

***The National Museum of the Pacific War  
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)***

***Center for Pacific War Studies***

*Fredericksburg, Texas*

Interview with

**Mr. Albert Bouley**

June 27, 2001

**National Museum of the Pacific War**

## **Fredericksburg, Texas**

### **Interview with Albert Bouley**

Today is June 27, 2001. My name is Floyd Cox, a volunteer at the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg, Texas. We are here in San Antonio today to interview Mr. Albert Bouley, who at present lives at 8401 N. New Braunfels in San Antonio. We are interviewing him today regarding his experiences during World War II.

**Mr. Cox:** To start out with Albert, I like to thank you for providing us the opportunity to hear your story of your experiences during World War II. What I would like to start out with Albert is by asking you where you were born, when you were born, where you went to school, and we will take it from there.

**Mr. Bouley:** OK. And you are quite welcome. I was born in New Bedford, Massachusetts, the old whaling city, November 22, 1922. I went to school there. I attended a parochial school, a bilingual school. Half of the day was taught in French, and half the day in English. I attended high school in New Bedford. In 1940 I left high school and joined the CCC, the Civilian Conservation Corps that President Roosevelt had established, and I was stationed in Split Rock, Wyoming, which was a long way from New Bedford, Massachusetts.

**Mr. Cox:** What year was this?

**Mr. Bouley:** This was in 1940. I only spent six months there, and then went back home upon discharge from the CCC and held various jobs until the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**Mr. Cox:** Can you remember what you were doing and where you were at December 7, 1941?

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes, definitely. Every Sunday afternoon we used to have semi-professional football games in town and I was at one of these football games. Strangely enough no word was ever said about the attack. I don't know whether the people at the stadium had telephone communication, or radios, or anything, but apparently no one heard anything about it because there were no announcements made. Also, they probably didn't want everybody to get up and leave the football game. So I was unaware of anything until I walked home. I didn't have a car, so I had to walk across town, and when I got home I was notified by my parents that Pearl Harbor had been attacked that morning.

**Mr. Cox:** Now you were about 18 years old then.

**Mr. Bouley:** I was two weeks into my 19th year. I had my nineteenth birthday in November. I had talked about going into the service with a couple of fellows prior to this, but like most people knowing that the country was mobilized and that something was bound to happen sooner or later, we just decided to postpone it until something really did happen. A friend and I had talked about joining the Marine Corps and he wanted to do it right away. That was probably in October of 1941. I was being cautious about it and said, "Well let's wait until something happens." So, when we met that evening after dinner he told me, "Something has happened, so what are we going to do?" We decided to go downtown and see the Recruiting

Sergeant about enlisting. The Recruiting Offices, of course, were open 24 hours a day, however, in my hometown, which was not a large city, there was only one Recruiting Sergeant and he had nothing but an office. So we went in and told him that we would like to join up. He had us sign our names to a couple of forms and told us if we felt the same way in the morning we should be there at 6:30 a.m. and he would take us to Boston for a physical.

**Mr. Cox:** Let me ask you this Albert. Why did you select the Marine Corps to go into?

**Mr. Bouley:** Well I had always considered it the best branch of the service, and secondly I knew they would get involved right away.

**Mr. Cox:** You wanted to get into the action.

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes I wanted to get in, and as I said we had talked about it for a few months before that so it wasn't a "spur of the moment" thing. The following morning he and I went downtown and saw the Recruiting Sergeant, who drove us to Boston with some other fellows and we spent the whole day in Boston at the main Post Office. Each floor of the Post Office was devoted to one branch of the service. Of course the place was teeming with volunteers and we underwent the physical and came back home that afternoon. I guess by the time I got home it was about 5:30 - 6:00 o'clock in the evening. I had been accepted. My papers were stamped, which was a kind of a funny thing because when I mentioned joining the Marine Corps to my folks, my Mother tried to talk me out of it. She asked me to join

some other branch of service, but not the Corps and my Father said, "Don't worry about it, he is too small they won't take him." So I came home and waved the paper under his nose where it said, "Accepted."

**Mr. Cox:** Why was he concerned about your physical stature? How tall are you?

**Mr. Bouley:** I just made the minimum height. When I took the physical at least five or six people measured me and I was the minimum height at 5'4" tall and I weighed all of a 118 pounds. There were still additional papers that had to be filled out, including a Police Report. Since the draft was at age 21, and I had just turned 19, I had to have a parental signature in order to go into the Armed Forces. So that had to be done. My Dad had to go downtown and sign the papers in front of a Notary for me. After we had completed the physical in Boston we were asked if we wanted to go in right away or if we wanted to wait until after the Christmas and New Year holidays coming up. I imagine the reason for that was that they were trying to get people into groups because the recruit depots for all of the services were just overwhelmed with people rushing in. Since I had hurt my Mother's feelings by going in right off the bat, I decided that it would be nice if I waited until after the holidays. We were driven back to Boston on January 6th of 1942 and I was sworn in on that date. So my effective date of service was January 6th, 1942.

**Mr. Cox:** So after you were sworn in, how did it progress from there? Did you go to Boot Camp, and if so, where?

**Mr. Bouley:** Well, it is a funny thing. I don't know if you want these asides, but as soon

as we were sworn in, which was again in the evening, late afternoon probably 4 or 5 o'clock, a Marine Sergeant marched us all up to a hotel and he put us up for the night and told us he would be there at 6 o'clock in the morning to take us to the railroad station to go down to Paris Island, South Carolina. But the interesting thing is that he took us into an area that was known as Sculley Square. Anyone who has been around Boston knows that Sculley Square is a notorious neighborhood. All of the burlesque houses were there, and the hotel we were put up in was right next to the most famous of them all, the Old Howard. This area is now known as the Combat Zone. It is where all of the drugs, the prostitution, etc. goes on. But at that time it was rather mild because it was just the burlesque houses. So we were put up in a hotel that evening and the following morning he came and got us, marched us down to the railroad station, and put us on a train for Paris Island, South Carolina, which is the East Coast Marine Corps Recruit Depot. When I got there the Marine Corps had already had an overflow of recruits, and the place was crowded. So I ended up in a two-man tent. All of the barracks had been filled up and out on the parade ground they had set up two-man tents in platoon sections. I spent Boot Camp in a two-man tent. The friend who had enlisted with me was my tent-mate.

**Mr. Cox:** What was his name?

**Mr. Bouley:** Henry Damm and we stayed together until shortly after Guadalcanal, and he was sent home. The recruit training had been 12 weeks, but after Pearl Harbor it was cut down to six weeks because they were building up the infantry divisions in the Fleet Marine Force and they needed people badly. So I only spent six weeks at Parris Island and upon completing Boot Training just about all of my platoon went to the Fleet Marine Force. It was a platoon of 64 men, two men went to the Air arm, one went to Marine Corps Headquarters, and another one went to the Marine Corps Institute. Sixty of us went to the 1st Marine Division so the emphasis was on getting people, getting trigger pullers into the infantry. We were sent up to New River, North Carolina, which is now a part of Camp Lejeune, but this was before Camp Lejeune was built and it was a tent city. I went from one tent into another. I was assigned to M Company, 3rd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, which was a heavy weapons company. We had three platoons of 30 caliber water-cooled machine guns, one platoon of 81mm mortars, and one 50 caliber anti-tank, anti-aircraft platoon. Upon arriving in New River, North Carolina, I began my training as a Heavy Machine Gunner. We trained at New River from mid-February, which was when I arrived, until sometime in mid-June when we were put on a train. The 1st Marine Regiment was the rear echelon of the division. The 5th Marine Regiment and the 7th Marine Regiment had already left. The 7th Marines had gone to Samoa to set up defenses there, and the 5th Marines had gone through the Panama Canal to Wellington, New Zealand, where they set up a base for

advanced training. My Regiment, the 1st Marines, went cross country to San Francisco by troop train where we boarded a vessel that had been a Swedish luxury liner. It had been impounded in the United States and converted to a troop carrier. Its original name was the Kungsholm and was renamed the SS John Erickson, and was manned by Merchant Marines. We spent three weeks going to Wellington, New Zealand and we were under the understanding that we were to undergo six months of training in Wellington and practice amphibious operations and then we would be going into combat. This was the information we had been given on the ship going to Wellington. The Marine Corps had a policy that six days after you were out at sea they would tell you your destination, but you never knew where you were going until those six days were up. We got into Wellington and there was a strike. The dock workers were on strike so there was no one to unload our ships. We were put on working parties, four hours on, four hours off, round the clock, taking things off of one ship, putting them in warehouses that had been leased, and then reloading arms, rations and ammunition on other ships. That should have been a clue to us, but we were young green kids and we didn't realize what was happening. Actually General Vandergriff had received orders to hit Guadalcanal. We spent 11 days unloading and reloading ships. We got very little liberty in Wellington because we were working all of the time and, as I recall, it rained almost constantly. We went back aboard ship after 11 days and I went aboard the USS McCawley, which was an assault transport. We were



told that we were going to go out to sea and that we were going to come back and hit the beach in New Zealand. After we were out at sea six days they called us and told us that we were going to invade the Solomon Islands. Nobody knew where the Solomon Islands were, and then they said we were going to hit Guadalcanal, Tulagi and a couple of the other small islands, and we didn't know where those were either. Then we proceeded on to Guadalcanal. The ship I was on, the USS McCawley, developed an engine problem during a storm that lasted about four days. A rather bad storm. It wasn't a hurricane. I guess it would be called a squall. We went into the Fiji Islands where we were supposedly going to practice landings and then go ahead and make the invasion. I managed to make two landings at Fiji, and then they were called off for some reason. We were there, as I recall, for about four days during which time they repaired one of the defective engines on the McCawley, and then we steamed for Guadalcanal and landed on August 7, 1942. The 5th Marines made the initial beach head and the combat team I was in went ashore 50 minutes after the 5th Marines landed and we went through them with the idea of going toward the highest terrain in that area, which was referred to as Grassy Knoll, and which now we know is Mt Austin. The idea was that we were going to take the high ground while other units were going to hit the Japanese at the airfield, and at their beach positions. In doing so we would be able to cut off their retreat.

**Mr. Cox:** Now let me ask you this, was there any firing from the Japanese coming at you when you landed on the beach?

**Mr. Bouley:** No.

**Mr. Cox:** They didn't meet you on the beach?

**Mr. Bouley:** No. They looked at that convoy and I understand they saw one of the largest convoys I guess that had been put out at the time. They did not have too many combat troops on Guadalcanal. I've forgotten what the number was, but it was a small number, particularly when you are facing a whole reinforced division. They just took off. They left their guns. They didn't even disable them. They only set a few warehouses on fire. Then they took off. So we met no resistance other than the jungle. I understand we were supposed to reach Mt Austin in six hours. Two and a half days later we were still heading for it when we were told a Japanese convoy was headed our way and we had to go back and set up beach defenses, which is what we did. We set up the beach defenses.

**Mr. Cox:** You went back to the beach to set up defensive positions in case the Japanese landed on the beach. Did they ever attack?

**Mr. Bouley:** No. Thank goodness. The Navy stepped in between us and the Navy lost a lot of ships and men. I think it was probably the most disastrous defeat the Navy took afloat in its history. We witnessed the naval battle from the beach and we could see the star shells lighting the sky. It was miles out to sea, but we saw the sky light up and we knew what was going on. That night we lost four heavy cruisers and I think a couple of destroyers. We lost the Quincy, the Vincennes, the Astoria, and the Australian cruiser Canberra. It was a terrific loss. The day after the battle, we had small

boats with us on the island, and they went out to pick up survivors. The shape those poor sailors were in was something horrible. Doctors were performing amputations on the beach on canvas cots. Those kids had been out there in that water all night long and some of them so badly burned it was terrible. We stayed there on the beach for a few weeks. The three battalions of my regiment, we, the 3rd Battalion, was on the left on the beach, and then tied into us was the 2nd Battalion, going toward a small creek that we now know as Alligator Creek, but we thought it the Tenaru River. Then the 1st Battalion was up the river so our regimental line extended down the river to the point which was a sand spit and then west along the beach and that is where the Battle of Hell's Point took place. Right at the sand spit where the Japanese attacked our lines and tried to get across the sand spit. They hit the 2nd Battalion and part of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines.

**Mr. Cox:** Now were you in the line at that time?

**Mr. Bouley:** No, I was on the beach defense because we were tied in to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion's left. I think that would be toward the West. When the Japanese hit them there was a fear that they would break through so part of my battalion, and I don't know how much, but my platoon was involved in it, was moved from the beach in the middle of the night. We moved down toward the point, and formed a second line of defense behind the 2nd Battalion so that in the event the Japanese broke through at the point they would run into us. So we had a sort of "defense in depth," but the Japanese

never did break through. I think something like 800 Japanese were killed that night trying to get through at the Point. Then later on they moved us. They were constantly moving units around. They moved us up on Alligator Creek at the very end of the airfield, and we set up a line there on the Creek extending inland. If I'm not mistaken, we ended up being the left flank of the line that extended up into Edson's Ridge where the Battle of Bloody Ridge, took place. During the battle, some Japanese tried to get through the wire at us and we opened up with our machine guns. We had excellent cross fire. It was level terrain and that took care of any who attacked our front. We had a double apron, barbed wire fence on the other side of this little river. Reports said a few hundred dead Japanese were found on the other side of the river.

**Mr. Cox:** Now, at this time you were with a machine gun group?

**Mr. Bouley:** My company was split up. Each machine gun platoon was attached to a Rifle Company to support it. Even though Rifle Companies had their own machine guns, they had a machine gun platoon, but they had the light machine guns and we had the heavy, water-cooled machine guns. We could fire longer bursts because of the cooling system on the guns and we could fire more accurately because we had a heavier tripod. In a defensive position we used to sandbag them down so our guns were a lot more effective. One platoon was assigned to each one of the Rifle Companies in the 3rd Battalion and my platoon was assigned to "I" Company, 3rd Battalion.

**Mr. Cox:** Now what was your job on a gun crew?

**Mr. Bouley:** At the beginning I was nothing but an ammo carrier. In those days we had large machine gun squads. There was a squad leader and twelve men who, in effect, were twelve machine gunners, but only two could operate the gun. The gunner and the assistant, and from the experiences they had had in World War I the gunners didn't last very long so there were a lot of spare gunners in the squad. So we were ammo carriers. The gunner carried the tripod, the assistant gunner carried the gun, the number 3 man carried a water can and a spare parts kit. The rest of us, including the Platoon Leader, carried ammunition. We each carried two boxes of 250 rounds a piece. We had the old wooden boxes with the web belts, rather than the metallic belts that were used later in the war.

**Mr. Cox:** Now how many rounds per minute? Do you remember how many rounds per minute those machine guns would fire?

**Mr. Bouley:** I'm not sure what the cyclic rate of fire was. A box a minute was what we considered rapid fire and that was 250 rounds. The cyclic rate of fire, of course, was much more than that. It might have been around 600-700 rounds a minute. Effectively our rapid fire was about 250 rounds a minute. We could fire 15-20 round bursts in rapid fire without damaging the gun, whereas with the light machine guns a 6 round burst, or an 8 round burst was considered quite a lot. As I was saying, they moved us from place to place. Because we had a perimeter defense, nobody was actually being held in reserve. Everybody was somewhere on the line, but if you had

engaged in some action at one particular place in the line they generally took you off that place, or if you were in a jungle for an extended period of time, 2 or 3 weeks, they would take you from there, move you to the beach, move the outfit that is on the beach back up into your position in the jungle and rotate it that way. That gave everybody a break. If you were on the beach that was kind of nice living. No mosquitos and a nice cool breeze, just like what a tropical island is supposed to be like. Since the Japanese would only attack at night, it was pretty peaceful in the daytime. We could go swimming and enjoy the beach.

**Mr. Cox:** It wasn't like that when you were in the jungle part?

**Mr. Bouley:** No, not like that in the jungle part. The mosquitos were fierce on Guadalcanal. I know we suffered a great many more casualties on Guadalcanal to the mosquitos than we did to the Japanese.

**Mr. Cox:** Did you happen to get malaria?

**Mr. Bouley:** Oh yes. Just about everyone did. And dysentery. I picked up dysentery within the first few weeks on the island. I was pretty bad off for a while. I didn't get malaria until the very end until just prior to our leaving the island. I think the months of October and November, if I remember reading correctly, were some of our worst months with malaria. We suffered many more casualties from Dengue fever, malaria and dysentery than we did from the Japanese. I guess everyone learned a lesson from it because by the time we hit Peleliu, which had a large swamp that ran parallel to the beach, I understand small L-5 aircraft took off from converted LST's with DDT

spray and before we even hit the island they had sprayed that swamp because we were going to have to go through it so things were pretty much under control. Most of us were still having attacks of malaria, but we were on atabrine regularly, and if you got an attack then they would give you quinine and then put you back on a heavy dose of atabrine and then kind of taper it off.

**Mr. Cox:** Well after you were on Guadalcanal and you are in the reserve position, what took place after this?

**Mr. Bouley:** Well we moved down to the beach and then moved back up into the jungle and back down to the beach. Eventually we were sent out to the Matanikau River. "I" Company was given a position right at the mouth of the river at the sand spit. My platoon was in support of "I" Company and we were there with them at the spit. We expected tanks to come across so we had a half track with a 75mm cannon on it. I think the halftrack also had two 50 caliber machine guns. We also had two 37mm cannons with a lot of canister ammunition, which is kind of like a shotgun shell coming out of an artillery piece, plus armor piercing for firing at tanks. Then we had our guns set up along the beach and up the mouth of the river a short way to where we tied in with another unit. I've forgotten the date, but sometime in October we knew the Japanese had landed tanks. Our aircraft had reported them. Prior to the attack we could hear a lot of chopping wood going on on the other side of the river. I believe that is the west bank of the river and I think we were on the east bank. We assumed, and whatever

scouts we sent out verified that they were building a Corduroy Road because it was a rather marshy area.

**Mr. Cox:** By corduroy road you mean they are chopping down the trees?

**Mr. Bouley:** Chopping down the trees, which was the chopping we would hear going on.

**Mr. Cox:** So, it was a log road?

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes. We were eating two meals a day all of the time that we were on Guadalcanal, and we used to eat our last meal about 4 o'clock in the afternoon. There were some artillery pieces not very far from us, and at the time that we would have our evening meal, it was brought up from headquarters in trucks and the cooks set up a chow line behind our positions. Half of the men would go back and get chow and then come back up to the guns and the other half would go back. They shelled us at that time. They knew what was going on and I found out later from reports that patrols could look down into our area and see everything that was going on. So the Japanese would shell us. One night one of the shells killed five guys in my platoon and wounded about a half a dozen others that were right at the very tip of the point. I was on a gun further back on the beach. We had two guns back there and I was assigned to one of the guns. By that time I was no longer an ammo carrier. I was on the gun itself. We were given extra guns so the crews were cut down in size in order to man more guns. In fact, on Alligator Creek when we were there, I think that we were manning 14 machine guns, where we would normally man four, so that



meant about three men to a gun. About three or four days after that they attacked with tanks and I believe a regiment of troops. It was a typical Japanese Banzai attack. They usually attacked about nine or 9:30 at nights. It was very dark and they attacked at the sand spit. The half track and the 37mm guns were knocking out the tanks as they were trying to get across the spit. After they had knocked out several of them the tanks pretty much occupied the space on the sand spit. One of the tanks went around them out into the ocean a little ways and had the cover of the disabled tanks between themselves and the 37mm and the half track 75. They had the disabled tanks between them and us, so they kind of made an end run around them and came up the beach straight for the two guns that our section manned. I wasn't there on that night. That afternoon one of the guys about 30 yards up the river had an attack of malaria and he had been taken back to the division hospital. So I was taken off the gun on the beach and sent up to replace him. The tank that had broken through came down the beach. Because I was up the river I didn't witness this, but I understand that because they were being fired at by the tank, the men on the two machine guns left the guns. The tank apparently was trying to get behind the half track and it had literally out-flanked the line. It chose one of the gun emplacements; the forward one. These guns were offset on the beach, one closer to the water. The one that I had been on was a little bit to the rear and the other one was a little bit further up and little bit more inland right next to an embankment of about three feet. The tank turned and used

that gun emplacement to climb the wall. I didn't mention that these guns were fully emplaced. By that I mean that we had made emplacements out of coconut logs on four sides with a little opening to get into the rear and an embrasure through which to shoot. Then we had layered them with sandbags. I guess the tank driver figured that this was a good way to get up that wall and get behind that half track because he climbed up it and crushed that emplacement down. He didn't make it all the way up the wall, so he backed off and hit it again and he still didn't make it all the way up the wall, but his front end was stuck there and one of the fellows from my squad, a machine gunner by the name of Joseph Champagne, won the Navy Cross that night for disabling that tank with a hand grenade that he placed in its track. Now the tank was disabled and couldn't make any further progress. The half track had been dug in on a slant so that its gun was probably no more than three feet above the ground. The driver backed out of the slope. How he did it I'll never know as all of this was done in the dark. He backed out of his emplacement, came around, ran up to that tank, face-to-face, and hit the turret two or three times with that 75 and just about knocked the turret off. The driver, in a panic, backed out into the ocean to where he flooded the engine.

**Mr. Cox:** The tank driver?

**Mr. Bouley:** The tank driver. They died there. Further up the river, where we were, we had two guns. We had them pointed toward the west side of the sand spit. We had those dug in with coconut log and sand bag emplacements.

We could traverse the guns the width of the embrasure, but everything was happening at the point. So our guns were facing right down to the point at about a 15 degree angle. I understand a regiment of troops were following up the tanks.

**Mr. Cox:** Japanese troops?

**Mr. Bouley:** Japanese troops. We were firing right into those Japanese troops. I think, if I'm not mistaken, we knocked out nine tanks that night and just about destroyed that Japanese regiment.

**Mr. Cox:** How close did they get to your gun emplacement?

**Mr. Bouley:** To my particular gun emplacement? I was right on the edge of the river and they didn't try to come across the river. It was rather deep where we were. The only place they could get across was at the sand spit and that was at low tide. At high tide you couldn't across there. The river emptied right into the ocean. We fired thousands of rounds into the point that night. The gun I was on must have been spotted for we were receiving enemy fire. At daylight, we saw that all of the sandbags in the front of the emplacement were shot up and the sand was spilled on the ground.

**Mr. Cox:** This is a spit that you see pictures of where there are Japanese troops that are basically covered with sand.

**Mr. Bouley:** No, that is the Battle of Hells Point. That was the first real, major battle that we had on Guadalcanal.

**Mr. Cox:** OK.

**Mr. Bouley:** The fellows on Tulagi, they fought from the first day. For those of us on

Guadalcanal, our first real battle was that battle at Hells Point. After we finish I can show you a picture in the Division history book. It shows the disabled tanks. I think one thing that might be interesting for people to know is that the tank, which was a light tank, had run over that machine gun emplacement four times, back and forth and crushed it right down into the sand. The following morning we dug the gun up. We took it apart, cleaned it, oiled it, set it up, pointed it out to sea, and fired it. John R. Browning sure made good weapons. That thing fired just like it had fired before. All it had was a little dent in the top of the water jacket. We kept it on the line with us for the rest of the campaign. After we were relieved up there on the Matanikau, we had some beach positions and then we went up into a position on a mountain. We stayed up there a few weeks. Then we went aboard ship and left Guadalcanal. One thing that might be of note is that we were in such bad physical condition that when we went aboard the ship, none of us could go up the cargo net by ourselves. We couldn't climb it. The sailors threw down ropes and we tied them under our arms and they hauled us up the net. I left on the USS American Legion and went to Brisbane, Australia. We were there several weeks.

**Mr. Cox:** Was that an R&R or were you there training?

**Mr. Bouley:** They took us there because we were in such poor physical condition. My best friend weighed about 185 when we went in on the "Canal." He dropped down to about 130, so he lost a good 50 pounds. The dysentery

that hit us the first couple of weeks was devastating. From there on out it was all down hill. I think it was estimated that all of us probably lost 20 pounds. At that time, I could ill afford 20 pounds. At that time I probably weighed about 110 pounds. We went to Brisbane, Australia, and that is where I came down with my first attack of malaria. I had picked it up before we left Guadalcanal. I was taken to an Army Field Hospital and was treated for malaria and then was sent back to duty, and I no sooner got back to duty than it was decided we were so badly infected with the bug that the Australians were afraid. I guess our people also were afraid that we would infect the civilian population. They moved us to Melbourne, Australia. Most of us were in the hospital five or six times with attacks of malaria, while we were in Melbourne. By that time we had gotten replacements. When I first got to Melbourne if you had three consecutive attacks of malaria, three consecutive treatments I mean, hospitalizations, the medical personnel would send you back to the States. When I was in for my third attack, my third hospitalization, Division decided that they were losing too many men and they stopped sending anybody else back. Consequently, I didn't get to go back. I don't know I probably had five hospitalizations over a period of four or five months while I was in Melbourne. We were there a total of nine months. Then we left Melbourne. We were back up to strength and most of us that had been ill were now in pretty good shape. My regiment went to an island called Goodenough. It is off the coast of New Guinea. The other regiments

went to different places in New Guinea. I don't know why we were all split up. My regiment went to Goodenough and started extensive training. Of course all the time we were in Melbourne we were going out on maneuvers, and had night fire problems where we fired at night using live ammunition. We went on a ten day field exercise and then made a 57 mile forced march back. I might mention that the 1st Marine Regiment was housed in the Melbourne cricket grounds. We lived in the grandstand of the cricket grounds. That is where they had the track and field events in the Olympics in 1984. All the different regiments went to different bases, but my regimental commander, being the senior colonel in the division, was given his choice so he chose the Melbourne cricket grounds, which was only a tram car ride away from downtown Melbourne. It cost us a half a penny to ride the tram in uniform. So we were right in town. We were living it up good. The way we lived in the grandstand was that they took double-decker bunks and cut the legs off one side of the bunks, cut those short and placed them on the row's seat. The other leg was down on the floor of the row.

**Mr. Cox:** Where your feet would go.

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes, where your feet would normally go. The long legs and the short legs were up on the seat, which made the bunks level. The stadium only had a roof on it. It didn't have any sides so when it rained and if there was a good wind, the rain came in on us, and dust, you know, the dust came in pretty

badly. But we lived there. I was saying that we went to the island of Goodenough. We were there for a few months. As I recall, we left Melbourne in September. Again, the 1st Marine Regiment was the rear echelon. We trained on Goodenough until November and then moved to Finschhafen, New Guinea. The Army was still fighting at Finschhafen. They were fighting just up the beach. Since we were all combat equipped and had all of our ammunition, we were moved right behind the Army's lines as a ready reserve in the event the enemy broke through the Army could fall back on us. We stayed there a short while, I think about two weeks. Then we left Finschhafen and jumped off in LST's to hit Cape Gloucester on the island of New Britain. Incidentally, it was a joint Army/Marine Corps operation. The 1st Marine Division had been loaned to MacArthur and we were now a part of General Kreuger's 6th Army. The Army troops hit one side of the cape, and we hit the other side of it and then moved through and made contact with them and cut the cape off completely. New Britain is a big island. It is about 300 miles long and we needed the fighter strip. The Army had been bombing the main bases up around Rabaul, where the Japanese had thousands of troops and half a dozen airfields. The Army had been bombing these bases but they couldn't stay over the target very long because their fighter escort didn't have enough fuel to take them all the way to Rabaul and then all the way back. I think they were coming from New Guinea. The 6<sup>th</sup> Army needed a base that was close to Rabaul and Cape Gloucester was only a couple of

hundred miles away. The fighters could be stationed at Gloucester and then bombers could take off from New Guinea. The fighters would rendezvous with them, escort them over the target, give them all the protection they needed over the target, and then escort them back as far as Cape Gloucester and the bombers would fly back to New Guinea. So that was the purpose for the invasion. We made the landing, a very different landing. My particular outfit landed off LST's. They ran them right up onto the beach, opened the bow doors and dropped the ramps and we jumped off into the surf. It was a very watery landing, probably up to my chest. Not too bad for some of the taller guys, but it was pushing me a little bit.

**Mr. Cox:** Due to your height?

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes. And then we made the landing. Again, my platoon was attached to "I" Company, and "I" Company was given the flank. We were put into a swamp which on the Navy maps was described as a "damp flat." We were covering the left flank as the organization was going up on a beach road that went to the airfield. By road I mean just a little dirt track. But it was probably about 10-12 feet wide. We were protecting their flank out there in the swamp.

**Mr. Cox:** Now let me ask you this. When you made the landing was there any opposition on the beach?

**Mr. Bouley:** Not where we landed. Not where the 1st Marines landed. The 1st Marine and 7th Marine Regiments landed abreast and the 5th Marines were in



division reserve. They came in later. I understand the 7th Marines further down the coast ran into opposition. In fact, I think the 7th Marines took the most casualties of the division in that campaign.

**Mr. Cox:** Now as you got off the LST, you are still part of a machine gun crew. Are you carrying any of the equipment of the machine gun?

**Mr. Bouley:** I was the gunner then.

**Mr. Cox:** So were you carrying any part of the machine gun?

**Mr. Bouley:** I was carrying the tripod.

**Mr. Cox:** How much would the tripod weigh?

**Mr. Bouley:** At the Cape Gloucester invasion we were armed with light machine guns.

**Mr. Cox:** They are air cooled.

**Mr. Bouley:** They are air-cooled machine guns that lie very low on the ground. Its tripod is very small. A small three-legged thing that probably weighs 10-12 pounds. The gun weighed considerably less than the water-cooled machine gun, and my assistant gunner was carrying that. It probably weighed in the neighborhood of 20 pounds. So, we were going up through this “damp flat” that the Naval Intelligence map indicated.

**Mr. Cox:** You called it a swamp.

**Mr. Bouley:** It was a swamp. The taller fellows were OK, but I got to the point where I had to hold the tripod up here.

**Mr. Cox:** Above your head.

**Mr. Bouley:** Up above my head with my carbine in this hand and when the water was up to my chin I stood up on my tip toes and said, “I hope this flat doesn’t get

any damper.” (Laughter) It was a mangrove swamp. It was all banyan trees with the large roots. Tricky going through because you didn’t know if snipers were in it. Anybody could be concealed in there. The first day we went in there but about 2 o’clock in the afternoon K Company, in our battalion, had run into some problems. Incidentally they were following tanks going up the road. It is the first time we had ever operated with tanks. But K Company ran into a problem and they lost quite a few men. This was about 4 o’clock in the afternoon. They had lost several officers so K Company was pulled back and put in reserve. We were moved out of the swamp and put on the road. For the rest of the campaign we followed the beach road behind tanks. The second afternoon we came across an open section of tall Kunai Grass. I don’t know if you’ve ever heard of it, it is a reedy kind of grass with sharp edges, and it grows about seven feet high.

**Mr. Cox:** That is over your head.

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes. Over everybody’s head. My platoon leader was about 6’3" and it was well over his head. We knew that there was a fortification on the other side of this field. The field wasn’t very wide, probably 75-100 yards, and it extended inland from the beach. Before we moved into it we were told to set up our guns and fire one box of ammunition, 250 rounds. The Japanese had a habit of placing snipers in trees. There were trees on the other side of the grassy field. We were to spray the whole area, so some of us were firing low at the point of the road, and some of us were firing up into the trees, and instead of traversing with hand wheels we used a free gun, which

simply means you unlock the gun. On the tripod there is a traversing bar that the gun is clamped to. That day we unlocked that clamp and moved the gun back and forth as we were firing. So I fired 250 rounds and then we moved out across the field. We were in the Kunai grass and the tanks were out there with us. I think we had two or three tanks in the area I was in. I couldn't see them. We got about half way across, I guess, when we were stopped by Japanese fire. They were firing some big stuff. We later found out that they had some emplacements with 40mm anti-tank guns. We were receiving fire but couldn't see where it was coming from. We couldn't see the enemy. You couldn't see a guy five feet from you. My squad leader told me to set the machine gun up and I bent over, down on one knee, put the tripod down and received the gun from the assistant gunner and dropped it into its socket. When my Squad Leader said "oh," I looked back and he fell over to his left rear. He had been hit in the thigh. He was carrying a Thompson Submachine gun and the projectile went through the stock of his Tommy Gun and into his thigh, breaking the bone. I don't know whether it was shrapnel or a bullet. It split the stock of the Thompson Submachine gun, hit him in the thigh and took his leg out from under him. Had he fallen forward, he would have fallen on me.

**Mr. Cox:** Now that is your assistant?

**Mr. Bouley:** No, he was my squad leader.

**Mr. Cox:** OK. Squad leader.

**Mr. Bouley:** He had just said, "put the gun up here," and I bent over to set up the gun.

He didn't shout out very loud. He ended up being maimed for life, and it was surprising what a small sound he made when he was hit. I don't know whether what hit him came from the side, or whether it came over my head as we were receiving fire all the way up the line. Then a very good friend was killed. A fellow by the name of Ernie Bahnsen, a fellow from Connecticut. My platoon sergeant also was hit pretty badly. The platoon leader wasn't there. I think he was in the rear. He didn't have any experience. He wasn't a field officer. He had been given the platoon just before we landed so he had no combat experience. He asked the platoon sergeant what he should do. The platoon sergeant just said, "Stay in your command post and I'll take care of it." I remember him running back up in line behind us hollering "do something even if it is wrong." So we started firing the guns into that area. The tanks, of course, were firing with their 90mm guns. It lasted all of 10 minutes with a lot of firing going on.

**Mr. Cox:** And you couldn't see the enemy?

**Mr. Bouley:** I couldn't see anything.

**Mr. Cox:** Just firing blind.

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes, I was just firing into grass. Just firing where I thought it was coming from hoping that none of our troops were in front of me. So then we ceased firing and the tanks moved up, and the riflemen that were following the tanks moved up and cleared the whole area. We moved through that area and dug in at the edge of an open field. That is when we noticed the Japanese had the 40mm anti-tank guns dug in. They also were firing 60

caliber anti-aircraft machine guns at us. They were pretty well set up, but it wasn't a very heavy line. I don't think it extended very far. There were bodies scattered around the place. We dug in there and then the next day we moved out and took the airfield. They didn't defend the airfield at all. "I" Company that I was attached to, moved beyond the airfield and up over some ridges and on the military crest of a hill. We dug in our machine guns there and over several days we reinforced them with logs, whatever trees we could cut down, and sandbags. We filled the bags with dirt and put them on top of the logs. We set up a defense line which extended inland to protect the airfield. We dug in there and stayed there for the rest of the campaign. We moved back to the beach when we were relieved by some Australian troops. We then went to an island called Pavuvu. It is a terrible place. We waited to get replacements from the States and build back up to our original strength. We continued training because as the replacements came in we had to train them on the guns, take them out to a range, let them fire, and that sort of thing.

**Mr. Cox:** They were really your ammo carriers because they were new.

**Mr. Bouley:** They were new. They would be what we called the "anchor men" in the squad. The squads had been cut down to six men because we only had the light guns and we weren't carrying as much ammunition. There was only the squad leader and five men. WE needed two to man the gun and three extras to help carry ammo. So we trained them. Incidentally, we had landed on Cape Gloucester on the day after Christmas, so I boarded ship on

Christmas Day and we had our Christmas turkey dinner aboard a LST. You had to go through the chow line and then go sit out on the deck somewhere and eat it.

**Mr. Cox:** This was 1943?

**Mr. Bouley:** That was in '43, Christmas Day of 1943. Then we landed the following day on December 26th. At landing on Guadalcanal, the Navy also fed us a Christmas dinner before our landing. I keep reading about traditionally the Marines got steak and eggs before they land. Maybe the officers did, but I always got turkey. A full Christmas dinner, you know everything, including ice cream. They put a blob of ice cream on a hot metal tray.

**Mr. Cox:** That is the military for you.

**Mr. Bouley:** Oh yeah. They fed us at four o'clock in the morning. A complete turkey dinner on that tray and those sailors heaped that tray full. On Pavuvu, we again set up a bivouac area and then we trained the new troops. Then we received the word. Colonel Chesty Puller, who had been in command of the 7th Marine Regiment, took over the 1st Marine Regiment. He took that over about a month before we left Cape Gloucester. So we were now under the famous Colonel Chesty Puller, the most decorated Marine in the history of the Corps. We were working on extensive training and then we were given the word that we were going to hit Peleliu. This was now around August of '44. Before we boarded ship, Colonel Puller gave us a little lecture. He told us that his regiment, the 1st Marine Regiment, would not take any Japanese prisoners and for us to remember what had happened

to the Australian priests who had been bayoneted and the nuns who had been raped and bayoneted on Guadalcanal.

**Mr. Cox:** Quite a pep talk.

**Mr. Bouley:** Quite a pep talk. He said, "That's my orders. We will not take prisoners and when we land there will be room for us or them, but one of us is going to leave that island."

**Mr. Cox:** Was it an assembled group that he told this to?

**Mr. Bouley:** The whole regiment.

**Mr. Cox:** The whole regiment. He got before the whole regiment?

**Mr. Bouley:** Yeah. Pavuvu was kind of a garrison area. The CB's had built it for us. They had built a stage, put up a big screen, and had taken coconut logs cut in half and set them up on little stands to make seats. We had a projection booth and even if it rained we'd see movies.

**Mr. Cox:** So Colonel Puller got in this kind of stadium, or theater-type of...

**Mr. Bouley:** That is where he was, up on the stage, yes. Occasionally we'd get a USO group that would come through. On Pavuvu, Bob Hope came through at one time, although I didn't go down to see him. He was going to bring a lot of young, good looking show girls and we'd been back in the islands too long for that. I didn't want to see any leggy show girls. Gary Cooper had come to us when we were on Goodenough Island. Gary Cooper, Phyllis Brooks, and an actress by the name of Una Merkel. We put on a little show for them because we had our own little group in the regiment made up of guys from the regimental band. Two of those guys had been stand-up

comics. They weren't famous, but they played in night clubs in New York. We had one guy who was an excellent vocalist. We had our own dance band, and they played all the jump tunes for us, all the Glenn Miller songs and Hugh Howard, the vocalist, would sing all the latest songs. The songs that we liked. So Cooper says, "You guys don't need us." But Puller got up there on the stage and told us that we would not take prisoners.

**Mr. Cox:** On Peleliu?

**Mr. Bouley:** On Peleliu. Not his regiment. He had no control over any other regiment, but not in his regiment. We wouldn't take Japanese. The Japanese used Koreans as a labor force, but they were in their Army. They wore Army uniforms, but they weren't combat troops, they were strictly used for labor. Now he made a distinction between the Japanese and the Koreans. If they were Korean, OK. But then if you happen to take a Japanese soldier he always claimed he was a Korean.

**Mr. Cox:** I was going to ask you, how could you tell the difference?

**Mr. Bouley:** We couldn't. We took them at their word until Intelligence talked to them. We had taken a few prisoners on Guadalcanal. Probably 15 or 20 of them, I don't think many more than that. Only because intelligence insisted on it and I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but the 1st Marine Division had adopted a policy that the Japanese established on Guadalcanal. No quarter given, no quarter taken. If the Japanese came across a wounded



Marine, they killed him, they bayoneted or shot him, and we got to the point where we would do the same. We all knew about Colonel Goettge's patrol that went up the Matanikau River on a mercy mission because we were told there were people there who wanted to surrender and the Japanese slaughtered them. I think there were only two survivors who swam back. I know of one Lieutenant who turned a wounded Japanese officer over and the guy was laying on a pistol and he killed the Lieutenant. He would come in with his hands up and another would be behind him. They would come walking in, and as soon as they got close they would fall on their faces. The guy in front would fall on his face and he had a light machine gun strapped to his back and the other guy would fire it. So we accepted the fact that if they were going to play the game that way we would too. I went to Peleliu. It was a different kind of landing. We were on LST's, and we had amphibious tractors on the tank deck. We loaded into the amphibious tractors and they opened the bow doors when we were still three or four miles out and lowered the ramp and we went off the ramp into the water, all the troops were already in the tractors. I had an unfortunate experience there. The amphibious tractor that our machine gun section was in also had a small jasco unit in it, which was a joint air/sea communications unit, comprised of a Lieutenant and four or five men. But our particular amphibious tractor was all the way aft and up against the bulkhead. The very last ones. When the bow doors opened and amphibs went off the ramp one at a time. All of the amtrack engines were running

and people started passing out from carbon monoxide. I told one of the fellows that I was feeling bad and I thought I was going to faint. He said, “No, we’re moving now and we’ll be out in the fresh air pretty soon. Just hold on.” We had wet our handkerchiefs and held them over our noses and mouths, hoping that would help, but I guess it doesn’t. So I passed out and I didn’t come to until we were just off the reef. When I came to there was an LCVP, with a Naval Officer, and two or three sailors in it and they had hooked on to the amphib. They were taking one of the kids from the jasco unit and transferring him from the amphib over to the small boat to take back to the ship because he was out. He was still unconscious. The guys started moving me back to transfer me when I came to. Being “Gung Ho” I wouldn’t have any part of it, so when they took the kid off, the Naval Officer, wanted to know whether I was going back or not. My Section Leader was saying go ahead back, and I said, “No, I’m staying.” The Naval Officer was getting impatient and he said, “Make up your mind or I’m going to cast off.” The amphibious tractor on our right took a direct hit from either an artillery shell or one of the big mortar shells that the Japanese were throwing at us. Because we weren’t very far off the reef.. The reef was about a hundred yards long and we were just off the reef. The officer didn’t want to stick around there much longer. So I told him to shove off, that he was loaded and I stayed. When the amtrac hit the reef, the driver had to change gears. A different set of gears was used for land or water. In the process of changing gears, the driver stalled the engine. He

turned the engine over for what seemed like an eternity, but was probably no more than two or three minutes when the engine started. I remember thinking that we were going to have to wade in to shore like the guys did at Tarawa. We hit the beach. We were in the old type amphibious tractor that you had to jump off over the gunnel and they were pretty high. They were about 8 feet.

**Mr. Cox:** Yes, about 8 feet.

**Mr. Bouley:** So it is a pretty good jump down and I didn't realize how weak I was and when I jumped over the gunnel, I fell to my knees. We were in the first assault wave. I mean we were the first wave with troops. An armored amphib wave went in ahead of us and then they were firing their guns. They had a small Howitzer and two machine guns. There was a line of them. When I jumped down onto the beach, my legs just went out from under me. I had a Thompson submachine gun and it dug into the sand.

**Mr. Cox:** Cardinal sin, right?

**Mr. Bouley:** Right! I was on an enemy beach with no strength in my legs and a bore full of sand. I couldn't shoot my own weapon, but at least we had the organic weapon, the machine gun. The section leader called me and the other squad leader over and said, "I don't know what is in front of us." Machine guns were supposed to have riflemen in front of them and we were supposed to follow them up and then they would tell us where they wanted us if they ran into something. The Section Leader's job is to watch the rifle

platoon leader and to keep him in sight and see where he wants to employ the guns. Here we were on the beach and the beach is a dangerous place. This was our third landing. We were old salts. We knew what was going to happen. We knew the Japanese were hitting the tractors in the water and pretty soon they were going to drop their fire onto the beach. They had already pre-fired it and knew all of their measurements and angles, so that they could drop it on the beach. What generally happens with the first three waves is they pile up on the beach. Even though they are told to move in. I guess it is kind of a natural thing. So my Section Leader, a fellow by the name of Donald McCauley, a Sergeant, said, "I don't know if there is anybody in front of us, but whatever it is we can fight." He said, "We are not going to be able to fight this stuff if they start dropping it on the beach." So he said, "I'm for moving in, what do you guys think?" I said, "You're in charge." And Bert Clendennen said, "We're with you." He was the other squad leader. So we moved in and we went inland. We went beyond the armored amphib. We went into the swamp. Went through the swamp and were heading for what is called "Phase Line One." We didn't realize that we were the only troops there. There were only 13 of us and we didn't know what was happening on the beach. We could hear a the noise of the shells going off and that is where the 1st Marine Regiment took its heaviest casualties on the first day. On Peleliu the 1st Marine Regiment took the heaviest casualties that had ever been suffered by a Marine Regiment in combat.

**Mr. Cox:** Most of those were due from the artillery dropping in on the beaches?

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes, and the Japanese had dug in anti-boat guns. They had 40mm anti-boat guns dug in which we moved past, but they weren't manning them. Probably because of the air and naval bombardment. They had a dug a tank trap on the beach, which was nothing but a big ditch, and what I suspect happened, because we were inland and I didn't know what was going on back there. I suspect that as our troops piled up on the beach, the Japanese started dropping the fire to the beach, and Marines saw that tank trap as a good place for protection and a lot of them jumped into it. Unfortunately, the Japanese had the tank trap zeroed in so they just dropped their fire into that tank trap knowing full well that people would be there. That and that is where we took most of our casualties. All three regiments landed abreast and the 1st Marine Regiment was on the extreme left flank and K Company was on our left flank. I Company was in the middle and L Company was on our right. K Company was in what was called the "point", and the Japanese had that covered with machine gun fire K Company that was commanded by a Captain Hunt. He wrote a book called "Coral Comes High," about that action if anybody ever wants to know about it. Of the three companies in our battalion, K Company took the worst beating. The Japanese had heavy machine guns laid in, in what is called enfilade fire. They were firing right down the line and creating the maximum number of casualties. My section stayed out on Phase Line One most of the afternoon. It was terribly hot.

**Mr. Cox:** Were there any Japanese. From the way I understand it, basically you were beyond the perimeter.

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes, but we didn't know that. Phase Lines are established in an amphibious operation and the idea is not to try to regroup on the beach, but to get off the beach and move up to Phase Line One. Stop at Phase Line One and regroup because units overrun each other, they get mixed up. Maybe a sailor has landed you at the wrong place and you have to find your unit. But that was all supposed to be done at Phase Line One. There was a little road in, I don't know, 200 yards from the beach maybe, it was a little coral road, maybe 10-12 feet wide. That was Phase Line One. We didn't know where anyone was and we figured that, "well, we'll go to Phase Line One and wait for them to catch up to us." We didn't know that they were going to dig in behind us.

**Mr. Cox:** Now were you taking any fire at this time?

**Mr. Bouley:** No. It was quiet where we were. We sent back one guy. We gave him our canteens and sent him back to get us some water. He started back through the swamp and some mortar shells landed there, so he said to heck with it and filled the canteens in the swamp. He brought them up to us. He had taken his steel helmet off his liner and filled it up and came back with it full of water and all of our canteens. He said, "But there's bugs in it." As Squad Leader, I had a little jungle kit in which I had water purification tablets, sulfurnilimide, sulfur thiozol tablets, battle dressings,

and morphine styrettes in case a guy is hit badly. We were pretty well equipped when we landed on Peleliu. It was a lot different than on the `canal because on the `canal all we had was a little battle dressing and a vial of iodine. We could pretty well take care of ourselves until we could get to a corpsman. God bless them, they were a great bunch of guys. I don't know what Marines would do without them. So, PF John Sisco brought us the water. We did a little water purifying, but we were so thirsty we didn't wait till the tablets dissolved. We started drinking it right away. Peleliu is a coral island and the heat was tremendous. The sun reflecting off the coral makes it extremely hot. I don't know what the temperature was, but it was fierce and we were consuming water like crazy. We moved to Phase Line One. Sgt McCauley had me set up my gun at one place on that little road and the other gun with Corporal Clendenner's Squad a little down from us. It was brushy area that opened onto the road. Before we left Pavuvu I had developed a bad case of tropical ulcers on my feet and I had spent some time in the battalion sick bay, but it was time to ship out so I told the doctor it was time for me to get back to duty. He told me to keep my feet as dry as possible and gave me some vials of iodine and food powder. He said, "Keep your socks changed and put iodine and foot powder on your feet and maybe they will be all right." Well since we had gone through the swamp my feet, of course, were soaking wet. So I sat up there on Phase Line One and was in the process of changing my socks when PFC Sisco, who laying the behind machine gun opened up, I spun around and yelled,

“what the heck are you shooting at?”, and brought up the Thompson sub-machine gun to my shoulder. Just then a Japanese popped his head up from some brush just across the road. I fired a burst at him. I don’t know if I hit him. I immediately got my socks changed and we settled down there waiting for everyone to show up when we heard a tank coming up the road. There had been some tank activity in the aircraft dispersal area, which was off to our right, but we weren’t involved in it. We were in a brushy area. You couldn’t really call it a forest because it was mostly brush. The tank came up and went past us.

**Mr. Cox:** Japanese tank?

**Mr. Bouley:** Japanese tank heading for this dispersal area. The tank commander was up in the turret and five or six riflemen were on the tank. They went by us. If I had had a baseball bat I could have knocked one of them off the tank it was that close. The tank commander was up in the turret and he had about six riflemen on the tank. It went past us and I don’t know if he saw us, or as they went beyond us and Corporal Clendennen’s gun, he saw them, but he overshot us all so he stopped and backed up. When the tank went past the other squad Sgt McCauley gave the order “out of action,” which means to break the gun down. The gunner was straddling the gun to unhook the gun from the tripod and give it to the assistant gunner when the tank backed up to them. The gunner grabbed the gun and pulled it up on the tripod’s trail legs and squeezed the trigger. He cleaned them all off the back of that



tank. When I heard the firing I was wondering what was going on. Well, of course, we knew it had to have been the tank because you could hear its engine. As soon as the Japanese got hit a Navy F-4U Corsair dove down at the tank so the tank commander must have given them the order, he buttoned it up and they took off for the dispersal area. The plane turned around and came back and started firing rockets at the tank. I don't know what happened to the tank, but he got knocked out either by one of our Shermans or by one of the airplanes. I ran over to the other gun position because our section leader, Sgt McCauley, was there to ask him what was happening. When I got there they were gone. Just the dead Japanese were laid out in the road so I ran back and said, "out of action, let's get out of here." We pulled back. Two of my new men, this was their first campaign, had started running as soon as I said, "let's get out of here," and they had left their ammunition there, all four boxes of ammunition. So I stopped them. The gunner and the assistant gunner and another man that had his ammunition went back. I stayed with the two men and I told them, "pick up your ammo." So they picked it up and we started back and I didn't know it, but the defense line had been dug in behind us and as I started back I started to veer off parallel to it. Before leaving the road, we had heard some activity over to our left and we suspected, which turned out to be true, that there were about 15 Japanese moving up on our left, but we could not see them because of the heavy brush. They were heading out toward the same coral road. So I started back and to move away from the

Japanese moving up on our left I made a turn and started running down parallel to what became our defense line. I was running parallel to it when someone fired at me and just barely missed me. It wasn't one round. It was a burst of rounds. I swear I heard them go past me. I hit the deck and the two guys hit the deck behind me. Then I thought I had run into the same Japanese. I thought the ones that were on our left had gotten behind us. So I decided to go back the way I had come. I really didn't know where I was. It was the blind leading the blind and then I ran right smack into that Japanese squad. Just as I was to break through some brush one of them yelled.

**Mr. Cox:** In Japanese?

**Mr. Bouley:** In Japanese, to one of the others. Now I didn't know which way to go. Someone had fired at me going back toward the beach and these guys were over here, so I went back to where I had been shot at. Before I was running standing up, now I went into a crouch and nothing happened. I decided to take a look and when I stuck my head up over the brush someone hollered, "Don't shoot it is a Marine." That is when I knew that these were our people back there. But then I got furious because that meant that one of our own people had damn near killed me. So I went back screaming. I was bleeding. I don't know whether he nicked me in this arm or if when I

hit the deck, I hit some sharp coral, but I had a couple of veins cut and the blood was just dripping off my fingers. I went back furious. I had a Thompson submachine gun, and I started, "Who is the SOB that just fired at me?" One of the BAR men from my own company said, "I did." He said, "And if that guy hadn't yelled when he did, I would have got you because I was lined up on your helmet." The other guy, who was a mortar man had recognized my camouflage cover and then said, "don't shoot it's a Marine." He saved my life. We dug in there for the night and the following morning we were waiting for orders to move out and we were out there in the coral, pretty well exposed. In coral you can't dig in. All you can do is build it up in front of you. So we were sitting around the edge of what might have been a bomb crater, or where a rocket had hit, but it was a little defilade area, and four or five of us were sitting around the edge of it, and every once in a while the Japanese would throw some mortars in and we'd hit the deck, and then when it quit we'd sit back up again. We're sitting there when a runner came up to me and said, "Corporal Bouley the platoon leader wants to see you at the CP." So I said, "OK." I followed him over to the CP because I didn't know where it was and the Lieutenant was sitting there with the platoon sergeant and he told me that Sergeant McCauley had been hit. I asked how bad was it. He said, "he's not too bad, he got hit in the arm, but he was evacuated," and he said, "I want you to take over the section. Can you handle it?" I said, "Yes, I'm sure I can handle it." I was senior to Clendennen so I had the most experience as a squad leader. I

now had two machine gun squads to be responsible for. He asked me how badly I was wounded and I told him I didn't know if I was wounded or not, but it wasn't bad. He said, "Well, we have you listed as wounded and refusing evacuation." I said, "Well, get me off the casualty list." The platoon sergeant said, "keep your mouth shut and you'll get a Purple Heart." I said, "Yeah, and my Mother will get a telegram, and knowing my Mother she will think that I'm going to come back without an arm or a leg, so if you can get me off that casualty list, get me off it." The Lieutenant told me he'd see the First Sergeant and get me off. So I took command of the section for the rest of the campaign. That day we moved up into some hilly area, not really up in the mountains. Not up in "Bloody Nose Ridge." I understand some guy got his nose shot off by a sniper. He bled all over it. So we referred to it as "bloody nose ridge." We stayed up in that area for a few days, then moved further up and kept enclosing on the mountain. One night the Japanese came out and attempted to hit our line doing stupid things. I don't know why the Japanese did what they did in combat. They banzai'd and banzai'd. That just tells you they are coming. We'd go in as slow as we could, you know, and as quiet as we could. But this time on Peleliu a guy was blowing a bugle, running up the road, up a coral road in those cobblenail boots they wore, crunching on that coral road blowing a bugle. I don't know how many people were behind him, but we opened up on them. My section never moved through that area so I don't know how many we killed. Then they pulled us back and they told us that they were

going to pivot the whole line and they wanted us on the beach. So we went down to the beach. By that time we had been on the island five or six days. The Japanese had set up tank mines, they used 200 pound bombs and dug them straight in the ground, with just the nose of the bomb sticking up. Our engineers had spotted them all and had staked them out with red rags. We had to follow along that path, and not to get off it. That happened while we were moving up through it. We stopped to take a break. It was very difficult to hike very far at a time. Due to the extreme heat and humidity you perspire extensively and become exhausted. We sat down and I was leaning up against a tree, and I took out a cigarette and lit it and looked over at one of those bombs about 5-6 feet away from me and a fly was walking across the top of it. I got up and walked away. I was afraid a fly would set it off. (Laughter) It would have probably taken a tank to set it off, or a real good hard blow, but I wasn't taking any chances. So I moved away. Then we moved up the beach and my platoon extended from the beach on up to the swamp. There were three machine gun sections in the platoon and the other two sections extended from the beach up to the edge of the swamp and I was given the swamp. We had an open flank at the swamp and I don't know what outfit was on the other side of it. The line was moving up the beach below Bloody Nose Ridge in order to box it in. At night when we would dig in my platoon leader had me go down into the swamp and set up my section with a squad of riflemen to protect the open flank which meant that we weren't in the water, but we were right at the

very edge of it. There was an embankment that dropped down, maybe 15 feet, down to this marshy area and then the water started and I was able to set up two machine guns there. I had the rifle squad with me and I asked the rifle squad leader to dig in a BAR [Browning Automatic Rifle] team at one side of each gun with one team in the middle. My extra men were dispersed between the guns. We would do that at night, which meant that we were down in the swamp and the mosquitos were fierce. If you went up the 15 foot ledge there were no mosquitos. During the day we moved forward and at night we would get to go down into the swamp. That went on for about three or four days. Finally I went back and saw the platoon leader and asked him if he couldn't possibly rotate us and let one of the other sections take the swamp for a while. He decided that we didn't really need to have anybody down there so he let me dig in my guns at the edge of the cliff and protect that flank from up there, which would have been the thing to do to begin with. I told him, "we haven't had any sleep. You can't sleep with all of the mosquitos. We've got an exposed flank. How about giving us a break so that we could have two men standing watch on the guns and the rest of the men could sleep and then we would rotate them every two hours."

**Mr. Cox:** How did the swamp smell?

**Mr. Bouley:** Terrible. Like a swamp. I don't know how to define it. I don't know how to describe the smell of a swamp. Rotted? Yeah. Like a lot of rot. You know, all of the underbrush and everything that had rotted in it. That

was the way it smelled, which was no big deal. We could put up with the smell, it was the mosquitoes that were killing us.

**Mr. Cox:** I guess you just kind of got acclimated to the smell. There wasn't anything you could do about it.

**Mr. Bouley:** Sure. After a while the whole island smelled the same way. I guess we smelled the same way. So at any rate, they moved us up and then eventually they brought the end of the line up and we were then at the foot of Bloody Nose Ridge. The first night I spent down on the road at the edge of the ridge and I had the guns set up on either side of a road which was about 12 feet wide or maybe a little wider because there was a Sherman Tank that was just behind us there also. Right at the foot of the mountain. We stayed there that day and that night and the following day we heard a lot of firing up in the ridges. At dawn the Marines had moved forward to take Bloody Nose Ridge. Bloody Nose Ridge is actually a series of ridges. The Japanese let L Company get over two ridges and then they cut loose with machine gun and sniper fire. It was very, very effective. Those guys took so many casualties they were forced to drop back and they were taken out of the ridges. Then my Company moved up into them. I set the guns up on top of a ridge and the following morning we attacked again. Well the Japanese did the same thing. We moved out in a skirmish line. I moved my machine gun section, not in a squad column. One squad in front of the other. I was out in front and I was watching the leader of the platoon I was supporting. They went over the first ridge and got to the top of the

second ridge, and there they started taking heavy fire. All of my section didn't get over the first ridge. I got over, Corporal Clendennen, got over, his gunner and his assistant gunner got over, but the rest of the section hadn't made it over that first ridge yet, so they just stayed where they were while we were stopped. I didn't want to lay out in that open field because we were exposed to sniper fire so we went behind a huge chunk of coral, which was about the size of a big rock. It had to have been probably eight feet in diameter. It was a huge chunk. It was pretty high. Maybe about 12 feet high. So we moved behind it. All four of us. Then, on my right my company commander had moved up with his runner. All you could hear going on was guys yelling for corpsmen, plasma, and stretcher bearers. The riflemen were getting hit really hard. My company commander had his "spam can", those walkie-talkies that were used in World War II and he was talking to regiment. I assume he was talking to Colonel Puller because he said(well can I cuss on this thing?). He said, "Well God Damn it Colonel, why don't you get up here and find out what is going on." I thought Wow, he's talking to Chesty Puller like that. The people up ahead were trying to protect themselves by getting behind some kind of cover and then after probably ten minutes here came Colonel Puller and a couple of his staff.

**Mr. Cox:** He was coming right up to the line?

**Mr. Bouley:** Came right up to us. He was standing ten feet from me. He said, "Well Captain, here I am. Now what the hell is going on? Why aren't you



moving out?” I found out later, that because we were stopped and the people on our right and our left were moving forward and that was creating gaps in the line so even though they weren’t meeting any resistance they had to stop also. They were complaining, “What’s the matter with the 1st Marines? Why aren’t they moving out?” So Puller was getting complaints from General Rupertis as to “why aren’t you moving out?” Puller said, “Captain why aren’t you moving out?” The Captain just said, “Listen to it Colonel Puller. Listen to what is going on.” We could hear “corpsman, stretcher bearer.” Those guys were badly exposed and taking a beating.

**Mr. Cox:** From all the gun fire.

**Mr. Bouley:** They were getting hit by ... The Jap snipers and machine gunners were having a field day. So Puller said, “OK, pull back to the position you had last night.” Now the question was how to get back across the exposed area that was under fire and to get back over the other ridge. There were two ways we could go back. A large tree was up against this ridge and there was a little sloped area about 30 yards away where stretcher bearers had been going up, but then the stretcher bearers started taking hits. So our choices were up the slope or over the tree. I said, “OK, let’s kind of

stagger it so we won't go the same way." I told squad leader Clendennen that in the event I didn't make it, he'd take over the section. Then I told him to go first. He went first and he went behind the tree and then jumped up and went over the ridge. As soon as he went over I told the assistant gunner to go up the slope and to run as fast as he could. He did. He ran up the slope and made it, and then I decided that I would go and that the last guy would follow me. I ran the same way that Clendennen had gone. I made it and got behind the tree, and then I jumped up. As I climbed over the ridge, a shot rang out. I didn't hear the report of the shot, but a bullet hit a coral rock about 8 inches above my head. I figured that a Jap had the area zeroed in. I hollered to the other guy whose his nickname was Yoggie, "Yoggie, where are you?" He said, "I'm behind the tree." I said, "Well don't come over this way. This guy has got it zeroed in. He just hit a rock above my head." I said, "Get rid of the tripod. Throw it up here and you won't have to carry it." He threw the tripod up and it hit me square in the back, which almost put me out of commission and then I kept trying to talk to him and saying, "Yoggie, Yoggie." But Yoggie had gone the other way and had made it safely. Then we dug the guns in the way they were the night before. That night I put everybody on two-hour watch and I told Clendennen that the worst watch was midnight until two o'clock, that was the one when you would just get to sleep and then you'd have to get up and stand watch. I didn't have to stand a watch, but I always felt I had to do my share. I told Clendennen he and I would take the midnight until two

o'clock. We went up at midnight and relieved the fellows on watch. They said, "There's a Jap right out in front of us and he is hollering something." There was a large piece of coral right in the open area just down below our ridge. Not the same piece that I was referring to before, a smaller piece. A much smaller piece. There was a Jap behind it and he kept hollering, "Datta Coi, Datta Coi." He said it for the two hours we were laying behind the guns. He wanted us to expose our position and I'm sure he had grenades. The night before I had to fire a gun to cover a corpsman and stretcher bearers who were taking a guy out and they wanted me to give them covering fire to try to hold down the Jap's heads to keep them from sticking their heads up and firing at the rescue team. So I had fired with that particular gun. I'm sure they saw the tracers and had the gun spotted. The Jap was right out in front of us. I could have lobbed a grenade and got him, but we were old troops. We knew better. Be quiet and don't expose your position. He hollered it all night long. For the two hours that I stayed there on gun watch, I had a pistol laid right on him and I said, "you know, I could hit him right from here if he would stick his head out, but I can't fire." The next day some foreign correspondents came up to see what was going on. One of them seemed to know quite a bit of Japanese so I asked him what Datta Coi meant and he said, "come out." He was hollering at you to come out. I said, "Well I wasn't about to come out." I was pretty happy where I was. We stayed up there on the ridge that night and then the next night we moved down the ridge to another position and

the following day word was passed to us that the Army was coming to relieve us. The Army had landed on another little island. This was their first combat, but they had met very little resistance. Now, they wanted to come over and support us, but General Rupertus had too much pride. I guess he didn't want the supporting the Marines. I don't know how true it is, but scuttlebutt was that he told the Army General if we couldn't have taken the damn island, we wouldn't have landed on it in the first place. But then Division passed the word that the 1st Marine Regiment had been declared no longer a viable combat unit. We numbered less than a battalion. We had taken about 60% casualties and we were no longer considered an effective fighting force. Some Army troops came ashore and the word was passed to us that we weren't to leave our holes, our positions, until the soldiers got into them. About three o'clock in the afternoon, some soldiers in a machine gun section came up and took over our positions and we went down out of the ridges and went back to the beach. As we were going back to the beach, some combat correspondents were taking movies, and as we were walking by one hollered out, "Are you guys the 1st Marines?" And somebody hollered, "there ain't no more 1st Marines." We went to the beach and my platoon leader sent my section out along the beach to set up, in case there were any stragglers coming in. We stayed there about four or five days. When I got back one of the section leaders, a sergeant who had been an old China Marine, a guy by the name of Charlie Farrell, was furious. I said, "What happened?" He said,

“Some dumb Lieutenant took a patrol out and he caught a Japanese soldier. All the guy had was a rifle and the guy was sitting behind a rock sound asleep when he walked up on him. He took him prisoner.” I said, “I thought we weren’t supposed to take any prisoners.” He said, “You haven’t heard the rest of the story.” I said, “What?” He said, “Well the Lieutenant let him have his razor and shaving soap and he cleaned him up and let him wash, and then he gave him an extra suit of dungarees he was carrying.” Farrell got furious and said, “Lieutenant we are not supposed to take any prisoners. You know Col Puller’s order!” The Lieutenant said, “I don’t give a damn, this is my prisoner Sergeant,” Farrell said, “I got a man in my section with the whole butt gone out of his dungarees and you gave your brand new pair to this Jap.” Then he said, “at least cut the pocket off of it because it has the Marine Corps emblem on it.” This Lieutenant said, “Sergeant, get out of here, that is a direct order and don’t interfere in something that is not your business.” I said, “What happened then?” Farrell said, “Then the Lieutenant took the Jap over to the Regimental Command Post. He told Col Puller that he had a prisoner. Col Puller said, “Lieutenant, is that man a Jap or a Korean?” He said, “He is a Jap, Sir.” So Col Puller said, “You know my orders,” and turned his back on him and walked away. So the Lieutenant got the two guys that were guarding the prisoner and said, “Take him down to the beach and shoot him.” They did. Farrell was furious because he didn’t get the dungarees off the Jap before they shot him. A week later we left the

island and went back to Pavuvu. When I got to Pavuvu my replacement was already there. We were told we would be going back to the States so I was relieved of duty. I just laid around for a couple of weeks on the island of Pavuvu, getting fat and sassy. We went aboard ship and sailed back to the United States in three weeks. Before we left, Colonel Puller got us out and thanked us for the job we did. He said, "But I want you to know, if I had my way not a damn one of you would be going home until this is over." He said, "I don't believe in sending good combat troops home." We were only going back for six months. It was a program the Army had adopted. Six months limited duty and then they would send you back out as a replacement. So I went back to the States.

**Mr. Cox:** Do you remember what the date was when you got back?

**Mr. Bouley:** It was in November of 1944. I don't recall exactly. It took us three weeks to get back. I was a week in San Diego, so it had to have been October when I went aboard ship. The latter part of October and we spent most of the month of November at sea because the ships ran convoy courses and it took three weeks. We landed in San Diego with nothing more than what

we had on our backs. In San Diego they had to process us. They had to give us clothing and equipment, and cut orders for us, give us a change of duty station since we were no longer in the 1st Marine Division. I stayed in San Diego about a week because they were doing it alphabetically and I was among the first to be processed. I went in for processing and a guy advised me (some clerk-typist) that I was only back for six months and then I would go back out as part of another invasion force. He said that if I was smart I would request a school and if I got it I would be in the school and come up with something other than a machine gun NCO military occupational specialty (MOS). So I said, "OK, how about putting me in for Aerial Gunnery School?" I had always wanted to fly. I knew if I got through aerial gunnery school, and if I went out, I would go out as an aerial gunner on a torpedo bomber or a dive bomber. The guy said, "Have you had malaria?" Everyone of us had malaria. I said, "Don't be silly, yeah I had malaria." He said, "Did you have it often?" I told him, "Yeah, I was in the hospital about seven or eight times." He said, "Well they won't take you in aerial gunnery school because of the malaria." I said, "Well how about putting me in for Sea School?" It was in Norfolk, Virginia. I would attend about two months of Sea School and learn about the secondary batteries on a ship and then I'd sail out as part of the crew on a cruiser or a battleship or an aircraft carrier. Anything that had a Marine Detachment aboard. The clerk said, "They won't take you in Sea School either." I asked, "Why not?" "Same reason, malaria." He said, "You would spend

too much time in Sick Bay and the Ship's Captains won't have you aboard their ships." So I said, "Well, the hell, what else is left?" The guy said, "Drill Instructor at Parris Island." "Or, Shore Station Guard Duty." So I said, "Well, I'll take Shore Station Guard Duty." They assigned me to the Brooklyn Navy Yard in New York. I was there for six months as a Guard Patrolman, standing regular watches either out at the end of the pier or on a gate, pitching liberty in New York, having a big time. Since I lived in New Bedford, if I could manage a couple of days off I could go home on the train. It was only about 120 miles from the base. I was at home for the whole month of December because they gave me a 30-day leave. So I was at home for Christmas and New Years and I reported in for duty at Brooklyn right after New Years Day. While I was at the Brooklyn Navy Yard I came down with another attack of malaria. I was sent to the Brooklyn Naval Hospital for treatment. With malaria every time you came down with an attack you it left you in a very weakened condition because it destroys the red corpuscles in the blood. The treatment was ten days on quinine, straight quinine, and then you went to a rest camp for 2-3 weeks to build yourself up. You had no duties, you could play sports or do whatever you wanted to do and eat a lot. In the States, I was sent from Brooklyn Naval Hospital to Sea Gate Naval Convalescent Hospital, which was out on Coney Island. Sea Gate Naval Hospital once had been the Half Moon Hotel. Right near the midway and everything. In the "Velachi Papers" Joe Velachi blew the whistle on the mafia and Murder, Inc. A group of



guys who for a fee would kill anybody. Well, one guy was turning State's Evidence. He was put under police protection in a room on the 6th floor of the hotel. When I got there I ended up in the same room that this guy had been kept in. This guy was thrown out of the 6th story window of that room. When I reported in, two Marines were already in it. The Navy had taken out all of the fancy beds and put double-decker bunks in so they could put four guys in a room, but we had an attached bath. One of the Marines said, "Come here, I want to show you something." He raised the window and said, "See down there, this is where that Murder, Inc. guy was thrown out. He was under police protection so now they don't know whether the police threw him out or the mob. Whether the Police were paid off, or what, but this guy was killed from that hotel room." I was there for about three weeks. Then I went back to duty at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. I was back to duty only about two weeks, I guess, when I came up on a replacement draft. I was sent down to Camp Lejeune, which had been built while I was overseas because I had been gone for 30 months. I was at the main station at Camp Lejeune awaiting a draft to go to the west coast, then out to the Pacific. The Battle of Iwo Jima had just taken place. In fact when I was at the convalescent hospital casualties were coming in from the Iwo Jima campaign. Then the Okinawa campaign started when I was down at Lejeune. I was in a casual company and we were waiting for transportation to go to Camp Pendleton. Doctors to give us a physical. I was declared 1A. We also talked to a psychiatrist to see if we were crazy

and he asked me what color hand grenades I liked and things like that. I was declared 1A which meant that I could go back out to combat. I had a couple of friends on the draft with me. Friends that I had met at the Brooklyn Navy Yard and I wanted to go out to the coast with them, but it wasn't to be. One day I was washing my dungarees in the shower; every Marine is issued a bucket and a scrub brush and a big bar of GI soap. So I had my bucket and GI soap and I had my dungarees on the floor of the shower and we scrubbed them up and when I came out the whole bay was empty. I didn't know why. All the bunks had been rolled up. All except mine. There was a Sergeant in charge. I went down to his room and I said, "Where did everybody go?" He said, "They went to such and such a barracks, that is where they ship out from." So I said, "Well how about me, I was in the shower, I didn't hear anything." He said, "What is your name?" I told him and he looked on his roster and said, "Your name is not on the list." I said, "What is going to happen to me." He said, "I don't know." So I said, "What do I do?" He said, "Just stand by. Come and see me at 8 o'clock in the morning and one o'clock in the afternoon to check in. Standby until you get further word." So I'd go to see him at 8 o'clock in the morning and say, "Corporal Bouley reporting," and he would say, "OK, I got you." Then I'd go back at 1 o'clock and say, "Corporal Bouley: reporting," Once again he would say, "OK, I got you." Then after about four or five days he came looking for me in the bay. I was the only one in the whole barracks. He said, "You are to get into your greens, and report to

a Major so and so at Headquarters.” I went up to see this major and he said, “I see you were a machine gun NCO.” I said, “Yes sir.” He said, “Well I want you to know what you volunteered for.” I said, “Excuse me Major, but I didn’t volunteer for anything. I was on a replacement draft and I was supposed to ship out and my name never came up and now today I was told to come and see you. This is the first I know about anything.” So he said, “Well I just wanted you to know what you’re in for. We have a heavy weapons school here, 81mm mortars and water-cooled 30 caliber machine guns and you are going to be an instructor in the school. We get Boots fresh out of Boot Camp, send them through the weapons school, either as mortar men or machine gunners, and then send them out as replacements.” So I said, “I don’t want to stay here. I wanted to go to the west coast.” He said, “Well, I’ll tell you what. If you screw up we’ll put you in the Brig, we’ll bust you, but we won’t transfer you. You are stuck here for a year.” So I said, “My God.” What could I say? Aye, Aye Sir as you say in the Naval service. I stood up and he said, “OK report in to the training battalion.” I went down, reported in to the battalion and moved into their barracks. I was a machine gun instructor in the heavy weapons school when the Atom Bomb was dropped and I was given the option of either staying in or taking a discharge. I decided that since I could stay out 90 days and still keep my rank and come back in, that I would get out then and within the 90 days I would probably reenlist. I went home and met my friends who had been in the Navy and we all said we were going to go back,

but it got to be “well we only have two more weeks to go back,” and then “well we only have a week to go back.” So I stayed out for 2½ years and unlike the rest of my friends I decided to go back. I went down to see the Marine Recruiter. I still wanted to get in the air arm and I asked him if there was a possibility that if I went back in the Marine Corps I could get in the air arm because I wanted to fly. He said, “No, you were a machine gun NCO, you’ll go back to the Fleet Marine Force.” I said, “Well, I don’t think I want to go back in the Corps.” So this Master Sergeant was from the Air Force and he said, “Did I hear you say you wanted to fly?” I said, “Yeah.” The Air Force had just become a separate branch of the service, but they were still wearing the old Army uniform. So he looked like a soldier to me. He said, “Why don’t you come in the Air Force?” I said, “Well doesn’t the Air Force belong to the Army?” You know if it was the Army/Air Force they could transfer you from the Air Force to the infantry or the artillery or anything. He said, “No, this is the United States Air Force. We are a separate branch of the service now.” I said, “Can I be transferred to the Army?” He said, “No.” The Army recruiter said, “Hey, I’ll give you Buck Sergeant and your choice of any division in the United States. Guarantee you’ll stay there for a year.” But I said, “No.” I still had that ridiculous idea that Marines get that somehow or other the Army is kind of inferior and it would be a step down and I still wanted to fly. I didn’t want to go back into the infantry, but that Buck Sergeancy looked pretty good. The Air Force guy said, “I’m sorry, I’ll have to take you in as

a Buck Private.” They weren’t called Airmen then. The Air Force was still using the Army rank and uniforms. So he said, “I’ll take you in the Air Force. You will probably get to do what you want to do.” So I got to thinking about it and I said, “OK.” I joined and I didn’t have to go in basic training. I Volunteered for an assignment to go to Turkey on a Foreign Aid mission that was paying \$15 a day per diem. I thought I had died and gone to heaven. There I was a PFC making \$100 a month. That was counting my overseas pay and since I had four years service that also included the foggy that one gets every three years, but I was getting \$405 in per diem. I was living in one of the best hotels and was attached to the State Department. Then when I came back from that, they asked me what I wanted to do. I had been on the flight line in Turkey and had had my first flight and I loved it. We were assembling aircraft that had been sent over for the Turkish Air Force. We were assembling them, depickling them, and test flying them, fixing up whatever little squawks came up, test flying them again, and then turning them over to the Turkish Air Force. I’d volunteer to go up on every test flight. I’d sit up in the Bombardier’s Station. They were bomber/trainers and they had a little bomb bay. I’d sit up in the plexiglass nose. I loved that. So when I got back to my duty station the Sergeant Major asked me what I wanted to do and I said, “I’d like to go to aircraft and engine maintenance school.” So I did. The Marine Corps wouldn’t give me aircraft, but the Air Force gave it to me right up to here, right up to the nose. After sixteen years with airplanes, out

on the flightline and everything I got to the point where I didn't want to look at another airplane.

**Mr. Cox:** Where did you go to A&E School?

**Mr. Bouley:** Keesler Field, Mississippi. That was before it was moved to Texas. It is now up north in the Panhandle.

**Mr. Cox:** Wichita Falls?

**Mr. Bouley:** Wichita Falls, yeah. In fact, there were only two groups behind me that went through Keesler. As soon as they finished a phase everything was dismantled and shipped to Wichita Falls. I went through training at Keesler and was assigned to the flight line. I worked on airplanes for the next sixteen years.

**Mr. Cox:** And then you retired?

**Mr. Bouley:** And then I retired from the Air Force, yes.

**Mr. Cox:** Well it sounds like you had a full life.

**Mr. Bouley:** Yes, did a lot of things and saw a lot of the world. In all of my service I went overseas five times. I spent a lot of time overseas. Of the twenty years I served I spent half of it overseas. I used to volunteer for overseas assignments. I volunteered for Japan and got it. I took my family to Japan and my children were exposed to another culture for four years. I completed my 20 years over there and was sent to Travis AFB, California, for retirement processing. I went back to college. In the Air Force I had completed two years. I went back to college, and the wife became the major breadwinner of the family. I went to school full time for 2 ½ years

and completed the BA requirements and I got a teaching credential from the State of California. I went back to a town where I had been stationed out in the desert in California. A small town called Apple Valley and the district was building a brand new high school. I knew the individual who was going to be the Principal there, a fellow from Boston. So I went to see him and got a teaching position right away. After I taught a couple of years I decided I wasn't going to make any money teaching unless I had a Masters Degree, so I went to school nights and summers for a Masters Degree in Education. I Taught for 15 years and my wife was tired of California so we moved out here. I had an old friend from the Air Force who lived in Wymer and I went to see him. I hadn't seen him in about 14 years and we had served about 5 ½ years together so we were very good friends. We had served in the same squadron, doing the same job, working out of the same tent on the flight line. We were both aircraft maintenance inspectors. He took us on a tour of Austin and Bergstrom AFB then along the back roads to New Braunfels and to San Antonio. He told us about the facilities at the military bases so we decided to move to San Antonio. All our children are grown and just my wife and I are here. We lived for a year in New Braunfels, but I came down with a pinched nerve in my neck and had to undergo physiotherapy daily. New Braunfels was kind of far away, especially in the winter time and driving in on I-35 so we decided to move to San Antonio and we've been here ever since. We've been in San Antonio since the summer of 1983. And that is my story.

**Mr. Cox:** That is quite a story. Thank you very much for taking the time to relate it  
and thank you for your service to our country.

**Mr. Bouley:** You are quite welcome.

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