

## Kenny Marvin

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**Answer:** I went over and started talking with them what little Japanese I know, and they didn't even know the word for war.

**Question:** It is interesting, isn't it, that for whatever reason, Japanese culture has erased a lot of it from history?

**Answer:** Japanese or like Chinese they don't like to lose face, and they did, and so that's. I couldn't believe it. She says what was I doing (inaudible) during the war, since it was war you know, and walking around there, I don't understand.

**Question:** I'm going to do one thing. Ken Marvin, that's your name, and you were born when and where?

**Answer:** June 21, 1921, Havre, Montana.

**Question:** I love Montana. I love Havre. Great winters over there.

**Answer:** Too damned cold. I was just three years old three or four years old when I moved out here so I don't remember a thing about Havre.

**Question:** So where did you move to, right to Gig Harbor, or?

**Answer:** Right to Horseshoe Lake.

**Question:** And that was because your dad had worked here or?

**Answer:** No my dad worked for the Great Northern and they had a big strike in those days and so somebody sold all those people that were laid off a bunch of property a bunch of land out here and was nothing but logged off stuff and that's where Vaughn and Key Sitter (inaudible) and down through there they call the Montana settlement.

**Question:** Oh, I didn't know that.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So is that where you grew up then?

**Answer:** Yes, I grew up a little ways from Horseshoe Lake, there's a little schoolhouse there, it's still standing. It's called Glenwood and then my junior high school in south Kitsap and Port Orchard. The last three years I went to what is called Union Gig Harbor High School so I graduated in 1939.

**Question:** Now where was Gig Harbor Union High School?

**Answer:** It's right up here on the hill. They call it, used to be Goodman, but what the heck is it now?

**Question:** The building is still there?

**Answer:** Oh yeah they figure on tearing it down. It's kind of a junior high or something.

**Question:** Huh, so what was Gig Harbor like before the war as a kid?

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**Answer:** It was just a fishing village. Slovenians and Norwegians and Swedes. Swedes were up in the valley, what they call Crescent Valley up here, and they were all very hard working people. Very nice.

**Question:** So the community was kind of Swedes over here and Slavs over here really so they set up their own little district. They were fisherman's too the Norwegians and the Swedes. All nice people. I went to school with all of them. Wonderful people.

**Question:** So it had a real international flavor to Gig Harbor?

**Answer:** Well, yes, there was the Slovenians outnumbered most of them for a long time. I have two Slovenian son-in laws and they are tremendous. One of them works for Century (inaudible) and the other works.. he is a tug boat captain for Crowley.

**Question:** I know Crowley well. As a high school kid where was the hang out in Gig Harbor?

**Answer:** There was no hang outs, we just played football and baseball and went home. I don't remember, really there wasn't. We didn't have any money to hang out to do anything with, but we used to come down to little school where Latter Day Saints school is building is where the Mormon church is in town. I think they called it Lincoln School and that's about all we done on Saturday and Sunday afternoons was play football, baseball, tag football, that is about all there was to do.

**Question:** Movie theatres?

**Answer:** Oh, there was a movie in town but we didn't have a car then, not until later on in high school and then so we rode our bikes all the way from Horseshoe Lake and after we got through playing baseball or football we rode back, very seldom we went to a movie because that cost 25 to 30 cents.

**Question:** Kids today would hear you rode your bike from Horseshoe and they couldn't even fathom the thought of riding.

**Answer:** It's got to be ten or fifteen miles I think.

**Question:** And I assume the roads were a little different then?

**Answer:** They were all gravel roads there was no black top or no cement.

**Question:** Well, what did you do in the summer, did you have jobs?

**Answer:** We picked berries and we picked cascara bark and so on. And later on my last few years in high school went to camp where my brother lived and I worked in a cold storage plant and I worked in a railroad the last summer and you had to work. I used to buy my own clothes and stuff.

**Question:** Kent must have seemed like a big city?

**Answer:** Oh it was, railroad town, or the railroad went through there.

**Question:** Cause what was " downtown" Gig Harbor like back then, was there a village, or stores, or?

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**Answer:** There was the Peach Tavern where the (inaudible) is now, and then across from there was a grocery store, Cass owned it, and then there was a drug store, (inaudible) and a dentist's office. That's about all there was. Oh there was a little I think there was a little restaurant or a beer hall there and down by the Tides tavern when I first came here that's where the ferry came in. The ferry docked there, from Tacoma, you know from Pt. Defiance and I remember we had a Model-T and we always had to have a full gas tank cause that is pretty steep coming up out of there you know.

**Question:** That's funny, a lot of people wouldn't even think about the fact that a ferry came here because for the kids today the bridge has always been there.

**Answer:** Oh yeah.

**Question:** That must have made a big change when the bridge came in.

**Answer:** I guess it did. I was in San Diego when the bridge opened and then I came home in 1940, I think it was September of 1940. I was across it a couple of times then when I went back I think it was in October or November of 1940 when it blew down. Cause they even let the high school out. My wife went to high school here and they even let them let the high school out to watch the bridge fall down.

**Question:** Now, how did you get into the service?

**Answer:** My brother was in the service and my.. to start with my grand father and great grandfather and my two great uncles were all in the civil war and I used to read a lot about the Civil War and I even got letters he wrote home about the Civil War and I just wanted to be in the service. In '35 my brother went into the Marine Corp and then I was in Kent and they had the national guard outfit so this kid talked me into joining the national guard. So we went to Fort Lewis and it was an artillery outfit too, it was a 75 millimeter, or a 3" outfit, and it was a lot of fun. I spent a couple of summers.

**Question:** So that was before the war?

**Answer:** Before the war, yes.

**Question:** How old were you when you got in to the guard?

**Answer:** I was about 15 or 16.

**Question:** Now did they let younger kids in the guard or did you have to?

**Answer:** You had to lie a little about your age but there were so many of us about that age you know.

**Question:** And was that like the guard today, we call them weekend warriors.

**Answer:** That's what we were. We met about once a week, but then see when I come back to school I had a heck of a time because I had to go to Tacoma on Tuesday night and so I stayed with some people there and I finally gave that up because I couldn't attend.

**Question:** So that's where you started to get your training though.

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**Answer:** Yes, after I graduated why I got a trip to Alaska on a fishing boat and when I got back I... my brother lived in Kent, and I stayed with him and worked on the railroad and the war started in England and I thought hey I didn't want to be in the guard, I wanted to be in the marine Corp like my brother had been see. So I was just on a summer crew and so when we got laid off I headed for Seattle for recruiting depot office to sign up.

**Question:** Now was that before Pearl Harbor?

**Answer:** This was in 1939.

**Question:** Oh, ok, so a long time before.

**Answer:** October 3, 1939.

**Question:** So it sounds like you were pretty knowledgeable about what was going on worldwide though did you have any idea we were headed towards the war?

**Answer:** We all thought you know, I wanted to be trained so I decided I'd go into the Marine Corp and in those days they was running them through there pretty fast. I was in the 39<sup>th</sup> platoon in 1939 and I don't know how many more platoons went through that year but it didn't seem tough you know because we just got off the railroad working and I was pretty well fit, so it didn't bother me.

**Question:** Where did you do boot camp?

**Answer:** In San Diego, Marine Corp depot in San Diego.

**Question:** Huh.

**Answer:** And a year and a half ago I was back there, the first time in 60 years, my grandson graduated from boot camp. I have a grandson in the Marine Corps.

**Question:** So your grandson went to the same boot camp that you?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** Going back to that bring back memories or?

**Answer:** Yeah sure did. I remember the parade ground and the buildings surrounding the playground. I don't know how many times I marched up and down that parade field I know it's quite a few times.

**Question:** So you were what eighteen?

**Answer:** I was eighteen in June and so we was all pretty much the same age.

**Question:** Was that the first time you'd been away, of course you'd been up to Alaska so you'd been away from home.?

**Answer:** Oh sure I was.

**Question:** What did your mom think of your getting in the service, do you remember?

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**Answer:** She thought it was a pretty good idea, because in '39 jobs were hard to come by, you know, and I was just on the summer crew on the railroad and there wasn't much to do.

**Question:** That's the one thing people forget, as you read history you've got to look back and see what the economy had been.

**Answer:** It was zilch. I made \$85 a month on the railroad, when I joined the Marine Corp \$20.80 a month, so what the hell you got all your.. everything furnished, all your clothes and three meals a day and two bits for a hair cut.

**Question:** Didn't have to decide what to wear in the morning.

**Answer:** Oh hell no.

**Question:** Do you remember any of the people that went through boot camp with you?

**Answer:** Oh sure.

**Question:** Are there some you made life long friends with or did you just come and go?

**Answer:** There's a few I made lifelong friends with, yeah, but there isn't that many of us left. Just like of the 400 of us left on the islands there is about 114 left. When you get to be 80 you're cheating on life.

**Question:** Did you have a nickname?

**Answer:** No, last name, In prison camp I had a nickname, well I used to do a lot of boxing and they'd call me Punchy. Nickname for quite a few, it was a lot of fun.

**Question:** Did you box in the service?

**Answer:** Oh, just a little bit.

**Question:** Because I know they have different like they had a football team and they had baseball team?

**Answer:** I mostly played handball.

**Question:** From San Diego where did you go?

**Answer:** Pearl Harbor.

**Question:** Before?

**Answer:** Before the war.

**Question:** Before any of us knew what Pearl Harbor was you, before it was attacked?

**Answer:** Yes, before it was attacked, yes, yeah. See the fleet used to be stationed in San Diego and then for some reason they took the fleet out of San Diego to Pearl Harbor, so in I think it was late January of 1941 we went to Pearl Harbor.

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**Question:** What was that like, cause we always, everybody I interview talks about it after the event. What was it like I mean did you have even the faintest idea of where Pearl Harbor was?

**Answer:** Oh sure. We went out on the Enterprise and it was about four days and it was warm, California is kind of warm, but it took us a while to get used to the climate out there you know. Because it can be hotter than the dickens one minute like you sitting up looking at movies in the evening be real warm and then all of a sudden here comes a cloud and you're drenched so these clouds come and go but there wasn't much to do there was so many service men there but they used to take us every Wednesday to a place called Kaneola Beach and we swam in the surf and had a lot of fun.

**Question:** It's not at all the Hawaii of today, right, it was a pretty undeveloped, I mean it's not the big tourist attraction that it is today, or was it?

**Answer:** Oh there were quite a few tourists you know. There used to be a lot of movie stars liked to come out there, I remember, Dorothy Lamar and big mouth, what was her name,

**Question:** Not Carmen Miranda?

**Answer:** No, it was another one, but anyway, they came out on the ships you know, on the Lauraline and the Matsonian, it was a lot of fun. We wouldn't go downtown very often.

**Question:** Where were the marines stationed over there?

**Answer:** Right in Pearl Harbor. There was a regular guard unit, and then across from there was an aircraft battalion.. There was 8 to 900 or more in a defense battalion.

**Question:** Were you at a ready state or was it training?

**Answer:** Training, yes.

**Question:** Nobody thought, I mean in retrospect, we all know Pearl Harbor now, but you were over there just doing your job and?

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** How did you get from there to Wake Island then was that your next?

**Answer:** Yes, we, out of the battalion, Johnson Island and (inaudible) Island the marines were on there but they were all central for defense and all these batteries, batteries we split up so in August of 41 why we went on a cargo ship to Wake Island.

**Question:** Tell me about your view of, well first of all, what was your duty what was your job now when you went to Wake Island?

**Answer:** Job was just to work but I mean this is real, I got on this cargo ship or I was just going up the gangplank.. we was passing our sea bags up the gang plank and then I was in charge, I was a corporal you know. And in those days a corporal was kind of a big shot, self-proclaimed, you know. I'm the judge of that, so carried the last one up and I.. not supposed to be anybody on this gang plank and I run into somebody and I says what the hell are you doing here. I looked down, Christ, white shoes, white pants, the farther up I looked it

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was an officer. Navy officer. It was my buddy from school her. He was an ensign on this cargo ship. I says Secord what the hell are you doing on this rust bucket. A couple of days later I say hey Secord where the devil we going. He says Wake Island. I says it don't mean a thing, but it was really comical.

**Question:** What a small world huh?

**Answer:** Oh man.

**Question:** So did the marines get along with the navy when you were on ship or was there always a?

**Answer:** Oh sure sure sure. That marine and navy that's (inaudible) like who cleaned out a night club one time in San Diego because the army was picking on some sailors there were 15 to 20 of us there but we were in civilian clothes.

**Question:** The navy and marines ok, but army and marines...so when you arrived at your beautiful vacation destination of Wake Island, what was your view when you pulled in there. What did you think when you saw Wake Island?

**Answer:** We were just in tents you know, and they were nice tents they had wooden decks and sides you know and screened and just a tent over the top of it. It wasn't too bad. And then we started to work. you know placing.. putting our guns in placement and placing (inaudible) these three inch guns are real.. they weight six and a half ton and they got outriggers you know like this and like that. So had to clear al that we worked.. we was just out there to put those in because we were supposed to be relieved before Christmas by the third defense which come out from the states.

**Question:** What had been at Wake Island before we got there?

**Answer:** Pan American Airways and that's about all that had been there.

**Question:** What was Pan Am using it for?

**Answer:** Well, they flew those clippers, you know, from Frisco clear to the Philippines and

**Question:** So they would stop there and fuel up and

**Answer:** Fuel up and they had a regular hotel, big hotel there.

**Question:** Was the hotel still active and everything when you started moving in?

**Answer:** Oh yeah, oh sure, they had planes coming through there once a week or so and that's where this Nomura and Kirusu stopped there overnight on their way to the United States just before the war started.

**Question:** Why did you think the Marines were there building all this stuff up all of a sudden?

**Answer:** Hey, he.. it's whoever is up there he is making all the decisions you know so we were just putting the guns in place for another battalion and then we were supposed to be back in Pearl Harbor for Christmas but it was four years later we got there.

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**Question:** What does the island look like for somebody who hasn't been there when you pulled in is it palm trees and beautiful scenes?

**Answer:** No you see that picture there it says marine barracks and stuff, there wasn't a palm tree on the island, I don't know where that picture came from. Must have been in Honolulu or someplace because they got them there but these were iron bark trees what you call (inaudible) Vida and they weren't very high.

**Question:** So scrub brushy kind of?

**Answer:** Well, yeah, and then our friends the gooney birds, and the albatross, and the turns, and there was another beautiful bird there with big long feathers. I can't remember the name, but there were thousands of them.

**Question:** So what did you do? I mean, I assume most of the time it was working, I mean it is hot, it's nasty working conditions, how did you pass time when you had free time?

**Answer:** Well, we didn't have a lot of free time. Oh we go down to the ocean and try to snorkel, spear fish, and stuff like that but they didn't want us to swim in the ocean on account of the sharks and they had an old swimming pool the civilians, this is an old civilian camp we were in and this was all fenced in with chicken wire and everything so the eels and sharks couldn't get in there and that's about all there was to do just fish and but when the general come out there, there was no fooling around we were 6-7 days a week.

**Question:** Now how far is that from Pearl Harbor about?

**Answer:** 2300 miles.

**Question:** 2300 miles. So you were at Wake Island when Pearl Harbor got attacked?

**Answer:** Oh yes, see, it was Sunday on Wake Island. I mean it was Sunday at Pearl Harbor and it was Monday morning where we were because we were across the date line, clear across the International Date Line.

**Question:** And how did you hear about that?

**Answer:** Well they got on the radio. We were at breakfast in the mess hall and then they saw us hollering and saw the general of course and so we went over to our tents and grabbed our rifles and in each tent, this was about four months before, there was five of us in a tent, and they had a case of ammunition in each tent and 2 cases of hand grenades so we just grabbed the rifles and the ammunition and hopped on the truck and took off for, so you can see how far it is from our camp there to our position on Peale Island

**Question:** You said Wake Island is about three miles and the other islands are about a mile?

**Answer:** Half a mile, that's half a square mile, but I don't know how long, I think it was five miles from where

**Question:** Not very far.

**Answer:** We just hopped on a truck and in about 45 minutes were on our guns.



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**Question:** So was it scary, was there reality to what had happened, or was that just?

**Answer:** Nobody would believe it you know. We had to go right through this civilian camp and these guys were working and we said, hey, the war started, ah go away, you know. And so we found out about 11 o'clock. They had brought a truck load of food and a bunch of us were gathered with our mess kits and here comes these airplanes and the next thing was they were dropping bombs and that's when they got the Pan American Hotel which wasn't too far from us. And actually I could see the pilot in the airplane bomber. At first we thought they at the other end of the island where they saw them they thought they was ours because supposed to have been PBYS' come in that morning see and there was a patrol of flight patrol but they was up to 13,000 feet. Japanese came in at 5-600 feet or 1000 feet under low clouds.

**Question:** Where were you? Was it like a beehive coming at you?

**Answer:** I just saw these planes and what the hell are they doing and after we heard all the explosions and everything we ran to our guns but they were so low, I think we fired a few rounds, but they were going so fast and so low that it was just wasting ammunition for us.

**Question:** Does fear take over?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** That is what I hear a lot of people say cause the movies make it all oh oh but it sounds like a whole different there is not even the realization they are coming at you.

**Answer:** I never really got scared until the last few days. We were on these guns, I was on the azimuth. You know I got a crank in each hand and you're just matching bugs, you hardly ever looked up. Once in a while I'd look up and I could see those bombs coming down you know, but as long as you can see them you are alright.

**Question:** And that is the amazing thing, you physically see this bomb?

**Answer:** Oh yes.

**Question:** Because it is not like a plane that is 50,000 feet up in the air. They are coming in at 500 feet and you see them drop bombs.

**Answer:** 500 feet that was the first morning. I never saw any of those bombs but I heard them, but I mean afterwards you know, when they come over, they started coming over about 8-10,000 feet and then higher and higher because we was getting rid of a few of them.

**Question:** Getting settled in and better at.

**Answer:** Oh yes.

**Question:** So were the bombs close, hitting close to you or?

**Answer:** Well, not for the first few days and there was a 5", there was two 5" guns, seacoast guns, maybe 50 yards from our gun or maybe a little further than that. But they wanted us to move on account of you know after you fire at those planes a few days they are taking pictures up there and normally you should move every 2-3 days and we stayed there

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3-4 days or 4-5 days and then we moved but before we moved that was when they, it was the 4<sup>th</sup> day, I believe, that the Japs came in with their ships and tried to take the island.

**Question:** And they came on the Wake Island end?

**Answer:** They came on the Wake Island side and the side the island we were on you could walk out there a half a mile you know with the tide, it was so shallow see they would have run aground.

**Question:** So this is like 3 or 4 days this is going on.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** They'd bomb for awhile and disappear for awhile or was it just constant?

**Answer:** They bombed every day, usually around 11 or 11:30.

**Question:** Did you ever sleep?

**Answer:** We slept at our guns, we never did go back to our tents because after the second day there wasn't any tents left they had obliterated it. We did go back the first night, one man out of each tent, and got our blankets, we had two blankets and that was about it.

**Question:** What about food?

**Answer:** The civilians would bring us food. They were real good. There was 1100 of them there.. and you hear a lot about they all ran and hid, but hey there were so damned many that helped us we forgot about the ones that didn't.

**Question:** So how many civilians roughly?

**Answer:** 1150

**Question:** And how many marines?

**Answer:** 400, and we had to start out with we had 12 fighter planes, F4F's but 7 of those got destroyed the first morning

**Question:** So we're down to five.

**Answer:** Down to five.

**Question:** And did those five get up there?

**Answer:** Yes, they got up there and did good for themselves.

**Question:** So did you have planes coming down out of the air and everything around you?

**Answer:** Oh once in awhile and you could see them but you were watching those planes up there like on mine (inaudible) the elevation on the instruments you weren't doing a good job see, you were goofing off, so you kept your eye on that deal a bob and

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**Question:** So was it like the movies portray? I mean movies portray fires going on and all sorts of things like that or is it mass destruction and everything is erased after the attacks?

**Answer:** Well the second day is when I got hit. I was ordered to take a tractor and a tractor and go down to the bridge, there was a bridge across from Wake to Peale And so before I got to that bridge there must have 50 or 60 civilians filling sand bags for us and. So I was waiting for this truck to get out of there so I could back this trailer down and get a load of sand bags and so they asked me, let's see if you can pull it, they couldn't get the truck out you know so I hooked onto it with this tractor, but before that this Joe Cocachia ,he was the civilian in charge of these people, had a string of sand bags you know made a little alley way and so he says run and jump on these things we had them staggered so he hooked me up so I am taking up slack in the line and I looked back and Jesus everybody is running and so I just turned it off and jumped right over the top of it and I crawled underneath. And got a pieces of shrapnel in my head. It glanced off the side of the tractor. But there were 8 or 9 civilians there that got killed because they ran you know. The ones that stayed in the little sand bags and stuff.

**Question:** Yeah that protection.

**Answer:** Yeah, that's when they hit the garage and they hit the hospital. Which was on top of this hospital is a big red cross and everything, but it didn't mean anything to the Japanese.

**Question:** This is I think the hardest thing, because history books don't tell us this, what does your mind do during something like that, I mean did you ever think they were going to get you or does your mind totally check that out and?

**Answer:** I'd written my mother you know and I says they didn't make a bullet for me.. I thought I was pretty brave you know.

**Question:** So your mind does override and basically you become fearless, not stupid, but I mean you take your precautions I assume but you still can do your job. So now you got wounded what happened then to you?

**Answer:** I just walked back to the.. cause I started up this tractor, this caterpillar and Jeez oil was coming out the sides there was a hole in one of the cylinders bout like that and I says hell I'll never make it back with this so. And then me and this Cocachia we went across the bridge to help some of these guys out of the hospital that had been wounded a couple of days before, you know. Well the day before, and so then we helped get them out of there and there was a big warehouse burning. I remember this was funny. This navy officer he comes and he grabbed both and he says I want you to put that fire out. Shit. There was no fire trucks or zilch here you know and I started to say something and the civilian he flat told him you know cause he wasn't he was a civilian, he told damn near to get lost. He says what the hell you think we can do.

**Question:** In a situation like that, that is interesting cause I never thought about that, in a situation like that does rank disappear or is that chain of command always keep things together?

**Answer:** Well like on our guns, our commanding officer was a captain and he was wonderful.. but he never threw his rank around, no.

**Question:** So it was respect?

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**Answer:** I think the Marine Corp had tremendous officers.

**Question:** I've got your mike cord off here a little bit. Now when did Wake Island get taken over, or when did you get taken over?

**Answer:** January, I mean, December 23, 1941.

**Question:** So how many days was that, that you were under attack ?

**Answer:** 16 days we were under fire.

**Question:** 16 days wow, and 400 marines, and 16 days.

**Answer:** Yeah, and we had 21 miles of waterfront to cover, 21 miles of beach, of shoreline.

**Question:** So do they keep squeezing you down?

**Answer:** Well no. This Wilkes Island that was the one that, the last morning when they made the landing, when they tried to take, the marines killed all but one person, all but one Japanese that was on that island. The last morning communications were all chewed up you know. In those days you didn't have these walky talkies and fancy radios and junk it was all laid out on telephone lines so.

**Question:** Those lines get broken and?

**Answer:** The only time we didn't get bombed in the day. One night one late evening one of the pilots was making an evening patrol and he spotted a submarine and he sunk the submarine and the next day is when we got bombed and that is when they figured out that this Jap submarine that's how they could find the island, they come all the way from the Marshall's see. They were honing with on this submarine, so after they got this submarine, we didn't get bombed the next day. See we never had any radar, no listening devices, we just depended on the planes that were up above to spot them. We had constant, we had men on watch all day long you know, with field glasses and everything, and I remember one time, there was a daylight star, and lots of times you got a false alarm on that.

**Question:** And you only had five planes to be up looking?

**Answer:** And then it got down to just one or two see.

**Question:** And there was nothing new coming in cause Pearl Harbor was torn apart at that point and so you are out there fending by yourself. So how did they finally take over, I mean what happens at that point?

**Answer:** They came in at night on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. They come in and ran.. two were across from the airfield on Wake they ran two destroyers, old destroyers on the beach to get the men off and. There was one three inch gun there and these are retired colonel now.. he manned this gun he wasn't even supposed to be on a three inch gun I think he was machine gun and they put those two ships that came in they put over 30 shells in those ships from a 3" gun and from our position we even fired. We had about a minute and a half fuse so they would burst right over these ships.

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**Question:** And that would give a chance to send a lot of (inaudible). Yeah, Yeah. So did somebody finally give the

**Answer:** The word to surrender? Yes yes. There was a navy commander, he was in charge of the island and he gave the word that we were to surrender and we got word from Devereux, he wasn't too far from us in a bomb shelter and so we scuttled our guns you know and then we marched up to where he was and then the Japs came all around us, made us take off all our clothes but our skivvies and our shoes and they tied us up with our own telephone wire.. with our hands behind our back and up around our neck and here we are just I don't how many there was of us, quite a few, and Japs on each side and it was automatic rifles and machine guns.

And there was an old China hand standing beside me and he says well he says they shot all the Chinese, never took any Chinese prisoners, it looks like we're going to go along with them and I said Christ Almighty. You know I thought to myself I says to my two buddies.. I says well you know just trying to be brave you know "I'm sure glad I met you guys".

About that time on my right here come a Jap officer with oh Christ he was all decked out with a big sword and everything and then we looked and here comes this navy commander who was in charge of the island he comes from the other direction and he is in full uniform and shaved.. and so he just took his sword and presented it to the Japanese and. So a little while later they let us all go down in this big bomb shelter which had been a hospital so we just backed up to each other and undone ourselves you know. And maybe a half hour later or so why they let us out, so hell here is everybody's clothes laying around so all our clothes were stamped with our names in it but you didn't have time to look for it. You just grabbed a shirt and a pair of pants and then they put us on the airfield they marched us to the airfield, it was just a little ways away. We stayed there for I think 2 ½ days during that day we got a couple of pieces of bread apiece and some water and hotter than hell in the daytime and cold at night. And some of them I remember the captain didn't even have a shirt he didn't have a, then they marched us over to the civilian camp which was nice buildings and so we stayed there until January 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup>. when they put us aboard these merchant ships.

**Question:** Was anybody telling you what was going on or was it all the rumor mill? I mean did you know where you were going?

**Answer:** We had no idea where we were going, but this Major Baylor, he left. A PBY came in 2-3 days before we surrendered and he.. they took him to Midway cause he was communications and he wasn't supposed to be on that island anyway or he could leave any time he wanted to so.. but he left and went to Midway. And he wrote a book. The last man off Wake. He was the last man off and the first man on when they surrendered.

**Question:** Wow, so a couple days went by and they had you they put you on the airstrip for awhile and then they moved you in to this other place then they transported you off by ship, did they put you on a ship or?

**Answer:** Yes it was a passenger liner, they used to go from Frisco to China and Japan and, Anita Maru, but we didn't have good quarters. I had a couple of blankets in my arm and we all carried all kinds of stuff you know, shit, we scrambled aboard and they took everything away from us. All we had was khaki shirt and khaki pants, and I don't know what they did with it but the next thing we knew we were down in the hold. And 16 days later why we were in Shanghai, but we went to Yokohama first and they took off about 30-40 men. And from Yokohama to Shanghai I don't know how many days that was but they took two marines and three sailors up on deck and beheaded them and used them for bayonet practice and then threw the rest of it over the side.

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**Question:** For no reason?

**Answer:** Retribution.

**Question:** Was it to set a tone, to put fear in you?

**Answer:** Well we never knew this until after the war was over and 4 or 5 years ago a fellow from Olympia was in the special forces and his uncle was one of the sailors that got beheaded and so he got a hold of me and I've been to a couple of their reunions and but. I think it was October 1943 they left 98 civilians on the island all special workers all crane operators, welders, painters and electricians and they thought the United States was going to take the island back because every time a part of the fleet or aircraft carriers would go by they'd just bomb them and strafe them and mess them up a little bit so they really thought the United States was this is after the battle then it wasn't the time they had bombed them you know and so they took these 98 civilians down on the beach hand cuffed them took their clothes off, hand cuffed them, and machine gunned them and they never knew this until after the war and when the island surrendered they got to asking where these men were and finally some of the troops.. it leaked out that the admiral and the vice admiral were responsible for this so they were taken to Tokyo had a trial and were later hung.

**Question:** Wow.

**Answer:** Oh they were cruel, very cruel people but if you read your history that is the way they were raised.

Do you watch the history channel much? It showed one night about years ago Japan didn't have much of an army so whoever took a hold of it decided discipline and I mean it was discipline. I've seen corporals and sergeants just slap hell, beat hell out of the privates and from the officers all the way down. Whoever had the most rank could beat the hell out of the other guy and that's the way they were and that's the way they done to us.

**Question:** I heard one POW tell me a story about a Japanese high ranking official marching along and the underling couldn't keep up with him so he beheaded him but he says the thing is that they treated their own soldiers just as bad as they treated the prisoners of war.

**Answer:** And the main thing was that they were raised from that high up, from kids, it was a.. if you surrendered your soul wouldn't go to that big Yasukuni shrine there in Tokyo or whatever so that's the way it was and they thought we were a disgrace to our country for surrendering.

**Question:** So where the first camp that you ended up in, first POW camp, was where, Shanghai?

**Answer:** Woosung That was about, I'd say it was about five miles out of Shanghai, because we landed right in Shanghai and they said it was so many kilometers. This was in January. Cold and kind of raining you know and just in khaki, and we marched out to this place, lined us up in a field and it was I think 6-7 wooden barracks. They were old Japanese army barracks and I got in the 2<sup>nd</sup> barracks that night no blankets at all. And the next day they gave us each two blankets and Christ you could hold them up there and read a newspaper through them you know. Oh God. I've been cold ever since. We never had heat in the barracks, in any of the camps I was in. I never had heat, but Christ you just got used to it. And we slept on platforms about that high off the.. and there was just nothing there worse cause that's a little rug there you know (points at floor) and this was just wood.

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**Question:** So you got that and a sheet?

**Answer:** No sheets, just those two blankets and I don't know how many months it was before.. hell you wouldn't see guys the only time you'd see them was when they brought the food around you know cause they were laying in it. The only thing you took off was your shoes and you used those for a pillow. OH God.

**Question:** Did they keep you together, everybody from Wake Island, or did they separate you so they mixed you up?

**Answer:** They kept all the Wake Island people together. In this prison camp before we got there, and this is really something, they had a gun boat. It was on the Yangtze or the Yangpu It must have been the Yangpu, anyway it was the Gunboat Wake, it was American gunboat Wake and the British one was the Petril. But these guys told us the morning of the war, these Jap officers came aboard the Wake and says you got to surrender. The guy says ok, a lot of guys are up town, you know, they lived up town they were shackled up or married, some of them were married, but when I went aboard this Petril, this British ship, this British Higenbottom was his name or some damned thing Wiggenhorn, or some, he said get your bloody ass off my ship and then he took off. Well, there was a Jap cruiser about a quarter of a mile down the river and just blew him out of the water.

**Question:** What was the first camp, was it a camp that did something, I know some were ship yards, and some were?

**Answer:** We were way out in the country. I wound up in a ship yard in Japan, but we were way out in the country and it rained so damned much we didn't do nothing for 2 or 3 months. The only thing that helped us was these officers had school classes on math and history and stuff. Hell I learned more about math than I did in high school there in a few months and then when it got good weather why, this had been a big battlefield, so they kind of a swamp deal.. and there were a lot of civilians that had been surveyors and stuff. We made a huge big field, carried dirt that swamp kind of wet and made a big field and had a baseball field and football field and a.. But in the meantime this had been a battleground and Christ guys were finding all kinds of swords and bayonets and this dumb head came in one day and he had a German potato masher a German hand grenade he was fooling around with said for Christ's sake cause we had studied them.. put that damned thing away.

**Question:** Was there ever thought of escaping?

**Answer:** There was. I think four officers and a Chinaman and a foreman from Morrison Knudsen that tried it but they didn't make it. There wasn't any real escapes until I think in May of '45 when they moved them all out of Shanghai to Manchuria. Then there was 4 or 5 officers and one civilian that all made it and there's a book. Wake Island Pilots and it was written by General Kinney and he was just a second lieutenant when he was captured but what a brain. He worked for I think it was Douglas or something as a mechanic before he went in to the Marine Corp and he contrived everything. He made himself a little short waved radio and compass and all sorts of things and it was three years ago when we had a Wake Island reunion and he showed us on a screen like that all the stuff he made and everything. And I remember that morning I hadn't had my name tag on yet and neither did he and I was out by this pool and I said good morning how are you doing buddy and we were standing there talking and a guy came up and said well good morning General and I thought holy crap are these guys Generals? That was hard to believe but they were regular fellows.

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**Question:** How did , were the Japanese on you all the time making you work work work work or did they just put you in these confines and just contain you, I mean what?

**Answer:** Not really, in the summer when the weather got good they decided to take us out on the roads and fill chuck holes and stuff like that, but we goofed off so much that they got tired of that, and everything we done we screwed up, you know, but then at the last before we left we'd moved from Woosung to Kiangwan.. and the last thing we was doing there when we left was making rifle abutments you know and there was I don't know how many meters long it was about 300 meters long and about 50 yards wide and they had little railroad tracks they had little carts and we'd fill it and push it, it got kind of high before we got out but they kept right on us there.

**Question:** Were they vicious or did they relate to you as a human I mean were they mean?

**Answer:** Just some of them. We had one Ishihira, he wasn't even military, he was civilian but he was they called him "the beast of the East". If you stayed away from him you were alright. And then when we was in.. well both places, there was a lot of civilian people been interned down town and they knew some of our officers see and so they would send in all kinds of stuff so we got. And then the Red Cross came in later on and gave us a pair of corduroy pants and a sweatshirt and then we got well it was in China 18 months, I got 4 red cross boxes. And in Japan nishda, nothing. One time we got one red cross box for seven people so that's here is a spoon full of this and a spoon full of that.

**Question:** What type of things were in the red cross boxes?

**Answer:** Bully beef or corned beef , the limeys called it bully beef ,and can of (inaudible) powdered milk, brick of cheese and a little can of coffee, Nescafe, and a couple of packages of cigarettes. Mostly were Old Golds, and that's when I first, I was there a couple of years before I started smoking, and then now I can remember Old Golds and now you can't even find them on the market.

**Question:** What about meals?

**Answer:** We got a tea cup, a metal tea cup, we got rice, just packed with rice and then another tea cup that size.. what we called slump or wangpu juice, once in a while you'd find something in there.

**Question:** What was wangpu juice was that fish or

**Answer:** Like vegetables you know and stuff like that.

**Question:** So you didn't go to a mess hall to eat

**Answer:** Oh no no no, they brought it out in buckets. You had a bucket, big bucket of rice and you start with this guy one day and the next guy and then if there was any left they had a tiny cup what we called a gizmo for that guy and it was quite a deal.

**Question:** Did the guards or whatever did you ever get in conversations with them the Japanese?

**Answer:** Oh some of them.



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**Question:** Were they nice?

**Answer:** Some of them were real nice.

**Question:** Did you ever get a chance to ever just sit down and talk with them or was it always?

**Answer:** The only time we ever had fun with them was after we made this baseball field you know we were playing. Cause the YMCA the navy had a YMCA downtown and the people after the navy left they sent in all this stuff we had all kinds of baseball stuff and football stuff. so we were playing baseball and, this guard was standing just a little ways from the batter and I can't remember who the batter was. And the guard yes yes yes so the guy just walked over and gave him the bat and the little guard gave him his rifle and the guard tagged that ball real good. I wish I'd of had a picture of that. They were real good until a superior came along you know.. and then they knew they had to get tough.

**Question:** Did it change from camp to camp, were different camps different levels of toughness?

**Answer:** Oh yeah. Then in August of 43 well I got a.. I think there was about 3 or 400 of us got sent to Japan to a place called Tsumori and we worked in a shipyard there. There was a nice barracks there. It was a new barracks. That's when we worked. Shit. Sometimes we'd work 2-3 month's without a day off. It just depended on where you were working, if they had a day off.

**Question:** What was your job? Did it change every day?

**Answer:** Cleaning castings, that come out of the foundry you know? My buddy was across the street. He cleaned the great big stuff out. These were pumps we were putting together and they were huge and we had little tiny jack hammers and we cleaned the rest you know and it had to be real smooth and you'd stick your head in there and no respirators nothing you know, that's why my lungs are fouled up besides getting pneumonia a couple of times, but, and I felt sorry for the Japanese people. These poor people All there was was old people working there and young kids 10-12 years old. They'd come about noon. They'd march in there. It was the first time I'd seen kids in uniforms and packs on their back. And those kids were real good. I remember I was working by the bench and this little kid come by and he must not have been 8 or 10 years old and he sang Turkey in the Straw in English, and then the next little kid would come and, Lamp Lighting Time in the Valley and they were a lot of fun. They didn't do anything you know. Everything was so crude. I was happy to get to Japan to work in the shipyard. I had been to the shipyard in Bremerton you know before the war, Christ, everything was so crude that I said boy this shouldn't last too long.

**Question:** Were these military ships you were working on?

**Answer:** Oh yeah.

**Question:** Huh.

**Answer:** It would take by the time those things came out of the foundry and we cleaned them up and we drew all the holes and tapped them and everything this was all by hand oh God we'd dink around all day with 4-5 holes you know. It would be months before those pumps were ready to send to the ship and we could see some of these merchant ships come

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in. There was a great big old field piece in front, like a Civil War cannon, same way on the stern.

**Question:** Did you have any contact with home while you were in the prison camps, could you get letters or anything or did they not catch up?

**Answer:** Well, I did one time I got 4-5 letters but then when I go home at night , I go back to the barracks at night and get a chance to work behind the Japanese office for their bath tub you know and ah so to start it they'd bring me paper and then a couple times they brought me a box full of letters and here was one of the letters I'd written home. They didn't have anybody smart enough to read them to find out if there were mistakes in there and so I said what is the use of writing home.

**Question:** So they were just destroying them?

**Answer:** They were destroying them.

**Question:** Did you ever think you weren't going to get out of there?

**Answer:** Hell no, I always knew I was going to make it and March or April, it was March when they came over once in awhile and bomb, but they really it was in April of 45 when they really got us. They started at 8 o'clock at night and bombed steady till 4 o'clock in the morning. And these were naphtha-gel , you know, they were long 3 inches they are about 3 feet long and they drop them in clusters they'd roll out and where they hit they'd set a fire. And 3 or 4 of them landed in our barracks and 3 fellows got killed and about 2 or 3 weeks later they moved us again. But they never hit the factory. I can't believe that. Boy, I tell you, we were real happy the first bombers we seen come over. They'd run us back to the barracks at first, then it got so it'd be every day and we'd just stay. But I can remember at first we'd see the bombers come over and Jap planes get at them and after a couple of days they didn't even try anymore because there was so much fire power in those planes.

**Question:** You could definitely see the superiority of the?

**Answer:** Oh God yeah. They were B-29's and they even had pictures of them in the navy yards where we worked. (Bee-nee-ja-koo)It's big. We'd tell them, hell we got bigger ones than that. The last interpreter we had in the shipyard was really comical. (inaudible) was his name and I worked across the bench from him for quite awhile. He wasn't doing anything, and that was unusual for Japanese. He was lazier than we were. So one day I said to my buddy, I said that's the laziest damned Jap I've ever seen. And he leaned across and said I'm not lazy I just don't like to work for these people.

He was conscripted labor and he didn't make enough a day for a pack of cigarettes and his folks were in an import and export business in Tokyo and then he became our honcho or our boss. We had a lot of fun with him. We'd get 15 minutes in the morning for tea break you know, we'd go outside and have tea. We'd get to bs'ing with him and we'd get it to a half hour sometimes to 45 minutes to a half hour and he'd say damned you guys. We got so we came in the morning and, he came and said when are you guys going to quit, and he'd say geez I hope it's pretty quick. We said "how do you feel like this?" "He said well, we shoot down one of your planes, a week later you got ten more. We sink one of your ships and a month later you got 5 or 6. Look what we got". I would have liked to see him after the war but we weren't there. In April of 45 they hit our barracks and everything in fact there was a big fire station right along side of us and.. all the fire trucks left and the fire station burned down. We had a devil of a time keep our barracks and go down to the barracks where the food was. So about 2-3 weeks later they moved us to us up towards Niigata To a little place

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called Nitsu Just a small town. It had three steel mills. We were never bombed there. They just flew over us.

**Question:** Was that your third camp?

**Answer:** That was the fourth camp.

**Question:** So you went to four different camps.

**Answer:** Four different camps, and this Sanders he was in all the camps I was in. Sandy. God he was a nice guy. He had to wind up with the big "C".

**Question:** Now did you know him prior to the war?

**Answer:** No, I met him in the service. He was in communications. He was in telephone.

**Question:** Stringing those cables he said. Was there bartering that went on in the prison camps?

**Answer:** Hell yeah. When we got those Red Cross boxes they were traded for everything. I remember we got a little box of tea.. and nobody wanted tea and the guys were smart they got this for cheap and after all the rest of the coffee and every junk, the tea sold for pretty good you know. And they were trading for everything. Cigarettes you could buy. You could buy a bowl of rice for cigarettes. You could buy a guy's rations for cigarettes and some of the guys that was hard smokers they damned near starved to death and they finally had to, finally gave orders no trading for food. Well sure because oh yeah.

**Question:** Put one more piece of tape on here. So did you barter just with your own soldiers or did you do a little bartering with the guards also? I mean were there things

**Answer:** Well some of the guys bartered with them. About the only time I ever bartered with them was for, you know christ we had diarrhea for three years you know. We'd trade cigarettes for sulphanalomide pills you know and that was for diarrhea for awhile.

**Question:** And were those from the Jap guards because you didn't get medical attention at all?

**Answer:** We did in China, you know, we had a lot of stuff in China but when you got to Japan.. you got a little package of powder for everything you know. Christ, you get flea powder, we'd put the flea powder in a little dish, dump a couple lice in it there or fleas and shit they'd just swim around in it. But they had a, they had a powder for everything.

**Question:** When you were in the camp what did you think about to keep you in a positive attitude or to keep you looking forward. Did the other guys talk about home or did you put home out of your mind?

**Answer:** We thought about home. This was funny, lot of guys sitting in a corner, and they was home making recipes you know of food they were going to do when they got out. I'd look at it and Christ all mighty a lot of it was rice in a dish. But I out of this library got a hold of Robert W. Services and I liked his poems so I learned a bunch of them you know. The Shooting of Dan McGrew, and the Cremation of Sam McGee, and the Race of Men, and My Madonna.

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**Question:** So you went in young, so you weren't married?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** Did you have a girl friend at home?

**Answer:** Yeah kinda.. but, not that much because here I'd been in San Diego and Pearl Harbor and you didn't even get close to girls you know there was so many of them and when they find out you was a marine and only making \$36 or \$54 a month it was the sailors they wanted you know, they made more money. So never really had any particular one.

**Question:** So you didn't have to face that. You didn't get the Dear John letter or?

**Answer:** Oh, no no, didn't even know what that was until I got home.

**Question:** Did you lose any of your friends on Wake Island?

**Answer:** One kid that was in our outfit name was Venerable, he was from Pottsville, Pennsylvania. A regular, a regular well he was a kinda a hick, but he was a real good kid. Right after we got captured why he'd been.. you know getting canned goods that was out in the brush you know and then he'd only eat half of it and in those days it was tinned you know, and he got diarrhea and he died that way, but real close friends, not, only one or two.

**Question:** So you were pretty lucky in that way then?

**Answer:** We didn't lose many cause we were all young and everything.

**Question:** Young and invincible?

**Answer:** Oh yeah.

**Question:** How did you get set free?

**Answer:** Well, at this little place called Nitsu I was working in a shipyard. I was working in like a blacksmith shop and we were the only company working that day and we went into this building for our noon chow and to eat our lunch and boy at 1 o'clock outside go to work. So then this day why come o'clock oh.. come 12:30 we looked up ahead of us in this building was the honchos ate the guards all took off about 12:30. They disappeared. So 1 o'clock came and we knew we had to stay there and we stayed there and then we thought what the hell is going on and about 1:30 here they came. No smiles, no hollering, no nothing, just go to work. We went back to work. The Japs there were 6 or 7 of them there they were all sitting down not saying a word. I said to the honcho, hey, how come no work? (Japanese) No lights?. He said, no electricity. I looked up and all the lights were burning so I asked him. So he told me, the war is over, I couldn't believe it. Yeah. He told me and so then I went next door and got a friend of mine that could really speak Japanese and boy he rattled it right off and pretty soon my buddy started crying like mad he says, hey it is over. So then about an hour later they marched us all back to camp but that little honcho I had there was a wonderful old man. He had lost an eye. He had fought in China you know they had been fighting the Chinese since '32 and I got to like him real well, and he liked me. I'd have to come in the morning and bow to him and then he'd tell us all what to do and one day he showed me a picture. He had three daughters. And you know by then all the Japanese women were getting good looking you know and I told him just bs'ing.. that middle one just six months

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more. I'm staying here and marrying her. God, after that he'd bring me cigarettes. He'd bring me beans. Oh I had a lot of fun with him.

The funniest thing, I'd have to bow to him every morning and say to him in Japanese, good morning, I can't remember his name right now, Mago San, or some darn thing and he'd say good morning to me, ohayou. He got me up in his office and when I got a little chummy with him you know. Have tea and I'd say good morning Mago San and tell him to say good morning Marvin San and so he learned that and every morning he'd say good morning Marvin San and I'd say good morning what the heck is his, I can't remember his name, Matuta San, .More. ok Good morning, how are you? So every morning he'd say good morning how are you. And then he got to more and more so I told him to say good morning Marvin San what the hell are you doing? I told the guys, I says, hey, now don't break up in the morning because we're going to get this. And oh. Turn that thing off while I say that. He was something else. I felt sorry for those poor people, the Japanese people you know because the longer the war went the more they had to work and the less money they got. And if they didn't work they didn't get rations for food, see, and some of those poor people. And after the war we'd go in their houses.. right in a small town. We'd just go anywhere we wanted to you know. We was there damned near a month and here's lathes and all kinds of stuff, everybody was working. And I got to reading later on that these old people that had these lathes was making this stuff and sending it to whoever put it together but it was only about half right because they didn't have the right measurements and stuff like that and.

**Question:** It sounds like, an interesting thing about war.

**Answer:** There's nothing interesting about it.

**Question:** Well, I mean, historically, there's this surreal aspect.

**Answer:** Sure.

**Question:** Here you talk about a very human relationship, almost like buddies, you tease him you know, more English and so you have fun with him, so who do you think the enemy was, was it a country or was it people?

**Answer:** It was military. Before then Japan never, it was always ruled by the military. Now they got different parties over there. Before the military said hey this is it, some of those poor villages.. there wasn't a young man in the whole village they were all off to war. And all that was left was old people and kids and. It was really disheartening for some of those people some of the families, some of those people didn't know where there son's were or they never came back. So I really the Japanese people themselves the civilians I felt sorry for them.

**Question:** So you don't hold any animosity?

**Answer:** Not a minute against the Japanese people, but the military.. but if you read that is the way they were brought up.

**Question:** Now in your stuff you have the canteen and the cook kit.

**Answer:** Oh the cook kit.

**Question:** Now where did you get that?

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**Answer:** I got that in Osaka, these weren't Japanese they come from the Dutch East Indies you know and they came in with shorts too. You know, the poor home guard, they were probably the filthiest people I ran into. But we had Auzzie's ,we had English, my best friend he just passed away a year or so ago, he was on an English merchant ship. He was in the English Navy and oh we had, my God, Borneo.. we had them all.

**Question:** Now you mention some US citizens that had been interned in Japan

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** So the same thing that happened here, we always talk about how, so the same thing happened in Japan. Now did they put those people in the prisoners camps?

**Answer:** No, they stayed down town. Even like this one ship, the Henderson, we had the officers in our camp, but the crew they just let stay downtown.

**Question:** Now once you got set free, again the news reels they always show the end of the war and these big ticker tapes but that is not what you faced is it?

**Answer:** Hell no.

**Question:** Now the war was over and then what happened. You had to get home somehow.

**Answer:** We stayed about let's see it was the 16<sup>th</sup> and we didn't get out of there until the 10<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup> of next month and we got to Guam, there was no parades, no nothing. You know, and, even when we landed in San Francisco there was no parades. I think the most startling was we got off there and some of the guys says we saw some marines in skirts and they say what the hell is marines doing in skirts, well we didn't know there was women marines. Jesus Christ.. look at that.

**Question:** So when you got back did you stay in the Marines?

**Answer:** No, I didn't I got out. I was at Oakland hospital for 2-3 weeks and then there was two of us that flew up to Sand Point and then to Bremerton. I was so confused I didn't want to stay in. In fact, it took me a week to get from Seattle to Bremerton. I knew my brother lived in Kent so I just took a taxi and went to Kent. They never found out about it until I got paid off. Then this lieutenant he says sergeant where were you? He says I see you were on leave for 5-6 days. He said that's good he says.

**Question:** So what did you do after you got out of the service?

**Answer:** I got a job as a mechanic, and later on I had a service station for 27 years. In between time I fished, I commercial fished, you know in the summer times, and then I did maintenance for a septic tank outfit real good friends of mine, I worked there for ten years, then I retired. My, I got a fibril, something wrong with my heart, it doesn't beat right.

**Question:** Dad's got the same thing .

**Answer:** I got retired.

**Question:** How do you think World War II changed your life, or do you?

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**Answer:** I don't know. It made me realize that these wars aren't what they're cracked up to be. If you really want to read something about World War II read We Slept at Dawn the book We Slept at Dawn and I Was There and The Day of Infamy. This will tell you. We were brought into this by our friend Churchill see. We had to help fight Nazism you know, we had to get rid of them, so I think it is all politics myself. Maybe I'm haywire.

**Question:** That's what I've heard a lot of people say.

**Answer:** Sure, why did we go to Korea? Why did we go to Viet Nam. They say it was rubber, it was oil, hey I don't know, but look at all their youth they are wasting.

**Question:** Did it change anything, the war, do you think?

**Answer:** You mean in Europe, or for me?

**Question:** In the world. When you think about it.

**Answer:** It got rid of the Nazi's because they were terrible, they were even more horrid than they figured. They lost six million, they killed six million Jews, hey, we're not supposed to do that. Who are we to take somebody else's life?

**Question:** You know when we started this project the argument some people had in doing this oral history of (inaudible) is that all these veteran's are glorifying war, that's what is going to happen.

**Answer:** No way, there is nothing to be glorified about war. No way. A friend of mine Jack Jameson and I went to school with. He lives out here in Rosedale, he was captured by the German's in Anzio And they took him to Germany and put him in a prison camp and I say Jack how was it, how was the prison camp? He says just like Hogan's Heros. He says, holy Christ, we'd get up when we felt like it and he says we stayed filthy and dirty just to make the German's mad. But it really never got tough until near the end of the war when Russia was closing in and they had to march because the German's didn't want to get captured by the Russians and so I don't know how many hundreds of miles they marched. And he says it was really tough then but you ought to get ahold of him, he really is a character. He was in Special Forces; he was in that movie, the Devil's Brigade, that was the movie they made about the first Special Forces.

**Question:** Huh.

**Answer:** And he is a kick.

**Question:** What did you think when 9/11 happened, when the Trade Towers in New York were hit by the two planes with Osama BinLaden?

**Answer:** Oh, I couldn't believe that. That they'd do something like that. I couldn't believe they'd bring it to the United States, but they've been having it in foreign countries for years, you know, but why us?

**Question:** Was it a dejavu? I hear some people say that's going to be my Pearl Harbor, that's the closest I'm going to get. Was it like all of a sudden here we are again or?

**Answer:** Oh, I don't know, I didn't think of it in that way. I don't know what to think of it. Well, you get in that kind of argument with people and so politics and all that junk I don't.

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**Question:** Do you think that there is a message from World War II from future generations that they should know about that the history books haven't put in there that the kids today and future generations might not understand.

**Answer:** Well, when I went to school it was all ancient history, about the Romans and the.. I could have cared less this happened thousands of years ago you know but then when they got to the Civil War well that's when I really got interested because I've got letters you know from my grandfather and all about his.. all the way through the Civil War and what they fought for was against slavery and I didn't know anybody at World War II, I mean World War I, because my dad he had a crippled arm and he couldn't get in. And I can't remember if I had any, I must have had kin folks, I'm sure I did some where along the line, but I was happy that my two brothers didn't have to, they was a lot older than I was and they didn't have to go, they worked in the ship yards and they were, so. I think they should know something about World War II.

**Question:** I think it is interesting because you talked about when you were at school what was ancient history, and World War II for the generations coming now is ancient history.

**Answer:** Yes.

**Question:** And what I see is that because when I look at a lot for me even Civil War history I looked at these people and they have you know drawings of them so they were characters even though I kind of knew they were real people it was still not real where World War II in talking to real people there is that understanding that war will take away the two or the one Korea or Viet Nam war is real people, men, women and children and families that are affected.

**Answer:** Well, it wasn't the history you know or the, cause they just lined up with swords and fought till dark and then they went back and laid down and the next morning fought again. But it isn't you know it isn't like World War I in those trenches because I knew a bunch a few of the neighbors that life in the trenches was terrible.

**Question:** Yeah. Are you glad you served?

**Answer:** Oh yeah, yes I am, I'm not you know, don't.. shoot.. feel bad about being a prisoner, hey you going in the service they don't guarantee you a bloody thing you know. No, they can't say well no you're not going to get killed or no you're not going to be that, it's just that you take your lumps. And so, I was just damned glad I came back because just look at those thousands and thousands of poor marines in the Pacific that didn't make it, see, or the same way in Europe, so I just so I did lose a little weight you know, I did weigh 180 pounds when I was captured and 115 when they let me loose. I tell you we got aboard ship and we just continuously around and around in the chow line. But after we to Guam I went to this hospital and then when we got back out again to go to Pearl Harbor they gave us tidally winks of different colors for each meal you know you couldn't sneak back to the chow line and I remember going along the rail just before we go into the galley why there's a couple of great big corpsmen, you know, they look to be six foot six or something, and anyway, they put a couple of pills in my hand and I say what the hell are these for he says they are vitamin pills and I threw them out over the side and I says all I want is something to eat and he just picked me up and says eat them!, ok buddy.

**Question:** I say this because you say the guys in the camp making these recipes, is there something, different POW's I've talked to have had one different meal that they thought about



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while they were in camp, that when they got home they wanted to have whatever. Is there a food that you thought about or was food not your?

**Answer:** It didn't bother me too much. Cause once it got working on their minds why then. I had a real good buddy, Crumpton he was from Scranton, Pennsylvania, he was a real good baseball player and he was in my outfit and I'd had him on guard duty a few times. And we was in Osaki there why my buddy Snider says hey I hear your buddy Crumpton is down in the hospital sick. So he says well we'll go down and visit him at the hospital tonight. So we poor old Crumpton was laying in the sack you know he could hardly talk and said well I'm going to die, well what do you mean I'm going to die, Crumpt, oh I feel like I don't want to live anymore so we tried to talk him out of it, but the next day at work why Snitz and I got together we said we'll go down and see him tonight so the bunk was like that you know and up here was the shelf for clothes and shoes so we go in there and he says what do you guys want, what are you guys doing, I said Snitz I get his shoes they are my size, and Snitz says I want his pants and shirt because they just fit me, and I says well I'll take his shaving gear and stuff because I'm running short of mine.. and he says what the hell you guys talking about. We says you're going to die anyway, you don't want to give it to those damned corpsmen. He says you son of a bitches, you sob's get out of here. Four days later he was back in the barracks. He says you guys were a bunch of damned ghouls. I figure we saved his life. We still talk about that. I got him on the phone the other day and he says you damned guys.

**Question:** So you keep track of a lot of the?

**Answer:** Oh yeah we do.

**Question:** Is there a special bond, I mean is there a special friendship that you have with people that served?

**Answer:** Oh yeah because we lived with them you know, we slept side by side with them for years. And I had a big guy LaRue, he was from North China, they sent the North China marines. The Legation Guards at Peking, Tensing, (Inaudible) And now they call it Beijing But anyway it was Tensing, (inaudible) and Peking then but anyway we got to be honchos for a section of 50 you know and he was quite a guy. To pass the time away sometimes you'd just an hour before we had to turn out the lights he said, let's take a trip, said where'd you want to go, and he said let's go to France tonight, you know and he'd make up a big deal and it was comical as the dickens you know, it made you laugh and the next time we'd go to Norway and he seemed to know all these places. It was fun you know.

**Question:** Did everybody?

**Answer:** They'd sit there and listen to him you know and then we'd get another kick out of, we had to count off section of 50, every morning and every night. Every place you went you had to count off and this was in Japanese and we had this he was an old merchant marine, Dutch, I remember, but when he came to our section you'd have to say in Japanese there's 50 men but there's three in the hospital three in the swege(sp) that's in the galley and three is sick you know and then you'd say bante, that's count off, and if a guy'd screw up the count oh God, they wouldn't get that guy, they'd get us, see. We had this Dutch, if you didn't put him in number 23, I don't give a damn what his number was it was (inaudible) we'd have to make a dummy run every morning and every night. Oh God, we got to love the guy. It didn't make a damned bit of difference, we never dwelled on, just the funny things, if you got the hell beat out of you you'd come in and says, what the hell is the matter with you, you're losing it, you used to take more punches than that you know. Cause if you felt sorry for a guy why.

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**Question:** That's where the survival takes place.

**Answer:** Oh yeah, yeah. You had your buddies. If you got sick and you wanted more chow, I'd give you half my chow, or vice versa or I'd go steal medicine for you or it's buddies you know and . Couple of funny things in China when this lady sent in to our major Major (inaudible) a mynah bird. And you know you can make them talk like parrots you know and this Ishihara, everybody hated him, detested that bugger, anyway they taught that mynah bird to say Ishihara is a bastard and finally he came around and he got that bird out of camp quick. It was the comical things you know

**Question:** Did people get beat often and was it for specific reason or just?

**Answer:** Sometimes it was for just absolute nothing. Oh cripes you had to salute these damned little guards.. that walk under your arm, and if you didn't salute them or if you didn't have a hat on you had to bow to them. You had to get up and put your hands like this and do a 45 (mimic bowing) and oh God, I always had something on my head. I'd say, good morning you little bastard, you know to yourself, or up your.

**Question:** Smiling at them all the time.

**Answer:** Yeah, but oh yeah, I got a few dandies myself. And then they had, say if they caught you and I arguing you know, ok then we'd have to stand up to each other and start slapping each other, that was one of their punishments, you know. And then pretty soon I'd say, God damnit, you're hitting pretty hard, well so are you, and pretty soon we were knocking each other on our butts. Or another deal was holding a bucket of water over your head and seeing how long you can do that. Hold your hands up.. like this.. just empty or hold your hands out oh God.

**Question:** That had to be physically, emotionally, mentally, all of the above challenging, I mean you had to keep your mind.

**Answer:** Oh cripe you blanked a lot of that out.

**Question:** Was there a time, did you ever get down in camp, I mean, were there lonely times that you just missed things at home, like were you there for a Christmas?

**Answer:** Oh, '42, '43, '44.

**Question:** Was that hard or did you guys find some way to.

**Answer:** Well '41 we spent Christmas on the airport, so we was four Christmases under Japanese. I never got down too much because I always had this LaRue, if you did start to get down, why he'd get on you, you know. We was always pulling tricks on each other. Yeah he's quite a guy.

**Question:** So once you left you never saw any of the guards again?

**Answer:** No, we found out the war was over and like I say that last morning, night when we come home we said you're full of baloney you know, so we'll know when we fall out for work the next morning. The next morning they did follow us out but they are giving us a big speech that there is a three day cessation of war and about that time here come torpedo bombers that damned near took the top of the roof off and he dropped a carton of cigarettes

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in a little parachute that the war was over. And the next day there wasn't a mean guard around they all left because one of them a bunch of us was going to tag him. My buddy threw a little Jap right in the river. He got me beat up about a week before you know, just because I called him a monkey, and of course every thing you did against them, you was doing it against the Emperor see, so, this is after the war I was in my buddy Ski and here he come with a bowl he was a civilian. I said hey Ski, he got the hell beat out of me here last week so he said get him over here so I go like this, that's how they mean come here, see and so, he said get him over by this door so I did and he took the guys bowl and set it down and he says now Marv open the door and I opened the door and he got him by the nap of the neck and he threw him right in the river and says close that door . We don't know if the damned guy swam or, we never bothered to look.

**Question:** Oh boy, so a lot of the guards disappeared.

**Answer:** Oh yeah all the meanies. In fact the only reason they kept guards there was they figured maybe the Japanese people would come after us but hell they didn't. We'd take walks anyplace but we'd get tired of walking. We'd walk out the gate my buddy and I and here'd come a couple of Japs on a bicycle and we'd grab the bikes and say, Mata mata, wait, so we'd go riding out in the country a couple of hours and come back, they'd be right there. This is funny, the second or the third day, here come a couple of guys in dragging a couple of pigs you know butcher them you know, then a guy would come in with a cow, same thing, but then the B-29's came over and dropped us food, parachuted it.

**Question:** Did they when they were dropping the food tell you how you were going to get home or anything?

**Answer:** No.

**Question:** So how did you figure out, cause that's the thing people don't think about is ok you're in this prison camp and you're in the middle of Japan or where ever and

**Answer:** Well we was just waiting. We was quite a ways up from Tokyo you know and so the rest everybody left before we did. The Aussie's and the rest of them left 4-5 days before we did and so they had this commander. He was a submarine commander, submarine captain off the Grenadier and he says by God we're going to Tokyo so my buddy and I were both corporals and he said get a couple arm bands made MP so he says we march across the bridge to this train station and he told that guy that officer we want a train at ten o'clock tomorrow going to Tokyo and he gave him a little lip and the next thing I knew he knocked him for a loop. We left the next morning at ten o'clock.

**Question:** So was that a Japanese run train?

**Answer:** Japanese yeah.

**Question:** So you were using their systems to get around?

**Answer:** Oh yeah, yeah.

**Question:** So you got into Tokyo.

**Answer:** This is real funny. We had a, he was a fighter pilot and he jumped down over a Rabaul somehow. Anyway we're making milk stops picking up everybody you know and the guys were getting off and hell you just go in a store and grab a bottle of sake and (inaudible)

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and those guys that had been before us had a lot of money, we had a barrel of money, and they were throwing it at the Japs you know.. and he was coming around hollering I want everybody to stop drinking somebody will fall off. About three o'clock the afternoon the train stopped backing up well what the hell is going on, it was this lieutenant had gotten drunker than hell and fallen off... How can I say it, I just want to remember the funny things. They were tough on our officers. They beat our officers just like mad. Just once or twice a week they'd just line them up. I remember one poor navy officer we came in one day and he had this sign around his neck. I'm a thief. And he had stole a couple of onions out of the garden and his two onions were pinned in here. He stayed there two days.

**Question:** They were hard.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** It seems part of the survival of war is to put aside some and remember.

**Answer:** Oh yeah, like my buddy Jacobson said about this German prison camp. He says hell when he got there some guys that had been there a couple years had a family started down town. These were old World War I guards German guards and they didn't give a damn. Give them a couple of packs of cigarettes or something and hell you could go anyplace and he said it was really something.

**Question:** That's again the perception that I think a lot of people have of prisoner camps are of the concentration camps in Germany versus some of these that were almost like a factory it sounds like. Negotiated.

**Answer:** Oh those guys. Did you ever see the picture Stalag 17? We had a reunion at Oklahoma City at that time and that was the premier of it and it was just for POW's and their wives and stuff and then after it was over why this what the hell is his name the main character, we walked up on the stage and shook his hand. Trying to think of his name but.

**Question:** I'm always so terrible at remembering names.

**Answer:** God.

**Question:** When did you end up in Gig Harbor, right after the war, or did it take you awhile to end up?

**Answer:** Well, like I say from (inaudible) hospital we were sent to Bremerton Naval Hospital and then well like I say it took a week to get from Kent to Bremerton or from Seattle to Bremerton and then I'd come home. Hell.

**Question:** What was Bremerton like right after the war, I mean?

**Answer:** My mother lived in Bremerton, or right out of Bremerton a little ways. I don't know, I didn't fool around in Bremerton much and I just come well, I had to go through a whole mess of check places you know they check me for this and they check me for that and I'd get so many checks and then I'd go home and come back and I fooled around for about a month and finally they asked me when are you going to take a 90 day furlough and I says I didn't even know I had one coming so I took a 90 day furlough and hell all they did over there was look up as far as they could see and down as far as they could see and that was it you know cause they wouldn't our doctors didn't know anything about malnutrition or beriberi or pellagra or any of that stuff so.

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**Question:** Was there a lot of ex-military that got decommissioned out of Bremerton?

**Answer:** You mean that left the service, I imagine there was, I don't know.

**Question:** You just got on with your life and.

**Answer:** Yeah, I only spent about a week at the marine barracks before I got out. It was real funny I couldn't get out of the gate the first couple of days because I didn't have a liberty card and so I went down to the marine barracks and asked to see the marine sergeant and he says what is your serial number, I said hell I don't know, he says what'd you do with your dog tags, I said I never had a dog tag, he says you got to be, I said no I'm not, then I remembered I had a little piece of paper and when we left Shanghai why Major Devereux gave us that this is so and so member of 1<sup>st</sup> defense battalion from Wake Island and signed his name. I said here this is all the identification I got and he went in to the Majors office and the Major came back and says can I have this for a souvenir, I said no, no, and he says you mean to tell me that you didn't know your serial number, I says nope, we never had dog tags, so then finally they looked up my serial number because I'd go to these different places you know military places, and ok what's your serial number. I'd just use my rifle number and that's, cause I knew that. He says, how in the hell have you been getting by, I says I just give them my rifle number, so then I had to learn my serial number, but they wanted me to ship over, I was a sergeant then, I'd been a sergeant, when we were captured they gave us an extra rate see so I had seniority up to kazoo for a sergeant from the 23<sup>rd</sup> of December '41 and this was '46 see. And he says if you ship over we'll make you platoon sergeant. I said you make me platoon sergeant then I'll ship over. Why? I says hey the Japanese promises us so many things I don't believe in promises. Then he says well if we make you platoon sergeant we got a shipment detail going out to Midway Island. I say no no no. I says I spent the last four and a half years on islands. That is just like my buddy, he was from Colorado, he says when I get out of this damned Marine Corp. I'm going to buy me a car, I'm going to tie a set of oars on it and start inland and the first damned people that ask me what those are that is where I'm going to stay.