to spend Christmas on Christmas Island - - but not if he ever saw it. The temperature gets mighty hot.

L How long were you there on Christmas Island ?

H Just to pop in. We came in and landed at one time. I never spent too long on any one island.

L So on these islands, all their food, just everything had to be brought in.

H Everything including water, fresh water. There was no natives, or very few, and they would have built a reservoir and catch rainwater. As far as the troops coming in they had to have their desalting equipment and would make what fresh water we had. When we'd go on one of these islands all our fresh

water had to be brought in.

Talking about these islands. We'd go out and come back in and have maybe a new type of training exercise, new guns brought back up strength, As I said we were in a "bastard outfit". Our Battery compliment was 156 men. By the way I didn't stay a private too long.

L I was just going to ask you that.

H Shortly afterwards I went to an ordinance school, when we got the 40 millimeters, and I was a buck private when I finished the ordinance school. Then I came back and the Captain says: "Well the T.O. (the Table of Organization) calls for a sergeant, so you're now a buck sergeant." So I wasn't a buck sergeant too long because I went to another ordinance school and came out and they made me staff.

L You were getting more money now too. Not that you can spend it.

H Not too well. There was no place to spend it. Not too much money more by present day standards. I think as a staff sergeant I drew something like \$90.00 a month, but that was pretty good compared to a \$30.00 a month buck private.

L Were you responsible for all your clothes and cleaning when you were popping all over the Pacific ?

H You didn't clean, nothing was cleaned. You lived out of sort of a barracks bag. You didn't have anything like a line of dress uniforms. Fatigues, coveralls and maybe khakis, 'cause you were flitting around the Equator at the time and you didn't need heavy clothes of any description. What washing was done you did it yourself as you could in saltwater. They came out with a saltwater soap and nothing would ever lather. The only fresh water - - to get a little further ahead of myself - - I know when we hit Saipan, we were allocated two quarts of water a day. That was our ration. From that you were supposed to do everything, wash, drink, shave, you name it. You can see there wasn't too much washing done or too much shaving done, except for what we could do with saltwater.



- L Mildew must have been quite a problem.
- H Definitely. There was no "spit and polish." In combat I always harken to "M.A.S.H." \* with the officers. The officers were officers, you respected them for being officers, but there wasn't any "spit and polish" and saluting and all that. In fact they frowned on it because they found when you hit an island that was infested with snipers anybody who seemed to be in charge was the first target. So they didn't wear their insignias and rank too prevalently and they didn't go around asking for salutes and all. Most of them were pretty regular "joes." They had to be in a combat outfit.
- L How often did you get replacement troops ?
- H Well the only troops we ever lost were a few through enemy action, not too many. We actually, in our outfit, even though we spent all out time in the Pacific and were fired on and landed on beaches and all - - we actually lost more men through crazy, screw-ball accidents than we ever did through enemy action. When I say screw-ball accidents I always cite when I lost two men in my squad one night. They were both from Tennessee. They had a little still back up from where we were stationed and they were running off a little moon-shine and it blew up on them and killed the two of them.
- L What island was this ?
- H This was on Saipan, which was a little later in the narration. Later when the B-29's came in, we lost seven men one night. This B-29 had been shot up, it had lost two engines, came in for a landing and didn't have enough power and he pancaked and skidded right across one of our camps. We were stationed around the B-29 strips. We lost seven men that night, not from enemy action, indirectly but not from the enemy fire at all.
- L You're with the artillery.
- H A.A. Artillery.

\* M.A.S.H. = popular television program (re:Korean War)

- L You're moving around in the Pacific to various islands and keeping the Japanese pushed westward. How were you getting new equipment? You were packing all of your equipment each time and moving it were you?
- H Everytime we moved we moved what we had with us. Everytime we got ready to move to a new island there always seemed to be new equipment or replacements of personnel would join us and bring us up to compliment.
- L You see, I think in relation to seeing these old war movies where these convoys were blown up or bombed or torpedoed and the equipment wasn't getting to the men.
- H Luckily in the Pacific that wasn't done too much. The Japs had a strong submarine fleet but they weren't too active. Our submarine fleet did a whale of a lot more damage to their shipping. As far as our loss of equipment, being blown up and all, it was nil, anything we got from the states. I guess I said earlier we had replaced the 37 millimeters with the 40's and brought up to the quad 50's so we really had fire power. And we got seasoned troops. We found out after you'd gone through 50 or 75 air-raids you knew enough to keep your head down. You knew enough to stay in a sandbagged revetment. If you couldn't reach them with the weapons you had, you stayed put. I think many a night I practically crawled in my helmet and that takes quite a feat when you can do that!
- L You're quite tall.
- H I've told everybody the only reason I'm here today is that I had the deepest hole and I stayed in it the longest of anybody in the outfit. That wasn't exactly true but - -
- L I've heard stories from men who were in the Navy saying that the worse part of World War II in the Pacific was 'The 90 Day Wonders.' Did the Army have 90 Day Wonders?
- H They sure did! We had them.
- L Would you explain them briefly for those who don't understand this term?
- H What a 90 Day Wonder is? Well I had four chances that I know of to go back to O.C.S., which is Officers Candidate

School. We had a Captain in our outfit who was a bug on it. He thought anybody who ever got through the eighth grade ought to go through and become an officer. He was a bug on being an officer. As it turned out with the time I had in, I was drawing as much money as he was when I became a tech sergeant and at the time I was drawing as much as he was as a Captain, and without responsibilities. They were a great deal; and I didn't have to pay for my meals and I didn't have to pay for my clothes which an officer does. So a 90 Day Wonder is someone who was given 90 days, I don't know as it's even that long, to become from a - - well if he was a enlisted man he wasn't classified too much as a 90 Day Wonder - - somebody right out of college, right out of civilian life, he immediately went to Officers Candidate School and in 90 days he was supposed to be so versed in how to led men and how to be a leader and an officer and most of them right away got drunk with power. Sure, they had that bar on their shoulder and their cap, and would come out and know it all. So that was a 90 Day Wonder. It is a wonder that many of them survived, but they soon learned, most of them, they were pretty well screened if they got into a combat unit. They didn't last very long if they tried to throw their weight around.

- L Another question I'd like to ask and this is going back to December 7, 1941: Up until December 7th I'm assuming you are hearing from your parents, from whoever if back in the United States, at a regular interval for 1941 mail. Maybe it was every few weeks. From that time on how long did it take you to hear from them again and how often did you hear from them ?
- H Surprisingly - - the best morale builder or the best morale booster there is is mail from home and one thing I will give the government credit for, no matter where you are, they always seemed to manage - - it might be three weeks late, but they always managed to get the mail to you.

- L Three weeks doesn't seem like a great long time in World War II.
- H It was probably within three weeks. We didn't get mail at all immediately after Pearl Harbor. Of course my mother knew where I was and within a matter of two or three days she had contacted the powers that be, I don't know exactly where, and they had informed her that my name wasn't on any casualty list. This was within three days from the time of the attack. We got mail at a fairly regular basis. Sometimes it would be in just a matter of days. You don't know what it was but there came in what was known as V-Mail.
- L I know what it is but please explain it.
- H It is almost like a telegram in a way. It was just one sheet that you could write a message on and it was very fast. They were able to get that back and forth. It wasn't a big bulky letter or anything but it was what was called V-Mail.
- L All of your mail would have been censored?
- H Oh definitely. We made a point of not writing too much or giving too much away and I had very few letters censored that I know of.
- Craziest thing though. I was just looking through some of my old books and I've got some pictures I took over there. I had one picture that I tried to send home confiscated, and here a year or so after the war, and this was confiscated in 1941, - - in about 1946 I got it, the picture. And I've got the picture. It came five years afterwards. It was nothing more than a shot from the top of the Pali which is outside of Honolulu, Nuuanu Pali, and I got the shoreline. It was a beautiful shot of the shoreline.
- L The word Pali, is that a Hawaiian word for mountain ?
- H Yes, mountain. Like Mauna<sup>l</sup>ua, Mauna<sup>k</sup>ea, they're certain names of peaks.
- The last that I can recall of any consequence, we were in the spring 1944, we were given very intensive training, we had jungle training, we had hand to hand combat, we had survival training.

- L Hadn't you already been through all this in the Pacific ?
- H Oh yes, we had it, but we were given refreshers courses. We got so with all our combat and survival types of training you used to like to go in combat, because the combat was sometimes easier than the training. They had brought our outfit all up to strength, we'd received new guns, newly outfitted anything that was worn, the old was discarded, and we were put aboard a ship, a L.S.T.. This would have been May of 1944.
- L Give the full word for L.S.T. please.
- H Landing Ship Tank, L.S.T., which is a flat bottom scow that had the top speed of about six to eight knots. It didn't cut through the waves, it didn't roll, it slapped. Every little swell it slapped into. The most roughest riding thing in the world! Below decks was loaded with aviation gasoline and A.A. shells. On the upper deck they chained all our trucks and equipment on the deck and we slept wherever we could. We were 26 days that way, out in the tropics, slapping the waves. Of course we didn't know where we were headed. We had a 'pool' and I don't think anybody won the money. We ended up on Saipan. We had her going to Truk, we had her going to Guam, and we had her going everywhere but where we actually ended up and hit the beach. We didn't know until we cleared Kwajalein, we pulled into Kwajalein and spent a day there. When we cleared Kwajalein we were on our own. We were away from the last American held territory. We went south of Truk. We pulled into Saipan, or off Saipan, the night of the 14th of June 1944, and I never saw such an array of ships in my life. I've seen many of them concentrated - - battlewagons, cruisers, destroyers, and they were throwing shells into that island. The island of Saipan is about 15 miles long and 5 miles wide.
- L How far away from the mainland of Japan is Saipan ?
- H It's around 1500 miles; I did know exactly. We were closer to the Philippines than we were to Japan.
- L And at this point the Japanese are still holding the Philippines too ?
- H Oh yes. They still had the Philippines and they had

- Saipan, they had Guam, they had Tinian. We were the farthest any troops had been into Japanese held territory.
- L When you were on Saipan, were you there when it was taken from the Japanese ?
- H I went in on the Fifth Wave.
- L Oh my! Would you like to tell me about it ?
- H Yes. We were between the battleships that were throwing shells in. We were just easing around there. We were due to hit the beach the next day. The battlewagons, cruisers, destroyers, and what-have-you were shelling. There was aircraft carriers, they had planes that were strafing and dropping bombs. This was June 14, 1944. We didn't land until the morning of the 15th. They shelled it all night long. The Japs pulled a raid, an air raid, and I never saw so much "ack-ack," or anti-aircraft fire; I think you could have walked on the flak up there to protect the aircraft carriers that were just off. Every ship there had smoke generators. We made smoke and hid all the ships that we could from their attack. The next morning about 8:30 or 9:00 o'clock, the shelling continued, I don't know for just how long but we were there about 24 hours and it never let up, and how long before that it had been done I don't know.
- L It's amazing you have got any ear drums left at all. All this time you are sitting in this flat bottom, double-decker boat full of ammunition and feeling perfectly safe ?
- H Absolutely ! You thought nothing of it.
- L How far away from shore were you ?
- H At the time we were probably a couple of miles off shore.
- L That doesn't seem quite far enough.
- H We pulled in closer when we got in the landing barges.
- L Which were called Ducks ?
- H The Ducks.  
We were attached to the 2nd and 4th Marines. The Marines hit the beach about 9:00 o'clock in the morning, and then of course there was a wave right behind them, and another wave behind them. Our outfit was in the fifth wave. The Marines had probably pushed inland maybe 500 yards from

the time they landed. We had these 40 millimeters and they used us as close-in fire support. We were right up behind the front line troops firing into anything that looked like a cave or crevice or anything that could have a machine gun nest or have a pill box. We were using the 40's to fire. The 40 millimeter was a nice - - we thought it was a wonderful weapon compared to what we had in the old 37. We could fire 120 rounds a minute, about a 2½ pound shell, and that's fully automatic. Of course you couldn't do it for very long or you'd burnt the barrel out. They had a 3500 yard self-destructive range. In other words we could fire a shell 3500 yards before it would self-destruct.

L Was it effective at all when it was self-destructing ?  
H Oh yes. If there was anything there. It would just blow apart.

The Marines went in about 9 in the morning and we went in probably an hour and a half later and we were using support. About 2 in the afternoon we pulled back the 40's and perched on the beach for beach defense. Because we knew the Japs would run planes over because they still held Guam which was 60 miles to the south of us. They held Rota which was to the north and they held Tinian which was only about two miles off the southern tip of Saipan. In fact when we got around the southern tip they were shelling us from Tinian.

L At this point in time, were the Japanese using weapons comparable to yours ?

H Ours got to be superior, no question about it. There were approximately 25 or 26,000 Jap troops on the island and they held the high ground, because Mt. Topachi - - that was a peak in the middle of the island, about 1500 feet. There were two towns of pretty good size. I'd say that they would be comparable to Albion and Medina, called Garapan and Chara Knanoa. Of course they were pretty well shot up. The Navy had really flattened them. They had quite a bit of industry. That was the only island of any consequence that I hit that had any native population on it.

- L Still ? They hadn't killed them off.
- H Oh no. There was still quite a number of them. They were holed up in cellars and caves. You'd be surprised. With the tonnage of shells that was thrown into that island how very few casualties the tonnage cost in lives.
- L Why is this, because they could dig down ?
- H Yes. After seeing it you yourself felt so safe. If you were in any sort of a hole at all - - it took a direct hit - - and what chance did you have of a shell coming in - - well occasionally, but rarely. But there was quite a bit of industry in these two towns. There was a cannery, there was a sugar mill, caused they raised sugar on the island.
- L All during the war they had been raising sugar ?
- H Yes. The Japs held the island, or was given the island, back in 1918. So they had had it all this time. They had not spent too much time because this was one of their innerdefense islands - - and they had not spent too much time to build it up, militarily, although they did have quite a number of troops. In fact we took an area, I've got some pictures of it too, that they were just starting to set up some fairly large guns and in looking them over we found that they were English made that they had captured in Singapore and had been moved there and they were going to place them on Saipan. But they had never gotten the emplacement done enough so they could use the guns. They had the guns there but had never set them so they could be used.
- L Did you ever have the problem on Saipan of the natives being more friendly towards the Japanese troops than they were towards the Americans ?
- H Oh, they were friendly to the Japanese troops. One of the saddest things I ever saw in my life was the suicide - - I didn't see the actual killing but I saw the aftermath of it when there were what few few troops were left and a number of civilians were driven to the north end of the island and in preference to being taken by the Americans, entire families committed suicide. They had thrown their children into the ocean and a lot of them blew themselves up with hand grenades because they



had been indoctrinated of the torture and all that the Americans would inflict on them.

L Their cultures would have been somewhat along the line of the Japanese culture in that death meant very little to them ?

H Right. Death meant nothing, and to them to be captured meant you no longer lived, even though you were alive; your family considered you dead.

We hit the beach in Saipan on June 15, 1944 which was seven days after they landed in Normandy or in Europe, something like that. I know we heard about it when we were going to the landing. They were with Armies in Europe where we were with Batteries and Battalions.

L Would you explain the difference in numbers ?

H This was in the numbers of personnel. A squad is eight men - - our battery was 156 men, This consisted of 8 - 40's, 32 - 50's, in other words everyone had an automatic weapon and everyone could do a dozen different jobs. Then you went into companies, there were batteries, then you went into battalions which might be six or eight companies together. Our battery consisted of four letter batteries and a headquarters battery.

L So in Armies you're talking thousands and you are talking in terms of hundreds ?

H Yes. By comparison. The Japs had about 25,000 men on the Island of Saipan and we landed two Marine Divisions and an Army Division so we had comparably a little greater manpower. A division might have been 10,000 men.

L In a landing when you take an area, do you confiscate the equipment found or destroy it ?

H We just confiscated as much as anything. It was usable. In fact I've fired Jap weapons. Not at them - - but their machine guns and their mortars, just to familiarize ourselves with them.

L So it would be useful to your troops ?

H Yes, I don't know of any instance where we used them but we could have used them. We as the United States or an American G.I., if you were going to abandon a thing

we would destroy by some means or other, blow up what we had to leave, or blow up an ammo dump. But the Japs never would. They were of the opinion that they were going to retake it so they didn't destroy it. I can see now why the Japs had so much courage. Every storage dump and all had I don't know how many shots or gallons of Saki, which is their rice wine and a very potent drink. Bottles upon bottles of Saki, while the United States Army didn't keep their troops drunk. But the Japs would. They would keep them pretty well inebriated, they were used to it.

L Their enlisted men were the peasants, is this so ?

H Pretty much so and the officers were from the higher class people. Their training was very vigorous and they were trained to obey an order implicitly. That's one thing you could see, it was very pronounced, If they were supposed to just take their lives in their hands and advance, then they would sacrifice their life. To them life wasn't worth much, where we go out of our way to save our skin more or less. They could never improvise. If nothing worked, then it didn't work; there was no improvisation for them.

L Did you actually come face to face with Japanese on Saipan during combat ?

H I've shot at them. I don't know how many I ever killed. I never came to hand-to-hand or never came within knife range. Deliver me from that ! I told them if I ever had to use a bayonet I was going to run the other way. I've shot at them but I don't know how many I've ever killed or ever hit.

L Did you ever find that this disturbed any of your other fellow troops, that they had to kill ?

H We were pretty hard hearted about it I guess. I never thought too much of it. As I say we did some crazy screw ball things. I know we were stationed once - - when we got permanently around the B-29 strip, somebody in our outfit, rather morbid in a way, dug up a bunch of skulls, and every stump and all around our camp area he had a skull sitting on it, until the Chaplain came

down and gave a big lecture on how sacrilegious it was toward the dead and we got rid of the skulls.

L What did you do about medication during World War II ?  
H Every outfit had a medic. We had hospitals right along with us. Of course they would come in later. I was attached to the Marine Corps and of course the Marines are part of the Navy so we had corpsmen. We had two corps-men attached to our battery which were Marines. One of the craziest things; I got hit in the hand, on Saipan, D-Day, not bad just shrapnel and it puffed up and all.

L This has not seemed to bother your golf in the years since ?

H Well if I grip anything for a period of time I've got to straighten these two fingers out, they sort of lock. But the craziest thing was, of the two corps-men we had with us, the fellow who put the sulphur drug on and wrapped the bandage around it was a fellow from Johnson's Creek, New York. He was from north of Route #104 where he lived. Mike Zagmester, and part of his family is still down there. Now I don't know where Mike is, the last I knew he was in Niagara Falls. But Mike Zagmester was the Marine Corpsman that was attached to our Battery on Saipan which was about 10,000 miles from home, maybe not quite that far but mighty close to it.

L Did you know him when you saw him ?

H I never knew him but the name was familiar and we started comparing notes and it was Mike Zagmester from Johnson's Creek.

L Did this ever happen any other time that you ran into anyone from Medina or locally ?

H Yes. I ran into my uncle I hadn't seen from California and he was in the Navy and he had been on a ship that had been either torpedoed or bombed and he was in the hospital in Honolulu. This was probably in 1942 or 1943.

L I remember somehow knowing you did have malaria during the war. At what time was that ?

- H Yes. I picked that up in 1944 on Saipan. I had malaria and I had dengue fever. I think I had that three or four times, but I had malaria once. That's enough.
- L Is dengue fever similar to malaria ?
- H Similar to malaria. Of course malaria sticks with you, dengue doesn't supposedly. It only lasts about three or four days and we called it "bone-breaker fever" because every bone in your body aches and you thought you were going to die and hoped you would. This was right after Saipan D-Day, so many had it and there was no such thing as hospitalization or anything from it, you just suffered it out.
- L There wasn't any medication given for it ?
- H We took atabrine for malaria and we ate all the aspirins we could to try to keep the fever down and to keep the ache at a minimum.
- L They weren't giving you quinine ?
- H Quinine comes from the Indochina area and we had no quinine because the Japs had the quinine cornered. But they came up with the material called Atabrine which was very similar in a way. But the thing is you turned yellow. Your whole body turned yellow, the pigment of your skin and you were yellow when you kept taking atabrine. Then somebody came out with the rumor that it made you sterile and as a result most of the guys wouldn't take it and it got so bad that they almost stood there with a pistol in the chow line. You had to take your atabrine. But the rumor was a false rumor it was later proven. Quinine was not available because the Japs had the corner on it.
- We had at the time probably some of the best medical doctors and the help that we could have possibly had. There was always a hospital ship along with every invasion. In fact on our D-Day, Saipan, quite a number of the fellows were hurt. They had gotten wounded and all. I'll never forget one instance - - our 40 millimeters were on wheels but in order to fire them there was a hydraulic control and you let the gun

down and the thing weighted up in the couple of tons, and there was a couple of pads that swung out from the sides which was no more than metal plates that kept it somewhere solid. This one fellow who had only been with our outfit for a matter of a couple of weeks, 'cause he was a replacement, - - they swung the gun out, he put the pad down and he didn't move his foot. It smashed his foot. I think he was ashore the grand sum of about three minutes. I think we sent him right back out with the same landing ship that brought us in.

L You mentioned earlier the Japanese showed respect for the hospital ship during the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Did they continue to do so during the other invasions ?

H No. They didn't seem to. In fact anyone who wore the Red Cross was just more of a target. The red stood out.

L When was the war over for you ?

H After Saipan we helped take Tinian which was another island just south of there. Then Guam had been a United States possession up until 1941 and the Japs took Guam which was only a matter of 60 miles south of Saipan. We helped take Guam and then came back to Saipan. That's when the B-29's came in. This would be late 1944. We bogged down there and our anti-aircraft guns were stationed around the strip that they had built for the B-29's that had started bombing Japan. They had started intensively bombing Japan about Thanksgiving time of 1944. The Japs threw everything they possibly had at us. About every night that we were there we had "Washing-Machine Charlie". We called them "Washing-Machine Charlie" because you could always tell their planes' motor was not the deep throaty roar that ours were and we called it a "washing-machine". They'd come over about every night and keep us awake. Then they kept throwing different raids. The most intensive raid we ever got was Christmas night of 1944. The Japs came in and threw just about everything they could at the B-29's. They did quite a lot of damage. They came in with what they called a

"Baka Bomb". We call them Baka because Baka in Japanese means crazy. It was nothing more than like a torpedo with little stubby wings that were manned by one person who was a suicide deal. It was similar to a Kamakaze but it was brought in by a betty and then released and he would glide it. This guy would literally sit on a torpedo, he had no motor power, but he had a little glide power. They could glide maybe two, three, four or five miles. On Christmas night of 1944, Tokoyo Rose, who was the only entertainment we ever had, - - they ought to have given her a medal - - we laughed at her, never took anything serious that she was talking about, she was all propaganda. She always used to play some of the best music. She was the only music we could get, you know, we were so far away from home. But Tokoyo Rose kept telling us for two or three weeks that we were going to get a Christmas present and that was our Christmas present from the Japanese was the bettys and the bakas after the B-29's. They did quite a lot of damage and got quite a lot of ships that night and they were too far out of our range. The 90's, the bigger guns, were firing at them but they stayed up too far out of our range and all we did was stay in the hole and just hope that one didn't come in there with us.

Then in the start of 1945 the war heated up. That was Iwo-Jima, Okinawa which I didn't get involved in. But around May or June of 1945 they started building us back up. We got all new equipment, we were brought up to manpower strength, we had intensive training, although we were still actively used as anti-aircraft around the Airstrip. Then in August the Japs received the Atom Bomb.

L Where were you when the Atom Bomb was dropped ?

H I was on Saipan. The plane carrying the bomb was from Tinian which was two miles away from where I was.

L Did you have any inkling of it at all ?

H No. We had no inkling of it. It was a highly kept secret. In fact we didn't hear about it until quite awhile after it was actually dropped.

Then rumors started. We knew the Japs were licked. We knew we had to go in and take the main island and that's what we were building up for. It was later proven that our outfit was due to hit in September. We were going in on the invasion of the Japanese island in September.

L The main island of Japan ?

H Yes, in September. We later found out that was the plan and that's why we were brought up to strength. They were building up Okinawa and they were bringing troops into our place and we were due to hit in September. But the Japs finally quit after they hit Nagasaki. Hiroshima was the first, then Nagasaki was the second; then the Japs finally sued for peace in August of 1945.

L Did you ever actually get on Japan ?

H No. I did not. I had a chance, not to get on Japan but - - between the time the Japs sued for peace and our troops actually landed on the island of Japan they were flying in supplies to the prisoner of war camps and I knew some members of a crew of a B-29 that was going up and taking in supplies and parachuting them into the camps. I had a chance to go on one of these flights and I turned it down. I said, "No, I've come through nearly five years." But what dissuaded me was, they didn't <sup>know</sup> where the Japs were, if it was false or not, if they had quit and if we had to go in again. The planes that they were using to fly these supplies in were what we called "War Wearies". They were planes that had been shot up and they were planes that had come in and had replaced motors and they weren't the front line planes, they were the second rate planes, and they were flying supplies in and I don't know, I had a chance to fly over but I turned it down - - I kick myself now, I wished I had of.

L I know there are stories that went on for many years after the war that on some of the islands the Japanese troops still either refused to believe or didn't know that Japan had surrendered. Did you ever run into any of that or did you come home immediately ?

- H In a way you might say I did run into it because even on Saipan - - and they held out for a long time on Guam too, a number of them did - - they would declare an island secure, but there was always somebody holed up and you might get shot at weeks afterwards. We did run into that, oh maybe six months after. There was five or six of us in trucks carrying supplies somewhere and a sniper cut loose on us and this was probably five or six months after the fighting was over with and this was in 1945. See the war was still going on but they had been defeated. I understand, especially in the Philippines, they just recently - - some Japs have been told they have got to surrender. In fact one of them wouldn't and they brought his brother in and some of his family and he finally did quit, because he wouldn't consider the war was over. That was one reason why in a way we'd have to go in and invade the island. There will always be a controversy as to whether the Atom Bomb ought to have been dropped or not. For my money, the only thing I can see wrong with it - - I see no reason why they had to drop the second one. The first one showed them what we had, jarred them up, but why they had to drop the second one, I don't know. But I'm probably here today because of the Atom Bomb having been dropped because we didn't have to go into the mainland of Japan. Every man, woman and child, they had been practicing with bamboo spears and anything that would have been an enemy and we would have literally conquer them person by person.
- L Can you even guess an estimate of how many more years the war would have gone on ?
- H I don't think it would have gone on much longer. It might have lasted another year because plans were not to really make the big thrust until about 1946, but we were due to land in September of 1945. Because they were bringing in troops from Europe and they were going to be involved in it. It might have been only another six months or so, but it might have lasted as much as a year.
- L At this point Japan was just so busy defending itself that they weren't able to build anything new like the



American forces were.

H No, that's it. Why a country that was so dependent on -- they didn't have any natural resources, they had no oil, they had no metals, they had no steel, they had nothing of that nature could have thought they could compete with the might of the United States and its vast resources. What they had when they started the war was superior to anything we had, no question about it; their planes were far superior, I would say their naval gunnery, their naval ships and all were superior. Their Zero could out-fly, out-maneuver, out-fight anything we had when we started the war, but later we got the P-51 which the Zero didn't stand a chance against. It was like a piper cub against a jet. The B-29 was the greatest flying machine ever.

L Was that the Flying Fortress ?

H No, the Flying Fortress was a B-17. This was even a bigger one and with more bomb load, better armament, everything.

L When did you actually get home to Middleport ?

H The war ended in August of 1945. We hung around and they wouldn't let us go because they had not signed the peace treaty yet. MacArthur had all the ships, to make a big splash, up in Tokoyo Bay for the surrender. So it was November that I finally started back to the States. I can't tell you the ship we were on but we ran into a typhoon, at a tail end of a typhoon, and we did the circle route. We went so far north that I can remember seeing the outlines of the mainland of Alaska and we were headed for Los Angeles.

L And here you are in tropical clothing!

H Tropical clothing, right.

L It must have been a little chilly.

H Yes. We were off the coast of Alaska and I will knock on wood that the only time that I ever had any touch of sea-sickness at all was when I went in the old President Pierce from San Francisco to Honolulu which was in 1941, and I had been in L.S.T.'s and L.S.D.'s and transport ships, Swedish ships, everything that practically floated

and never had a bit of sea-sickness. You can't say that for a lot of others. We were coming back and hit this typhoon and they had onboard the ship for us the finest of steaks and ice cream, you know, 'cause they were treating us pretty well. ~~and~~ I would say there weren't ten percent of the troop compliment on their feet to enjoy it. I'll tell you, if you wanted ice cream you'd go to the line and they'd say: "You want some ice cream? Here have a gallon!" They'd pass it to you if you were on your feet.

We pulled into Los Angeles and were processed because we were still in our tropical clothing and — had spent four or five years one side or other of the Equator. By the way I'm a member of the Royal Order of Shellbacks and the Purple Dragon Society because I've crossed the Equator and been across the International Date Line and both of them about six or eight times so you're a member of those organizations, honorary. So they sent us by troop train from there to Fort Knox, Kentucky and here it's in November. By present day standards it wasn't too cold. That was too full at the time for discharge so we went to Camp Attaberry, Indiana and I finally got my discharge in Attaberry, Indiana. They were so backlogged with those being discharged that we spent almost a week there and it was cold and all we had was tropical equipment, clothing, and we were given Class A wool uniforms and I got aboard a train out of Attaberry, Indiana into Buffalo, took a bus from Buffalo into Middleport. They talk about having royal send-offs or welcomes — I got off the bus, walked home and that was it. That was in November of 1945.

- L Did your mother and father know the time you were arriving?
- H I don't think I even sent them a telegram because it was so rush-rush at Attaberry that you were trying to get connections that I just think I just walked in.
- L What was the reaction, do you remember?
- H "Glad you're home." But they knew because I'd been three months in the process of coming. They knew I

would be in at any time.

L How much time did you have off once you were completely discharged before you were back to work ?

H Well I got home on a Thursday or a Friday and I went to work Monday.

L At Niagara Sprayer ?

H No. In the interim my cousin's husband had taken the job I had at Niagara and I didn't want to boot him and I had a chance to go into Industrial Chemicals in Lockport, New York. Niagara Chlorine Products Corporation. So I went right to work for Niagara Chlorine Products on a Monday morning. This was in 1945.

L How long did you stay there ?

H I was there until the Korean War broke out and then I got called back into the Korean War.

L As a Technical Sergeant ?

H As a First Sergeant. In the interim, in February of 1950, June and I were married. Her maiden name was June Thaxter of Middleport. The date was February 4, 1950. Then it was in July when I got notice to report at Fort Dix. But I didn't see any overseas time. I went in as a Tech Sergeant and later became a Field First Sergeant. I went into Dix because I supposedly had a critical M.O.S., which is a Military Occupational Specialty, they wouldn't give me a full discharge, but I never saw any of the equipment I was supposed to be so proficient on. I was in Dix for about three months and then I transferred up to Fort Devens, Massachusetts as a Field First Sergeant in a Tennessee National Guard outfit. I was the only northerner in the whole Guard.

L They must have talked funny to you.

H I got along with them first rate. We were there in the winter of 1951 and we moved to Pine Camp which later became Fort Drum to Operation Snow-Drop. I'll tell you, those poor boys suffered.

L This was in New York State ?

H Yes, around Watertown, right up there in that area. We were given advance training for those - - they were shipping them from there to Korea.

In 1951 they finally did give me my discharge.  
 Then I went back to Niagara Clorine and I didn't like the idea of punching a time-clock and all, so Barker Chemical was looking for somebody. So I joined Barker Chemical as a Field Man. I was there about 12 years, got to be the manager of Barker Chemical Branch in Barker and then we formed our own corporation, the Agchem Service Corporation in Medina. I was one of the original six that formed the corporation.

L What year was that ?

H 1963. I was there until I retired in 1980.

L But you're still not completely retired because you go to work everyday.

H Well I just do it to keep my hands in. I worked five hours this morning for Cornucopia.

L Is this just at the Kuckville farm or is it also with the Olcott farm ?

H Both, it's also at Olcott, I'm back and forth. I have monitoring stations set up for insect monitoring, and I do work on young fruit trees and a little bit of everything. I spread mouse bait and right now I've been doing some fall herbicide work.

L This continues most of the year when you can be out working in the orchards.

H You do a lot in the wintertime. The only time you don't do much is probably in January and February.

L Cornucopia Farms is primarily orchards ?

H Basically. 1200 acres of fruit. It is a division of Gerber Corporation, Gerber owns the operation.

L We have forgotten one very important item on this tape. We have gotten you and June married in 1950 but you had better tell us that you also have another member of your family.

H We have a daughter. She was born in 1954, Leslie Kay Humphrey. She lives in Medina at North Town Apartments and she is employed at The Little People's Center. (end of taped interview)

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This interview was conducted by, transcribed by Lysbeth Hoffman of Waterport, N.Y.