

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

**Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas**

**Interview with
C. R. "Jack" Mummert
August 28, 2001**

**1st Lieutenant, 1st Battalion
9th Marines, 3rd Division**

Hello my name is Richard Misenhimer and today is August 28, 2001 and I am interviewing Mr. C.R. "Jack" Mummert at his home located at 705 E 4th Street Number 24, Rochester, Indiana. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War Center for Pacific War Studies for the preservation of historic information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I want to thank you for taking time today for this interview.

Mr. Mummert:

You got a lot of stamina to stick with it and my problems too.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well that's fine we appreciate your time here. Let's start off by asking you, where were you born?

Mr. Mummert:

Logansport, Indiana

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay.

Mr. Mummert:

The third day of January 1916. I was born in 716 Washington Street, Logansport.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Mummert:

None.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were your parent's names?

Mr. Mummert:

My dads name was Raymond Mummert and mothers name was Eva Merrel when they were married and

that's it. He was from Winamac, actually a little town out of Winamac southwest. There is a big John Deere dealer there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Pulaski?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes at Pulaski.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Gilsinger Implement Company there.

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Mummert is spelled M u m m e r t?

Mr. Mummert:

Correct.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to school?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, in 1929 my mother married a rancher from Montana and I was raised in Montana. A little town Havre, Montana.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How do you spell Havre?

Mr. Mummert:

H a v r e

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay.

Mr. Mummert:

I went to school in a little town just west of Havre my first two years of high school. The third year I had to go to a different school because my old school wasn't accredited. The fourth year, my graduation, I went to Havre in 1935 I was graduated.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do between the time you finished high school and went into the service?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, it's kind of an interesting story too. In that the man I worked for in high school for credits had what we called a salesmanship class in high school. Meaning I did menial work for whoever I worked for. But it worked out all right, because it was a furniture store. All I did was open up in the morning, dusted off all the furniture, and go to school. Then noon I'd come back and watch the store. That's the way it went. Then finally I was to graduate. Then Mr. Nelson, the man I worked with said, "Jack are you interested in a job?" I said, "You bet your neck." In 1935 they were hard to get. He says, "I know a man who's looking for somebody. You go talk to him." This man ran a John Deere dealership. Which was a branch house of Deere & Weber Company in Minneapolis, Minnesota. And he asked, "Jack, do you know anything about books?" I said, "No, sir" Do you know the difference between debit and credit?" "No sir." He thought a little bit, and said "Would you be interested in keeping books and learning about them?" I said, "Mr. Davies, if you got the patience I'll go along." So about six months later he handed me a note and said, "You go down to the administration building to the North Montana College and find out how much tuition is and the books and so forth to be an accountant." So I did. It was \$80 so he set me down in front of his desk and wrote a check for \$80 and a note for \$80. He said, "I'm going to give you a \$5 a month raise and you pay off this note." I was making \$30 a month. And as a result on December 7th I was a branch house assistant manager at Grand Fork, North Dakota, for the Deere & Weber Company. Bingo.

Mr. Misenhimer:

December 7th, 1941?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, December 7th, 1941.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Mummert:

When? In '42. I had to go back out to see the ranch and get that squared away because of family problems. So it was late 42 before I could join the Marine Corp.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what month do you think it was?

Mr. Mummert:

I think it was December or November. Along in there somewhere because I was in platoon Number 22 which was the beginning of the next year. So see, it had to be close there because San Diego was putting troops out pretty fast.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You say you joined the Marine Corp?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, sir.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You volunteered?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, sir.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you choose the Marines?

Mr. Mummert:

In Missoula, Montana, I had a night job to take care of an all night heated garage, and the recruiters were coming in with their cars and I asked him: "How late are you working and recruiting?" He said, "Till 4

o'clock then I'll go home." I said, "A quarter after 4 if you want another marine why you be in your office." He said, "Well, I'll be there." And he was and I went in the Corp and that was it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you take you training then?

Mr. Mummert:

San Diego.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long was that training?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, it wound up that I was a drill instructor in San Diego for about three or four months, something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was after you finished your boot camp though, right? How long was your basic training or boot camp?

Mr. Mummert:

I think it was eleven weeks but I can't recall for sure. But I wound up as a drill instructor I know that. One day a second lieutenant came down and got me to come down to the office and talk to the Major. He wanted to know if I wanted a commission. I wasn't sure if I wanted a commission, but I asked him what he had to offer and I wound up I was sent to school in Quantico, Virginia. I received a commission as Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corp.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When was that?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh I can't tell you for sure but my serial number is 026068.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So that would have been sometime in '43?

Mr. Mummert:

Could very well have been, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So how long were you the drill instructor out there?

Mr. Mummert:

Drill instructor? Oh, I don't know maybe five or six weeks, something like that. But my history of being a bookkeeper and all this bit, see I was getting a little old for actually. I wound up as communications officer for the First Battalion of the Ninth Marines of the Third Division.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you took your officers training in Quantico, Virginia?

Mr. Mummert:

Well some of it, yes. But I went to school in Monmouth, New Jersey for communications. See there is a difference between communications, American, British, and Marine Corp. For instance you get on the phone with British people and they will say, "Are you through?" She means have you got your party and are you talking to them? Well to us that means, "Are you done?" So you got to know all these things. Then the Navy deal is a little different too, see. So they sent me to Army and then they sent me to Navy School in Los Angeles, Lilac Terrace in Los Angeles. Then from there on guard duty on the Mount Royal hauling troops from San Francisco to New Caledonia until they could find a place for me to go in the Ninth Marines, which they did. I went in as the First Battalion Communications Officer and I had four companies that I kept communications with.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So before that you were on a ship transporting troops to Noumea?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So how many trips did you make there?

Mr. Mummert:

Two. I was just finding out where I could go and so forth.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on those trips were you on a convoy or just one ship?

Mr. Mummert:

No, No Mount Royal sailed by itself. It was the ship that Mussolini used to transport troops from Italy to Ethiopia in 1933. It carried 17,000 troops.

Mr. Misenhimer:

17,000?

Mr. Mummert:

That's with Mussolini, with us I think there were 8,000 troops on one trip. There were 1,500 officers, about 400 nurses, and ships personnel about 3,500. It's a huge city, a floating city. It's what it is really.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The troops you were carrying, were they Army?

Mr. Mummert:

No, Marines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Marines?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh yes, all Marines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On these trips were there any threats from submarines or anything?

Mr. Mummert:

No, but I have a little incident that was worth while I think to me anyway. I kept books at Havre, Montana. I went to the bank everyday, it was just a matter of walking three blocks and that particular

day it was raining, just raining to beat the dickens. Havre at that time just had one concrete street and down the middle of that street was a crack and in the rain a little boy was riding his bicycle and he upset in the middle of the street. Before I knew what had happened I had the bike in one hand and the kid in the other and my back to the Montana National Bank it all happened right now. About six years later where do you think I found little Bobby Dunn Piez, he was one of 500 convicts that we were hauling from Treasure Island or one of the islands down by San Francisco to Noumea as help, just manual labor. He was one of them. Well anyway we had some reason or another I can't recall right now. Oh, I know, the Captain in charge of them, it was hot, oh my, they were down on H deck. It was hot as blazes and he asked one compartment at a time, with 250 in each compartment, to take them up on promenade deck to get some air. Well, my gosh that's where the nurses were and these were convicts. We had a heck of a time getting them corralled and I had to survey all the equipment in 500 bunks for weapons or anything you use them for. Who do you think was sitting inside the hatch as I stepped in, little Donny Plez. "You know me?" I said, "Shut your head or I'll blow your head off." "What the hell, well remember you saved my life at the rainstorm." I didn't have to go through one bunk. I had to send the sergeant up to small stores to get tags and wires to tag anything I found. There's a corner there just as you step in the hatch, there was a pile there about a foot deep sloped down to the ground. Knives, pistols, forks, soup spoons makes a good knife. There it was all I had to do was tag them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They put them there?

Mr. Mummert:

They put them in the corner there, little Donny Plaz had told them who I was saved my life. Really did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did they get all those weapons?

Mr. Mummert:

They make them out of anything. You can make a weapon out of that son of a gun.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Out of the magnifying glass?

Mr. Mummert:

No sharpen it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well yes, the handle that's what I'm saying.

Mr. Mummert:

Good grip, anything you can make a weapon out of anything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You say they had pistols also though?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh yes, all kinds of pistols.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were these people in prison for? What was your friend

Mr. Mummert:

Oh, I have no idea they were just prisoners. It was quite a deal, we lost 13 of them and that's why we had to do a survey. Cause we lost 13 we had to find them, which we finally did but we searched that ship. It was a giant ship, but we eventually found them. That's another story.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well go ahead and tell it.

Mr. Mummert:

Well that's it. That particular story.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You made two trips to Noumea?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, I made two trips to Noumea and back. The second time I was bunking down at Camp Magenta

Noumea, New Caledonia and we were already to fly. Every morning we had to be ready to go, so one morning we shipped out and I think I took the small ship from Noumea to Guadalcanal. I can't remember the name right off hand but I remember a Japanese dive-bomber dropping a bomb down on portside of the promenade deck and it just skipped down like that. A 500 pounder, I saw that and went aye, aye, aye.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It didn't explode though?

Mr. Mummert:

It didn't explode it skipped over to the port side. But they unloaded me at Ninth Marines at Guadalcanal and I stayed with them through, uh; we had the mop up detail. Actually the boys that stayed through the rough part (phone rings and the conversation changes.)

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went to Guadalcanal from Noumea then?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you join the Third Marines then?

Mr. Mummert:

That was at Guadalcanal. At Guadalcanal I joined the Ninth regiment of the Third Division.

The first battalion of the Ninth.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all did you do on Guadalcanal?

Mr. Mummert:

I was communications officer. I set all the communications for our division or for our regiment. For our battalion actually, but I had Indian talkers and Navajo and communications were pretty rough and much

needed. I set up a paddle crafters set up for radio to pick up Los Angeles at 2:30 in the morning. If I'd come home late at night from the officers club and not turn on the radio I'd sure find out about it the next morning.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know when you went to Guadalcanal roughly?

Mr. Mummert:

When? Shucks, I could tell you it was immediately after the first battalion was in Bougainville. If we know when Bougainville was it was right after that. Because they lost their communications officer at Bougainville and I replaced him. So that would give us a date we can go by.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The Landing on Bouganville was Nov. 1943. So what was the Third Marine Division doing on Guadalcanal? Training?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, we were training for a while and clean up. We were cleaning up the little individuals that were giving us a bad time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you mentioned the officers club, were there quite a few facilities by then?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh no, just a P.X. we would go down there and have cheap beer and that sort of thing. But yes that's what it was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you live there?

Mr. Mummert:

Tents.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tents?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes and then the rain in the morning you go out of the cot. You know what a cot is? In the morning your shoes would be floating by you. You're laying in bed there and there are shoes floating by you from the rain.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you near Henderson Field or where were you there?

Mr. Mummert:

No we were up on Guam on the 21st of July.

Mr. Misenhimer:

1944? That was the date of the landing on Guam.

Mr. Mummert:

1944, yes. This is a little story of where I was involved myself. That I did and what was necessary. See, we were suppose to be joined by the 77th Army Division and in going up the mountain see we went ashore this Lusan Beach and the Army was supposed to be on our right going along with us. Well low and behold we get up there about six, four or five thousand yards and I counted no Army so Colonel Randall sends me back to find the Army and there they were sitting back and making coffee on little coffee burners. They're having a big time resting and here we are up there, what is it, 300 yards behind us and 200 yards away from us and the Japs in between us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was on Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

On Guam. There it is by God I was there. I went to get them and the Captain say, "What am I suppose to do?" I said, "Get your ass out there on the line or you're going to have a silver oak leaf on your butt that you're not going to forget for a long time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Back on Guadalcanal then where you were all staying wasn't real close to an airfield?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh no. Grissom no.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No on Henderson Field on the Guadalcanal.

Mr. Mummert:

Where I was on the Matanikau River, which was completely up and we had an area where we were training in and an area where we were disinfecting these Japanese.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So on Guadalcanal you were just basically training and setting up channels of communications?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh yes, there's another book that tells about sending me down to find the Army. I found the Army stalled and busy brewing coffee and tea on gasoline burners. Their CO didn't know how to advance these troops. He's got a company of people and he didn't know how to move the troops. Yeah, it was terrible, cause we could have been wiped out you know. What the heck?

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long did you stay on Guadalcanal roughly?

Mr. Mummert:

Well the time I um, from the time Bougainville was over till the 21st of January, we spent 59 days aboard ship waiting to go into Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of ship were you on?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh a regular troop ship.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went from Guadalcanal to there?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

59 days?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, we were aboard ship 59 days while they're pissing around with Saipan up there with the Army. Army couldn't get going so they sent some marines in, a couple of platoons. I'm being facetious.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, talking like a true Marine.

Mr. Mummert:

Anyway we went into Guam in July.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you on the first wave in Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes sir, I went in there under fire.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were they defending the beaches pretty heavy at Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh my, it was blanketed. For instance say take an area, here's a beach ahead and you're coming in this way and they would bracket this area with mortar fire. There would be a mortar fire, and a mortar fire, and a mortar fire, and a mortar fire, and a mortar fire, and a mortar fire, and a mortar fire, and a mortar fire. When this one went off you could expect the next one here. So you had to time yourself in between these explosions so you wouldn't get your head blown off. But Colonel Randall and I, and the commanding officer of the battalion, we went along the left hand side, more or less, and when this one blew up. We went up one, when this one blew up we went up another see, and when this one blew up

over here. Well, see this one was doing to be down here see, behind us. So that's how we get along these troops. I had a platoon of troops I was trying to get ashore too.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you went to shore what kind of boat did you go in there on?

Mr. Mummert:

Well the landing craft we had couldn't make it all the way in because of the coral reefs. So we waded in 500 or 600 yards. Waded into shore. We were sitting ducks out there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The landing crafts were what, LCVP's?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh, no, 40 people in each one.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Higgins boat?

Mr. Mummert:

Pardon?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Higgins boat?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, she's the original one we went over the side gunnels. Then they had some that dropped a gate down in front.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was it like a ramp?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, a ramp. That was later, but they could go so far otherwise they would just breach with the coral.

One place I can't remember which one it was but it had to be on Guam somewhere. Well, we had a little

kid named Murphy I don't think he weighed more than 135 pounds but he was a light machine gunner. And you carried the machine gun like this and somebody else has the base and he just rolled off the side. Well when one of these Higgins boats goes in he goes up as far as he can to drop you off. Well when he goes out he guns his engines and he digs a big hole. Poor little Murph landed on the side in the hole and pretty soon we saw his helmet coming up out of there he still had his rifle.

Mr. Misenhimer:

His machine gun?

Mr. Mummert:

His machine-gun a 30 caliber. He still had that sucker, he couldn't be 135 pounds or more, but here he comes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you loose quite a few people going in?

Mr. Mummert:

Pardon?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you loose quite a few people in landing there in Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

In Guam, you bet your nickel we did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So that's where you had to go back and get the Army, right?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes on Guam. When we went into Guam we went up Asan beach they were suppose to come in and join us over on Orote Peninsula and fill in see. Well hell we're like this see 200 yards this way and 300 yards this way. There was a gap in between with Japs and you don't know what else. Oh boy, I told that kid that you'll have a silver oak leaf stamped on your butt if you don't shape up and get going. He said, "How do I do that?" I said, "line them up Goddamn and get going."

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did he then?

Mr. Mummert:

Huh?

Mr. Misenhimer:

He did then?

Mr. Mummert:

I don't know but I had to get back to my troops. Anyway we made it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you string wire or use radio?

Mr. Mummert:

Both.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Both.

Mr. Mummert:

The original radios on Guadalcanal were the old amplitude modulated. The new ones we got on Guam were (long pause) SCR 300's.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Frequency modulated?

Mr. Mummert:

That's it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

FM.

Mr. Mummert:

FM no problem with it. The old FM you couldn't get through this house; it was worthless you had to

use wire. When we got to AM it was a good deal. As a matter of fact I picked up the landing in Okinawa when we were in Iwo Jima with one of those little SCR 300's.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was the first day you went on Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

On Guam, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were in the first waves?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, it was pretty rugged for some of the boys they were floating around out there. You couldn't wait you had to keep going.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long did the Guam invasion, how long did it take before you had the island secure?

Mr. Mummert:

August. Well I think we went out to Medin Point, It couldn't have been more than 3 or 4 weeks at the most. See we went in Asan beach and had to go back out and clean out some other peoples problems. We were kind of the mop up crew. Colonel Randall at that time was as a matter of fact I'll be meeting him in September 20th at Canton, Ohio. He's a retired (tape cuts out).

Mr. Misenhimer:

He's a retired Major General.

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, he was a liaison with the Allied Forces for five secretaries of state. After we got back from the war but he stayed in the Corp and was a liaison for five secretaries of state. Brilliant man. He always makes a remark that he spent, well in 1935 he was in China. He was a first lieutenant and he said he made more the first year he got his diploma as a lawyer. He retired spent a year and got his diploma as a lawyer in one year. He made more money that first year than he did all those 35 years before. All put together.

He's an amazing man. He gives me a boot in the ass every once in awhile.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What are some other things that happened in Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, I got to know a family by the name of Butler and as we went into Guam on Asan beach the capital is Agana and they had been in business since 1914. He was a Georgian that moved to Guam and he had a Coca Cola franchise and years go by and wars over and everything's done. I go out to Guam in 1994 to look things over and see what it's like and just for fun I opened up the telephone directory and looking for some people by the name of Butler. I got somebody on the phone and I said is Mr. Butler there, oh no he's passed away 14 years ago. Well is Mrs. Butler there? Oh no, she passed away 3 years ago, now who is this anyway? I happen to know those people and I thought I could make some kind of contact. He said, "Where are you?" I said, "I'm down at Sheraton Hotel." He said, "You get out the front door and I'll be there in 20 minutes. Here he comes I swear to God he was that big around 5 foot 10. In a little old Datsun automobile. So I opened up the door and he said, "Your name Mummert" and I said "yes" he said "Get your butt in here." For 2 days he took me all over Guam. He was the grandson of Butlers. About 3 days ago I got another phone call from him. Every now and then he calls me up to see how I am doing.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you had the Navajo code talkers out there on Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

That's right. We had 40 or so on Guadalcanal and unfortunately the Indians as a people can't drink alcohol or anything. So we get a 6 x 6 truck together and put a tent on the truck and pile all their crude beer in a truck and take them out into the boonies and let them put up their tents and spend the day. We'd come back and those people just looked like heck. Their clothes were torn up the tent was tore up. They were a miserable looking bunch of people. But they could talk on the telephone. Yes sir, they

saved our butts on Iwo Jima. Anyway I've been wanting to go back and see some of those people. I made one trip and tried to find these people but it was almost impossible to find these Indian people but apparently () in themselves or something I don't know what. But I spent three days trying to find some of those boys that had been with us all the way through but that was then. And I went to a wedding, um the groom is from one village and the bride is from another village. So you spent three days in the groom's place getting all primed up for this wedding and you go down for another three days after this wedding getting unprimed. In the mean time they build a daze about 10 x 10 with a rose arbor and finery you wouldn't believe. The bride just had a train and everything in first class. That was quite a deal.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were some of your other experiences there on Guam?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh, I about cut that finger off.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did that happen?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, I was cutting. We didn't have a lot of equipment we should have. All I had was a K-bar knife and I still got it around here someplace. Oh, it's in the car. But we, I had a machete it's about that thick about so wide sharp as a razor and weighs about 4 or 5 pounds. When you cut with it, it'll cut through brush and stuff. And I'm just a going and it's raining and going and chonk. I just reached in my pocket and wrapped the hand up and away we went. Kept on going. I got blood poisoning after we were all settled and everything. I woke up and my bookie was Dr. Johnson and I'm lying there like this with my arm up like that and doc says, "What's going on? How come you got a, there's black race down my arm like that you got blood poisoning." So in the hospital I had blood poisoning, dengue fever, malaria, and something else I can't remember. But any way we were training for Iwo Jima.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was this on Guam where this happened?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After the fighting was over there?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You stayed on Guam then?

Mr. Mummert:

We were training to go to Iwo Jima and I was in the hospital. I had something they gave me I forget what it was, anyway my troops were leaving. They were going to Iwo Jima and I said I like to get going and join my troops. He said they were already gone. I said that don't make any difference, I still want to go with my troops. So he got me air transportation and I got there just in time to go to shore with my Ninth Marines. That was a terrible day, I went back in '95 and it was pretty much the same. A bunch of holes and bones, but I lost an awful lot of boys. See, they would cut our wire, telephone wire, we had to go around and string it. The CB's came and they built a runway. Well today they go up here and we go around there. Well tomorrow they're up here and the Japs already cut a wire so we had to go around again. Go on up and around we keep on going. I've lost a lot of troops trying to keep that one company with wire. Thank goodness we had those SCR 300's and 600's radios because they were our God send and Indians on top of that such which saved our butts. Because the Japs didn't know what we were talking about.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Otherwise, they were tapping your lines?

Mr. Mummert:

They would tap the lines then they would cut it. But it didn't do them any good because they couldn't

understand anyway with Navajo. But that's the way it was. Oh my let's see the 4th and 5th divisions went in initially they bogged down and that's when we went in. In between them. We got up to Modia (mag?) number one air post airstrip and went through this bit with the wire. And Modia going this way number 2 was across this way so you had the whole works you had to go through. But the boys they kept the communications here. Johnny Clep, he's dead now passed away this past year. He was C company commander, no B Company commander on Guam. And he's the one that got the presidential citation one night and I was along side there by him and Johnny got his citation. It was a good deal. Well anyway it finally got over with and there wasn't enough of my outfit left that they dispersed us and They sent me to the 4th Division with General Cates on Maui on the Hawaiian Islands and that's where I was finally sent home. And I went back out to the ranch, nothing there. There was nobody to farm it, nobody to take care of any cattle or anything, wasn't anything there. So I took a trip to Indiana I had people here of course and I met a young lady here. It was just 54 years ago. She's sitting in the other room there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's her?

Mr. Mummert:

That's right. That's my story in the Marine Corps.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about the flag raising in Iwo Jima.

Mr. Mummert:

I didn't see the first one go up but I did see the second one go up. There was a second maybe 30 seconds there you could have heard a dove fly by. And then all Hell broke loose. You never hear anything like that in your life. Just all Hell broke loose, hey there she is. Everybody took off in a dead run.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is that the first flag or the second?

Mr. Mummert:

That was the second one; see I didn't see the first one go up. I took pictures on Iwo Jima. I didn't see the first small flag raised. Later I saw the large one. 2:23 I listened to Okinawa. Something happened but I don't remember how I got from Iwo Jima back to Guam. The shipped me back but I don't remember. I got hurt and that was that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You got hurt?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you mean your finger or something different?

Mr. Mummert:

No, no, see an officer doesn't get any recognition you give recognition to your men. But they loaded me up and the next thing I knew I was in the hospital back on Guam and how I got there I don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get a Purple Heart?

Mr. Mummert:

Enlisted men get Purple Hearts; commission men don't get a Purple Heart.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You showed me some of your medals and ribbons, which all ones did you get?

Mr. Mummert:

Which ones did I get?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes.

Mr. Mummert:

Well presidential citations, I got two of those in there and that's about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Some Battle Stars?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, some Battle Stars. But that's plain ass battle; of course what the heck you do it anyway.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You say when you were on Iwo Jima for a reunion were there Japs there?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Snippy?

Mr. Mummert:

They wouldn't let us go up on Mount Suribachi.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They wouldn't let you up there?

Mr. Mummert:

No, and one little private went up to the General Moondy and said, "General, they won't let us up on Mount Suribachi." "Is that so?" About 20 minutes later we had 20 trucks lined up and we went up that sucker. General Moondy, I got a picture of him someplace. Yeah, we went up there just like a ball of fire.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did the Japanese try to stop you?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, they tried to but they just pushed them off the side.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the highest rank you got to in the Marines?

Mr. Mummert:

First Lieutenant.

Mr. Misenhimer:

First Lieutenant?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, I'm one of the few mustangs. I went in the Corps before the draft, not very many of us left.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What do you mean by mustang?

Mr. Mummert:

I went in the corps before the draft.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's what that means?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, that's what that means.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you stay in the reserves after you got out?

Mr. Mummert:

Well the funny thing was I was put on stand by duty. And I went to Feragate? Idaho and from there I went home. Well then I made a trip to Indiana and met this beautiful lady down here and the first thing I knew I was not in the 11th naval district, but I was in the 9th naval district. General Randall is CO in Indianapolis Reserves. He could see from the records and he called on the phone he said, "Mummert I got to have a communications officer down here for the 16th Marines." He said, "We could do it the easy way or we could do it the hard way, when can I expect to see you?" I said, "I'll be there 8:00 tomorrow morning." But Iwo Jima was the first battle that the Japs had lost in 1300 years.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On their own soil?

Mr. Mummert:

Their first battle they lost in 1300 years and bunch of little teenage kids did it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This is side two of tape one with Mr. Mummert. You were saying the black sand on Iwo Jima.

Mr. Mummert:

The black sand going up the beach here is like a man walking in a newly harvested pile of wheat. You sink almost up to your knees and that's what you had to go through in order to get up that beach. That and plus 80 or 90 pounds on top of what you normally carry for weapons is quite a chore.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What weapon did you carry there?

Mr. Mummert:

I carried a 45 and a little 30 caliber.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A 30 caliber carbine or M-1?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, I had a 30-caliber carbine and a 45 pistol. That's all I could manage with what else I had to do.

But these people were something else, I tell you. Those young people would grab onto something.

Buster it's going to have to give and that's all. But I got almost everything I could find about what we did and how we did it and why. The reason why is because our officers told us that's what we're going to do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you recall anything funny or humorous that happened to you at anytime in training or along the way?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, I suppose there had to be somewhere on the line. Oh, Shockley on Guadalcanal was intelligence officer and Shockley somehow or another broke his leg. We went down to Mob 8 the hospital to visit and when you visit somebody you take a few bottles of beer with you. So we're visiting with him and the hospital is built in a large square. Hallways like this and you go in the administration and they're all away around. Here about the 3rd door down is Shockley's place. He's got a wheelchair and he's got his leg out like this. Well after about 3 or 4 beers we got to racing to see who could go down, over, up, back, the quickest. Well the last time we didn't quite make it, we ran Shockley's leg through in the wall.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You pushed his wheel chair around?

Mr. Mummert:

We were pushing the wheelchair and we didn't make the curve, we shoved him. There is a couple other things but you can't publish them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well what did it do to his leg? Did it break leg again or anything?

Mr. Mummert:

Oh, he broke his leg. Next time we saw him he had a chest cast on. His family were furniture manufacturers and they manufactured a line of furniture, which was called the Royalty Line. King, Queen, knights, and all that Bed was a knight or whatever. King or Queen but it was influential family. (tape trouble) Nurses just left oh boy, anyway.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How's that?

Mr. Mummert:

Well, in the course of my endeavors and lifetime I was able to help the State of Kentucky get some packinghouses to process their hogs down in Kentucky. I got one Swift and one Armour packing plant from way up North to go down there and as a result, Chloeann, my daughter, got my commission on the wall down at her house.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Kentucky Colonel?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This is one off the base from Guadalcanal?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, You could read a book by moonlight, we could write a letter by moonlight on the beach.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Very bright there?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, It was that bright. You could read a book. Just sit there and read a book by moonlight. My nurse on Guam used to have a boyfriend who was a Colonel in the Marine Airforce. And the Colonel would come down and pick up this Miss Hill and me wrapped up in a couple blankets and take us down to Tomon ? Bay and they would lay me down on the beach on the blankets. Every once in a while they would come and turn me over so I wouldn't get cooked on one side. Then they'd roll me back up and take me back to the hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me again.

Mr. Mummert:

We needed showerheads.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On Guadalcanal you couldn't get showerheads?

Mr. Mummert:

The battalion you could not get showerhead you couldn't get them. So Colonel said, "You better go see

if you can find some shower heads." I said, "Okay." So I took two quarts of whiskey with me and the jeep plus the driver of the jeep and we went down to Doma? Cove to a small store (naval store) and I got a box of showerhead about so big a cube full of showerheads.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About 2 feet cube?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, plus a jeep load of Almond Rocha candy in one-pound cans. A whole jeep load.

Mr. Misenhimer:

All that for a few bottles of whiskey?

Mr. Mummert:

Yes, all that for a few bottles of whiskey.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This is end of tape.

Transcribed by Kevin Kennedy
June 2004
20 hours