

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

Question: If I could just get you to give me your name, first and last and the correct spelling so I have it on tape.

Answer: My name is Marvin Butterfield, M-A-R-V-I-N, Butterfield is B-U-T-T-E-R-F-I-E-L-D.

Question: Great. I also use that to set my audio levels.

Answer: Hm-hmm.

Question: Now you were in -- you were in the Marines?

Answer: Yes.

Question: And which, like everybody else, you have a very unique story but we'll get to that -- that part of it. Actually you have a lot of different stories which are kind of interesting, the amount of --

Answer: Yes, I do.

Question: How did you get in the service?

Answer: Well, there were three of us, we were going down to the pool hall in Glendale, California

Answer: And one of the guys had to stop off at the post office and buy some airmail stamps. They were brand new at that time. So Dick (inaudible) the other guy and myself, we went in to, you know, just to kill time and do some gawking. And there was a big table in the main lobby with men and women in line for -- it was a Navy recruiter. And they were all waiting for -- to be assisted or whatever you know, whatever Navy recruiters do. And we wandered around and finally found a smaller line in a dark corner of the post office with Marine sergeant in dress blues. And he was recruiting for the Marine Corps. Well, we didn't like lines, anyway, so -- we'd just came through the great depression, you know, aptly named I believe. And all lines were not fondly remembered. So when Ted got back from getting his stamps, why, the three of us were challenged by this Marine sergeant to take an eye exam -- eye test. See if we were going to waste his time or not, you know, his valuable time. Well, it was a challenge and we took it. And we passed the eye test. And football season was over, we'd all been on the football team. As a matter of fact I lettered one year, my last year in football. And, well, what ... Anyway, so we took his challenge and then a day later, why we were sworn in and we gave our oath to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States of America

Answer: And up to this time I don't remember anybody ever releasing us from that promise. I consider it an oath up to this day. And we were on a bus heading for San Diego and a recruit depot. We went past Camp Pendleton and away south from Glendale, Los Angeles are

Answer: And there was a big fire at the -- at Camp Pendleton. There was some talk about stopping to help put out the fire. Well, we didn't -- we didn't have time. So this was a Saturday night and we headed on down to the recruit depot. We got in there about 1 o'clock, and I was on the top of a three-tier bunk set-up. And right above me, I didn't notice it until the next morning really, was a PA system. And at 0500 that son of a gun went off and I was sure they didn't mean me. I'd just gotten there. So I had an assist from a mean old

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

sergeant, he put us on the deck. Or put me on the deck and he said we were going to learn more about soldiering in seven weeks than we could in the Army in seven years. And we start right now. And right face forward ho. And off we went. They didn't have time for any finesse at all.

Question: How old were you?

Answer: I was 18.

Question: You're 18 years old.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Now was this pre-Pearl Harbor or post-Pearl Harbor?

Answer: Well this was post-Pearl Harbor. This was actually in January of 1943, so the war had been on for, oh, what, almost two years. And when -- when we got into the recruit depot and found out where we could go, we had what we called scatter papers that sent us out to different duties. And they were forming paratroops, Marine paratroops, which I was interested in. And they also had -- were asking for volunteers for the Marine Raiders, which were kind of famous at that time because of the Makin Island raid where Carlson's Raiders had gone in behind the -- behind the lines on submarines and what not. And unfortunately they captured about 19 of those guys and they took them to Kwajalein and beheaded them. But that's another story.

Anyway we finally got through with our boot camp as we called it, and, where are we.

Question: Do you remember where you -- where you first got shipped to that you saw action?

Answer: Yeah, well, we left San Diego on the USS America

Answer: It had been a luxury cruiser, cruise ship up until 1941, and it was really quite a ship. But they had transformed it into a troop -- troop ship, and it took Army personnel and Marines all over the world. But we left San Diego on the 21st of September, just when the sun was moving into the southern equator. And we took off for New Caledonia, which is where we wound up, Noumea, New Caledonia

Answer: We stopped in Pago Pago, which was the American Samoa group, and dropped off some material and some supplies and they took on some fellows who had been affected by malaria, elephantitis, dengue fever. And we didn't get off the ship -- we didn't have to get off the ship for that. I didn't want to go ashore anyway, after seeing those guys. But, and we had -- we had also had our initiation into the, oh I forget what they call it now, but we -- if you haven't had an opportunity to cross the equator, you're still a pollywog. And so they have an initiation for you when you go over. And we had to shine all the brass on the ship. And that was a big ship. Of course there were a lot of us, and they furnished the toothpaste and the -- or the paste and the toothbrushes and what not. And the guy that oversaw it and explained everything was a chief bosun's mate, and I swear that guy had been in the Navy -- Naval Service when John Paul Jones was a seaman second class. He was a real ancient mariner. And he got confused because it wasn't all brass. Everything that was even metal had to be polished up. And when we got to Pago Pago, why that ship just shone like sunshine. And we finally got to New Caledonia and that was quite a place. The -- New Caledonia is in the South Pacific between Solomon Islands and New Zealand. The people there that are indigenous to the country are what they call Melanesians They're a very strong, fierce looking black people

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

and they have their hair dyed an orange color. Orange was a favorite color. Most of the women that we saw, and we saw very few of them, had orange print dresses that they would. So this was a kind of a thing with them, orange was their color. These people had been cannibals up until 1930 when France outlawed cannibalism or big pig as they called it. It was a custom, a big pig, and it was outlawed in 1930 in all of the French islands. And besides the Melanesians, there was a lot of Tonganese, we called them Tongs. Today we call them Vietnamese. They were a very hardy, handsome delicate people that grew most of the produce that we had in our camp down there. And one of the -- one of the first things that I liked about the camp was that it was right across from the ocean. And the Seabees had built a big raft on 55 gallon drums, empty 55 gallon drums. And it had a one meter springboard on it. And this was known to every sailor and Marine I think in the island. And on my birthday, my 19th birthday, we went -- four of us, went to take a swim at this raft and we always went at least in pairs. We were never to go alone. We just had a little too much respect for the blacks. And just coming off cannibalism, why you can understand we were a little (gestures). Anyway, while we were swimming in this beautiful lagoon and coral and tropical fish and everything like that, we were joined by a bunch of older fellows. And they were very nice, they worked right in with our swimming party and we went on diving and exploring the coral formations and catching up on our suntan and what not. And this one guy got on the board and he was going to dive into the water. And I mischievously got on the board behind him and gave it a little jump of my own which threw him off balance and he went into the water and came up sputtering. I apologized, and the afternoon just kind of went on and on. We finally had to get back for chow so we went back to the road to hitchhike back to camp in time for chow and before we could catch a ride, why a jeep came tooling up toward us. The jeep had a blue board on the front where the license would be and on this board were three gold stars painted. This was a flag officer. So we snapped to and gave them a big salute. Military courtesy requires that of course. And the return salute was pretty good, too. Thumb on the nose, smile on the face. And it was Admiral Halsey. Yep. It's just too damn bad they don't put insignia on the swimming trunks. Otherwise I wouldn't have done that to him at all. But -

Question: So that was Admiral Halsey that you --

Answer: Admiral Bull Halsey, yep. He had just taken command of the (laughs) of the South Pacific theatre. He was only there for awhile and then he took his task force north and was replaced by -- or he was replaced as the senior officer, senior military officer, by the Major General who commanded the 77th Division -- 77th Army Division. And when they pulled in, why it was all fluff and feathers and fanfare and stuff. And he requested that the Marines off load his ship. He didn't want his troops to off load the ship. They were combat troops. They weren't longshoremen, but it was OK if the Marines did it. So we did it. And we took everything and put it in tents and the place, marked it, clearly marked it, hey you could find that stuff at night. Which we did, later on. Because the Seabees were going to build us a new camp and they wanted 40 cases of beer. We were going to have wooden decks, electric lights, I mean this was first class. We had to dig our own heads, but it was going to be just great. So one moonless night, why we went to the motor pool and got three trucks and 12 Marines that weren't doing anything much. So we went to the Army Supply Depot and got the beer and a whole bunch of other stuff and we took it back to camp, our new camp. And the -- the natives, the Melanesians had set quick camp as they called it, just outside of ours, just off of our camp. Well we gave the Seabees their 40 cases of beer, then we took the rest of the stuff out and put it in the -- in the woods -- in the jungle. And we no more than got settled in there than the Army came up, MPs and one of the supply dump guards, hoping to identify somebody. And they wandered around, you know, and looked and all they could find was these innocent looking Seabees. And which was fine. And the ... one of the guys suggested that they go look in the woods, in the jungle. Well, it was too dark. There's no moon and the

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

fires that the Melanesians built for their quick camps. They didn't want to go out there. So they said they'd come back in the morning. Well, they came back in the morning but, gee, these -- the natives had packed up everything including half of the stuff we left with them and took off with it, all the canned goods and the fruit and stuff. So that was - that was that. And then later on we went up to Guadalcanal for some more training and we trained up there and had numerous enlightening experiences as to how the Raiders worked because the Raiders had been very instrumental in capturing Guadalcanal and the Solomon Islands, which was the first offensive of the -- of the war, after the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. It was really the first shot we had at them. And we trained and then finally we were ready to go into combat and the first place we went was to a little island called Emaru which is on the northern part of the Solomon Islands, it's about 200 miles from Rabaul, which was the granddaddy of all the Japanese fortifications in the Pacific. It was only a half an hour away by air. And I thought my God, do they want an airstrip there? You know that's so close. But we were told that Admiral Halsey had requested that the 4th Regiment, which we were at that time, be involved in this. And I thought well, I wonder if he really accepted my apology. He did. As it turned out, the Japanese and all of their laborers had left the island about a week before so that the only thing on the island -- on Emaru, when we got there, was these wild pigs with lethal tusks. They had -- maybe you remember seeing these tusks, they curved around and everything. And they had absolutely no social graces. They're just -- it took a 30 caliber bullet in the head to bring them down. They were just -- but it was good eating, good eating pork. And so we were there for a while and set up a rifle range.

And then we moved back to Guadalcanal and got there just in time for me to get a toothache and I took off for -- on the northern Kwajalein and finally wound up at Aniwetok. We were allowed to go ashore for some beach volleyball and we got a \$20 draw for toothpaste and poker stakes, which was more important than anything else, as it turned out. And there was some talk about going to Saipan or Tinian because they weren't doing well at that time. But things got better and so we were diverted and went to Guam, which was where we were originally headed. And we landed on Guam on the 21st of July, 1944. And had a nice experience on the way to Guam. We were on an LST which I'm not sure what the Navy calls LST's but we called them large, slow targets. And we were on -- on this one. And occasionally we would get to sleep on deck because it was awfully hot in Micronesia and that are

Answer: So on the 3rd of July, between Aniwetok and Guam, myself and a fellow from -- he was from ranch country, Union, Oregon, wherever that is. He and I were scheduled to go on deck to sleep on deck. So we took our helmets and our kapok life vests and we were securely wrapped in a quarter inch steel gun tub on the port side focsle of this LST. And the whole thing was dominated by the 20 millimeter anti-aircraft gun. Well, we didn't think anything about any of that stuff and we just -- we did talk far into the night. It was a warm night and it was just one of those things where you get a couple of like minded people together and we sat there and shot the breeze for a long time. And finally went to sleep. And the next morning, which as it turned out was the 4th of July, we were awakened by the ship's PA system sounding all hands, you know, battle stations. Well all I had to do was stand up and my shoulder slipped right into this 20 millimeter gun handle and Gene Wells fastened the strap behind me and I swung the gun around and saw the morning sun and my first Mitsubishi. And there were dozens of them. Zeros and Bettys. Four hundred miles an hour, coming right toward us. And I knew I didn't have to figure out any lead time or anything like that, it was coming right at me so I just point the -- the anti-aircraft gun at the closest ship, closest airplane, slid back the lever and put a cartridge into the chamber and off she went. And I got off about four or five rounds before the gunner who was assigned to that gun caught up with us and I never forget his words. He said, "Well done, Jarhead." (laughs) Said "Now put on your helmet, you dummy". I had, you know, didn't think about things like that, even though I -- we saw these tracer bullets coming at us. This guy had let go a strafing burst and,

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

praise God, they went wide. But it wasn't any fun. And I think we could conclude that those ships, or those airplanes, came from Truk, which was an air base in the Caroline, that we had bypassed. And there were a lot of islands that had been bypassed, a lot of places, and this was one of them. Anyway, that was kind of a fun time. Except for those bullets coming right at you -- that's not -- that's not fun, I can't say that.

Question: What goes through -- cause you're what, maybe 19 years old now or something. I mean you're -- you're still a kid.

Answer: Yeah, I was 19.

Question: What's going through your head at that time? I mean, can you remember -- I mean I know it's 50 years ago, but you -- is it fear -- is that a good word? Or is that not a good word for what happened?

Answer: At that time, there -- there had to be some fear, but that was not the overwhelming. The only time I really got scared was when I was -- when we first landed on Guam. And the first thing I saw was our gunnery sergeant, a fellow by the name of Al Cariaga who lives down near -- near Sacramento, someplace. I've been in touch with him on occasion. We exchange cards and well-dos and Semper Fi and stuff like that. And he was standing up being tended to by one of the hospital corpsman who keep saying, "Sit down, Al - for Christ sake, you're going to get us both killed." And I guess he finally did. But they -- they evacuated him. He had landed at -- on the first wave to try to negate the hill where the Japanese were pouring mortar and heavy weapons fire into the ships that were coming in for the landing. I was scared for that at that time coming in because, oh, 30, maybe 40 yards, 50 yards at the most, off to our right, shell landed in the middle of one of those amphib tractors that was going into the beach. The thing just disappeared, poof. It was there and then it wasn't. So that was the first time I was scared.

The second time I was scared, we went up on MT. Allafantan and the Japanese were continually probing our lines trying to -- trying to get us off the island is what they were trying to do, I'm sure. But they were discussing Roosevelt's ancestry and the eating habits of Marines, you know. What we had for breakfast and just getting closer and closer and closer, all the time. There was no rifle fire exchanged but we did -- there were hand grenades that were tossed back. And as a matter of fact, our company commander, First Lt. Larry Bangsor, got his left nipple taken off by a grenade that the Japs threw at the headquarters CP. And then we experienced a banzai charge on the morning on the 26th of July. About a hundred -- well we had bottled off the Eriwadi Peninsula -- bottled the Japanese off. And had our line across the peninsula

Answer: And about a hundred Japanese soldiers broke out of their cover and they came charging right for us. We knew what banzai charges were because we had been told about them and seen them in movies, you know. They just -- they're swinging swords and throwing grenades and they all have their rifles with bayonets on them. And I could see -- I remember the sparkle from the bayonets in the morning sun. This was -- we're talking about 8 o'clock in the morning. And that's when I got this Japanese flag that I returned to Takahashi cause I realized what -- what was going to happen to me if I wasn't careful. So I dropped down and I fired off a couple rounds and the guy fell down and his helmet rolled off right in front of me and tucked in his helmet was this Japanese flag. The individual flag. And as I mentioned, I had an opportunity in 1960 -- '61, '62, sometime in there, to return it to Mr. Shinichi Okazaki -- got to get that right. And he returned it to the brother whose name was Takahashi. And Mr. Takahashi was a farmer in Nara prefecture in Japan. He wrote me a nice letter which I lost, damn it, but I got a nice letter from Shinichi also. And I was kind of proud of that. I -- I think that was the thing to do. A lot of guys -- they won't buy Japanese cars or, you know,

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

they really still hold a resentment to the Japanese people. The only resentment I had towards Japanese was when I was in high school. There was a kid that practiced football opposite me. His name was oke-something. I can't remember. Anyway, he was a bigun, and every time the snap the ball, why he'd knock me right on my butt. Oh I used to get so damn mad at him. But I couldn't do anything about it. So, but that's the only, really hostility that I felt toward the Japanese.

Question: What was the -- do you remember kind of the gist of the letter that came back from the brother? I mean was there animosity or --

Answer: Oh, no, no. That was one thing that really surprised me. Nobody ever asked me how I got that flag. They wanted to know where. I think they knew how I got the flag. But they were more interested in where did I get it. I don't really fully understand the Oriental mind at all. It's a -- well.

Question: Do you know the significance of the flag?

Answer: Well, it was just a -- like a lots of luck Joe and best wishes from the family and friends. There was writing all over it and it had the Japanese meatball on a white silk -- piece of white silk. I think everybody's seen one.

Question: Did all of the -- I mean, was that real common for the soldiers to carry?

Answer: It was quite common, yes. Hm-hmm. Oh, I don't know of any others. Well, there were quite a few of those individual flags were captured and are in museums and places like that. But it wasn't uncommon at all. There were quite a few.

Question: Now you had another interesting experience because, I think to quote you, that you're the best looking dead man or something like that?

Answer: Well, I was reported as killed in action, mistakenly, I hope. But my mother did get a telegram from General Vandergrift who at that time was the commandant of the Marine Corps. And when I got hit, I was -- I was a company runner for Larry Bangsor, and we had our share of Navajo talkers -- radio talkers. And they were -- they did a marvelous job for us in the islands. But company runners were still -- they still had occasion to use them. And the company runner that he had before that morning had been wounded. And he asked me to be his runner so I said okay, I'll do it. It was an easy job. All you had to do was what you were told. And I got to carry a very light carbine instead of the heavy M-1 rifle. And it was kind of a prestigious thing. And I was with Lt. Bangsor when we got down near the airfield on the Eriwadi Peninsula, and he -- we ran into heavy fire from cannons and machine guns, 77-inch cannon that the Japanese had set up to fortify that position. And heavy machine gun fire. And some kid that I knew -- he was from Ann Arbor, Michigan. I'll never forget that. And his name was Gerlack. He was wounded. He had a bullet through the knee and he was down right in the line of fire where we would have to return fire to, well, in order to complete our mission. So Lt. Bangsor says get him out of there. Well, you don't say why or how when an officer tells you to do something. I was not used to that at all. I said okay. So I slung my carbine, grabbed a couple of hand grenades, and went down and sat down next to a banana tree as a bullet went through the banana tree and took a -- took a hole in my dungarees -- put a hole in my dungarees. And I threw a grenade over my shoulder to where this Nambu machine gun was firing. And when the grenade went off and the chattering stopped, why I scooped up Gerlack and headed for the tank -- try to get him out of there -- out of harm's way. I didn't make it. One of the shells exploded and I got a piece of shrapnel that just about cut me in half. Took kidney and two ribs out of my back. And so I was laying there on the

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

grass bleeding all over Gerlack and our corpsman, a fellow by the name of Johns came up. As a matter of fact, Bob Bush might know him. He was hospital corpsman. He came up and he said don't make any fuss. He says I don't think you're going to get out of this anyway. And he sprinkled some sulfa -- sulfa powder on the wound. And then a couple of other guys, Bill Johnson and another Marine from our squad picked me up and put me on a tank and they took me to an aid station and I went to the hospital ship and I got -- Bill Johnson, I saw him after the war and he was just surprised as hell. He thought sure I was dead. And as I say my mother got a telegram. And scared a lot of people. And I never worried about it. Never thought much about it. Didn't really have time to. I don't know.

Question: Did you -- did you try to notify your mom that you were wounded?

Answer: Well, yeah, I did. I was in the hospital in aihā Heights, in -- up out of Honolulu, out of Pearl Harbor. And one of the gray ladies, the volunteers up there -- she prevailed on me to write to my mother. And I had hesitated to do that because I didn't want her to get a letter from a hospital. She might worry. I didn't know that she'd received a telegram or anything like that. But yeah, that was something else.

Question: That had to be tough on your mom.

Answer: It was. She -- she didn't break down until my dad said, it was about two or three days later, he took her to lunch at the Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles, and while -- while they were there, the dining room filled up with a bunch of Marines who were heading overseas. And then she broke down.

Question: Were you an only child?

Answer: Pardon?

Question: Did you have any other brothers and sisters or --

Answer: Well, I had a younger brother, Curt, he was in the -- he was aboard the Antietam Aircraft Carrier, and I had an older sister, step-sister, who was in the WAVES. She joined, oh, about three months before I went into the service. And she was always very, very proud of the fact that she got to serve her country. And it was -- it was more prevalent then, the pride than I see today. It's -- it was different.

Question: Do you -- and I don't mean the gore aspect of it -- do you -- can you remember when you got hit or is that something you blacked out? I mean, do you --

Answer: I don't remember actually being hit. I can remember the incident leading up to it. I can remember going down and talking with Gerlack and telling me he wanted to get back to Ann Arbor and throwing the grenade. I can remember that part. But I don't remember -- I remember scooping him up, but I don't remember the actual getting hit part of it. I do remember the -- I was on board the hospital ship, sitting in the gangway there. And every time somebody'd come by, why I'd ask them for a glass of water, or some water. And first thing they always do is say well where are you hit? And I -- when I told them, they said, no, can't have any. It would run right through you. So I wised up pretty in a hurry. The next guy said where are you hit and I said right here (pointing to leg) and there was so much blood and crap around you, they couldn't tell anyway. So I got my drink of water. And it was kind of dumb, but I was thirsty.

Question: Did you -- did you ever think you were going to die?

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

Answer: No, I never did. I didn't -- I knew that I was in serious trouble after I woke up from the operation. Commander Rex and the ship's chaplain were at the foot of my bed when I woke up. And I was -- had three mattresses and I was doped up crazy and they were standing there smiling. And the chaplain said, "Who would you like to thank for your miracle?" Well I wasn't a Christian then so I didn't -- hadn't give it any thought. And I said well that's easy, I thank the one who did the miracle. And that satisfied both of them. It troubled me afterwards, but it satisfied them. And that was kind of a difficult moment. But I realized that at that time that I was pretty close to room temperature. But I never thought that, other than the fact that I lost about 50 pounds, I never thought about dying at all. And when Gene Wells and I were out on the -- in the gun tub that night, we had talked about everything except dying. It just -- it didn't -- didn't cross our mind. Not us. I mean, we were immortal. That's why we threw the Atrabrine -- Atrabrine tablets over our shoulder in the chow line. When we had -- went through the chow line, we'd hold our thumb like this and the Corpsman would put an Atrabrine tablet to prevent malaria

Answer: And they tasted like hell. So we'd take a step and then flip them right over our -- the ground was littered with yellow Atrabrine tablets, you know, it was terrible. But nobody liked them. And we all thought we were immortal anyway.

Question: Cause you were a Marine or because you were young?

Answer: Because I was young. And I did get malaria later on. I had -- as a matter of fact I had malaria and yellow jaundice at the same time when I was on Guadalcanal. I remember they weighed me at 175. And the next time I got weighed was in the hospital ship. I weighed 125.

Question: Wow.

Question: How much, and this is probably a hard question to answer. How much do you think World War II changed your life?

Answer: Well, I'm not sure. I know that I came to regard people, most people, with a lot more compassion than I did before. And I knew -- I was aware then of my own mortality. And that was a change. I -- I don't know about changing for -- well, I was always very proud of what we had done in the Marine Corps and I know that I've made my share of mistakes, being a human being, you're bound to. But I don't think joining the Marine Corps was one of them. I don't think that in any way, shape or form. I was always very proud of that.

Question: Did you go in a boy and come out a man? Is that -- I hear that said -- is that how you felt?

Answer: Yeah, I think that's -- I think that's accurate. The time that I spent in China after the war was probably more maturing than being in the -- in the mud Marines or, you know, going from island to island and shooting at Japanese when you see them. When we were in China, we were supposed to fill the vacuum left by the Japanese troops who were all going to go home. We had to disarm and send them back to Japan. And that part was very easy and there was a lot of sympathy toward the Japanese, even though we knew what we had to go through. Do you know that when -- when the atomic bombs were dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, part of the 4th Regiment was on board ship heading for the invasion of those islands. And you can't believe how gratified some of those guys were. I ran into them at the -- at the reunion in Chicago when I was back there. And of course when the

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

Japanese surrendered, the government had to cancel an order for 250,000 purple heart medals. That's a lot of blood.

Question: Scary to think about.

Answer: I -- I gave a pint of blood when I went into the Marine Corps recruit depot. Best investment I ever made. I got nine back. But the Chinese were -- were different, and the -- we were -- well, we were there partly just to show the flag. Every Saturday morning the regiment went out to the race track which was just on the outskirts of Tsingtao, and we paraded around the -- had a band -- either a Navy or Marine band, playing Stars and Stripes Forever. And I mean forever. And we just walked around, marched around. And occasionally, one time we had a Canadian cruiser that came into Tsingtao. And we had a detachment of Canadian Marines, Royal -- Royal Marines, who marched with us. And they had their flag and our flag. I wrote home about that because I was very impressed with the two flags, two nations flags marching around the -- the race course there. And when it was all over, why we had a -- a drill competition which they won. Damn it. And then we went out to a place called Long Beach which was a recreational area out north of Tsingtao where we all swam in the Yellow Sea out there. And we had a beer drinking contest and we won that, but just barely. The Communists were up in the hills behind us there and ever once in awhile you could hear a whing come across Long Beach there or have a bullet plop into the water. So I think they just wanted us to know that they were there. Well, hell, we knew they were there. Every fourth man in town was a 5th Columnist.

One incident over there, the Chinese cut off the reservoir -- the water for the reservoir. Well, it wasn't fit to drink anyway, but we needed it to bathe and wash clothes and stuff. And the admiral, oh, I've forgotten what his name was now. Anyway, he was the commanding -- commander of the -- the senior military commander. And they had moved his fleet up from Shanghai to Tsingtao, which is where the Kaiser's fleet used to be. At Tsingtao, in the bay there, up to World War I. The ... where was I?

Question: You were -- the reservoir.

Answer: Oh, the reservoir. Yeah. So anyway, the admiral said that if they didn't let the water come down -- we were living in the Tsingtao University Compound. Most of us. And if they didn't let the water come down to the University Compound so that we could bathe, he was going to come up and take the reservoir away from them. Well, lots of luck. I mean, he had to know something I didn't know because there was just no way in God's green earth that a regiment of Marines could take -- there -- those guys were like blue -- blue bell flowers all over the hills. You could see their coats, you know, the blue coats that they had. And -- part of the -- part of our regiment, the 2nd battalion of the regiment was out in -- outside of town at an airfield. I've forgotten the name of the airfield now, but they were guarding the airfield until Chang Kai Shek could come in and take it over, which he never did. But they were having problems out there and we had people killed on the docks. We were guarding the docks and the warehouses. And one instance, they had -- we had two Marines killed and 20 Chinese Communists were shot on the docks there. And part of our duty also was to ride shotgun on the trains from Tiensin to Peiping which is Beijing now, but in those days it was Peiping. And they'd sit on top of the trains and guard them from the bandits and the Communists and they lost two or three that one winter there. It was just crazy. And then the 2nd battalion was out of the airport there and they ran out of strawberries and champagne for their picnic and they wanted -- everybody wanted to go home. That's when I started doing my shopping. Picked out this camphor wood chest that I wrote about. And prices were getting real good at that time. Everybody wanted to sell out. So when we got about as low as we thought they could go, why we went in and made our purchases. Tsingtao was quite a place. They had a -- had a place -- an Italian restaurant called Luigi's -- Luigi's on the Hill. And Luigi

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

was one of these Italian -- I don't know whether he had been deported or what, but Tsingtao was full of Europeans. You could just take -- mark an "X" across a map of Europe and wherever the ink hit, somebody from that country was in Tsingtao. There were Norwegians and Balts and Greeks and -- . Anyway, Luigi's was quite a place. We went up there -- I was -- I guess I was kind of an honorary paizan or something -- had a lot of Italian kids in the -- in the Marines, and some of my best friends were Italians. Boy, I could tell you some stories about Sicilianos and Napoleans and the -- a whole bunch of them. And we used to not always call them nice names, you know, which you wouldn't think about calling today. But I recently found out that the word WOP that they used to call -- for Italians -- is -- stood for W-O-P -- without papers. So when they immigrated to this country, they were without papers, so they were a WOP.

Question: I didn't know that, huh.

Answer: Yeah, well, it's -- it's the way it was. And--.

Question: Do you remember where you were when you heard the war had ended?

Answer: Where I was when the war had ended?

Question: Yeah.

Answer: Yeah. I was at San Francisco. It was a riotous time. Lots of celebrations and ... I don't remember that as much -- making that much of an impression on me because I think we were -- we had pretty well figured out that the war was going to be over pretty soon when those bombs dropped, and thank God that they did because it would have been just terrible for both the Americans and the Japanese if that had gone one much longer.

Question: Did you lose a lot of friends?

Answer: Well, we were not encouraged to make friends in the Raiders because of the nature of our -- they were formed up to go behind enemy lines and to raise havoc and it was kind of a special -- Special Forces type thing. The only friends that I had were this kid from Brooklyn who we called Guinea -- his name was Charles Zangi. and he assured us that Guinea was a very common name in his Brooklyn neighborhood. So -- he's the one that I have the picture of -- of the -- when we went to the Palladium -- double dating at the Palladium. I often wonder what happened to him. There was another guy from Philadelphia, Frank Corso, Frank J. Corso. He was a Sicilian, and very, very proud of his Sicilian heritage. And boy, some of the stories he told. I mean, even if they're half true, they were fascinating. We were both in a -- a standby, casual company down at Camp Pendleton. I was waiting to go into the hospital to get repaired -- get my side repaired, get that surgery done. And he was there waiting for a -- to be awarded a silver star for something that he had done on Palau or one of the islands there. But he told stories like -- well, his great grandfather -- this is one that I'll never forget. His great grandfather had been a Sicilian pirate. Now whether it's true or not, I have no idea

Answer: But anyway, on one of their trips or raids to an island, he snatched a bride for himself. They were married in the church, that would be the Catholic Church, of course. And even though she bore him five sons, four of whom lived, she was stubborn and would not speak the Sicilian dialect. But they got along just fine. And his brother, Frank's brother, he told me it was -- he didn't have the stuff to get into the service -- didn't have the gonads or whatever you want to call it. So the last -- at the last report he was running numbers at 12th and Mithlin Street in Philadelphia

Marvin Butterfield

Tape 1 of 2

Answer: And it was -- oh -- and we used to wrestle and jujitsu, wrestle all over the place, you know. And call each other names. I called him Guinea

Answer: I can't use that kind of language here but all kinds of dirty, nasty, filthy names. And one day when he was supposed to receive this silver star, the day before that, his dad had sent him a telegram saying that he and the family were going to be in Los Angeles and Frank was to come up and meet with the family. Well that was -- that took precedence. And I know that Frank had permission because we both went to the OD's office and got permission on our way to the slop shoot that day. And so the next day, Saturday, when this flag officer wanted to present the silver star to Frank Corso, Frank was no where to be found. And the battalion exec and our commanding -- our company commander, prevailed upon me to fall out and take that medal, because we looked so much alike. Well, I did that but a lot of the guys who were -- you know, they said what in the hell's going on here? He didn't win that medal. Well I gave him the medal and I gave him the box it came in, you know, when he came back from LA with his dad the next night. But that was something. I never forgot that. I think about that guy an awful lot. And not only when I'm watching re-runs of the Godfather which is -- that's the first thing you can think about.

Question: Do you remember, when you came off on the landing barge or whatever, do you remember everything that you wore?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Backpack and --

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Tell me a little bit about that.

Answer: Well, we had our -- our backpack and we had our extra socks, and we had whatever food we could have stolen from the galley on that LST. The main thing was socks. If you had a couple extra pair of socks, why that was, you were in good shape. Then we had our bayonets and -- I don't remember much more. We had our rifles and our cartridge belts and what not.

Question: How long do you think you wore a set of clothes. Because you, you know, it wasn't like you had your chest of drawers with you or anything.

Answer: Well, until they got sweaty. And depending on where you were, there was one time when we were down in New Caledonia and the -- we were on a long hike. And the lieutenant says you guys tired of hiking? And some turkey said yes, we're tired of hiking. Okay, we'll run a little while. And so they did. And these natives - the Melanesians, you know, they were, well, bon chance, jyrine, ces't la geurre. (gestures) They had more brains than to run like that. This was right after -- this was just around New Years, too so it was mid-summer in -- in those latitudes. And that was crazy. Marine Corps never learns. Try to run our legs off. They just -- doesn't take.

Question: Do you think there's a -- well, let me switch tapes here.