

## George Normoyle

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**Answer:** Okay.

**Question:** Okay.

**Answer:** Now what do you want to do?

**Question:** We're back in New Guinea --

**Answer:** Oh, yeah, anyway, we -- we took him out and sent him back with a couple cartons of cigarettes, which cost us fifty cents a carton, and he thought that was fantastic. In fact I saw him at my -- best buddy's 50th wedding anniversary in Seattle five years ago and he was there. And he was telling all the other people there about how we took him out and took him on the ship and washed his clothes and sent him back with two cartons of cigarettes. He says when he got back, the other guys thought that was just great. (laughs) But he was -- that was a miserable situation.

**Question:** See, that's an interesting concept, and one that I never thought of, because I figured if you were in war, when you got someplace and were fighting a battle, you know, screw it, I'm not going to go that extra 20 miles to go visit a ship or something like that. I'm going to just --

**Answer:** Yeah, well, a lot of guys were that way, you know. And then we had -- we had one guy that was -- Minton was his name. He was a little dingy, some ways. And we -- up on the beach there about a quarter of a mile away there was a Japanese ammo dump. Well, Minton thought that he was going to go up and get some souvenirs out of that thing. Well, make the long story short, he set off the ammo dump. Didn't kill him, but he set off this ammunition dump. Oh, man, he was in trouble again. (laughs) But all they did was ship him back out to sea -- sent him on another boat and moved him out, you know. But, man, it was quite a 4th of July party for a bit there. We didn't know if the Japs were coming back in or what in the world was going on, blew up this ammo dump. The next day, all the Army was mad as hell about it. (laughs)

**Question:** Yeah, you had a lot of (inaudible) on that one.

**Answer:** Oh, yeah.

**Question:** That's pretty interesting -- again, the funny little things that --

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** -- that could happen.

**Answer:** You'd think anybody who was stupid enough to even go around an ammo dump, you know, shouldn't have -- you know -- those things are usually mined. You don't go around them. But not old Minton, boy. No, when we were up in -- in Biak, there was -- after the Jap fleet had went through, why they had shot a few torpedos around, and one of them landed on the beach a few hundred feet away from us. And just a torpedo laying there. And Minton, my old buddy out there, sitting on the nose of that thing and trying to unscrew the -- the cap there for a souvenir. You're going to get blown from here to hell and back and so am I. Get away from that thing, you know. God, what a guy. And we got run off the beach, on one beach. Well, I guess I didn't clarify that. When we were in -- in part of this operation, we were attached to the 5th Air Force. Because on this LCT we were on, we had a big radar screen on it. Okay. The Army came on board and they ran the

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radar and we ran the boat. So when they were -- they were on there, we were attached to the Air Force. And that was just a situation where nobody wanted us. Navy didn't want us, the Army didn't want to give us anything, and the Air Force, hell, they're back in Australia, far as that went, you know. (laughs) We'd get -- we'd -- so we'd tie up along side of this ship one night, she come in. We said, hey, can we come aboard, and they had a green GI up there guarding this hold. And so, yeah, I guess so. So we go up the ladder. Looked in that hold and the hold was full of beer. Oh, my heavens. We said to this guy, I tell you what, you should go get a cup of coffee. We'll stand guard till you get back. Take your weapon with you and go. So this other guy and I -- we got -- he goes down in the hole. I think we got a rope with -- call it a monkey fist on it. And we wrap it around and I pull these things. Run over to the side there, and a guy down below catches it. We stole a hundred and some cases. And they're four-pack at a time -- four hundred cases --

**Question:** Of beer.

**Answer:** Of beer. So then we said, well, hell. Let's do some more snooping here. This guy came back; he didn't know what happened. By that time we -- we were all tired out anyway. So we -- where's the freezer compartment at? Well, then we found -- they had big boxes of sirloin -- or tenderloin steaks. Box was about that big, about like that (gestures) -- for the officers. So we get about six cases of those. Well, now this thing that we're on now -- it's not very big. We got a refrigerator -- you could probably -- it couldn't hold very much. So we got everything thrown away in there and this thing's jammed full of frozen steaks. (laughs) So what do we do with this beer? Well, there's only one place to hide it, George, and that's up in your ammo locker, up in the bow. So, throw all the ammunition over the side and fill that full of beer. (laughs) That was kind of dumb, I admit. Oh, pretty quick we get this little visitor comes over, looking for this. Did you guys steal some beer off the ship? No, sir. I'm going to look. The guy looks around there, and no beer. Should have looked in the refrigerator - they would have hung us for stealing all their meat. (laughs) So we ate steaks and drank beer for about a week there -- got carried away. Yeah, couple of those things were -- you can look back and laugh about them, what the heck.

**Question:** Now, had you have gotten caught --

**Answer:** Oh, they would have court martialled us.

**Question:** Would they?

**Answer:** Oh, yeah.

**Question:** Would they just send you up to the front?

**Answer:** No, this was getting now towards the end of the war.

**Question:** Oh, okay.

**Answer:** In fact when I -- when I -- after we landed in Hollandia and went through Biak, they decided they were going to give us some R & R and so they sent us down to Brisbane, Australia for ten days of R & R, which is great. And the Aussies are great people. And most of their men were either fighting in Europe or they came over from the other side of New Guinea, came over the pass, over the hill and through the jungle. Terrible job. I mean terrible deal. But I mean they were -- they were exceptionally gracious people. And they -- talk about a hardship. They had a lot less than we had here, as far as rationing goes and stuff. A lot less. But when we were there they'd give us -- when we were up in the front line and run out of

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food, they'd give us mutton. Boy, Aussies loved it and I can't stand the smell of it. To this day I can't stand the smell of it and they loved it. But, yes, we went down there for ten days R & R. Well, I met this young lady there. And I thought, man, this is it. So I go back -- when I belong and we're getting ready to move out. The skipper says go on down to Hollandia, and get the mail. Catch a flight down from Biak here. So I go down, fly in Hollandia, -- and guy said, no, it's still in Brisbane. There's a Liberator leaving to go down there. Hop a ride on it. So I did. I go down there and that was ten days. Well, I came back to the ship. And they were just -- when I got back, they were just -- I didn't get aboard before we left, heading north, heading for the Philippines. So, skipper said I'm going to court martial you. I said, "Sir, you sent me after the mail and I got three big bags of mail here." He says, "Where did you get it at?" I says, "Brisbane, Australi

**Answer:** " (laughs) He had a fit. He was going to -- he says you're restricted to the ship. Well, where can I go, you know, I'm restricted. Can't go anywhere. We're going up, heading to -- to retake the Philippines. So it kind of just died off after a while. That was probably the worst thing I did in the service. Actually, now it would be, well, desertion, almost. If you're gone so many days, you know, you're AWOL, and then you're absent without leave, and then you're really in trouble after so many days.

Oh, the other funny thing was that I -- I came back when I reported down to Treasure Island to go to the school, they give me duty at -- there's a prison right next to Treasure Island, which is -- (inaudible). Anyway, sent me over there to be a guard for awhile, till the next class of school started. So I'm here, one of these with a club and a SP band around my sleeve and I see these bunch of bald headed guys walking down there, in step, PAL's, on them, prisoner at large, but they're -- and this old bosuns mate. And I look, and here's old Minton. I says, "What in the blank blank are you doing here?" And he says, "Oh, I went over the hill in eastern North Carolina". And they found him and sent him all the way back up to San Francisco, put him in the jug. He's -- I think he spent there about three months and then they shipped him out again. But he was always doing something like that. (laughs) I'm not -- I'd kind of forgotten about that once in a while. But he was -- he was a real character.

You know, but the funny thing -- the -- the guys that actually -- the GI's that were in the trenches, more than not. They -- very few of them talked about it. You know, there wasn't something well, I blew this guy's head off or something. Maybe ... some guys -- even after I came home I know a lot of guys that saw a lot of action, a lot of killing, and they didn't want to talk about it, you know. Life goes on and let's drop that and just like ... that ship blowing up there. And seeing all these people just vanish. And you go, humph. Same thing like, you know, on the beach there when... One other thing. We were laying off Biak there, fairly close to the beach and there was pretty heavy fighting going on. And this liberator came down low. And she opened up her bomb bay and she was dropping maps, coordinates, but it looked like a bomb. And our own people shot her down, right there. And that was terrible. We were saying why are they firing at her? We didn't realize what had happened. We saw a -- what looked like, well, actually it was a case with maps in it that they were dropping from, showing positions of the Japanese or some darn thing or other. But anyway, those guys on the beach were so trigger happy, man, they bla, bla, bla, the plane was only up there about 200 feet, couldn't miss it. When she went down that tail gunner in that thing was blasting right back at them. I'll never forget that. But then all of a sudden, then it was quiet, plane crashes, boom, uh-oh. That didn't help the guys on the plane.

**Question:** So -- friendly fire.

**Answer:** Friendly fire, yeah.

**Question:** Oh, that's too bad.

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**Answer:** Well, the guys were under a lot of stress and they were being -- they were being -- they had been -- been -- the Japs had countercharged a couple of times and they were really gun shy and when this plane opened, they didn't -- they just didn't realize that it wasn't a bomb. I guess they thought it was a bomb and they just started shooting.

**Question:** I would think I would have been --

**Answer:** Little gun shy, yeah.

**Question:** Yeah.

**Answer:** But anyway.

**Question:** It's interesting because, and again, I don't focus much on the actual battle and shooting people and all of that, but it seems like that aspect of the war for a lot of people would create a real moral dilemma

**Answer:** Because they have their value structure, and all of a sudden oh, okay, it's okay to go kill people. No, it's not okay to go kill people --

**Answer:** Well, yes. But, you know, I think our values have changed a lot in the last few years. Where it used to be acceptable and okay, it's not anymore, as far as killing goes. People didn't -- well, there's always been pacifists -- people that didn't want to go to war or kill or anything. There's always been that. But ... I don't believe that -- that it -- it really bothered the people doing it so much because we -- we kind of felt that it was something that had to be done. It was almost like kill or be killed. And I -- I guess on the one side, some people. We have it then and we have it now. Some people like to kill anyway, both sides, not just one side. And when you look at the atrocities that they did and stuff, it -- it gave you, at that time it gave you -- well, you didn't think so much about killing, because look what they did to fellow Americans and British and other people. And so you didn't look at them like you would an ordinary person, as far as -- the way I look back on it. Now I don't even -- I don't even think about those things because I -- I just put them in the back of my mind and forgot them. Don't -- don't like to really drag them out too much.

**Question:** Is it a -- I know that -- the only thing I know is from -- actually from Vietnam War -- where we talked to (inaudible) and how they trained soldiers. Does it become, enemy, us, enemy, us, so it's not really a person who --

**Answer:** Yeah, basically it does. That's probably about the best way, yeah, you can put it. It's them and us. They're the enemy. Kill them and they kill us. And that's the way Viet Nam was, of course. But all wars are that way to a point.

**Question:** (inaudible)

**Answer:** Oh yes. You look back --

**Question:** Do you -- do you hold any animosity towards --

**Answer:** The Japanese?

**Question:** Yeah.

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**Answer:** Yes, I do. and the reason I say that is that they have never apologized for what they did. And I -- I -- to this day I don't think that's right. I think that they attacked us, a sneak attack, they killed our people, and even after we beat them, they never apologized. No, I -- as far as talking about the A-bomb, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki -- I'm not -- I don't like nuclear bombs. But I realize on the other side of the fence that thousands and thousands of lives were saved. Actually, it probably would have been a tremendous amount of loss for Japanese, even more than those two bombs. Because at that time they were going to fight right down to the last man, woman and child. I mean, they were brainwashed to the point where they believed they were going to die for the Emperor. And they would have, I'm sure they would have. And consequently we would have lost thousands of men. It ended the war quick and that part was good. Yeah, we were getting ready to go to Japan from the Philippines when the war ended. So I'm not sorry about -- about the war ending. I'm really not sorry about the bomb because it did its thing and -- and nobody's used it since, thank goodness. But I'm still upset that the younger people in this country don't respect the flag -- and I don't want them to respect me. I don't care one way or the other whether they do or not. You know, I can -- some -- some yellow, green, purple haired guy might call me an old so and so. And that's okay. I can put up with that. (laughs) But, I don't know.

**Question:** Is -- do you think there's a message from World War II that you'd like to leave with future generations?

**Answer:** Well --

**Question:** Your grandchildren, that kid you have there that --

**Answer:** Well, yeah, there's a -- they -- the people didn't realize what we were fighting for and what we won. If we hadn't have won, if Germany had beaten us or Japan had beaten us, they wouldn't have the things we have now. They wouldn't have the freedom. They don't understand cause they've always had this freedom, and nobody understands except a prisoner of war what happened when you lose your freedom. And that's what we would have done. We would have been -- we'd have been a bunch of prisoners for awhile and then they would have just trained us, you know, brain-washed us to their way of thinking. Young people. Not the old people. They'd get rid of the old people. No, I -- I think that -- I'm glad that my -- that my -- on the one hand, my brother went to Korea and then as my children got older, the oldest boy didn't have to go to 'Nam because he had several children at that time when it started. And another one was -- couldn't -- had bad eyesight and they wouldn't take him. On the one hand I'm glad they didn't go. At the other hand, one part of me says that it had been nice if they'd gone for their country. Because my dad went and I went, my brother went, but none of our grand kids have gone, which is -- or my kids, and it's probably for the best. Nobody wants your family to be killed or wounded. Yeah.

**Question:** That's that hard dilemma because finding a way to keep that sense of what the freedom is without having to fight for it --

**Answer:** Yeah. And I, you know, I guess you have to go with the flow and make the changes and go along if you want to -- we can't live in the past, we have to go forward. The past, some people, they think it was bad, but other people think it was great so -- of course, we all complain about things -- taxes and this and that.

**Question:** (inaudible)

**Answer:** Oh, yes.

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**Question:** Do you think that -- how much do you think that World War II changed your life? Because it's interesting. You caught the perspective that I brought to a lot of vets to say here's your life. Here's World War II on that time line.

**Answer:** Yeah.

**Question:** But yet --

**Answer:** Well, I think it -- it -- well, it taught me ... it continued, along with my family, but it taught me respect for people, whether they were -- it taught me respect for the police and for the military. Now ... what else -- I'm trying to think of something here and it's not coming out right.

**Question:** Did it - did it scar you? A I -- I -- one of -- after I came home, after the fact after my wife and I were married for two or three years. I also had a bad case of malaria that I was on the hospital ship for awhile. Almost died from it. And -- but that's another story. But, yes, I have -- I'd have nightmares. Yeah. And, of course, in those days they'd say, well, you know, straighten up, you know, you're okay. You don't need any -- you don't need any help. Now they send you to the psychiatrist or, you know, lot of different people. But then they'd just say, oh, pull yourself up by your bootstraps and move on. You're okay. You know, forget it. Move on. Well, sometimes, you know you -- if you have nightmares, it just kind of raises hell with you a little bit, put it that way.

**Question:** Do you still face that?

**Answer:** No, not so much any more, no. Because, actually I've kind of put all of this stuff in the back and don't think about it. Now, I haven't had a nightmare for ... oh, quite a few years now. Quite a few years come to think about it. Probably -- I probably had, oh what do they call it. They have all kinds of name for it now, you know, post-traumatic combat stress syndrome and this and that and all kinds of stuff. And there's a lot of guys out there. I know one guy that comes in -- into Denny's and he's still living in the past, you know. And he's, basically he really is disabled because he can't function. He's just all -- you know. But now I got sidetracked here. Where are we again now? (laughs)

**Question:** Well you were right on where it was because we were just talking about that -- how the war affected you in the long term. I assume there's things -- I was asking if it changed your life.

**Answer:** Oh, yeah, yeah. Well, when I came back I wanted to -- my work ethic was such I wanted to do the best I could for whoever I worked for. But that was the American way back then. When you went to work for somebody, you wanted to do the best you could for them for that job. And so you -- you could easily give the guy 110 percent and then moved on, or whatever. And it wasn't -- it was like when you went to work for the state, well, you figure well, I'm going to be there 30 years. I'm going to do the best I can and just, and in those days, either you produced or you were down the road. Nowadays, you got six months in, or a year, can't fire you. In those days, you didn't produce, you were -- you were gone. And that's the way it should be. And to this day it should be that way, but it's not the way it is. And you know. And it's like I retired from the state as a civil engineer and now I do construction management, new buildings, office buildings, schools, fire stations, things like that. You know, fairly good size contracts. And I'm constantly amazed at some of the workmanship that comes out that they'll say, oh, that's all right, and I'll say no, it's not. The guy will say, well, that's the standard of the industry. And I says, you show me a book and show me something that says that's the standard of the industry, and I said, I'll buy it.

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Otherwise tear it out and do it right. And it's very unfortunate that so many of our -- so many of our trades now are just slam, bang, if it don't work, well, we'll fix it later. And I guess, really, you're paying these people big bucks, big dollars for their work, some of them. A lot of these guys, you're paying \$30, \$40 an hour for what they're doing. And you expect for that kind of money that they will do a job properly. But some of them got the attitude, heck with you. It's good enough. And that -- that rubs an old guy the wrong way that's used to having it done right because when I was working, coming up, people took pride in their work and took pride in not only in their work but what they put out. And they were -- and now some of these guys will go along and they'll say, well, you know, so what. I don't think it's right. And where does that come from? That comes from people saying, well, nobody stands up on their back two feet and says hey, we're not going to accept that. And that -- in my old age that bothers me, but of course I'm still doing it, so

**Question:** Feel like you're fighting a battle?

**Answer:** Oh, fighting a battle. Lose once in awhile, win once in awhile. But anyway, yeah. (laughs) What the heck.