

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR  
(ADMIRAL NIMITZ MUSEUM)**

**Center for Pacific War Studies**

**Fredericksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**William D. Trubiano, Sr.**

**Andover, Minnesota**

**December 30, 2003**

**101<sup>st</sup> Engineers, 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division**

**B Company 57<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers, Americal Division**

**Guadalcanal, Bougainville**

**Three Battle Stars**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is December 30, 2003. I am interviewing Mr. William D. Trubiano, Sr. by telephone. His address is: 13024 Saratoga Lane North, Chaplin, Minnesota 55316. His phone number is area code 763-576-8923. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

William, I want to thank you very much for taking time to do this interview today.

Mr. Trubiano

I don't mind it.

Mr. Misenhimer

The first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Nimitz Museum. When I do these in person I give them to the person to read and sign but since this is by phone let me read this to you and make sure it is okay with you. "Agreement read." Is that satisfactory?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me start off by asking you what is your middle initial?

Mr. Trubiano

D as in Dante.

Mr. Misenhimer

What is your birth date?

Mr. Trubiano

August 17, 1920.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Trubiano

Somerville, Massachusetts.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Trubiano

I never went to high school. I went to grammar school but I never went to high school.

Later on I went to high school vocational school and learned plumbing and carpentry; cabinet making and all that stuff which helped me later on in my job.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your last year of school then?

Mr. Trubiano

I went to work.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of work did you do?

Mr. Trubiano

I worked in an Italian grocery store. This is the big type; I did everything, even made sausages. I packed up boxes, ran errands. Things came from Italy. I used to go down to the pier and pick these all up and cheese and I did mostly everything.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you go into the service?

Mr. Trubiano

I was born in 1920. I enlisted on February 23, 1939. I was in the 101<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineers. We used to go to Camp in North Carolina. The fact that made me join it was in 1938 we had a big hurricane and the National Guard was called out and I saw them and I joined. But the funny thing is I joined the National Guard but I didn't realize that they had Infantry and Engineers; I didn't know they had all that stuff. So it was lucky that I joined. It was only a short block from my house to a big National Guard Armory and I signed up. It was the Combat Engineers, the 101<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineers. I went to training on bridges and all that stuff at Camp Edwards. In fact we had the World War I clothing. We had the leggings that just wrapped around your legs and the short pants and I'm telling you it was antique stuff. We did it and we had parades during the summer. Certain days we would go out in the streets during the summer which I don't think they do anymore. It was good.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes. I had two sisters and two brothers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were your brothers in World War II?

Mr. Trubiano

No, I was the only one.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you actually go on active duty?

Mr. Trubiano

I went on active duty on January 16, 1941. I was sent to Camp Edwards in Massachusetts.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was your whole unit activated or just yourself?

Mr. Trubiano

The whole unit. Down at Camp Edwards they did field practice. When we went down there they didn't even have windows on the buildings. We went down there and did some training. In fact we went to North Carolina and then on the way back is when the war broke out.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were activated was that the 101<sup>st</sup> Combat Engineers?

Mr. Trubiano

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you were coming back from North Carolina when the war broke out?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you recall how you heard about it?

Mr. Trubiano

I think somebody picked it up on the radio or something. When it happened I called back home to tell them that I was alright. Like I say people tend to actually kind of worry.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you left North Carolina where did you go?

Mr. Trubiano

We came back to Camp Edwards. We went by truck in a convoy. We came back and then we were going to get shipped out. We got ready. What happened was we got inducted in 1942 and on January 23<sup>rd</sup> we left for the dock and got on ships. Before we got on that they gave us time to go home. There were no trains leaving so I hitchhiked from Camp Edwards to Boston and that's a ways. I visited and went back. We got on a train and went to Brooklyn, New York where the embarkation ship was. I got on the USS *Argentina*, that was a big ship, a luxury liner. They had bunks about 6 or 7 high, one on top of the other. We had all these heavy clothes because it was winter. We didn't know actually where we were going but we were going on a ship for someplace. They gave you plenty of clothes you figured for a cold place after we got on the ship. This was a big cruiser. In fact it was the flagship of the fleet and we were number one going there. We got on the ship at Brooklyn Navy Yard. We set sail and we went along the coast and went down through the Panama Canal. Nobody slept in the hold of the ship because the weather was warm; we all slept on the deck. We kept going and we went through the Panama Canal. We stopped at Balboa overnight. Boy you could practically reach out and touch the branches of the trees going through there. Going to the Pacific they made it two way. In other words one ship could go through to the Pacific and another one could go to the

Atlantic. They handled a lot of carriers and other ships. We took on supplies and we kept going to the Pacific. The Pacific Ocean is higher than the Atlantic. Despite going in the Canal and them raising the ship up to the level the Pacific is, they did that three or four times. Once we got to the Pacific we kept steaming right for Australia. We were headed for New Caledonia. About halfway across the Pacific, they didn't know what was going on so we went to Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you in a convoy?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes there were seven ships there.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of escort did you have?

Mr. Trubiano

Cruisers and destroyers. In fact they disappeared at night but during the day you could see all the ships around. On the way one of the destroyers sunk a submarine. I don't know if it was a German sub or a Jap sub.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that in the Pacific where they sunk it?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes the Pacific Ocean is where they sunk it. Let me tell you something. When we got close to Australia the ship zigzagged. They zigzagged all the way. What happened was they must have had turkey because everybody got dysentery on the ship. You can imagine on a troopship how awful that was. Everybody pulled out of it. The ocean was

kind of rocky. We were on there for 38 days. The Chaplain would have a Mass in the back part of the ship, the stern part of the ship. People played cards and different things. I watched the flying fish come out of the water; they would fly a while and go back in the ocean. The porpoises would jump around the front part of the ship. The ship would make waves and the porpoises were jumping.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you land in Australia?

Mr. Trubiano

We landed in Melbourne. In fact we went to some Royal park there in Melbourne; it must have been a zoo because you could hear lions roar. We got on a train and went to this royal park and they had tents set up for us. They had a couple cases of beer there. They must have been expecting us. They gave us a few drinks and it was good.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there in Australia?

Mr. Trubiano

Maybe about a week. I think they didn't know what was happening so we were there about a week. We went there riding a trolley; an open trolley that had the wire up on top of the street. We were there for only a week. Then we got on a ship to go to New Caledonia. I understand that it belonged to France. The French people were kind of worried about New Caledonia and why the troops went there but we got there alright. In fact our platoon got to New Caledonia, my platoon of 57 engineers of the 101<sup>st</sup> Engineers and we went on the pier in New Caledonia. What happened was we got to New Caledonia and picked up L Company of the 182<sup>nd</sup> and M Company of the 182<sup>nd</sup>, a



medical detachment of the 182<sup>nd</sup> and the rest of the service company of the 182<sup>nd</sup>, and B Company of the Engineers, the 103<sup>rd</sup> Engineers. They put us on the pier and we got on a ship to an island closer to the Japanese. We went to New Hebrides, to Espiritu Santos of the New Hebrides. We got there and started to building an airstrip for the B-17's. We got to work and we started chopping down coconut trees. See what happened was New Hebrides had a lot of coconut trees on it. I think they must have gotten the coconuts and they would take the shell off and they would smoke them and bag them and ship them someplace. They had a lot of coconut trees. The Japs weren't there, lucky for us. There were only 500 of us. Those Japs weren't there. They told us that some of the natives would help us. We had the equipment to knock the trees down. Some of the trees were so big we would take dynamite all around the tree and blow it down. We got the area cleared and we had some nice coral and we put it down to make the runway smoother. Later on they came up with this flat top mesh stuff that interlocked that they could put over the field; Marsden matting. We had to make piers for the supplies and everything else. The planes could come in and get closer to the other targets. Then what happened was the Marines came in later. We had two islands. I think Santos was the first one. Efate was another island and we did the same thing. We went over and built an airstrip for the bombers and all that stuff. To get it ready and prepare it.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your job at this point?

Mr. Trubiano

I was in charge of the tools and equipment, shovels and everything else. We did get an air raid once in a while and what would happen was when we got there we would dig

foxholes. We dug foxholes but we didn't dig them very deep. One time a Japanese plane, a Japanese bomber came over and he sounded like a washing machine so we called him Washing Machine Charlie. He came over and he stayed there and looked around and dropped a bomb in our area. My foxhole was only about two feet deep and I couldn't get in it. After he went away I dug down to China. (laugh) Let me tell you he kept coming and he kept coming. I don't know if we ever fired at him because he kept coming back and forth, one plane. After that first raid they dug holes deep enough to put their cots in there. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

That was in New Hebrides right?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes, Santos was the island I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your rank at this point?

Mr. Trubiano

I don't know. I didn't worry about rank I just took care of the tools.

Mr. Misenhimer

What else happened there?

Mr. Trubiano

Well on our island nothing; but they had the Coral Sea Battle going on. We were told to make a road up through the woods and jungle so that we could hide or something to get out of the way. There were only 500 of us and the ships were landing on the coast. Some made it and were lucky. We had to build the airstrip. We had some time for ourselves.

The boys made wooden boxes and sealed them. They got some fruit and sugar and made something to drink; made some alcohol. You could smell it all over the place. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

What else happened?

Mr. Trubiano

After we left Santos we were called back to New Caledonia to reorganize with the rest of the company. While I was on New Hebrides I got malaria. People came down with malaria but the story is this. I never had it. I had it in my blood when they tested it. When I started getting chills I would take quinine; that's what we had to take our pills everyday. If you got it, you would take the pill and just take it easy. I had malaria in my blood but never had the fever. They told me to take quinine for a week or two and see what happens. So I did and after a week I did come down with the fever and the chills. They sent me to the hospital and they gave me pills and said to take it easy. What happened then we went to New Caledonia and I went to the hospital and my Captain came over. He took me with him, he took me out of the hospital and took me with him to New Caledonia with the rest of my company. Down there we had a place and they showed some movies about the Japanese desperately fighting for the Canal. They were supposed to be so tough and all that stuff. Then we organized and went to Guadalcanal.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did they call it the Americal division?

Mr. Trubiano

Americal, right; see what happened we used to be the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division that was the 101<sup>st</sup> Engineers which was part of that. The Americal Division General it was I think

said, We're going to let the GI's name the division." So what they did was have a contest. He decided that he would name it Americal because what happened was we were in Caledonia and he said Americans in Caledonia and he put them both together and he got Americal. To this day they are called Americal. The Massachusetts people in the 26<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and American GI's in Caledonia; a blue shield with the southern cross. It became the 57<sup>th</sup> Combat Engineers in the Americal division.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's your patch, huh?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes our shoulder patch. In fact General Powell belonged to it and General Schwarzkopf was in it; a whole bunch of them. They all belonged to Americal. See what happened is they sent them to Viet Nam.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said that you left New Caledonia and went to Guadalcanal?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes we went to Guadalcanal. We assisted the Infantry if they needed help or something. What we did was set up a lumber drop. We would cut down the trees and use them to put up buildings.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you arrive in Guadalcanal?

Mr. Trubiano

I'm trying to find the page here. We got there December 9, 1942. It was close to Christmas.

Mr. Misenhimer

So the fighting was still going on pretty fierce wasn't it?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes the fighting was still going on; that's right. What happened you know at Christmas time, it is the Infantry's job; they're the ones that fight them and destroy them. Our job was to help them and build bridges if they had to have a bridge going across a river or bring supplies up there; whatever they needed we helped. In fact we were attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marines and if they needed something. We built a hospital underground and dug a headquarters into the ground over there with a roof on it; sandbags and stuff to protect them so they could plan the operation without being disturbed. We did a lot of stuff. Things like supplies. Sometimes we had to move supplies. Our job was to build the stuff, cut trees down and clear the path. Sometimes we would cut the trees down and the Japs could see us and would put mortar shells all around. We would have to quit and come back later. We put piers in so that ships could come in and dock and unload their stuff. The ships couldn't come right into the island because it was so shallow so they had to stay out in the harbor. They used to have to unload out there. The gas drums we would throw them overboard. The gas drums would float and they just wash ashore. That's how we did the gasoline. We got the air base cleared off. I went with the Lieutenant down to Cape Esperance. That's where I saw the two statues with the big crater in between them. It was quite a sight. Lieutenant Lovejoy went there. That's when they had a picture of a lot of different people.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now that was in front of a church, these statues were right?

Mr. Trubiano

Right but the church was demolished. We blew it up because the Japs were using it for a headquarters. See at Guadalcanal we took the whole island. They wiped so many of them out we had to bulldoze them and just bury them in a mass grave. What happened was after a while the GI's were picking the skulls out and picking some of the gold teeth out of them. They would use the skulls on top of the trucks like a prize on the front of the cab and they stopped it. After a while the Infantry they just go tropical. I don't know what you call it. They figured after everything that happened that they would get to go back home but it didn't happen. They thought of the things that happened and then the second day they just gave up and stood there and didn't think about it. We had a ways to go so after Guadalcanal; we had to go to Bougainville. On Guadalcanal we cleaned it right off; we cleaned all the Japanese off that island but when we came to Bougainville we only took a small portion; the airport and a small part of it. We just held them back. We held them back until they came back again and we struck them down again. It was back and forth. We had Hill 260 there at Bougainville; that was a tough fight. We would carry supplies going up through the jungle trails there. If they would see us they would drop a mortar shot on them. We used to have the natives help us and they would come up and if they heard those shells go off they would drop everything they had and take off. That's what happened. Bougainville we just took a small sector. They had the island surrounded so they couldn't bring any more Japanese in so all we did was hold them back. We had planes dropping those big jelly bombs all over the top of the hills and mountains up there. They dug these holes and they wouldn't come out or else they tied themselves up in the coconut trees to be sure they don't fall down; snipers. But that's what they did, they hid

up under trees and hid in these holes and caves and stuff and wouldn't come out so we had to get them out.

Mr. Misenhimer

On Bougainville did you land with the first wave or when did you land there?

Mr. Trubiano

I tried but I couldn't get a date on it, but we were there right after the Marines. The Marines were the first wave, they did the landing. That was their job. Once they did the landing they would get a little piece taken and then the Army would come in and take over. Then the Marines would take off and go back to New Zealand; that's where their home was. All the Marines went to New Zealand. In fact before we hit Bougainville, after Guadalcanal we went to Fiji Island. I was kind of ahead of myself. We went to Fiji Island for a rest period. They had cement floors in these tents. It was right next to the ocean and boy it was beautiful too. Then we had a fellow come around selling liquor. He wasn't supposed to. He was selling bottles of VO and everything. I think they were kind of Indian people. That's what this guy was selling. We got him to get some more the second time. He came back with a big bag full of booze. If someone didn't pay for it the guy couldn't go to the Captain and say, "Hey they didn't pay for this." Because he wasn't supposed to even be selling it. I guess that happened That's before we went to Bougainville. Like I said, the Marines had landed and I don't know about the Infantry. I don't know when they went in. We were the engineers and we had to build bridges and roads and different things that we blew up. They had a big Howitzer Gun, a 155 mm and they had to clean the area of some shrubberies; we would do that and different things.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever get any actual combat yourself?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes we went up some. Let me tell you, we didn't go looking for them but we were up there and we went up to help the Infantry in the hills and we used to carry supplies up there. That hill was a jungle when we started but when they got through there was nothing on that hill. There was an outpost on top of it for the Japs. They were back and forth, back and forth, fighting back and forth. As far as rifle shooting there, the best that I remember that was not us. They told us to go up and drop the supplies and come back. We weren't trained for that stuff. Just stuff like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

What rifle did you carry at that point?

Mr. Trubiano

Once we had the old Springfield 03 rifle and that shoots one at a time. When we got over there we got the Garand rifle and you could put the whole clip on that on automatic and you could shoot six shots. The Marines didn't want it. What happened was when we got over there we had to guard them because they would steal them from us. The Marines didn't like them so we had the Garand. Today they hold about 25 or 50 rounds almost like a machine gun.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever actually shoot at the Japanese then?

Mr. Trubiano

No I didn't shoot any of them. We didn't go up there looking for them. It wasn't our job.



Our job was to support them. It was our job to just drop the supplies and then come back down. Because they would probably see you up there we knew how to take care of ourselves. There were Special Forces that trained for that.

Mr. Misenhimer

I didn't know if the Japanese might have ambushed you sometime or something?

Mr. Trubiano

If we had actually run into them we would have shot them. We had our rifles with us and we could use them. They were up in the trees and all over the place and in the holes.

*(tape side ended)*

Mr. Misenhimer

We missed part of that so go back. You said they would be up in the trees and that sort of thing.

Mr. Trubiano

Yes, the Japs were up in the trees; they were tied up there. We would keep shooting them but they wouldn't fall because they were tied up there. They were up on the side of a little mountain. These were rugged mountains but they were small mountains, pretty good sized. In fact I think we had a volcano that shook the earth once in a while. They would go up the side of these mountains and they would dig a little hole and they would get into it and all you would see was a little peep hole and they wouldn't come out. You would have to throw a grenade in the hole and that was it. I don't think they took many prisoners on Guadalcanal.

Mr. Misenhimer

No they didn't.

Mr. Trubiano

That was the first offensive you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were on Guadalcanal were you bombed by the Japanese very much?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes we were bombed. They came over. In fact they had a dogfight and we saw all these tracer/bullets very close that they laid across us. We didn't know why but these were Japanese planes. Our fighters were after them and they dropped a couple of bombs and everything else as they came by. One of the guys kept a piece of it. On Guadalcanal I think it was Christmas Eve our destroyers were shelling the Japanese. They started Christmas Eve and all day Christmas Day. All you could see was the flash and the echo of the sound of the shell. You see it but it takes two seconds for it to get there, the sound. All day Christmas Eve and Christmas Day he bombed them.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were on Guadalcanal did you see any dogfights between our planes and Japanese planes?

Mr. Trubiano

I saw our Corsairs. The wings came up and they tipped up a little bit. That was a Navy plane. I saw them fighting with the bombers there. I saw these Jap fighters and they went after the bombers and I saw one of our planes get hit. The pilot bailed out and the plane hit the ocean. What happened, the movies just show a plane hitting the ocean. This plane

was just demolished when it hit the ocean but the pilot got out and he was saved. When it hit the water it was just like hitting a wall. The water is hard or something and the planes don't float. On Henderson Field they has some B-17's. We could hear them warm up in the morning. They would take off and come back and we saw a couple of them land on their noses. That's some different things that happened. The Corsair was a fighter, an American plane and they were the ones that went after the Japanese planes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How close were you to Henderson Field?

Mr. Trubiano

We would see the planes take off and they would come back. We were pretty close to them. They used to have those seaplanes too.

Mr. Misenhimer

The PBY?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Back to Bougainville, what did you live in on Bougainville?

Mr. Trubiano

We lived in tents. I lived in tents all the time I was over there; that was close to three years. We used to have the flap of the tent out so that when it rained it would go into a barrel that was our water supply when we hit the island. We would get the water and you had to put some chlorine in it to purify it because of the germs and the bugs. You don't think about it but that's what happened. We would get the water and we would put

chlorine in it and we would have to drink it with the chlorine and stuff. We a canvas bag with a top on it to collect the water.

Mr. Misenhimer

These tents, were they five man or six man tents or what size?

Mr. Trubiano

Six man tents. There were five in some of them. It rains at 3:00 practically everyday. It would come over quick. We would try to catch the water for washing. We had KP every once in a while out there; washing dishes and stuff. Let me tell you. I was there close to three years and my whole outfit that went over there, they all went home. I don't know what happened. They came up and I don't know what happened; I don't see them. They disappeared, the whole outfit. Nobody said nothing. My Captain, I don't know what rank he held after the war at coming home time but he was a Captain going over. He said when he went home he would take us with him. Maybe that's what happened. We stayed with the guys all the time but all of a sudden you don't see anybody. They just took off. Even the Captain; he took off and nobody said anything. I guess they were kind of sad because of the guys that were left behind. But they were just gone.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else on Bougainville?

Mr. Trubiano

Just Hill 260; that was the hill that we cut back and forth. One morning they told us to not make too much noise when we woke up. We had a Sergeant with us; my Sergeant. He slept in the tent. My Sergeant used to sleep in the hammock. In the morning they told us to not make noise so they must have known we were going to get hit the next morning

with a mortar shell. He was in his hammock sleeping. A mortar shell would make a small noise. You could hear the whistle but you didn't know if it was going or coming. When it was getting loud you knew it was coming. He was in the hammock and he heard the shell and he tried to get out of the hammock but he couldn't get out because he was wrapped up. You ought to have seen him go through that netting. (laugh) He jumped out of that thing quick. He was in the far side of the thing. The shell came over and he couldn't get out of there. They tried to push their way out in back of him. It happened at Christmas time too, the bombs went off in back of the area. They tried to push us out back and forth because they wanted the airstrip but out forces kept them back. They pushed them back and back and back there. I tell you what, before I went overseas I went home for the weekend to help around the house. I helped my father make some wine. In fact we bought some grapes down at Charleston. They had a grape house because that was grape country so we had some grapes to make a few barrels. At this time we had a small 25 gallon barrel. I helped him make the wine this weekend. We filled the barrels up and it was 25 gallons. We filled that and when it was filled he sealed it. He said that he didn't want it going overseas so he sealed it and that when I came back he would open it. So I was gone for close to three years. When I came home I was going up to the house and he wanted to open up the barrel to have a drink of wine.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you left Bougainville where did you go then?

Mr. Trubiano

That was it. In fact when we were ready to hit the Philippines and we were packing up and getting ready to hit the Philippines and what happened was a guy came over and told

me that I was going to go home. So when they told you, you were going to go home, that was it. I turned in my rifle and stuff and I kind of figured out myself how to get to the port to where the ship was. They checked you and let you walk up on the ship. We didn't go right home. They took us back to Guadalcanal and we worked in the supplies down there. We were unloading ships and loading supplies from Guadalcanal and putting them on the ships that were going to the Philippines. We did that for three or four weeks. Finally they had a ship. We were on this big barge, a big bunch of metal blocks all tied together to make a barge where they could take the stuff out to the ships and take it off and load it down in the hold of the ship. Twice I got seasick. That thing was all rocking and we were floating back and forth. Our own ship came in but the rudder was broken. They sent us back to San Francisco on that thing. The trip back took us five weeks on that ship. We came by ourselves I guess back to San Francisco. We slept on the deck; we didn't want to go down in the hold. We landed and I got off the ship and we were on an island out there right across from San Francisco. We stayed there for one night. The next morning we got on a boat and they took us to San Francisco. They had trains and we got on the train and we had a train ride from San Francisco to Boston. When we hit San Francisco everybody was using the phones, calling home. After that we got on the train and headed for Boston. Every time we stopped at some station to take on water or something and there was a bar close by, half the train went to it. When the train was ready to leave they would blow the whistle and everybody would run back. That happened all the way to Boston. There were other trains going to San Francisco.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you land in San Francisco?

Mr. Trubiano

1945. Let me tell you something I got home and I was home when they dropped the bomb. It wasn't long after. In fact I told my mother and father something. After Bougainville they hit the Philippines and they could have waited until they dropped the bomb it probably saved people. They dropped it after I got home. I was down at a place there. I could probably check it, but I was just thinking about it. What happened when I came home they had us go down to Ashville, North Carolina. We were there and I was picked to go back to Camp Edwards and work in the hospital. While I was back there they put me back with the German prisoners in that hospital. What I did was go get their food and supplies. I didn't like that and they needed somebody to work in the operating room, so that's where I went. I went to the operating room and they taught you how to scrub and wash your hands and they had cotton socks over the shoes so you didn't pick up the dust and dirt. I worked in the operating room for awhile. They made me Technician Fourth Grade. I was there for awhile. They had diseases. They had all kinds of stuff. The troopship used to come in and drop them off and we would pick them up and then I used to go over on a troop train and go cross country and drop them off to the closest government hospital so they would be closer to home. I was there for a while doing that at Camp Edwards. Today Camp Edwards is gone. They tore it down, the whole barracks and all. I don't know what actually happened but there was this person that wrote all this stuff about Camp Edwards. I sent her a few pictures from when I was at Camp Edwards. I don't know what happened but they collected it. I'll have to find out.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you came back from overseas did you come back as part of your unit or just

individual?

Mr. Trubiano

I came back by myself. There were other guys with me but nobody else from my outfit. I was the last fellow in my company to come back. I was the last one. I don't know what happened; they dropped out, they went here and they went to weird places all the time. I was the oldest one in my outfit that was sent over there; almost three years, about a month shy of three years. Then what happened was when you do come home after being away for three years it's just like you go into a book. You close the book and you open it again. My brother was only a small kid and after I got back he was as tall as I was. Gosh when I came home I didn't realize that I wasn't the only one. My brother was with the Seabees and had gone over. He went to Saipan and Tinian. I was lucky. When I got home he dropped in and I saw him and he told me that he had went to Saipan and Tinian for awhile. But as I said I came home after three years and we opened that barrel of wine. That was fun.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes I got a Japanese rifle. I got some wild boar's teeth. They had wild boars over there and they make the teeth grow in a circle. In fact let me tell you when I was at that church, I hadn't told anybody about this, but there was a crucifix on the ground. I picked up the pieces and got it. I also picked up a candlestick. The water came up from the hills and mountains there. It was piped down. We saw water coming down from a hole down there and that's about it. I got a grass skirt and a plate. They had these natives over there that



used to do everything for a quarter. In fact we had them washing clothes, the natives on the island. They would get out in the stream and bag them and scrub them. You would give them a nickel or a dime or something and they were all set. I had this man that I gave him a quarter and after a while they had a tough time getting back. They were kind of spoiled. I guess they were used to picking up coconuts and bagging them but they weren't getting much. It's been 50 years since Guadalcanal. I had a lady send me two pictures of those statues. I couldn't take them so I had her take two pictures and send them because she had a camera. I'm trying to find out who they are. It might be a French Island, I don't know, but I know New Hebrides is half French and half English. On Fiji Island they grew sugarcane. They had a train that would come up and they would put all the sugarcane stalks on there; like bamboo I think. If she had the backing there was a lot of stuff that you could do there. They just had a lot of women from the Catholic Church out there; trying to civilize these people and try to get them a better life. They've got these women, the natives and they are trying to civilize them. They work and they are a happy bunch. They sing and they work for her. If they had land they could grow something, plant something that they could get money from; cocoa beans or something like that. You could plant something around there. The ground should be pretty good. I didn't tell you but over in Guadalcanal not my company but A Company, had to pick up a lot mines out in the field. They put them on the truck and what happened was he was coming back with them and he passes a refrigerator, one of those big boxes with refrigeration. They are coming down the road and all of a sudden 'whop' and they couldn't find anything but the axle of the truck. There were a lot of mines in there at once and something happened and they blew up. Then the artillery guns were shooting

weapons and the plane made a circle to come in for a landing and he was too low or something and he got hit and killed.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did your B Company have any casualties? Did anybody get wounded or killed in your company?

Mr. Trubiano

When?

Mr. Misenhimer

In Guadalcanal or Bougainville, either place?

Mr. Trubiano

No not from the Japanese but I think they got hit by a mortar shell. We took supplies up to Hill 260 and some of those guys got hit. When you consider the whole company and the National Guard you could see recruits come in . They would pull up to your unit. What happens is when they get up to the front line there right behind the infantry, they are scattered. The guy would come up with supplies to these little parts of the jungle. The Japanese stationed watchers going up there and they tried to shoot these mortar shells. A couple of them got hit; I think we heard about it. The medics come and take them away so nobody sees them. So it is kind of hard to say who was wounded or killed; you can't tell.

Mr. Misenhimer

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Trubiano

I got some. I've got them in a package here. The Asiatic Pacific with three Bronze Stars.

Good Conduct Medal. Then I got the American Defense Service medal. I got a Unit Citation from the Navy. Unit Clasp with a Bronze Star. That's it. I got four all together. They had a fire where the records were kept. I wrote them for information and they didn't have it. I kept writing to them and they sent me another complete set of medals. I have one set in a frame. They came up with a stamp for the Asiatic Pacific and I put that in the frame. I got it all fixed up and it's hanging in my room. I've got some pictures here too. In 1940 they had us marching for three hours going up Plattsburg, New York. Roosevelt was supposed to be passing by in his car and we found out later that it was Patton that was there. We were up there waving and he came by and he didn't even stop. He just went zoom in his car and that was it. The photographer was up in a tree and he took a picture of the whole company. I've got that here too. 1941.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider the most frightening time you had?

Mr. Trubiano

New Hebrides I guess. That wasn't too bad. But as I said those Japs went over but there was no fighting going on.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of your commanding officers?

Mr. Trubiano

We had Captain Miller and he was good. He was from New Hampshire. He became the AC. He was good. We had a military cemetery down at Camp Edwards at one part of it. The other part was where the GI's were buried. I lost my wife back in Boston, she passed away and my daughter, we moved to California with my son and his wife. Then he got

transferred from there to Minnesota and that's where I am now. This is one of the nicest cemeteries that GI's get buried in. She got buried there and it's in the hills. Right up at the foot of the hills my old Captain Elliot is there. They are keeping them all together. I don't know. Some of the places are getting filled. I don't know if you've been to Camp Edwards but that's a pretty area there. I don't know what happened to the rest of Camp Edwards, maybe they built houses there. That's what you get with politicians like Kennedy. They don't care what happens. He's a big clown in Washington. I see him on the TV and they are laughing at him. He's actually a disgrace to Massachusetts.

Mr. Misenhimer

Has the Americal Division had any reunions?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes we've had reunions. We still have them once in a while but I don't go. We used to have them back in Boston.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you recall about your time overseas?

Mr. Trubiano

When we went from one island to another island near New Zealand we were on this British ship. It had seaplanes that they launched off the ship. He fired it and the gas tank blew and burned the whole plane.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said that you had Bob Hope over there?

Mr. Trubiano

Yes Bob Hope was there. Do you know if he ever got paid for that?

Mr. Misenhimer

No he didn't.

Mr. Trubiano

He didn't. They were good. Joe Perand was there and they had a band from England come over there. When we were over there at New Hebrides, not too much on Guadalcanal, but at New Hebrides we used to have movies over there. We had movies at night in a coconut grove. Others would come down and see the movies. They would get real excited when they would see a big plane or something. Sometimes we would be having a movie and the air raid signal would go off and they would go back to the camp and get in their hole.

*(end of interview)*

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