

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

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

**Donald D. Cotner
Navy
Guam**

August 1, 2003

Mr. Misenhimer

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is August 1, 2003. I'm interviewing Mr. Donald D. Cotner at his home at 3646 South County Road 300 West, Winamac, Indiana 46996. His phone number is area code (574) 595-7482. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific Wars, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of the historical information related to World War II.

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

Mr. Cotner

You're welcome.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you – what is your birth date?

Mr. Cotner

April the 5th, 1927.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And where were you born?

Mr. Cotner

Pulaski County.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Cotner

Yep, I had one brother and one sister.

Mr. Misenhimer

A brother older or younger?

Mr. Cotner

Brother and sister both were older than me.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was your brother in World War II?

Mr. Cotner

Nope. Nope. He passed away when he was real young.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh. OK. Alright. And where did you go to school?

Mr. Cotner

I went to school at Dragon School in Beaver Township, White Oak School in Beaver Township, Walters School in Monroe, and Winamac High School.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And what year did you finish high school?

Mr. Cotner

1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

And when did you go into the service?

Mr. Cotner

March 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which branch did you go into?

Mr. Cotner

Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you drafted or did you volunteer?

Mr. Cotner

Volunteered.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Cotner

Thought I liked it. I just liked to go to the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had you had any experience in the navy at all?

Mr. Cotner

Nope. None whatsoever.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And where did you volunteer at?

Mr. Cotner

In Indianapolis.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then from Indianapolis where did you go?

Mr. Cotner

I had to come back home, and they called me about 3 weeks later to go down and get a physical. Took my physical, came back home, and waited for 4 or 5 days and then they called me back to Indianapolis and I went to Chicago – Great Lakes, Illinois.

Mr. Misenhimer

And was that in March when you went up there?

Mr. Cotner

I went there in July.

Mr. Misenhimer

July '45. To Great Lakes Naval Training Station.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what was basic training like there?

Mr. Cotner

Hell. I was there for 14 weeks. Training was real, real vigorous

and interesting.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have Marine drill sergeants, or were these Navy?

Mr. Cotner

I had Army and Marine both – and Navy. We had 3 of them. Army, Navy, and Marines.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what all did they teach you in boot camp?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, they taught us how to fight fires, how to shoot anti-aircraft guns, and we – survival training, gas training, gas mask training – the whole ball of wax.

Mr. Misenhimer

Bayonet training?

Mr. Cotner

Yup. Had that. Had machine gun training.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were basically taking an Army type rather than a Navy.

Mr. Cotner

Yup. Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

They were getting ready for the invasion of Japan?

Mr. Cotner

Yes, sir.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was 14 weeks?

Mr. Cotner

That was 14 weeks. Yes, sir.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything in particular you recall from that time?

Mr. Cotner

No, not that I want to talk about. (laughing) No, we had a lot of guys up there that was real good. The scariest thing was jumping over - off of a 60 foot tower into the water. That was the scariest thing. Nothing - I mean that was about it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you happen to know how to swim or have to learn how to swim?

Mr. Cotner

No, I already knew how to swim, but I mean you had to swim the length of the pool.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about tying knots? Did each of you tie knots?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, yes. Everything that you wanted to talk about we had to do. Everything we had to – but, no it uh, it was quite interesting because I was just an old farm boy out here when I went in.

Mr. Misenhimer

See at that point you were about 18 years old.

Mr. Cotner

I was 18 years old. Yes, sir. Had radio operator experience up there, and uh, that was about it, I mean.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you finished there about when?

Mr. Cotner

I think that was in uh – I can't remember. Probably August, August September. It'd be September.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah. September, first of October, around there somewhere.

Mr. Cotner

Around the first of October.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any particular schooling other than basic?

Mr. Cotner

No, not at that point I didn't have - no.

Mr. Misenhimer

And when you finished there what rank did you have?

Mr. Cotner

Uh, seaman – just apprentice seaman.

Mr. Misenhimer

Apprentice Seaman. What was your pay when you went in?

Mr. Cotner

21 Dollars a month.

Mr. Misenhimer

Twenty-one. But that would take care of food and clothing and housing, so.

Mr. Cotner

Well, when I got my first pay I got 7 dollars.

Mr. Misenhimer

What happened to the rest of it?

Mr. Cotner

It went for – you had to pay for your hair cut, you had to pay for some uh, what else did we have to pay for? I can't remember what we had to pay for.

Mr. Misenhimer

Shaving gear maybe?

Mr. Cotner

Insurance and gear and stuff like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished your boot camp, where did you go then?

Mr. Cotner

I came home for leave – Seven days. Had to go back to Great Lakes, we shipped out of there to Port Hueneme, California.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how did you travel out there? On a train?

Mr. Cotner

Cattle train. Cattle train, we call it. It was seven days from Chicago to California.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have anything to sleep in, or sleeper?

Mr. Cotner

Oh just, just sleep on the bench. I mean – just on a ...

Mr. Misenhimer

Chair car.

Mr. Cotner

Chair car. Yup.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now back in your boot camp, you had to live in the barracks there, right?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the food there?

Mr. Cotner

Food was good. To me it was good – a lot of guys didn't like it, but was, sometimes you didn't get good food, but otherwise, you got pretty good food. Got pretty good food.

Mr. Misenhimer

And then where was it you went to in California?

Mr. Cotner

Port Hueneme, California. And we were there for – I can't remember when. I've slept a few times since then.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah. OK.

Mr. Cotner

But we were headed for the invasion of Japan, is what we were headed for.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what all did you do there at this point?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, we used to run heavy machinery, learned Commando Attacks. I was trained in Seal Training. And how to operate a crane, backhoe – everything on board a ship, too. We had to use a crane on a ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

You say Seal Training. Underwater Demolition, too.

Mr. Cotner

Yes. Yes, sir.

Mr. Misenhimer

And that was training there in California? And how long was that particular part of the training?

Mr. Cotner

We only had that for a week.

Mr. Misenhimer

As part of that, what kind of equipment did you have?

Mr. Cotner

You know, I can't tell you. It's been so damn long ago that I can't tell you what we had. I cannot tell you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anyway, tell me that again.

Mr. Cotner

You didn't get to sleep for a long period of time, I'll tell you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Sometimes you had fatigues on?

Mr. Cotner

Yup.

Mr. Misenhimer

Swim under water with those? In swim trunks possibly?

Mr. Cotner

Yup. Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was one week?

Mr. Cotner

That was one week. That's all we had. A lot of – most generally the training went on for I think six weeks. Six or eight weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer

There at that camp.

Mr. Cotner

If you were going to be a full fledged Seal.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, ok, I see.

Mr. Cotner

But we only got, we only got one week of that because we was suppose to ship out.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. What else do you recall from your time there?

Mr. Cotner

There – well, it's not funny, two guys got killed. With uh, live training, with live ammunition. And they raised their heads up and two of them got killed.

Mr. Misenhimer

Crawling under the live fire. Which I've done too, right.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. That was one of the bad experiences. Then we had sharp shooter training. And just a little bit of this and that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Sharp shooter. Which rifle did you use?

Mr. Cotner

We had the M1 and the carbine and later on we used a BAR. Well, we went out of San Diego, is where we went out of. Three days out we hit a typhoon. I think it was 13 ships in the convoy. And three days later we were out there by ourselves.

Mr. Misenhimer

The others had all sunk or left or?

Mr. Cotner

They just, they scattered. And we were out there by ourselves.

Mr. Misenhimer

When would that have been?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, Jesus.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was after the war was over or before?

Mr. Cotner

Before the war was over.

Mr. Misenhimer

So it would have been before August of '45?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. I can't remember – I can't remember. I know we were out there by ourselves, and you get scared as hell, I'll tell you.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of ship were you on?

Mr. Cotner

We were on the U.S.S. General Mitchell. It was suppose to be a

converted uh, luxury liner is what it was suppose to have been.

Mr. Misenhimer

Used as a troop transport?

Mr. Cotner

Troop transport, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how many were you on there?

Mr. Cotner

Had six thousand.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what were the sleeping arrangements there?

Mr. Cotner

The bottom to the top. You got about two foot of space to sleep in.

Mr. Misenhimer

Bunks or?

Mr. Cotner

Hammocks. You slept in a hammock.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how about sea sickness – much sea sickness?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, God. Oh, yeah. Been there, done that. Yeah. Oh I was, I was sea sick for about three days is all..

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok, now let's go back to your time at this camp. Is there anything else you recall from your camp there in California – the training you took, all this?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, yeah. We shot the tail off of a Piper Cub when they were towing a target through, but other than that, I mean – caught hell for that, but other than that I mean it just...

Mr. Misenhimer

That was anti-aircraft training you did then.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Anti-aircraft.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of gun were you shooting then?

Mr. Cotner

Forty caliber.

Mr. Misenhimer

Single barrel?

Mr. Cotner

Twin 40's.

Mr. Misenhimer

Twin 40's. Alright. And you just shot up there and shot the tail off?

Mr. Cotner

Well, the man in charge said, "Lead the target, lead the target." So we did.

We shot the tail off the airplane. But other than that...

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else there?

Mr. Cotner

Oh – no, not too much.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any particular friends you made up until this point – any particular friends you'd made along the way?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah, I'd met two of them. One of them is from New Mexico – Louie Fabrino. And uh, there was one from Warsaw, one from Plymouth, and one from New York. But other than that, I mean they uh, pretty good friends – pretty good friends. I only keep in touch with one, and that's Louie Fabrino down in, he lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Mr. Misenhimer

So then you shipped out from San Diego you say?

Mr. Cotner

Yah, we went out of Diego. Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

On the General Mitchell.

Mr. Cotner

Yup. On the U.S.S. General Mitchell.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now after this typhoon, where did you finally go then?

Mr. Cotner

We went to Guam. We went to Guam because we needed repairs on the ship and they said the war had been over, so. We were there...

Mr. Misenhimer

So the war got over while you were on this ship going out there?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you hear about the war getting over there?

Mr. Cotner?

We didn't hear about it until we got there.

Mr. Misenhimer

To Guam.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any celebrations when you found out about it?

Mr. Cotner

Well, yeah. Yeah. Not too much though, I mean, uh. No – the Japanese were still on the island. They had mostly secured when we got there. But they was holed up in a church on a beach. But the Marines and the Navy guns took them out. And uh, other than that, why...

Mr. Misenhimer

So what did you do there in Guam then?

Mr. Cotner

Well, we run heavy equipment and unloaded ships – cargo, and hauled water and just tried to keep your butt out of trouble.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what rank did you have by now?

Mr. Cotner

I was a Second Class Seaman.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when you got to Guam, the war had just gotten over.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Oh, there were Japanese there when we got there. But they hunted them out in caves and stuff like that, but...

Mr. Misenhimer

I think it was up in the 70's before the last Japanese on Guam surrendered.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And where did you live in there?

Mr. Cotner

We lived in a Quonset hut. We had Quonsets there.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And how about the food there?

Mr. Cotner

Hah! Well, there was nothing to talk about, let's put it that way. We was always waiting for the Marine ships to come in so we got good food off of them, but, other than that, why just K-rations and C-rations.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what kind of an outfit were you in now – were you in a certain...

Mr. Cotner

They called it a Logistic Support Company. Done a little bit of everything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the cargo you were unloading - what all were you unloading there at that point?

Mr. Cotner

At that point - just anything that they come in on a cargo ship. Most it was food and provisions for the bases around there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there quite a few people still stationed at Guam at that point?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Yes there was. Quite a few of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they have B-29s there also, did they not?

Mr. Cotner

They had 29s, they had 24s, they had 25s, P-51s, and they had one or two P-38s up on one of the airfields.

Mr. Misenhimer

And that was the Air Force at that point?

Mr. Cotner

Yah, that was the Air Force, yah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have anything to do with them?

Mr. Cotner

No – I took a ride in a P-38, but other than that, I mean.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you? How was that?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, scary as hell!

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you arrange that?

Mr. Cotner

Just a bunch of friends we knew from the Air Force.

Mr. Misenhimer

Alright.

Mr. Cotner

We took it riding. Well you had to ride piggyback in a P-38.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah.

Mr. Cotner

In the center. But, it was quite a ride. Quite a ride.

Mr. Misenhimer

The pilot put it through its paces, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Yup – put it through its paces.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what are some other things that happened on Guam?

Mr. Cotner

Oh – had a tidal wave. Yup. Had a tidal wave. Japanese invaded our barracks a couple times. But other than that...

Mr. Misenhimer

This is after the War?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And when they invaded, what did they get or what?

Mr. Cotner

They wanted food. Wanted food.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they hurt anybody or?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, yeah. They killed a couple, they killed three in one tent, or

one Quonset building.

Mr. Misenhimer

With their knives or guns?

Mr. Cotner

Guns.

Mr. Misenhimer

So even after the war it wasn't a 100 percent safe there?

Mr. Cotner

No, you carried, you carried small arms all the time.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. They'd hole up in caves up in the mountains. Hang snakes down from the top of the cave. They'd hit you right about there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Right in the middle of the forehead, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Yep. Kill you deader than a doornail.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever go into any of the caves?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah, I've been in there. But it was already mopped up before we got there.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about some other things there?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, not, not too much that I want to talk about, I mean other than just, just everyday occurrence. Just everyday occurrence. We had to guard Japanese that were mostly unloading in the ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Japanese did, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you had quiet a few of the prisoners there, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. We guarded prisoners most of the time. Stood watch. Guarded prisoners, unloaded ships, hauled cargo, hauled water. Just odds and ends I mean. We were trained to do most anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

But at that point they were shipping out most of the people were they not?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Air Force was leaving I imagine?

Mr. Cotner

Yah, the Air Force uh, oh there was quite a few up on, uh, oh, Agana Air Port – I can't remember the name of it. There was a lot of them shipped out. There was a lot of them, that uh, went over the end out there because they couldn't get off. Yeah, we helped build some runways and some roads.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you every do any underwater demolition work?

Mr. Cotner

Nope – never did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Just that one week of training – that was it?

Mr. Cotner

Just that one one week of training. Yeah. That was enough. That was enough.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah. Where you considered to be a Seabee or anything like that?

Mr. Cotner

I was in uh, they called us Seabees but, uh, they called us the Logistic Support Company is what they called us – but we done things the Seabees did. But other than that, why, not too much.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how long where you on Guam?

Mr. Cotner

Well ever since I left the States – I was there probably a little over a year and a half.

Mr. Misenhimer

So it was up into '47 before you left?

Mr. Cotner

Latter part of '46, early part of '47.

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok. And you were there that entire time?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And did you ever get to Tinian or Saipan?

Mr. Cotner

Nope. Never did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Or any other island besides Guam?

Mr. Cotner

Nope – we seen Hawaii when we went by, but other than that, we didn't stop.

Mr. Misenhimer

Didn't stop.

Mr. Cotner

Nope – we just went by. But, other than that, there wasn't too much.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then when you left there, where did you go?

Mr. Cotner

We went to, uh, we come back into San Diego. And we got discharged in Great Lakes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Back to Great Lakes to get discharged.

Mr. Cotner

Got discharged up there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Ok. And when did you get discharged?

Mr. Cotner

Late '45. We got....Forty-six, I'm sorry. December '46 – I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And you came back home?

Mr. Cotner

Yes, came back home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Could you tell much difference in this country when you got back?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Lot of difference. A lot of difference. Things change quite a bit in that length of time.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you were gone from the States almost a year and half, then?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Almost.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now back in April of '45, President Roosevelt died. You recall hearing about that? Any reaction to it?

Mr. Cotner

That I can't tell you, Richard. I, I don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer

Would have been not to long – you probably were at Great Lakes?

Mr. Cotner

I was probably at Great Lakes, but I, I don't uh....

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And than in May of '45, Germany surrendered.

Mr. Cotner

Yup.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything....

Mr. Cotner

Nope. Nothing there – I mean it just...

Mr. Misenhimer

It didn't have any effect, or whatever.

Mr. Cotner

Nope. I guess not, I mean, we, we had our stuff to do – and that's what we done.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And when you heard about atomic bombs, what did you think about that?

Mr. Cotner

Hah! Well, we helped unload part of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, did you?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. We didn't know what it was. We didn't know what it was.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was on Guam, or where?

Mr. Cotner

Yup. We helped unload part of it. After it was all over, they told us that's what we helped unload, but we didn't know what it was.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that one of the two they used?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Well, it was just part of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah. Right.

Mr. Cotner

They come – it came in parts. Then they assembled it some place – I don't know where they assembled it at.

Mr. Misenhimer

On Tinian.

Mr. Cotner

Did they on Tinian. And uh, but other than that...

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Cotner

Wouldn't let us bring any home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. Cotner

Just one.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what was that and where?

Mr. Cotner

That was on Guam, uh, the Andrews Sisters. But I can't remember what it was about.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Cotner

No – oh, yeah. They wouldn't let me come home when my grandmother

and grandfather died, but other than that, I mean.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were on Guam at that point?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

All right. Now could you get mail when you were over there pretty regularly?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, we got mail about every two weeks. Yeah. Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And did you get paid regularly?

Mr. Cotner

No. We, we left San Diego and uh, we didn't get paid till, when was it? It was at least 3 months on Guam before we got paid.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. Did you get any ribbons or medals or anything?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, got a Good Conduct Medal and uh, Rifleman's Medal.

Mr. Misenhimer

You probably got the uh, Asiatic Pacific...

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. I got that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Right. Victory Medal.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. All that sort of stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

Standard ones. Right.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Well, let me turn to something else. What did you think about the officers you had over you?

Mr. Cotner

Everyone of them was good, except one. And he didn't make it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Didn't make it?

Mr. Cotner

Didn't make it.

Mr. Misenhimer

In what way did you mean?

Mr. Cotner

Well, he went overboard about four days out of, out of San Diego.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh. Helped a little bit, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Yup. No, we had pretty good officers. Had real good officers except that one. They'd help you out if you wanted help and that's about all you can ask.

Mr. Misenhimer

Right.

Mr. Cotner

About all you can ask. It was —

Mr. Misenhimer

They were Merchant Marine?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was real good to yuh?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. They were real good to us.

Mr. Misenhimer

And were they on the ship you were going over?

Mr. Cotner

Well, when they come into port over there, they'd always invite the boys down to either one meal a day, or something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Alright.

Mr. Cotner

And they all had good meals. They had real good meals.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK.

Mr. Cotner

But they were all the time griping because they'd been out about 3 months.

And then they'd get to go back home. But other than that, they was uh, they was the ones that gave us good food.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything funny or comical that you remember along the way?

Mr. Cotner

No, it was most generally, pretty all serious.

Mr. Misenhimer

Pretty all serious, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Pretty all serious. We only had flowing water on one end of the island. And we use to haul 5,000 gallons of water in a tanker. And they had to have guards around that all of the time, because if they didn't, hell, they'd shoot you while you was getting the water.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Japanese back in the hills?

Mr. Cotner

Oh, yeah, yeah. They'd set up there and, and pick you off I mean, but... Then they got a, they brought a two man Japanese submarine in. And that was interesting. They could launch an airplane from that. And there was only three people aboard. The deck was made out of plank. And, uh, we didn't get to see the engine room – all we got to see was, was the top, top deck of it. But there were only three people aboard.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah. A pilot and the other two, I guess?

Mr. Cotner

No, there was, there was two men and a woman.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, ok.

Mr. Cotner

One was a cook, I guess. One was a navigator, and one was a captain.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now, who was going to fly the airplane or what? Or was it going to be a kamikaze, probably?

Mr. Cotner

Kamikaze. Yeah, it –

Mr. Misenhimer

It was probably remote controlled?

Mr. Cotner

No, this one here was a piloted airplane.

Mr. Misenhimer

A piloted airplane. OK.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Yeah. A report on that but the one they brought it in over there didn't have an airplane on.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, I see.

Mr. Cotner

What they had, all on board, was, there was just three on board is all.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they on board when you brought it in?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah, they brought, yeah, they captured it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, I see. The Japanese were still on board.

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. They were still on board. But, boy... But you'd go into a cave, and it was dark, and they just hang them down. And those little coral snakes about like that –

Mr. Misenhimer

About 18 inches long?

Mr. Cotner

About 18 inches - 20 inches long.

Mr. Misenhimer

Coral snakes, huh?

Mr. Cotner

Coral snakes. And they're deadly.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you know of some people that got killed with them?

Mr. Cotner

There was some in our company that got killed, but I don't know their names.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, but I mean there was some in your company that did?

Mr. Cotner

Yeah. Yeah. Yup. Yup. Oh, they used flame throwers and machine guns to clear it out with.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah. Yeah.

Mr. Cotner

We had, had spiders, and that... salamanders – I call them. They change colors, sneak in your bed, and –

Mr. Misenhimer

Chameleons?

Mr. Cotner

Chameleons, whatever you call it. Cold, Jesus Crimeny . You'd have to undo your bed every night before you got into it.

Mr. Misenhimer

What, what kind of spiders did you have?

Mr. Cotner

Uh, can't remember the name of them, but they, probably about like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Three inches across?

Mr. Cotner

About something like that, yeah. And they wouldn't, they wouldn't kill you, but boy, they'd make you sick. They'd make you sick.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now were they in the trees or on the ground?

Mr. Cotner

On the ground and in the trees and they'd get in your tents - And in your clothes, and, ah it, uh, But them little salamanders, they wouldn't hurt nobody. But, Jesus. They're cold and ahhh.

Mr. Misenhimer

Didn't like them in bed with you.

Mr. Cotner

No - I don't like them in bed with me, no. No.

We were getting ready to go over seas, and they issued us winter clothes.

And we thought oh, well hell, we was going up to Alaska. We got uh, we

got aboard ship and out at sea, and we was headed to . . . they told us we was headed to the invasion of Japan. And then we uh, they changed all of our clothes. Oh, jiminy. Oh, well.

Mr. Misenhimer

One of them things.

Mr. Cotner

Yup. Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

This is the end of this tape.

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