



**Center for Pacific War Studies  
Oral History Program**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**James F. Young**

**United States Marine Corps**

**Date of Interview: October 25, 2003**

**National Museum of the Pacific War  
Fredericksburg, Texas**

**Interview with  
Mr. James F. Young**

**Mr. Metzler:** This is Ed Metzler. Today is October 25, 2003. I am interviewing Mr. James Young, who was in H Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, First Marines. This interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

Mr. Young, let me thank you first for spending the time with us today to share your experiences with us. Would you start by telling us when and where you were born and a little bit about your family life before you went into the service. Then we will want to hear your experiences.

\*\*\*\*\*

(At this point, approximately 12 minutes of the tape was taped over with the last 12 minutes of the interview.)

\*\*\*\*\*

**Mr. Young:** The sergeant set up a schedule for each man, to have a shot at how fast he could be the mortar gunner. That was the guy who took charge really and set it up and worked the sights. We had to set that up the fastest. Those guys were going to become the gunners on the four guns in the battery. So we had done all that, back

and forth, running and everything. We were being timed. Actually I was the fastest. I'm not bragging when I say that I happened to be the fastest. Then the next three fastest guys, two of them were my good buddies too. It was working out good. So we ended up being gunners right away. So it was only a matter of two or three months we were officially made corporals. So anyway that's how the battery started. We were to be the gun leaders and so forth. The Parris Island training was an awful lot of grenade throwing. Actually it wasn't as physical as it is now. When I look at those boys now, I figure we had it pretty easy. I don't know what you call it, judo, we learned that kind of stuff, but when you weigh 118 pounds, you are the one getting the worst of it. They'd bounce us around like a rubber ball. That was interesting. Then we got on to throwing the hand grenades. I had been injured as a child. I was hit by a car. I was on a bicycle and I had my right arm almost torn off. See this here?

**Mr. Metzler:** Oh, yes. Big scar on your right arm!

**Mr. Young:** In fact, the doctor examining me spotted that. He said, "What's this?" I told him and he said to me, "Do you have the use of the arm?" I said, "Yeah." He said "Lift that butt can." It was full of sand.

**Mr. Metzler:** Heavy.

**Mr. Young:** Well that was right down my alley, because the hospital had given me physical therapy to build up my arm, picking heavy things and using them little bowling balls, duck pin balls. Anyhow the doctor said "OK, I'll let you in." Now getting back to the hand grenade range where we finally had some grenade practice. You had to throw the grenade through a simulated window. When it came to my turn, I knew I couldn't throw it. There was no way I could throw it. I actually threw like

a woman. So I thought, “Man, what am I going to do?” So I just underhanded it – threw it like a bowling ball and put it right through there.

**Mr. Metzler:** Right.

**Mr. Young:** After about the fourth time, the sergeant finally says “How in the hell are you throwing that? You can’t do that. You’ve got to throw it like this--overhand.” I said, “I can’t. My arm is stiff.” He said, “How in the hell did you get in here?” I said, “They tested me and I also lied a little bit.” So he said, “I’m going to have to report you to the captain.” I said, “Please don’t do that. What’s the difference if I get that through there as good as they’re doing that?” So he said “OK” and he made me do it a few more times. He says “OK.” I almost got kicked out of the Marine Corps.

I don’t know what else you’d like me to elaborate on. Boot camp – I can tell you one embarrassing thing that happened. It was kind of interesting and people might think it’s a little funny. I got off the train in Philadelphia and there was a big sergeant there to meet us. My name is James F. Young, but I had a stepfather from when I was very young. He would not let me use the name “Young.” He wanted me to use his name which was “Wolfe.” James Wolfe. So here we are off the train all along the railroad siding getting this roll call. He comes to me and he calls “James Wolfe” and no one’s saying anything. Finally one of the buddies I was telling you about hit me with his arm and said “Didn’t you tell me your name was James Young?” I said, “Yeah.” “Oh my God.” I put my hand up. “Here!” He says “Man, we’ve certainly got a dumb ass here. Doesn’t even know his own name.” I thought “What a way to start this thing off.” Anyhow I tried to explain

to him but he really wasn't going to be our drill instructor anyway. I don't know who he was. So that's how I got to Parris Island. Of course we went through the regular training like everybody else does. We got sent to New River, North Carolina and joined this unit which became H Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> Battalion, First Regiment, First Marine Division. We had a sergeant there and his name was Benson. Benson was our sergeant and I guess we were there about a week. One day, this sergeant Benson comes in and gives us his orders for the day and so forth. When he left there, he went over into his own quonset hut and about an hour later, we heard all this laughing and high voices and here it was, the NCOs were having a little party in there. I don't know, somebody must have got a bottle or something. We all tuned in. But after a while, here comes our sergeant back over to our quonset hut, and he has lieutenant bars on his sergeant's jacket. He's getting a little juiced up and the other guy with him said "Benson just got promoted to lieutenant. I want you boys all to know that." We said "All right!" Off the guys go. As we found out the next morning, Benson was picked up by the MPs. He went into town with the boys and forgot to take those bars off his enlisted man's uniform. So he almost got busted the first night. Anyhow he became our commanding officer and rose to the rank of Major upon retirement. My wife met him and we knew him very well. He just passed away, I think two or three years ago. He was a real Marine, a poster Marine. Anyhow, he was in charge of our unit. So one weekend, we came back from what we call an overnight, 24 hours, 48-hour pass. We all got called together and we were told "This is it." That's the way it was put—"This is it. There'll be no phone calls." And they said "Be ready to move out by tomorrow morning. The sergeant told us, "Nobody goes, no phones or anything." It was kind

of hard, because nobody would know, like your parents or your girlfriend and so forth. Next morning, we were packed and lined up along a spur railroad and got on this pullman and off we went to San Francisco. It's interesting. There we boarded one of the President's lines--a big liner. Boy what a beautiful ship. We were on there I think it was one day. Then we got ordered off and they marched us down the pier to something that looked like a little scow to me, the GEORGE F. ELLIOTT, a troop ship, and we got put on that.

**Mr. Metzler:** Quite a step down.

**Mr. Young:** Yes, it was a step down. I don't believe the bunks were...they might have been a foot apart, no more than 16 inches apart.

**Mr. Metzler:** Clearance between the upper and lower.

**Mr. Young:** Yes, if you put your knees up, you hit the other guy—bam! Just like that. They were stacked eight high.

**Mr. Metzler:** Eight high?

**Mr. Young:** Yes, as I recall now. I hope I'm not exaggerating. Anyhow, we pulled out of San Francisco. There's Alcatraz. That was very fascinating. I had only seen it in movies. We went under the Golden Gate. It was absolutely a beautiful sight to see especially from down, looking up at that massive thing. I think we had just gone under that, I started swallowing. "What's going on?" I knew I was getting seasick. The next thing, I see some guys on the rail above me and they're hanging over there and throwing up. I knew what it was and I got violently ill. There were seven of us on that ship that got what they call chronic seasickness. I was sick every single day for eighteen days. I only ate what some of my buddies would bring down to me, a little broth or something like that. When we got to Wellington,

New Zealand, the skipper said “You guys will be sent back to the United States with chronic seasick cases.” Not one of us would go. We said we won’t go. We said we refuse to go. He said “Well it’s up to you guys. Something like this could kill you if you keep going. You could dehydrate. You guys didn’t have any weight to begin with and look at you now.” But he said “OK, give it a try.” Do you know, I never got seasick a day since then. I’d even been in a couple of typhoons and severe weather and never got seasick.

**Mr. Metzler:** Isn’t that amazing.

**Mr. Young:** So that was great.

**Mr. Metzler:** You just needed to be scared a little bit, I guess.

**Mr. Young:** Yes, something like that. When we arrived there at Wellington, New Zealand, we were supposedly there to learn combat training. Well we never got that because the orders were all changed. Of course, we didn’t know that at that time. So the ships were unloaded and then combat loaded, we called it, loaded with ammo and everything they needed to put on there. What we unloaded was food stores and everything for the camp we were going to. Anyway, we were there ten days, eight or ten days. There was a stevedores’ fight going on with the New Zealanders and there was a little fisticuffs every now and then because they were standing around having their tea and all that stuff and we were working. We had to do the bulk of the loading and unloading.

**Mr. Metzler:** While they were sitting around having tea.

**Mr. Young:** Right. So we finally got things organized and we left there for, we didn’t know where. We were at sea I don’t know how many days and finally the speakers went on. It was the Colonel on the speaker at this time. He was saying we’re going to

have maneuvers off of Fiji, the island of Fiji. Well, I'm telling you, if you saw those maneuvers, what a fiasco! It was terrible! Guys got hurt...broken arm and leg. We didn't know what we were doing. We'd never been down the side of a ship before on the big nets and if the waves are going and you go to step in the boat and it's way down there, the next thing you know it's coming up. You try to scurry back up and then down. Guys are stepping on your hands. We didn't know enough to grab the down rope. We were making like a little ladder and the guy above you would come down and step on your hand, but even so, if you hit the side, then you'd get your knuckles bumped, but it was better than getting those guys on your hands with the big shoes and stuff like that. The landing went terrible and the General, I guess, called the whole thing off because they even lost some of the Higgins boats...tore them up on the coral reefs. So we never did get ashore on Fiji. I can always say I was "at" Fiji but not ashore. Then we continued on. We were at sea, I don't know how long. It was the night of August 6, no it was the night before, probably the 5<sup>th</sup> of August when the General passed the word. We were heading for a place called Guadalcanal. We didn't have any idea what it was, of course. Everybody got kind of hyper and all excited. Believe it or not, we wanted to go. We wanted to get at these guys. We really did. We were young and they had done something terrible to our country. Anyhow they gave us that word. Then the morning of August 7, they woke us up around 4 o'clock in the morning. But first let me tell you, the day before on the horizon we started to see all these superstructures coming up on the horizon. It was a sight. We didn't know if they were Japanese or not but we weren't real concerned because we really didn't know what was going on. Here it was a large piece of the fleet to escort us. It was so



interesting. We were so excited wanting to see this thing start. So at 4 o'clock in the morning they got us up and got us all set. We got ready alert. Our positions at the rail were pointed out to us. Then I think it was around 4:00, between 4:00 and 5:00, they served us steak and eggs.

**Mr. Metzler:** The "Last Supper."

**Mr. Young:** Yeah you might say that. Anyhow we had the steaks and as soon as we were done eating, we ran topside to see what's going on. Finally the Navy opened up. Still we could not see the shore. Anyhow they opened up and that's the first time we ever heard gunfire like that. To us it was just absolutely awesome, especially broadside, with battleships and stuff like that. So the time came, I think it was 8:00, to go over the side down those nets. We had one boy, name was Jontiff from Baltimore. He was a loan shark, he always had money. If we were broke, we always went to Jontiff. He was a Jewish boy and a real nice boy, a real nice guy, but Jontiff was a heavy guy. He was one of the first ones down there and he stepped in to hold the landing nets. He got the nettings away from the side of the ship to hold it in between the ship and the landing craft. Somehow or other the communication men were set up in the boat with these coils of wire and they were big metal things. One long coil came down and hit Jontiff's hand and smashed it against the boat itself. So they had to get a basket down there and haul Jontiff back up. So they hauled him back up. So off we went to the great battle of Guadalcanal. The only injury my outfit had was a guy cut his hand, thumb I think it was, opening a coconut. We didn't see no Japs. I didn't hear gunfire. Every once in a while, you'd hear a bang! bang! They thought it was somebody that was itchy. Anyway it was a "walk-in," what I call a walk-in, no problem whatsoever.

**Mr. Metzler:** No resistance?

**Mr. Young:** No resistance, none whatsoever. So I guess it was that night...if you were at the meeting today, you might have heard about the Japanese torpedo planes coming in, but he neglected to mention Jontiff was also on that ship. Jontiff was in the sick bay and they managed to get him out of there.

**Mr. Metzler:** The guy with the smashed hand. The loan shark.

**Mr. Young:** So they were all taken care of. I don't know where they went. They went to a place at that time was called the "White Poppy" I think it was. The wounded boy, with the crushed hand.

**Mr. Metzler:** Is that a place on shore or another island?

**Mr. Young:** I thought it was called White Poppy. I think it was New Zealand where they went. I know some of the wounded were going to New Zealand when they could get there. They'd try to fly them out in the big pontoon planes in those days, seaplanes, the kind used to ferry people out there. They'd sneak in and take them out on destroyers that would make a run in, every now and then, and take them out and also subs took some out, but we never really knew where our wounded were going. Anyhow our unit that you met today, we were ordered to strike out for what they called Mount Austin, real high. I didn't call it a mountain but it was a very high hill. We struck out for that and we were in heat that we'd never been in before. The temperature was unbelievable. It was terrible. We'd walk and walk and walk and walk. The front guy would take turns switching with others because they had to use these big machetes hacking the way through the jungle. I often thought to myself if it's that hard for us to go this way, what are we worrying about them coming through this for? Then we had people running out of water. It's getting

toward evening and we're very short of water, so the Captain of our company sent scouts out to see if they could find water. So they did find some scroungy pool that was completely covered with slime. So they'd take the canteens to that swamp and brought it back and the corpsmen had some pills that they could drop in there. At least it was water. So that's what we had that first night. The night was miserable. You just plopped down right where you were. Every time you'd lay down, there'd be a vine or something sticking in your back. It was just really an awful night. Then there was fighting at sea. You could see the flashes out in the water. The next morning we were ordered back, back to the division again, so we got that walk coming back. But before we started that morning, we heard voices coming toward us and they said "Everybody out of the way. Two corpsmen are coming. They've got an officer that's been bitten by a scorpion." He had been bitten in the face. I've never seen anything like his eyes. You could not see any trace of eyes, just a crease and a bunch of flesh. He was blind. He didn't go blind, don't misunderstand. He eyes swelled shut.

**Mr. Metzler:** Totally shut.

**Mr. Young:** Completely shut. So they had to lead him the whole way so they wanted him up in front. Other than that, it was uneventful on the way back to the beach. Then we got settled in a small area, in a coconut grove, just at the edge of a coconut grove and we could see the ocean. We had an elderly gunnery sergeant. In fact he was the oldest man that I had noticed in the Marine Corps. I'd venture to say he was around 50. Gunny Dixon his name was and what a nice guy he was--Master Gunnery Sergeant. Anyhow he told us to dig in, dig foxholes. So we dug in, all lined up. Each guy that laid down, his buddy would say "Can you see me now?"

“No, I think that’s deep enough.” That gunnery sergeant came back and says “What is this? You call them foxholes? I guarantee you within the next few days, you’re going to have them where you can stand in them.” And we did, because there wasn’t one single day at Guadalcanal that we weren’t bombed, shelled, strafed. Every single day! Every day, weather permitting as far as the air raids, but if that didn’t work, a Jap cruiser would be out there, or a Jap sub, or a Jap destroyer. Everything was calm other than that. That was the only fighting that was occurring there. Then August the 21<sup>st</sup> was when all heck broke loose. It was the Tenaru River. It started off, we could hear a couple of shots—bing, bang, and another one. The crescendo just picked up until everything was going. We got our mortar battery up and that was the first and only time we fired, I would say, visual. Usually we had made pits and sandbags. We fired right from between the coconut trees, right from the ground, just like you were standing out here. At first, Lieutenant Benson, who I mentioned before, he asked me “Do you think we can clear the coconut trees?” It was pretty tough. I said “It looks like we can get through there.” He said, “Well, you fire yours first.” So I got the range and everything and let that first round go and we clipped a palm leaf right off--kind of leaning down like that. That’s the last time we hit one. He said, “Well, we got through there. That’s important.” We got the opportunity of seeing what’s happening. We could see these shells hitting. Meantime we’d be getting incoming, but luckily those were short. In fact they didn’t clear the trees.

**Mr. Metzler:** Maybe a hundred feet either way.

**Mr. Young:** Yeah and by the time the shrapnel got there, it was kind of spent.

**Mr. Metzler:** Now this was coming from offshore or this was coming from onshore?

**Mr. Young:** This was coming from onshore because these Japs were onshore and they came from this Tenaru River but it wasn't all that wide, not wider than that driveway. It didn't flow into the ocean except at high tide. There was a big sand spit there. So we had two thirty-seven millimeter cannons there loaded with canister shot, like gigantic shotguns. Well they took care of that point pretty good. They finally did get knocked out, but they got knocked out very late. The rest of the guys were pouring across, trying to come across the water. They'd get in the water. It was a dark night. It was a cloudy night but as soon as the clouds were over the moon, it got real dark. What the Japs were doing, they were throwing coconuts in the water too. If there was a Japanese helmet and a coconut floating, it was going to look identical. So you didn't know which was which. It was loaded with coconuts, so if you hit a coconut, the coconut would skip. It would skip in the water. But if it was a Jap, of course, they would sink. I remember one burst we put over there. About three rounds were in the air at the same time and when they came down and hit the ground, there were two or three Japs just jumped up. You could see them jump up and they were balls of fire. Their clothes were on fire and they were running right for the sea to try to put themselves out. It's not fun, I'll tell you that. There's nothing funny about it. It makes you feel bad. Well to me, it made me feel bad. When this was over and we walked among them, you would not believe how they were stacked up. Some of them were stacked up, I'd say as high as this window. High as that, right up over each other. It seemed such a useless thing. Why in the world would they keep charging? "We can't go through here. We gotta do something else." That's what we'd do if we ran up against things like that. You've got to stop and figure it out. It was a terrible sight to see. When some of the guys

found wounded, then the wounded tried to kill them. They'd be laying there wounded with a grenade all ready to go. Soon as they'd turn them over, boom! The officer, I don't know which officer, gave the order to shoot any Jap that moved.

**Mr. Metzler:** Just to make sure.

**Mr. Young:** Just to make sure. He said "We can't have that," them killing our men that way. Then, of course, some of us went through their pockets. On some you would find pictures of their wives and children. This made me feel very sad.

**Mr. Metzler:** Family.

**Mr. Young:** Yep, same thing. Interesting. Another point of view, they were doing the right thing. Is there anything else you'd like to hear about?

**Mr. Metzler:** Just whatever comes to mind. Well did you finally cross the river?

**Mr. Young:** They cross the river. We didn't want to cross the river.

**Mr. Metzler:** OK. You were defending—they were crossing.

**Mr. Young:** Yes, we put our defense lines out every night—never in the same place. Just a freak thing that we had them there that night. So that's one thing that saved us on that one or they'd have got through. I tried to get my things in order.

**Mr. Metzler:** So how long were you on Guadalcanal, you and your unit?

**Mr. Young:** August 7<sup>th</sup> through December, about four months.

**Mr. Metzler:** Guadalcanal campaign was very long.

**Mr. Young:** It was very long and like I said, every day was hot and we slept on the ground for eighty-some days. We didn't have tents. We had shelter halves, things that snapped together.

**Mr. Metzler:** Were you cut off from the outside world or were you able to receive mail?

**Mr. Young:** It was about two months before our first mail call. What had happened, I think it was the 2<sup>nd</sup> night of the invasion, a large force of the Jap fleet came down from Rabaul, from the island of New Britain, and they snuck in. I believe that we had pickets, destroyers on patrol. As I understand, Japs got in among the portion of the fleet that we had. I don't know how many transports were out there and they just threw on spotlights right on our ships. Some sailors told me that their officers became confused about who was who.

**Mr. Metzler:** Searchlights.

**Mr. Young:** The Japanese had these searchlights on and they had everybody targeted. Took 'em right out and they really raced into it. Then maybe a sub opened up and they were shooting each other also. It was utter carnage out there.

**Mr. Metzler:** A free-for-all.

**Mr. Young:** Free-for-all is what it was and the Japs were the only ones that were winning. They were actually pitting warships against each other. That's when we lost four cruisers. I think I can name them too: the VINCENNES, the ASTORIA, the Australian CANBERRA, the QUINCY. One of these was an Australian ship. The next day, the Admiral, I forget what his name was, was afraid of losing that portion of the fleet and losing his transports when he ordered the fleet out. We only had 1/3 of our supplies off. That's all. So what happened was we had virtually no food and clothes. Also we had unloaded only 1/3 of our ammo.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you were short on supplies.

**Mr. Young:** The whole time there, it was the same clothes.

**Mr. Metzler:** Boy!

**Mr. Young:** The Navy, they had to run out though. At that time, we said they run out on us. I realize now after the war was over and I read exactly what was going on, I can understand their point. The Navy had taken such a beating at Pearl Harbor, they could not afford another one like it or we'd have been gone too.

**Mr. Metzler:** You were kind of stranded.

**Mr. Young:** We were really stranded anyway, but we ended up eating Japanese rice and oats. That was pretty good, but the bags were all full of weevils. We found out if you threw a handful out into a cup, those things would float to the top, then you'd scoop 'em off and cook them. So we had Japanese rice and oats for breakfast, and oats and rice—we'd just reverse it—for dinner. It went on like that for quite a while. Things picked up a little bit when they snuck in a bunch of seabees. They had food that came with them. We managed to pilfer some goodies from them. In fact, one guy in our unit, there was a line of trucks going to this ship and he snuck into line. He was an ex-farm boy from Lancaster County. In fact he left Lancaster when I did, to go to Philadelphia to go down to the train. He knew how to run tractors, so he got hold of this tractor. It was a Japanese tractor. He got that thing going in nothing flat, hooked a wagon on the back and he got in the line with the guys going for supplies. As soon as he got his supplies, he just pulled out of the line as they were going by the coconut grove and came over to our place. He had cases of pineapples, sliced pineapple...oh man, delicious. Finally it was I guess 24 hours later and the Captain came over, I mean Lieutenant Benson, our skipper at that time and he says—he knew we got it because he wanted some too—"Bury that stuff! Get it buried." So we were out there trying to bury it. We didn't get it all buried.



So we lived high on the hog there for a while. Otherwise it was still rice and oats and we still had these k-rations in wax boxes. They were boxes coated in wax.

**Mr. Metzler:** Keep them waterproof.

**Mr. Young:** Yeah, waterproof. They had a hunk of chocolate in there, a real big hunk of chocolate. Didn't taste too good at all, but it was better than nothing to eat. We could put it in a pan or a cup and we'd eat it like that. That's the way we got our hot chocolate. We made hot chocolate like that and the other little goodie that we had was a couple of lime trees right there. Did you ever try lime juice with no sugar?

**Mr. Metzler:** I'll bet it's bitter.

**Mr. Young:** It tastes terrible.

**Mr. Metzler:** But you didn't get rickets or anything because you had your vitamin C. Did you or any of the others encounter malaria or any of the tropical diseases, dengue fever?

**Mr. Young:** Malaria, dysentery, dengue fever, elephantitis, but fortunately I never had any of that. I would say of our unit, 75% of them got malaria and dysentery and you would not have believed some of them boys with dysentery, crapping in their pants all the time. They couldn't make it to the head.

**Mr. Metzler:** Serious dehydration.

**Mr. Young:** Oh yeah, and losing weight. Big guys, some of them lost 40-50-60 pounds. They got dysentery.

**Mr. Metzler:** Did they ship them back?

**Mr. Young:** They couldn't ship anybody anywhere!

**Mr. Metzler:** That's right.

**Mr. Young:** They couldn't get in to get anybody out. They were just treated with what the doctors had on shore. They finally got what they call atabrine, I think it was, atabrine and quinine for malaria. I think the atabrine was yellow, a real yellow pill and the rumor got around that it would make you sterile if you took it. So a lot of guys wouldn't take it. So they'd finally have a corpsman there and the captain or the lieutenant, whichever was the commanding officer at the time, at the end of the chow line, where you picked up your chow. In other words, you've got your hands full with the hot coffee here and you've got the lid on your canteen full of rice and oats. Then the corpsman at the end of the line said "open your mouth" and wham! They threw that in there and then he'd said "swallow it" and look at your mouth to make sure it went down.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you swallowed it.

**Mr. Young:** So you swallowed it.

**Mr. Metzler:** Were there any supplies coming in by air drops or anything like that?

**Mr. Young:** They did. They snuck them in on destroyers mainly, which brings me to one of the worst things that happened to me--I developed hemorrhoids, OK? I didn't even know what they were. I never had such a thing before. I knew something wasn't right. I could hardly move around. I just sat whenever I could a little bit. Then orders came over I was to take, I was a corporal at the time, I was to take a working party down to the beach to help unload the destroyer so we could get it unloaded and out of there fast. I think it was about 15 that were going to go down and I was the corporal in charge. So I called the corpsman and said "I can't take that work patrol. There's something going on with my rear end." "Well, drop your pants" he said, "I'll take a look." He said, "Oh no, you can't go. It looks like you have a

bunch of grapes on your rear end.” So he called Lieutenant Benson and says “Young can’t take that working party.” He says “Why? He’s not goofing off, is he?” “Oh no, he’s not goofing off.” So he says, “Give it to Cliff Barter,” the other corporal. So at that time, I was lucky enough to have a forty-five I was wearing when I was working which makes it easier than with a rifle. So Barter asks me “How about letting me use your forty-five to take that working party?” I said “Sure.” So anyhow he took the working party and they no more than got down there and started to work when a surprise raid came in. The drivers that took them down with the truck had them all pile in the truck because there were no foxholes where they were at and they were going to try to make a run back. They got halfway back when the bombers got right over the top so they all piled out of the truck and all of them dropped in one bomb crater. A bomb went right in there. Took out all but, I believe, two or three of them. One was a sixteen-year-old boy. He’s the one that came running into camp saying “They’re all dead! They’re all dead!” He was going berserk, you know.

**Mr. Metzler:** Sure.

**Mr. Young:** The lieutenant and sarge went down there and made sure almost all were dead and part of them were still alive. Cliff was hurt very badly. He had a huge piece of shrapnel, I mean a hunk about like that, went through right here at his ribcage and was sticking out the other side but it hadn’t broken the skin. It was just turning purple, the skin was turning purple with that big piece of shrapnel and all that he was hollering for was water. So the corpsman says “Give him whatever he wants.” So he died while we were there. The lieutenant told me to get there and get the forty-five off of him. I always felt like that was all my fault.

**Mr. Metzler:** Well fate does strange things. You're certainly not the first veteran that's told me a similar story-- you know, "something happened and then I wasn't on that detail and they got hit and I feel guilty." That's really not true, I don't think. Anyway, go ahead.

**Mr. Young:** The worst night, I think, at Guadalcanal was around October 18 when several Japanese battlewagons came in. I was on watch with another corporal, Howard Brown, from Bangor, Maine. He and I were on watch. We were looking toward the sea. We could see through the coconut trees. We'd sit there shooting the bull for usually four hours and all of a sudden, we saw these flashes like that. I don't whether he said it or I said "It looks like a thunderstorm moving in." That's what we thought and just shortly after we said that, we heard this tremendous noise. This to me is indescribable. I just really can't describe this screaming screech as something that sounded as large as a train or a freight car going right by your head. Of course we realized what was going on then. The explosion was absolutely horrendous. We didn't have to let out a warning. We were going to holler "condition red." That was what we always hollered when something was going to happen. We all ran to foxholes. We had one foxhole that held about ten of us and that's the one I went in, the closest one. So in there we lit some candles and this thing was going on for hours. Some guys were like this. Everybody was trying to be brave and stuff like that, but it's getting to you. Then you figure, one shell is going to be in here anytime and we're all going to be gone. It went on and on like that. Guys were smoking down there. I never smoked or drank at all. I said to a buddy from Pennsylvania, he was smoking a pipe, and I said "Is that good for your nerves?" He said "sure" and he gave me a couple of drags on it. He said, "Do you

want a cigarette?" "Well I never smoked." He said "take this cigarette" and that's how I started to smoke. I got a little bit sick from that.

**Mr. Metzler:** Yeah, first time.

**Mr. Young:** I just felt real bad. But fortunately we survived that time. Our unit survived because most of that would be about from here to maybe the other side of the motel up there. From there on down was where most of these huge things were hitting. You can imagine how loud they were. They weren't even actually hitting on us, but we thought they were because the dirt would fall in your foxhole. That's when things looked very grim the next day. All our airplanes that we had at that time were airplanes that Admiral Nimitz had managed to scrape up. I had seen Admiral Nimitz twice.

**Mr. Metzler:** Had you really?

**Mr. Young:** Oh yeah and I saw Halsey, Bull Halsey too. Anyhow, Admiral Nimitz was a friend of General Alexander Vandegrift, which was our commanding general. As we found out later, he said "Archie, I'm going to get you airplanes in here, if I have to pull them off my carriers." It wasn't a whole bunch, about like a half a dozen or something like that and he got those planes in to us, but they were wiped out.

**Mr. Metzler:** By this shelling?

**Mr. Young:** Yeah, fuel dumps, everything. Everything went up that night, all the fire. So there we were helpless and then the word spreads around, trucks are picking us up. Trucks picked us up and on the truck, they said "We're going down to the opposite end of the airstrip to the hills there. We think there's going to be a big Japanese attack because there's four transports out there. We can see them with binoculars, soldiers coming down over the side there."

**Mr. Metzler:** Japanese transports.

**Mr. Young:** They were landing there. So we got on the trucks and on the way down across the airstrip on these trucks, we got strafed by these Japanese airplanes. I jumped off the truck and my helmet came off and a piece of shrapnel hit me on top of the head. I grabbed my helmet and put it back on. When this was all over, I took my helmet off and some blood ran down my face. I said something to the corpsman and he threw some sulfur powder on it. It's just a small thing but it's better than getting your head blown off.

**Mr. Metzler:** Yes.

**Mr. Young:** Anyhow we went down to the opposite end there and they got more planes in just in time while the Jap ships were still there. They weren't completely unloaded yet. These planes were able to play havoc with those transports and they destroyed them all. The Japanese beached two of them and you could see Japs falling off of them like ants. But we knew it would take about four or five days or a week for them to get through the jungle. We knew what the jungle was like. That's another way the Japs made mistakes--trying to fight their way through that jungle and they expected to be in shape to attack? Then they'd start charging our lines at night and end up being piled up by the hundreds in front of our wire.

**Mr. Metzler:** What about snipers? Did you have sniper fire?

**Mr. Young:** Occasionally. We weren't bothered too much by snipers. So like I say, other than the bombing, strafing and shellings, we lucked out pretty good from there on out. We finally left there in December and proceeded to Melbourne, Australia. The people had come to watch us coming off the ship. The word had got around that the Marines had saved Australia. They always called us the "saviors of Australia."

**Mr. Metzler:** Really.

**Mr. Young:** Yeah, and a lot of them wanted to cheer us and stuff, but some of the guys, if you'll pardon the expression, their testicles and stuff were hanging out from their worn-out clothes.

**Mr. Metzler:** They were that tattered.

**Mr. Young:** Some of our pants were completely gone, just like a little bikini-type thing. So they hustled us off fast and got us all in trucks.

**Mr. Metzler:** Got you out of there.

**Mr. Young:** Got us out of there quick. Then of all the luck, I told you about all of our battalion's supplies going down with the GEORGE F. ELLIOTT. We were the only unit that didn't have any uniforms, so we had to stay where we were in the Melbourne cricket ground for, I guess it was, two weeks while the other outfits were going around the city having a ball. Oh we were going berserk. So this is once the United States Army came through and sent us clothes. So, let me see, I have to show you this. I'm not sure if you ever saw a Marine in this type of clothing (papers rustling). I hope they're in here. Probably not. My wife says I'm the most unorganized man you've ever seen. So we'll see. I'm trying. The other Marines would go "arf, arf." Doggies they were calling us.

**Mr. Metzler:** Right, because you were dressed in army uniforms because you didn't have replacement Marine uniforms because your transport ship had gone down.

**Mr. Young:** There. That's the way we looked.

**Mr. Metzler:** You look better than you did with bikinis on, right?

**Mr. Young:** Yeah with no clothes. I forgot to tell you, you had someone over your head all night long too, with the airplanes. "Washing Machine Charlie" that's what we

called them because they had the oddest engine on that thing. I don't know what type of plane it was, no idea. It had one bomb, that's all he had on there. They'd circle up there, I don't know how long, it's like maybe an hour, two hours, as long as his fuel would hold out, just to keep everybody awake. Then it'd be over and you'd think "oh he's gone," then 'nyin-nyin-nyin-nyin', he'd be right over the top of you again, but you'd be surprised, after a month of that, you started to get used to it. You could just go to sleep and kind of forget it.

**Mr. Metzler:** Sleep through anything.

**Mr. Young:** That's the way that went.

**Mr. Metzler:** So you left Guadalcanal and you went to Melbourne.

**Mr. Young:** In between we went to smaller islands in preparation for boarding the ships but I don't think that's important.

**Mr. Metzler:** So how long were you in Melbourne?

**Mr. Young:** I believe it was almost nine months.

**Mr. Metzler:** Nine months!

**Mr. Young:** Oh we were in bad shape. Their hospital was sort of run by the military. There were plenty of us in there. We even had our own men, the good and the bad. No matter what unit you were in, there were some bad people. We had some bad Marines. There was one that raped a girl, I think, and he tried to kill her too. Guys like that. We had some rape cases. Then I got duty at the hospital which was very interesting and you know Marines, they're always finding a way to make things easier. So we were supposed to do four on and eight off on guard duty, but we worked it out where one guy would take like twelve hours. Three shifts and it gives you days off in between. So everything was fine. That was interesting. But



it was a little hairy when I had to take this one murderer down from the fifth floor, down to wherever the operating rooms were. He was being sent down there for evaluations of some sort. So it was kind of tough to march him down the hallway there. They still had civilians in this hospital too and you had to tell civilians “please move aside” and empty the elevators and things like that, sort of push them back and let them go to one corner when I’d step in and so forth. You never let him out first because he’d be gone like a shot. So that was always interesting, trying to get him down there and back. This guy was there and he hurt one of the Marines badly when he shoved a tray into in a cell with his food. He caught the guy’s hand and tried to break his arm. He just hated everybody.

**Mr. Metzler:** A few bad apples.

**Mr. Young:** Finally after two or three months, things started to straighten out. The guys started getting in pretty good shape again coming out of the hospital. The units were re-formed and receiving stateside replacements and we started training. We got back into shape. We had a very nice colonel. I can’t remember his name. He wasn’t with us long. He was Puerto Rican. Anyhow we had a sixty-mile hike, no I think it was about seventy miles, thirty-five miles a day, I think we made. But you were moving. You stopped to do your thing, then you were moving. That man stayed with us the whole way. I saw his feet one time when I walked by. He was sitting and looking at his feet. He had big blisters all over them. We had blisters on ours too but there’s always this competition between other units. All the units in the Marine division were doing this at different times. Whoever had the fastest time was the best unit.

**Mr. Metzler:** Right.

**Mr. Young:** I don't know where we came in on this day, but we had pretty good time. Then shortly down the road in Australia, we became under the United States Army. The army was in charge of us, General something, I don't know—one of MacArthur's generals. Anyway an army general was going to be in charge of our next campaign. We didn't know what it was. This was another shocker when we left Melbourne. It was the same thing that happened when we left the United States. All of a sudden, it was like a lock-in. Nobody knows. We're moving out. Packed everything up and this move was real fast. I think they got the word about 7:00 in the morning and by noon that whole division was on the move. Some of us were stationed in Melbourne. I was stationed in Melbourne, in the Melbourne Cricket Ground. So just like that, the division was like a serpent going through Melbourne city. Up and down these streets. They were trying to keep in the low-key neighborhoods. Some units were meeting the others coming from different directions in this long straight line. Next thing you'd start to see all these women, and some men but mainly women. The sidewalks were just lined with them, some screaming and hollering. They had boyfriends and some of them had already gotten married. Like one of our guys, he was one of the KIAs. He had married a very nice lady. All of a sudden, I don't know where we were, but getting close to the docks, we heard her screaming and she comes running and she's grabbing him. Lieutenant Benson told him, he says "Go ahead, Marty. Get out of line, but catch up to us." So he let Marty go over and give his wife a hug or two. Dang if he didn't get killed. Just about a month later he was gone. That was Cape Gloucester. That was the "Green Hell" we ended up calling it. It was jungle and tremendous rainfalls. Monsoon season. Gee, sometimes your wallet would fall apart.

Sometimes the seams of your shoes would rot away. At least there we got what they called hammocks with overhead cover. You know how they tie a hammock. You could tie this part with the roof of it up like that and you had mosquito netting all the way down. You'd zip that down and you'd crawl in. But that didn't pan out too well either because we had heavy rains and wind. It would take this roof no matter how good you do with it. The windward side, all that rain would blow in. The next thing you know, you're laying in four or five inches of water. So we wised up to that. We punched holes in the bottom. We just let it run right on through. Then it became a little scary because some boys got killed in those. They'd get tangled when the Japs attacked. They'd just cut the ropes down and we couldn't get out of them fast enough. Then they finally disappeared. I don't know if they kept using them or not. I never saw them after Cape Gloucester. That was interesting. After Cape Gloucester, it was over to the island of Pavuvu.

**Mr. Metzler:** Could you spell that.

**Mr. Young:** P-a-v-u-v-u

**Mr. Metzler:** Just like it sounds.

**Mr. Young:** That was in what they call Marshall Islands. That thing was full of land crabs... and rats. We happened to hit the migration of the land crabs and it stank to high heaven. They only had one main road around the island for the trucks and the ammo vehicles and stuff and they'd squash all these thousands of crabs on this road, in this hot sun. The coconut trees, all these coconuts and stuff had laid under those trees, well since the war I guess. There were no more harvests and they were rotten. And the rats up in the top of the coconut trees, at night all the rats would come down to feed on the coconuts. They were all over the place.

**Mr. Metzler:** My word!

**Mr. Young:** It was a hellhole, but I'm telling you when we left there, it was pretty. We had a pretty place there. We ended up with tents in perfect rows and we had pieces of coral that we brought up there and made little pathways. Everything actually looked pretty. Everything was perfect. That's where we were in preparation for the worst invasion of all which was Peleliu. We returned to Guadalcanal on that trip, which I thought was fascinating but we weren't allowed to go nowhere. We got back to Guadalcanal and there still were some minor skirmishes way back. The army was mopping up, but it was kind of neat to get back to the same place where we went through so much hell. We finally left there on LSTs for Peleliu. We got the announcement the night before from General Rupertus. He said "Gentlemen, this is only 2 ½ miles by 6, this island. It's called Peleliu and this is going to be a quickie. We'll be in and out of there in 48 hours. Then we'll forward it over to the army." Well, I'm telling you, we started in there the next day and I thought it didn't look right from when I came out of that LST. I don't know how many thousand yards off we were. Everything was burning from one end of the island to the other. There was a tremendous amount of shellfire from in there. When we got up closer, I could see that there was an awful lot of water popping up and it looks to me like it's right up at the shore. There were coral reefs that we had to go across. This coral reef was very shallow there. As soon as you got to that coral reef, we were in amphibian tanks, and the amphib would stop and then start up again and you'd hear it dragging on this coral. Finally ours stood almost on end. We thought it was going to topple us over. I was hanging on and bam! It went down and off we went. Some of the other units had a landing craft type that they couldn't cross

the reefs. So what was supposed to happen was our amphibian tanks were supposed to unload us, return to that reef and unload those boats coming in to the reef, taking them from the reef to the shore because the other boats couldn't get in. Well that all went to hell for a while because in the first 20 minutes, thirty-some of those amphibs were destroyed. We could see geysers of water thrown up in the air. Almost all replacements said "Oh man, the Navy is really giving 'em hell ain't they?" You could hear this stuff, and I said "Boys, that's not our stuff. It's theirs coming at us." They all got quiet. We're getting closer and the next thing, we're taking hits on the starboard side and I never realized that the amphibian tanks had very light armor on the sides. Some of that fire started to penetrate and bullets would ricochet around and guys were getting hit. Finally the amphib got hit. He got hit in the front somewhere, but I think it might have been something small. It couldn't have been too big because it didn't hit anyone except the coxswain. There were two of them. One was laying slumped over and the other one was going like this with his hands, motioning to us—it won't go. So that's when I looked at the lieutenant that we had then, I don't know who he was. He was a replacement also. I was waiting on the order to get off, but he didn't say anything. So I hollered over to Sergeant Miller on the starboard side. I was on the port side. We both had experience. I said, "We're going to get hit with something big here any second!" He said, "Let's go!" I was just dropping down the port side when I saw him fall back in the craft. I found out later on that he took a huge piece of shrapnel in his shoulder. He was a strong man but it knocked him right back in the boat. So on my way in, I'm starting in and everybody's supposed to be behind me. We had about 14 men counting the ammunition crew. I'm on my way in there and a huge

shell hits between me and a lone Marine in front of me. Where he came from I'll never tell you, I was all by myself. There's no Marines in front of me at all, just that one. A huge geyser went up in the air. It felt like someone knocked me in the head and it really made me kind of groggy. I looked and I didn't see the other guy. The next thing here he comes up out of the water. Then he starts to fall down in the water again so I figured he's hit. So I got to him and he said "Please help me. Please help me." I'm a little small so I placed one arm around him and I said "You've got to try to help yourself too. You have to hold on to me." And I helped him in to the beach and laid him down. I fell over on my back because I was physically exhausted and laying there gasping and looking back out. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Boats were burning and I saw one boat and I'll never forget that boat. It took a direct hit by something big and it just looked like everything was in slow motion. Marines were spinning around in the air just like in slow motion, flopping back into the water like that, but, you know, almost all of them got up and started swimming for the beach. So I thought "That's good." It's just amazing the amount of amphibians hit and some of them were really burning, on fire and all that kind of stuff. So there I was with this guy and I said "I have to go." He says "Please don't leave me. Please don't leave me." The general had said no one stops for wounded. They always said that. There were strict orders—nobody stops for wounded because that's what our corpsmen are for. All I did for him was, I said "I'm going to have to go because I'm a squad leader and I've got 14 men I gotta look after." I said "Do me a favor. Turn over on your stomach." I had seen something underneath him. He rolled over on his stomach and one-half of his buttocks...it hit just one-half of his buttocks! That piece would keep flopping.

When a wave would hit it, it would roll it open and he'd scream. Anyhow I drug him up as far as I could and I went on my way. I never knew who that was and whether he made it or whether he didn't. I went on up there and I almost got run over by a tank which came in and hit a part of my pack. With that much noise, I didn't hear him and they didn't see me. The tank pulled up and they were coming in what we called "blind." They were taped shut to keep water tight with something like duct tape nowadays. They just pulled in and stopped right on my pack. The guy opened the tank turret. "Oh my God, are you ok?" Then he ripped all that tape off and they started going forward. I went forward trying to find cover. You couldn't dig a foxhole. It was coral, hard coral. So I came to a bomb crater and there must have been 17 marines in there. I didn't know one of them! No one was shooting. We had nothing to shoot at. There was a funny thing. I'd been in there about ten minutes, deciding whether I've got to go back to the beach or not, when here comes a guy up to the edge of the bomb crater and says "What the hell outfit is this?" I looked at him and it as Chesty Puller, our commanding colonel of the regiment. He said "What the hell outfit is this?" and I swear there was ten voices come out with a different unit. He says, "Well, dammit, this way. Let's go!" So everybody got up and started going like that. There were five or six of us, we went like that for a while and stopped. I had to get back. I was just ready to go back when one boy in here that's on this picture, he came in the hole. He was my assistant gunner. There, that picture there. You might have seen this. That's me in the center, here. There's a guy on each side. Well, the guy on my left there, that was my assistant gunner and the other was an ammunition man. Well, the assistant gunner comes flopping in the hole and he couldn't tell me where the rest of them

were. So finally all of a sudden, one of the sergeants pops in there and says "Hey come on. Come with me. They're over here on the right." He said all the men were over here on the right. So we draw all the stuff over here and that's where I got to that spot right there. Most of these are some mortar men, but you know what, like I say, we had so many replacements and they panicked! They didn't have one piece of mortar in there. They were laying down on the beach with most of their parts in the water. They dumped them in the water. It's just like a bad dream, you're trying to hurry and it just seemed like you're going like this and something's after you. That's the way it was. So it took us 'til the next day, they got new guns in for us. Then eight o'clock the following morning, we made a jump-off across the airstrip. This was a real nerve-wracking deal too. We're attacking the airstrip. We're charging across the airstrip. You see some men dropping. Then we got across to the other side. We went by one pillbox there and a Jap comes out like this, then went back in. The lieutenant at that time, I don't know who the lieutenant was, says "Get that man out of there!" So he came out like he's praying.

(tape side 2 begins)

**Mr. Young:** There was a Jap in the pillbox. It seemed like he wanted to surrender, but he would not come out of there. He'd just come part way, just wouldn't come out. So we had to move out. The lieutenant told the one private there, he says "Shoot him next time he comes out." The private says "I can't do that." It's pretty hard to shoot a man.

**Mr. Metzler:** I understand.



**Mr. Young:** It's pretty hard to do that. So by that time the lieutenant was screaming and hollering and he says "Young, take care of that yourself." Oh, my God. So I gave him about three chances coming out. He came out. So the last time, I gave it to him. That's the only man I know I killed personally and that hurt like hell.

**Mr. Metzler:** No, not fun.

**Mr. Young:** Then we got over to the other side and got situated, got our batteries set up at the edge of these big ridges. Our regiment had to take these hills. We had our observation people up there and they started getting ranges back for us. While we were setting up, I just leaned back to relax and a round went right beside my helmet. Just bam! Like that. It was a sniper, but he missed. He almost got a head shot on me. So I told the lieutenant, I said "They've got a sniper that's going to get us." I told him where I was. He went over there and pulled the old hat trick, you know, with the helmet moving around on the edge, like that. Sure enough the gun cracks again, but he even missed that helmet. Anyhow they finally got some dogs up there and flushed him out. Someone else took care of that. Then we got word from the observation post that there's a Jap mortar battery setting up their batteries. They gave us the coordinates and so forth and they said "Commence firing as soon as you can." Couple of practice rounds, so I let a couple go. I guess I had fired three, and finally the OP said "That's great. Open up and give 'em everything you've got." So we started firing. They'd already started. Their mortars were dropping close to us. One guy got hit right off the bat-- Chief, an Indian. He took the first hit. A couple more got hit, but they were all hit in the third and fourth gun area. We started getting so many rounds in the air, you wouldn't believe how quick we were firing those guns. The barrels got so hot, they were setting off the

increments on the bottom of the shell, the place that you put the little charge packets. They fit in the fins. Soon as that would touch the side of the hot barrel, they would burn. It wouldn't explode the shell, but it would burn the loader. So we finally got hold of some burlap off the sandbags there and soaked it in some slimy water and we packed the barrels in water and kept pouring water on it. We had four, five, six rounds in the air at one time. That's how fast we were putting them in. The OP says "Cease fire, they're gone. You guys wiped them out." So we were proud of that. But we also were dying from the heat. The heat was tremendous. The highest was 112, mainly around 100 and sometime during the heat of the day, 120, around there. It got so that your lips would crack and split here in the sides and down the centers here. If there was any kind of joke... there was always something funny even in the heat of battle and someone made you laugh, you'd laugh and stretch them out and blood would run down your face. The other thing was you didn't get any sleep. So I guess we went about the first four days with virtually no sleep. Just lay our head back on our helmets and try to doze a little bit. You'd do that and what would happen, the sweat would run down over your eyelids and coagulate and you couldn't get them open. You had to get cups of water and soak your eyelids.

**Mr. Metzler:** To be able to open your eyes.

**Mr. Young:** To open your eyes, just from that salt coagulating on there. So we were also running out of water and some higher up, high ranking officer, came up an idea he thought was super, I guess, and maybe apparently other ones thought it was super also. It was to use 55-gallon gasoline drums that were empty, and they would scour them out and fill them up with water and get these barrels in for us. So they did, all

right. I'm telling you, it was just like drinking gasoline. Guys were throwing up. It was terrible. We had a heck of a time for a while. Oh, it was terrible. I might add something else that was interesting. It was the first time I saw black Marines. First time. I don't know how long I'd been in the Marine Corps at that time. That's the first I ever saw black Marines and there was one big, black sergeant who had about a 10-man squad, and what they were doing was running ammo from that beach up to the lines. Those guys were scared to death. They'd drop down and he'd have a time. So finally he started screaming. He says, "Goddamn, them Marine boys are the only things keeping us alive." We could hear him holler, "Get off your asses and get that ammo up to 'em." He kept them moving. That's the first experience I had with them and they ended up doing very well. Very well. They really worked their cans off. In fact, down the road, they got in a position where they had to help fight. I didn't see them doing that but I understand they did very well. I guess it was about the seventh or eighth day. We knew something wasn't right. Almost all the brass was gone, gunnery sergeants, all the high-ranking people, are gone-- dead or wounded, gone. So here, I didn't know it at the time, but we were taking 70% casualties. That's counting the heat and the deaths and the wounded. So General Geiger, I think his name was, and another Smith, Oliver Smith, they decided that Chesty Puller's regiment is no longer a regiment. It has to be removed because it can no longer function as a regiment. So luckily, we were pulled out of there. I think it was ten days our whole unit came out and they brought an Army unit in to fill that gap. That's how I survived and my regiment got back. The Army stayed there til the end of October, about six or eight weeks they stayed there... the rest of the invasion. But our unit got out early and it was

one of the best things, I could say, that happened to me, because I figured my time was getting “iffy.” So that’s about all. There’s not much more except the pleasure of getting back home. Our trip back home was very good. We got back to Pavuvu again. There was a nice thing happened there. Some of the boys we thought were dead were at Pavuvu to greet us when we got there. Wounded and patched up and they sent them back to the units in Pavuvu and not back into the combat zone. So we got to see some of them which made us feel good. Then Admiral Nimitz, I guess it was, says “I’m going to get that First Marine Division back to the United States,” not the whole division, just the regiment, all of us old-timers. “All the original First Marine units,” he said “I’m going to have them all back where they belong for a great rest. I’ll get a ship to you and it won’t be long” and he did. He got us a ship that was coming from CBI theater, China-Burma-India theater. What a pleasure ride that was. It had about ten nuns on it and I had never seen nuns like that before. Of course, I wasn’t Catholic. Their hats were three-pronged, come out and curl this way, come out and curl that way. They had a whole bunch of youngsters on there, little kids, young, up to about twelve, and some mothers, and I guess officers’ wives. So we had a good time coming back. We spoiled those kids. In fact the nuns raised cain with us, said “don’t keep giving those children candy and stuff like that.” The children were always down where the Marines were.

**Mr. Metzler:** I can imagine.

**Mr. Young:** So we arrived back in San Diego.

**Mr. Metzler:** I want to thank you for spending the time to recount these experiences. I know it was painful to do some of that, but I appreciate it. I’m just sorry that I didn’t bring

more tapes. That's my fault, but we got almost all of the story. We'll put it together and it will be just fine. Thank you again.

**Mr. Young:** I appreciate it. Anything I can do to help.

**FINAL**

Tape 1026

Transcribed by:

Carole Gillespie, Volunteer

Fredericksburg, Texas

June 2009