

Donald Newbold

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Question: Okay, we're going to start out here. Just give me your name and the correct spelling of it so I have it on tape, first and last.

Answer: Donald M. Newbold, N-E-W-B-O-L-D.

Question: Now how come, and maybe it has nothing to do with the military, but I've noticed that most of the vets, when they sign something, when they talk to me, they always use their middle initial. Is that a service thing? Cause --

Answer: I guess so.

Question: Cause nowadays you don't see it.

Answer: Well, you've got to remember in -- and it wasn't that common, but there was a lot of Olsons, Johnsons and Whites and Smiths, and you know, and so you find more who you are, what Smith you are, well, I'm Samuel H. Smith as opposed to Samuel G. Smith, I don't know, that's my only answer to it, I don't know.

Question: That's why I heard the nicknames came from too, because there were so many Dons. It's like, well, I better find a nickname for you or -- you know, Bobs, Mikes, Freds --

Answer: That's interesting. I -- all the time, the better part of my life, I mean, my grown, my adult life, for some reason I should have been named Robert. Because I would say, and I don't think I'm exaggerating, at least 30, 35, maybe more times a year, but 30 times, minimum, people will call me Bob. After they've been introduced to me and even some people that were my customers for like 20 years, once in a while they come in and say hi, Bob. Oh, gee, I made a mistake. Very interesting. Best one I've heard.

Question: Now you -- were did you grow up?

Answer: I was born in Lebam, Washington, Pacific County, Washington, which is about 12 miles or so east of Raymond going towards Chehalis.

Question: And it really is Mabel?

Answer: Named after some lady named Mabel, backwards, Lebam. And I assumed that is true. I grew up mostly my -- that I recall days, went back that I can recall, is what we called Willapa, which is about three miles or so out east of Raymond, and then we who lived in that little community outside, we called that Willapa and then there was old Willapa which was where the original settlements in that area along the river, Willapa River, and that's where Weyerhaeuser had a camp for many, many years, way back. And they had the old bunkhouses, the old way, and the train that went up into -- the hills and brought out the logs and that's where they took the loggers in to cut. And so I grew up around Willapa and I went to schools there and then to high school in Menlo, Washington, which was another six miles or so up the pike east toward Chehalis. And it was just a little community that had a -- did have a cheese factory there for many years. They had a general store which was the post office doubled up as a post office, general store, and a couple of pump gas tanks in front. And then later there was a little -- what we call today a little hamburger stand that did business all the time I was in high school and before that, and the high school itself, and that constituted the town.

Question: Do you know Bob Bush?

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Answer: I knew Bob Bush. Bob was a year behind me at school. He played center on our little football team and when he was a junior he was a center. I was a senior then and I played halfback. And so, yes, I knew him. In fact the school had about 130 total students, 135 maybe. And so you knew everybody in the high school. And high school, in those days, was ninth grade through 12th. So you literally knew everyone by their first name, although you didn't always chum around with them or buddy with them or -- you had your own little, you know, close friends, but everybody was friendly. I mean we didn't seem to have this caste system -- cliques when I went to school, and I think that was probably one of the nice things. We had a few oddball guys, I mean, but they were -- they were not considered -- they were considered oddballs, but not outside -- they were acceptable and --

Question: Sure Characters.

Answer: Yes, they were characters. They were characters and that's it.

Question: Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor got hit?

Answer: I know exactly where I was. I had delivered the newspapers -- I had a newspaper route out in this community which included the Willapa I lived in and the old Willapa, which, the logging camp, I went through that, and on Sundays I went even further and we went to what we call Camp One where there's an old Grange hall, and I went around the river -- there's a river road. Followed it on up. And I didn't have enough daily customers to go daily but I went on Sundays cause I had extra Sunday customers. I finished the route. I used to get up at quarter till five and pick the PI paper up and deliver it and it took me from then till probably about 7:10 or 7:15 to get back home. So it was a long -- all on a bike, this was no walking. Because we're scattered out so much in that community. So came home. This Sunday, particular Sunday, and it was later when I got home. I didn't get home until probably 8 -- 8 or 8:30 cause of the distance involved. Had breakfast and then decided I was tired and went to bed. And this was December 7th, of course, this was about time of basketball, and in a small high school, you turned out for everything, track, basketball, you know. You can be a big fish on a little pond, in other words. And so I was tired, I went up - upstairs, and laid down in the bed and I don't recall the exact hour it would have been, but all of a sudden I heard some yelling downstairs. And it was my -- I lived with a step-father and my mother and two step-brothers who are -- one that's almost my same age, by a month, but the other one was younger, and an older sister by two years older than I. But I heard this yelling and -- so -- then they ran up to the bottom of the stairs and yelled "Pearl Harbor was bombed". You know. Well, I'm out of bed and we were all around the radio. We had an old Stewart-Warner radio, that was high tech communication of the day. And we stuck with the radio almost into the night, you know, listening to this. But I was at home, asleep, awakened. Bang.

Question: Did you know where Pearl Harbor was?

Answer: Yes, I knew where Pearl Harbor was. I had -- I liked history I guess but I had good teachers in school. And so I knew -- I knew where New York was, I knew where Willapa was, I knew where Pearl Harbor was. And sort of knew a little bit about the whole world. I mean, I wouldn't say I was an informed person but I always liked to study geography and history and that was always interesting to me.

Question: So that made sense to you then. I mean not sense, but you understood what that meant, the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor?

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Answer: Yes it did and it also meant in a way, there was a lot of speculation around all the populace, at least in the area -- around the area I knew and all the people, is when are they going to land the troop ships from Japan and invade. And there was a serious concern about that. That was probably born of some ignorance of logistics in invasions, and -- but the road was truly almost all open at that time. Even though our aircraft carriers didn't go down with that, those that we had. But they would not have been able to defend the coast if the Japanese maybe had planned in advance to invade. I'm sure they could have established a bothersome beachhead.

Question: So you were how -- how old?

Answer: I was seventeen.

Question: Seventeen.

Answer: Well, actually when they attacked I was 16. Cause my birthday is the 24th of December and I would -- became 17 just after the attack. And didn't enter the Service -- I graduated from high school at 17 in May or June of '43 and then I had diphtheria and it was a long story and was quarantined for that for two months, so after I got through with that, got over that, I was pretty ill, then my friends, most of them were getting -- were slightly older. The 18-year-old draft age. Either they were getting their notices. I was still 17 but I convinced my folks that I should join. And they signed away the rights of their son to the United States.

Question: Do you remember when you decided that you wanted to do that? Was that an immediate thing or over time or --

Answer: I think I knew all the time after I graduated that I would probably go in the Service. I didn't join the Marine Corps which I did later, I wouldn't say that was cut and dried. But I did have two of my friends out of graduating class of 14 in high school, three of us joined the Marine Corps out of that class, which is a rather high percentage, considering the per capita comparison. And uhm, but I liked them both. One of them was a good friend of mine and the other was a friend. And then one of my other good buddies was fellow named Jerry Kraus. And Kraus, he went into -- went to Stanford on some kind of a pre-V-12 program and I don't know, they cut that out later and so they just needed bodies and so they just put him in the Infantry, sent him to basic training, I guess. Those three... anyhow I liked the Marine Corps. I had a couple other friends that were in and they told me, you know, better sign up quick and -- my nickname in high school was Newby -- and they said better sign up quick, Newby, before they close out this deal, you know. (laughs)

Question: Deal meaning the war or --

Answer: No, meaning the Marine Corps. You better sign up now because they might not let you in later, you know? (laughs)

Question: So why the -- why the Marine Corps?

Answer: Well, I just knew some guys that had been in the Corps, already in, and I liked them, I admired them, and I had letters home, even from one of them, fellow named Joe Owens, Henry -- Henry Joe Owens, and he -- he wrote occasionally, back home, and said this is a good deal, you know, he liked -- you'd like the Corps, Newby. Cause I was always an enthusiastic guy and in high school, again you must remember that -- the numbers are small and the size of the high school. But when I was a junior they elected me their student body

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president and when I was senior I was elected to student body president and -- cause I just liked everybody and in -- I guess they -- guess in a popularity contest I got away with it, I don't know. It was a lot of fun. And always tried to treat everybody fair. And --

Question: So the letters that you were getting from these guys that were in the Corps -- was this after Pearl Harbor?

Answer: Yes, yeah.

Question: I mean, so these were guys that were seeing --

Answer: Yeah, the one of them was older than I -- he was in a class ahead of me and had already gone in, you know, he -- he was draftable right away. And so he chose to go in the Marine Corps, and he was writing home all these -- how good it was. He lied a little, it wasn't quite that good but (laughs).

Question: Yeah. Well, so prior to joining the Marine Corps, how much had you ventured from the Willapa Harbor area? I mean were you a worldly person or --

Answer: Hardly. Hardly worldly. Growing up, it was a big deal, kind of, I'm talking about my junior high age, you know, that time, probably going to Aberdeen or Chehalis was a pretty -- was pretty adventuresome area. That's a pretty good sized town, you know. And I think though in high school, we began, by ninth grade, going a little farther. We'd go into Seattle and we've got picked -- our band -- our musical band in high school was picked by the American Legion in Raymond to represent them at the state convention, I can remember that. I think I was a freshmen that year, ninth grade. So we got to go over -- and it was in the summer -- it was hot. But to represent the American Legion at their state convention, and a lot of them brought bands along and they had a contest, who had the best band. And so our high school band represented the local Legion. And -- and that's the first time that I -- these little things in life you remember -- I thought Walla Walla was so beautiful, it had so many nice trees, up and down the avenues in the residential areas at least that we were in. And then they had a place downtown and they had frosted root beers. Frosted glass. I'd never had that before. And so I -- I got to admit, of the little money I had, I think I spent half of it on these frosted root beers. (laughs) And so, yes, we were -- we were not worldly, but read a lot about it. But -- that's one thing, I was anxious to see what the world was like. You know, when I had ever got enough money together.

Question: So here's this 17-1/2, 18 year-old kid who's signed up for the Marines now --

Answer: Hm-hmm.

Question: Where did you do boot?

Answer: San Diego.

Question: Well, tell me about leaving Raymond. What was that? Cause now here your Mom and -- was it Mom and step-dad, Mom and Dad?

Answer: Mother and step-father. Step-dad.

Question: Mother and step-father are sending you -- what was that? Was it a big ceremony or --

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Answer: No, no. We just -- last dinner at home. It was just an evening meal and then the next day in the morning I had to get up early and as I remember -- I guess my step-dad was probably working. My step -- my mother, and I don't know who drove us up. It could have been -- could have been my sister or someone else, or we lived near another relative, step-relative to me, but a relative, just across the street and down. But anyway, I -- we went to Centralia. I boarded the train in Centralia. That was the first leg. And that was the first time I knew -- did I make a mistake cause the train got held up in Oakland and it took us from Centralia, Washington to San Diego to unload... two and a half, almost three days. Well they got sidetracked for some reason, I don't know, in Oakland, we're sitting in the siding there and they started bringing sandwiches through. But you're kind of dirty. In those days you know they burned coal a lot on the trains and the smoke would drift sometimes. And we didn't have -- we did not have sleeping accommodations, it was a seat you sat in, you know. That was -- by the time we got to San Diego, we were all pooped. Very tired.

Question: Were you just a kid by yourself or this was a train of Marines or --

Answer: No, well, I was, yeah, I was the only one I knew except there was a fellow that I got acquainted with from Centralia. And Larry, his name is, hmm, I'll have to think about that name. But I didn't really stay with him and in fact he went into a different -- in boot camp they put you in these platoons. And he went into a different platoon than I did, but I remember going down with him and we all were looking at each other about the second day of sitting on a siding, what kind of an outfit are we into here?

But I remember the first day there. Oh, can I harken back just a moment in high school. One of the things I had a lot of fun doing, playing sports. We had a lot of fun with that. I played a dance band, started about my sophomore year, or late sophomore year, and we formed a dance band and so we would play at local dances in town. Sometimes we got hired, to play for the Eagles or someone hired us. Or we would -- we would put our own dance on. We'd rent the hall -- the labor hall or someplace, have a dance, put flyers out, and so we -- we didn't have a lot of money. We made a little extra money so that come 1 o'clock in the morning, when most of my friends could hardly buy -- afford to buy a Coke for themselves and their girlfriend, we're down there ordering chicken fried steak. I mean, this -- (laughs). But the guys I ran with, none of us except my -- there was two guys in the band, one was older, a little older, he was a couple years ahead of us, age and everything. He was the piano player, very talented guy. He wrote some beautiful music, and he could arrange, which is also a given talent to know how to do that. He arranged it so we sounded better than we were. The music. But none of the rest of the guys I was with, we had about an eight-piece band. So nobody smoked or drank. That wasn't our thing. We just liked music and we began to notice there were girls in the world then, but you can't dance and romance them on the floor if you're playing a horn. So that was it. Just go on.

Question: When you -- there was no girlfriend back at home or --

Answer: No, I kind of liked a gal that was from Raymond -- she lived about half way into town, about a mile and a half down the road. Her name was Roylea, nice gal. Her dad was the county auditor, I believe, at the time. He then became the county treasurer later and I forget which way, but Ross -- Ross Nielsen. He was very, very fine man. And he raised -- he was separated from his wife way back and he raised three girls. This girl was the older of the -- of the three. And so I'd go down and kind of old fashioned call on her and we'd sit in her front room, and then when it got to be that, and Ross would usually arrange for his other daughters to kind of not bother us, you know. But Ross managed to walk through the room about once every hour, just to, I suppose, mother-henning his daughter. Which was okay, cause all we did is did a little bit of necking, but nothing. You know. And sounds pretty straight laced today but that was -- she's still around and I see her on rare occasions but she's a really nice

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gal. But it didn't work out. No, I left, I didn't leave any wake of crying females behind me. I guess I was just ugly and they're glad I'm gone. I don't know, what the hell.

Question: What was -- see, I just imagine, me, I mean cause I'm a homebody. And so here's this young kid, you get on this train now, you're leaving your mom behind --

Answer: Right.

Question: And now you're down at Marine boot camp.

Answer: Correct.

Question: God forbid.

Answer: Well, I can tell you -- things stick in your mind. When we got off the train, if you want to hear this. We got off the train in San Diego at the train station, fell out, go aboard buses, go over to the recruiting depot or the boot camp area. We fall out and at that time of course there was a big crush on, so the barracks were full, of other platoons there and so they had erected tents on this huge quadrangle that was the -- the grinder, if you will, the marching area. Encircled by the Spanish-style architecture mostly that were built long before we ever arrived there. I mean it was a permanent base type structures. But now here are the tents all out there. So we all are marched out on this concrete quadrangle and -- and we're standing in front of a fellow. And I would guess, I don't know exactly, he was probably about six foot two and probably weighed about 215 pounds or so and he was all muscle. He had shoulders this way, this way and down. (gestures) You could tell he was in great condition. And his introduction, I can remember, after being on this train, see there were also some men come in from Detroit and Chicago. Now you'd think they would maybe go to the East Coast, but no, or however they are dividing up the country to train them between the two -- Camp Lejeune or Paris Island in North Carolina was the Marine Corps base, main base, in the East Coast, and San Diego in the West. And so it's two training areas. So we get these fellows. We're all standing out there, mixed all up. This fellow, this -- which they call a drill instructor or a DI, he's standing in front of us and all of a sudden, because of the lack of having -- haven't eaten -- we haven't eaten at all since noon and that was a sandwich, you know. And it's getting dark almost, twilight. And so these guys start to faint. And one faints, you'd carry him - he said carry him in and put him on a cot. See we had cots inside the tents, just you know folding tent cot. And pretty soon another guy faints and he's out there talking, you know, telling us how it's going to be. And I can remember him saying you just do not have a mama, and you don't have a papa, all you got is me. And I remember he was pretty definite about that. Well, these fellows, about the third one fainted and he said, now you people, and that's the way they always talk, "All right you people", he said, "listen up." He said, "If anymore of you are going to faint, you're going to faint now. There isn't going to be anymore fainting when I end this little talk." Well, how in the hell do you do that? (laughs) So anyhow, I don't know if any more fainted. I can't remember. But that got our attention, you know, and I guess fired us up a little more. So we finally got to go get something to eat and then they -- went over to get showers. They wanted everybody to get scraped off cause nobody had had a shower for three days or so. And so we went in to the place to get showers. And I took a shower, everybody did, but I, for some reason, neglected to bring a towel with me. I mean, I didn't think I needed a towel -- when I got there, they'd take care of me, you know. No towel. So I'm in the shower, I come out, I'm soaking wet all over, and he says you have one minute to get in your sack, lights are out and I don't want to hear anybody up or down or I don't want to hear you crying, either. (laughs) So I'm going like this, scraping the water with my -- with my thumb and forefinger, trying to get somewhat dried. I jumped in that sack, sack or bed, and it was pretty wet yet. And that was not enjoyable, but I

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was so tired I think I fell asleep in 10 or 15 minutes anyhow. That was my first day. Had an interesting time.

Question: So that first day, did they do the shave and shots and all of that --

Answer: No, not the first day. That came down the second and third day they got through all of that where you got -- got shaved. And there was only one cut, there was no choice, of course. And then we went through quartermaster area and they -- that was interesting because they said what size shoe do you wear? Well I wasn't positive. I couldn't remember what and he looked down he says, oh, you look like an 8-1/2 Double E to me. That's what I -- they issued to me. You know I wore those for most of the time I was in the Marine Corps. That's the size I always got. I used to get shin splints, even when we were out training up at Camp Pendleton, and then of course, in combat. Once in a while I'd get a shin splint. Well, when I get -- now I'm going over three years period. So when I get out, go into a real shoe store in Portland, Oregon, cause I want to buy some civilian clothes, the guy says what kind of shoes are you wearing? And I said well this is what they gave me, you know. So I must have been pretty much of a rube, but, you know, to me he says, you know, you really wear a 10-1/2, A or double A depending on the last of the shoemaker, you know. You know and I bought those shoes and my feet and everything felt better than it ever had in my life. I was no longer getting these shin splints, you know.

Question: So you went through Iwo and everything wearing an 8-1/2?

Answer: Yeah.

Question: When you should be wearing a 10?

Answer: Ten and a half. Yeah.

Question: It would have made the war a lot easier, I think.

Answer: Well, some people -- that's what I said when things get tough with me and I can't figure something out or have done something that doesn't make sense, then I always revert to what I always say, you have to understand, I'm just a slow learner, that's it. So, well you didn't complain in the Corps. I mean you just, I mean you could complain, after you in awhile, you learned the ropes a lot, but it never occurred to me that -- that I was wearing -- that was what the problem. It just didn't occur. So, but boot camp was interesting because they would do thing such as -- we were out bayonet practicing one day, and in the Marine Corps recruiting depot and boot camp there, thrusts somewhat on the beach -- beach of the harbor of San Diego. So it was about, it must have been 500 yards down to the water, I don't know, I can't recall now. And I'm out there, you know, we're trying to learn how to parry and thrust with your rifle and a bayonet. That was the practice of the day, whatever we're doing. He says Newbold, he'd do this to everybody, a lot of wet hand of sand, take off at high port. That's what they -- that's how they talk. So, high port. So I take off at high port, go down where the water is, grab a hand of wet sand and run like crazy to get back to him. I hand him the sand, he goes, too dry. Take off at high port. Well, I got to tell you, I got every ounce -- I mean I burned every ounce of energy I had to get there, get that wet sand and get back up there, because I don't think I could have gone the third time without falling over. He looked at it and he said, well not too good but go ahead, finish the drill. Well, there's a reason, and there was one tough time that I remember. There was one kid kept getting in a lot of trouble. Really seemed to get in a pickle or get in a mess, you know, and he was -- he did something, and finally the drill instructor said come over to my tent. This was after -- after -- after we'd eaten, in the evening. So he was going to chew this kid out, you know. And he went over to

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the drill instructor's tent. Well, the drill instructor usually had an assistant, so there was at least, usually two, two drill instructors to a platoon, and sometimes they had three, depending. Depending on I guess their manpower supply. I can remember they took him over in the tent of the drill instructor which set apart a little bit. He had some wooden things, what do you call it, a hanger, he can hang his blouse, you know, and his trousers on and what not. Now we didn't have that. We just rolled ours up, you know, put them in a sea bag. But he had this kid and so -- and also the DI also had a foot locker. Usually a wooden to metal footlocker. He was allowed to keep his goodies in. So he has the kid stand on the edge of that and has this -- the instrument that he hung his blouses on, you know, a hanger, stand, and hooked his nose over this, and made him lean at an angle into this and course when the guy came back his nose was torn loose, (gestures) you know. I mean he'd put a pretty good dent in this kid, and he was bleeding, you know. So pretty soon the DI -- the other DI walked over to him. Told him, you go down to sick bay, get that fixed, you know. Well I don't think they really wanted to -- whoever was running the brigade, I mean the commander of that particular group of platoons, may or may not have (inaudible) but they covered for each other a lot. They was -- but they expect you to be tough enough to take it, see, this is -- and when they said move, they mean move now, and I mean on the run. And all of that, was to teach you that when you're in combat, if you ever got there, was that when they say move out or they signal you go this way, you go that way and you do it now. In other words, it's -- I wouldn't say blind obedience, but it was trained that you would do what you're asked to do when you're asked to do because the lives of others and obtaining the objective depended on this type of teamwork action, not somebody turning around say why me, you know. Or do we have to go? (laughs) And so I think that's one of the reasons among others that the Marine Corps built pretty effective combat teams. All and all. Not I'm not -- that has nothing to say that any other service didn't have a better group of guys or -- there's everything from the Navy Seals to paratroopers, both Army and Marine Corps, or that in the Army -- the Army had some special groups, there's Rangers -- and they had some really tough guys. I mean they're well trained, but as a whole, every Marine is a rifleman. That's the basic tenant. And they all know, and even those, as far as I know, even those who are going to be sky jockeys, pilots, on land or off a carrier or any -- any Marine -- has to go through this similar big thing. He has to know his rifle, he has to -- that's what he's supposed to know. Start with, and then he becomes a radio man, a pilot, he becomes whatever. But everyone has to go through that and it's rigorous training. And I think it pays off. Course there's (laughs) again, this is not, cause I have some great friends and I know there's some fellows in all branch of the service that far, far away did more than -- than I experienced and many of my Marine Corps friends experienced, but I'm speaking kind of the whole, I think it's -- that's the units and then the Army has trained and has some now some special mobile forces that they can deploy -- top flight -- but in the past and up to the Marine Corps expeditionary units are the ones they sent to the Mediterranean and -- and -- first, and mostly, to get -- cause they're ready to go.

Question: I don't think --

Answer: I've discoursed on that long enough, but I'm just --

Question: Yeah, I don't think anybody questions that either. The Marines definitely were a different -- different breed. I mean I don't think there's -- I mean I think there's probably some bickering within service to service --

Answer: Oh, yes --

Question: -- but I think when people back up and look at the big picture, what the Marines' job was and their training -- now going through it, did you -- did you think oh, this is great, they're teaching us this -- or did you think, oh my God, what am I --

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Answer: Well, yeah, at times you wonder what's all this about, you know. What -- bunch of -- why do we have to do that? You know, your mind is -- because when you're dealing with large numbers, not everything runs smooth. They -- they -- somehow, and it can happen -- went to firing range at Camp Matthews, which is in California but up a way -- little bit east of San Diego. And when I was there, a big outbreak of diarrhea, dysentery, if you will. And there was a whole field out there, I mean like a whole football field or worse. Looked like white poppies were growing out there because they really had a problem. And I had even -- I was shipped into San Diego Hospital for about two days. Till they got stopped, you know, with medications. There's foul-ups and things that they do, and somebody wasn't watching the store -- that shouldn't have happened, really. But I was thinking of -- what as it about -- going to -- oh, that's all right.

Question: Where did you see first active duty?

Answer: By active duty, what do you mean?

Question: Well, I mean action. I mean, where -- where was it when you were put into a military zone. Of course there's training, then all of a sudden you're in reality of fighting a war.

Answer: Oh, well we left -- well, before we left Camp Pendleton, they call it, at Oceanside, California, or also it was the Santa Margarita Ranch, which it was originally, a huge, huge area. And I'm not sure who owned it but the government leased it at least, or purchased it. And I think the Irvines of California owned part of that, I'm not sure, but it -- it's a huge area and uhm. But we -- then train -- go down to Oceanside itself cause the Navy had a boat basin in there, and we would go out in the -- in the ocean in landing craft and go up a few miles in what we called Aliso Canyon, what they now call Red Beach, a few miles up - - maybe seven or eight or nine or ten miles, and then we would practice landings. And amphibious warfare is a little different, you're talking about, see, the war in Europe and North Africa, there were amphibious landings, obviously, Normandy and D-Day and all the beaches of Omaha and Utah and so forth and sword. But and in North Africa, there was landings, obviously in Sicily, were partially going into Italy was partially an amphibious operation. And they tried to land at Anzio in Italy. But the -- the Pacific war was -- it was almost entirely amphibious, in a sense, because once you left the continental United States, the only other friendly land mass left at that time was Hawaii. Or the Hawaiian Islands, you know. And so we did go to the large island of Hawaii. That was our base. We trained at the foot of Muana Loa and Muana Kea. Little towns, now called -- or communities -- called Waimea and Kamuela was the area. But it was entirely different. It wasn't tropical. It was more like -- more like the sage brush, or like Wyoming or -- it was -- lot of wind up there. It could get cold, but it was -- rocky, well, volcanic rock left over, and some grass lands. Cause the Parker Ranch, which is the second largest cattle ranch in the world at that time, only second to King Ranch of Texas which is huge. So that's where we then trained to gain. That's where our division really trained as a full division.

Question: The Parker Ranch?

Answer: The Parker Ranch. And that leads me to a comment. Differences in the war, you say the Pacific war versus the European war, uh side. When you're over there, outside of being, let's say, primarily in Honolulu or primarily being on Oahu where Honolulu is located, and that would only -- town would only handle a certain capacity of service men, with the Pearl Harbor base being there, and the Schofield Barracks being there for the Army and ancillary Air Force things, and so here you come with all these other so-called warriors, and

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where do you send them on liberty? Where do they go to town, if you will. And I think for both the Army, the Navy, the Marine Corps, Seabees, whoever, Coast Guards, whoever were involved in the Pacific. Slightly different because we didn't get to see girls. Well, we could see women occasionally when we'd go to -- we got to -- we did -- few times we went over to Hawaii because we would go out to a -- I was on a Naval gunfire team which directs Naval fire from -- from ships, destroyers, cruisers or battleships, either, to targeted areas on land, I mean, on the islands that we were invading. That was our -- our call. In other words we're sea-going artillery, if you will. And that's -- and I was a radio man with a forward spotter, forward artillery, if you will, spotter, we called it -- we called ours a Naval gun fire team attached to a battalion of infantry. Well the thing that -- we go over to -- I go to say, a couple of times, from Hawaii, the island of, then we would go then over to Oahu which is the Hawaii that everybody recognizes or did, used to. There was no use going to town. It was crowded with servicemen. I mean it's like 10 or 15 to one or worse than that, you know. And besides I was being paid -- I was then a PFC, in radio school I got a high enough score to get a PFC's rating. So that gave me \$4 a month. I was making \$54 a month. And then when we went to Hawaii, that was called a war zone. I mean, you were in, effective, so they increased our pay \$10 a month so I got \$64 a month, of which I usually kept \$10 one payday, one month, and five bucks the next month, and sent the rest home for my folks to bank for me. There was no place to spend it, you know. And of course they didn't want -- it was kind of hard to keep the average age of my division was 19 years old. You know, these guys got testosterone running and they -- they all -- and I'm not saying everybody, but they had -- most of them liked to have a six-pack of beer now and then. There was no place to get it, basically. Once in awhile we get to -- get a few guys would get off and we'd go down to Hilo maybe for a night or a day or something. The little towns of Kamuela or some place. Course you could buy a steak -- the biggest steak you could buy then, if you could get to a restaurant. It would hang over the plate as the saying goes, and for a buck, and that included the mashed potatoes and all the -- you know, the whole shot. So, you know things are cheap, but there's no place to spend it, and of course five bucks, ten bucks every other month was enough for me.

Question: But you were -- I mean you got R & R, but you guys were pretty busy getting ready for --

Answer: Yeah, R & R was around there. We played inter-regimental baseball, and you know, competed and we had a -- we had a rodeo once. And you go up, if you go off there were -- not everyone did this, of course, but you could go up and hunt wild pig. Out up towards the mountains more. And they roam down in there. They had wild pigs, but you had to be careful you didn't shoot a cow, because you know, that's -- that was probably a treasonable offense, you know.

Question: Now you say a rodeo, is this like --

Answer: Yeah, we got --

Question: -- bunch of drunk Marines and a cow or what?

Answer: No, they -- it was sponsored by the -- by the authorities, meaning your superior officers of -- General Rocky said, that's great, got to have something to do with the guys -- you can't just lock them down, you know. And let off steam that way so that you use up a little energy, that's good, you know. It was a very difficult, interesting time, you know, to not be able to get on a bus or a train, I mean if you got -- any -- there's no time off. Where you going to go? They aren't going to ship you back to San Francisco to have a weekend, I mean, it's all over till it's over.

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Question: And it's all men.

Answer: And it's all men. I never had much contact at all with girls there. There were a few Red Cross people but I never was a cookie and donut guy so I didn't go to the Red Crosses and I didn't go to USOs. They had a little place, but I do remember -- I'm telling little sea stories now, but true. Our officers, the officers in the Division, or at least in the Regiment, had a party and this didn't go on all the time. They had one big party I remember though. They brought gals over from Honolulu and Red Cross gals down from Hilo up, and I guess they got enough mix and match there, I don't know. But some of the -- some of the enlisted men were serving at the mess hall, you know, to try and -- serving the drinks and doing the flunky work, you know, and the clean-up. But someplace along the line, one of the gals I guess, got a little inebriated that was an invitee. And she -- and to go to the bathroom there, we had -- back of all the tent rows, like each battalion had, had a long row of what we called heads or toilets if you will. And we called them heads. And that's where everyone went and then.. it was all sanitary but it was rather -- rather rudimentary -- nature. And she missed, or she missed coming back. And pretty soon, after awhile, here come -- here came, I should say, a couple of officers. I don't know where they -- they weren't ours that commanded us directly, but they came around with flashlights and they were going down the tent rows looking to see if somebody had caught this gal and put her inside -- decided that she was cold and she needed blankets over her or something. You know, I don't know. So they were in there with their flashlights. Well, they only got about four or five tents in and pretty soon, these guys -- the guys -- the guys were getting a little ticked -- cause we don't get to have girls up, you know. So they started yelling invectives at these officers, and the officers, I think, were afraid to go back and say we put these guys on report because -- I don't think they were really supposed to have them up there, and at least not inebriated -- get them inebriated, you know. But the joke of that was, and he's still living, my lieutenant who was the chief spotter and our commanding -- our immediate commanding officer, our lieutenant, was Owen Cohen. And Owen came from Chelan, Washington. And his father was a superintendent of schools in that whole area over there. Later years his brother became a superior court judge. But Owen had, I think, a little Chelan blood in him. In fact Owen looked a little like he had Chelan blood -- or, Indian blood. Nice guy. Very polite to his men, looked after us. We really liked him. We called him Bogey behind his -- after Bogart, because he was kind of cool, you know. But then also we called him Batman in combat because he would -- in combat, it was raining, a dead rain on Iwo a few times, and when it was raining, he could stand up and we told him he was crazier than you know what because he -- not all the time, but he'd stand up, he couldn't find a target he was looking for, he'd stand up and look for this target. And he -- and I'll tell you Japanese snipers were pretty good. They're good shots. They used to -- the old adage, the Japanese have poor eyes and they can't hit anything is (laughs). B period S period. (laughs) They're pretty good shots. So anyway we called him Batman. And that's -- but he was always Lieutenant Cohen. He earned that respect and we gave it. And so anyhow our joke with him, and later - I told him later in life, but between all of us, you know, the team. We figured he'd pick the ugliest one, and I said it doesn't take a hard thinker to figure out why. (laughs) Of all these gals, he got the ugliest one. Well, that -- you have to understand the times, the thinking and that.

Question: Oh, yeah.

Answer: And so then we left from there and loaded for combat from the big island. And when it was announced that we were going to go on this little journey. And the 4th Division trained on Maui, which is adjoining island. And that's where they did their training. And then 3rd Division was on Guam cause they had participated in the Guam invasion and taking of Guam. But they were to be -- the 3rd Division was to be reserved for this operation. They first told us that after we were aboard ship, loaded, transports and everything, that this would

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probably -- first word was about a three day operation, cause we were going to hit them with all this -- all these good hot troops. And then it could be five. Then after we just got started they decided it probably would take ten days. And the reality was before we were secured, actually the Marine Corps secured its last pocket of resistance, it was 36 days later. So somebody's intelligence was -- woefully lacking here, you know, in the estimation made.

Question: That was Iwo?

Answer: That was Iwo Jima. That's where we went, to Iwo Jima. But they -- we were aboard ship. It was interesting. We boarded there and then we stayed -- we didn't get off -- at least most of us didn't. Went into Hawaii or into Oahu or Pearl Harbor and waited for others to -- I guess the 4th and everything to get lined up for the convoy. And the Navy to get the ships in line that they had to send along. Then we took off from there, and we were aboard a troop transport for 40 days. Now that's a long time. And you're living on a troop transport, and I can't remember it was -- but I believe they were six high, they -- the bunks. I mean they were canvas slings, if you will, in there, attached to the bulkhead and they were attached to piping. And so the guy above you, you only had about six inches of -- of raising your head room and of course his fanny was right down there and it was a little tough if he passed a lot of gas, that was a tough one. And if you wanted to take a shower, what I learned is that you get up, maybe sometime, from 2 o'clock in the morning to maybe 3 or 4 and take your shower because in the morning you can't even get in there. Because there isn't enough room. And so you do all your toiletries you can in the middle of the night, then you go back to bed. And you sweat. It was hot in those holds and one thing I have never figured out, quite. They didn't want us to throw anything overboard ship, you know, of anything, because, of course, they're afraid of trailing subs, Japanese submarines would pick up the trail if you're throwing, and they did throw garbage over, but I know they threw it in some kind of a container, and I don't know if those were drums that sank or they were cloth bags or -- you know I thought about this once before and I still don't know. And now I'm chastising myself because I didn't go find out, you know the old story is if you don't know, that's fine, you're just ignorant. When you know you don't know and don't find out, the next time around, you're stupid. I think is a pretty good explanation right now, I'm stupid about that. And -- but I don't know what they did but they didn't want anything to leave in the wake that they could define they're trailing a convoy or another ship, you know. So apparently they didn't find any because they didn't attack us. But we were out there for 40 days aboard these troop (inaudible). And we stopped at Saipan - were supposed to make a dummy run for the beach. That was after Saipan was invaded and secured. Sort of a dress rehearsal run of how it was going to -- and the -- they had a little storm and (laughs) and the waves were high, high and they finally they just cancelled it all. We never did go aboard -- go ashore at Saipan. We went in a ways then turned around and came back. Got aboard ship again.

And then we finally went to Iwo. That was -- that was very interesting. And all of the stories that they tell -- and this is not to -- this is not to, I mean I'm sure there are other small battles, incidents that happened, in the war from the time we got into it, prior to that, the British were in and what not. I know nothing about the Russian front the Germans fought. Or North Africa or even -- but I do know that -- that Iwo Jima was probably one of our toughest battles, of the major battle. We had that many troops involved. I've looked up the numbers and it doesn't -- you never know cause numbers are always changing on you, even after 50 years, but our casualties there were about the same as Gettysburg. And I think comparable to Antietam. Those two of the.. were some of the most severe battles of the World War -- or Civil War. But in World War II I know that -- I just read again, and again I cannot verify, about personally chased down the figures, but about 47% of my -- my division, which approximated 20,000 infantry or 20,000 men, artillery and infantry is normal composite group. About 47% were casualties. And I can remember, yeah, I had -- killed right beside me. I mean torn all to hell in -- he caught -- it was a mortar, I think. Could have been

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artillery. We were under a mortar and artillery attack and they were just pouring it in. They hit -- they hit our commander, Tom Trotte, he was the -- colonel, and they killed he and Major Day, who was his adjutant. And they killed our first sergeant. That command post was only about -- couldn't have been 15 to 20 yards behind us. We were just moved by them at that time to set up in, I think was one of these volcanic sand holes, I think dug by maybe one of our 14 or 16 inchers because it was all kind of round and dug out. But they decapitated Tom Trotte who was -- it blew the major all to hell. And then the guy next to me, when this hit, it must have broken, as can happen with a shell or mortar or anything, occasionally they will break one way. So there'll be more shrapnel going one way and not the other. And not common, but he must have got it. He was just torn all to pieces. And my reaction, I was knocked out at that -- on that particular thing. And I don't know how long. I was buried half in the sand. And I had this radio out, I was trying to set up and get a communication for the ship. But anyhow I got myself roused, and I don't know how long. I looked over and here he is, and I ripped off my -- we used to carry sulfa packets on your cartridge belt along with your hand grenades and every other thing, canteen. And I remember jerking that off, tearing it open, running it over, spreading it on him. It was like chaff in the wind, I mean, I knew it wasn't going to do anything and, but you do things like that. Knee jerk reaction, I guess. But he had -- and this guy had two kids at home. And I just -- and then there's other things happen. And I'm not --

Oh, maybe a little interesting vignette -- it was after the battle ended, we were secured waiting for the troop ships to come from the Philippines, from MacArthur's ventures in the Philippines to pick us up to take us back to Hawaii to re-train, regroup, get replacements and so forth. And then we would -- we would get ready for the big invasion of Japan. That was the plan. And so on Iwo I had a good friend in high school, one Willis Pail, Willy Pail, he was life-long friend. And he was in the 27th Marine Regiment and I was attached to 3rd Battalion, 26th. He was headquarters, 27th. And I hadn't seen him, I hadn't seen him, I didn't see him even when we were on Hawaii very often, one time.. cause we'd be off training over another little island, I didn't explain that before, but Kahoolawe which is another island in the Hawaiian group. Where all Naval ships that come into the Pacific, that is line ships, have to qualify for shore bombardment. Battleships, cruisers, destroyers, before they could join the fleet, they have to do this qualification. And this island has nothing but bees flies and rocks. Kahoolawe. And they use it for target practice. And there's a lieutenant commander and at that time the navy, they had some troops there, a few guys, the Navy and the Marines. But they would -- it would then practice. We'd go out there and observe and maybe practice, fire a few, you know, to get the feel. And that was funny one time there because Kahoolawe, a cruiser and I can't remember the name of it now, I should remember that, but came on the line and came in, finally the commander would say fire for record. So the gunnery officer then and the captain of the ship, they'd wheel it where they want, get it lined up, and then when -- then when they'd do this, we all go into a big bunker, reinforced bunker, so in case a stray shell hits, we aren't out there on the hillside, you know, in the rocks. And the rocks are painted as targets, I mean, they're -- so you can tell. So he then radios out, you know, gives them the coordinates, and then says fire one. Or fire. So then they -- when they release the projectile then their answer -- this is procedure -- salvo!. That means it's -- pull the trigger. So then you wait, depending on the distance they're out, whether how many thousand yards they're out or whatever, you go thousand one, thousand two, thousand three, and you look, you know. Couldn't see anything on this one. Couldn't see where they hit, at all. Didn't even see a puff of anything. So he gives the fire, fire two. Salvo!. Nobody sees anything. So he getting agitated -- he gives them the coordinates again and says fire one. Nothing, can't see it. At that point he really is upset. He's -- and he is command -- this lieutenant commander is really in command of that -- that whole operation, not the captain of the ship or anybody else. He's -- he gives them one more order and somebody had the glasses, were looking, and way the hell, just on the horizon out at sea, (gestures) kerplunk. This is a true story. Holy cats. They're 180 degrees off. They're firing off that side of the ship and they should be firing out

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this -- the turret's pointed wrong. So he immediately gets the gunnery officer on the line and said -- he got his name. And he said you're on report and he said put the captain of the ship on. Well, the captain of a cruiser is a pretty big apple in the Navy. And I -- we were standing all around there. Cause we're all in this same bunker. And this commander says, you, captain, sir. You are on report. You haul anchor, you get to Pearl Harbor, you report to the admiral. My report will be there when you get there. Well, you don't read off -- a lieutenant commander doesn't read off an adl -- at least a full captain, a seasoned captain in the Navy, without a reason. Well I don't know what happened. We told the lieutenant commander later we didn't -- we didn't buddy with him but we says commander, I don't think, if I were you, I'd go on liberty in Pearl harbor until after that cruiser pulls anchor and goes someplace else. Oh, those little funny stories, you know. I started to say, we were in and out of there. After we secured, the last Japanese were pulled out, it was Kuribayashi's command post really at the end of it I guess. I went to the cemetery to look for the grave of my friend, Willy Pail. He lives in Chehalis incidentally now, Chehalis, Washington. I went down to see if I could find him, and he was down looking for my cross, and we meet each other. It's kinda interesting, cause it just happened at that time. I didn't see him again for quite awhile, because his regiment goes on board different transports than mine. But, so we've been lifelong friends, and in high school, he was a drummer in a band incidentally.

Question: It sounds like you were the first wave?.

Answer: No, I was not on the first wave. The 3rd battalion 26 was held back because they had all they could get, because there was only so much beach. There was only so much beach there between Suribachi and what we called the quarry, was the cliffs to the right of that, and we went in on the east beaches instead of the west beaches. That's all the room, so they only had room for so many battalions going in, on the first wa.. So the first ones hit about nine o'clock I think it was. We didn't go in til' I.. we were in, we were in the landing craft for quite a little while monkeying around out there til' we got the order to land the troops you know. I think we went in there around noon, give or take twenty minutes. I don't really know.

Question: While you were out waiting, can you see what's going on?.

Answer: You can see, oh you can see em. We were there and these battleships are not very far off, there not laying off five miles you know. They were doing point blank stuff, oh I don't know they might have been 800 a 1,000 yards off.

Question: They're pounding away, you guys are trying to sneak in under, the Japanese are shooting down at you...

Answer: To start, the Japanese when the landing happened, they had the high ground in Suribachi and they had some heavy artillery up there among everything else. And then the neck down below which is about 900 yards wide, approximately that, then it fans out like a pork chop you know, to the north. And uh, yeah that's the high ground. So their plan initially was to let us get into the beach to start with, the very start, fill her up. Keep them bottled, then beat the.. the wee out of you.. you know. It wasn't to bad a plan, there's always going to be a debate, if he had turned loose say 8 or 10 thousand troops and just came charging, what would have happened?, I don't know.

Question: Now you were, you were a radio operator is that right.

Answer: Yeah.

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Question: So you had the back pack radio?.

Answer: Well I carried.. the Army had a better deal, I was a little jealous. As I recall they had a 283 or 84 I think it was, or a 184 83. It was a light unit to carry, and it was effective enough as range went, because I carried what they called a navy TBX. Much heavier, bulkier, heavier batteries and everything.

Question: Self contained though?

Answer: Yeah, except you had to have a generator that you had to carry separate to crank the.. the generator cranked the power to run the radio normally, that's what you had to have. You couldn't rely on batteries solely. But I had a fellow with me that cranked the generator.

Question: Do you remember.. cause this is, you came on one landing craft and the front opened?.

Answer: Dropped open. First thing I saw to my left was a guy going up cart wheeling about 15 feet into the air. He had been near miss, hit by an artillery shell or something. He was flying just as I had stepped out.. and I thought, holy crud, you know.. I'm in.. this is not a nice place you know.