

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

THE NIMITZ MUSEUM

PRESENTS

AN ORAL HISTORY BY

JIM HUMPHRIES

INTERVIEWER - DWIGHT D. DANIEL

TAPE NUMBER 1361

*Duty on LSM-40  
off Suva*

THIS IS AN ORAL HISTORY GIVEN BY MR. JIM HUMPHRIES. A FORMER 2<sup>ND</sup> CLASS IN WORLD WAR II ASSIGNED TO L.S M 140. HE WAS BORN 29 MAY, 1926, THE INTERVIEWER IS MYSELF, DWIGHT D. DANIEL, AN ORAL HISTORY VOLUNTEER AT THE NIMITZ MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR LOCATED IN FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS.

TODAY IS 18 FEBRUARY, 2005. THIS INTERVIEW IS TAKING PLACE AT THE 60<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF IWO JIMA AT FREDERICKSBURG. THIS INTERVIEW IS IN SUPPORT OF THE CENTER FOR THE PACIFIC WAR STUDIES WHICH IS THE ARCHIVE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF THIS HISTORICAL INFORMATION IN THE NATIONAL MUSEUM FOR THE PACIFIC WAR, TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE.

THIS TAPE ONE, SIDE "A".

JIM, WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING TO MAKE SURE THIS TAPE IS WORKING?

JIM

I AM VERY HAPPY TO BE HERE AND I THINK THIS IS A GREAT THING YOU ARE DOING.

DWIGHT

COOL. WE VERY SELDOM ASK CANNED QUESTIONS BUT THERE IS ONE QUESTION WE ALWAYS ASKED, AND I KNOW YOU WROTE IT DOWN FOR ME, WHEN WERE YOU BORN?

JIM

29 MAY, 1926.

DWIGHT

WHO WERE YOUR PARENTS?

JIM

TERRY E. AND CORNELIA.

DWIGHT

AND YOUR MOTHER'S MAIDEN NAME?

JIM

HALL.

DWIGHT

WHERE WERE YOU BORN?

JIM

THE LITTLE TOWN, KELLY, LOUISIANA.

DWIGHT

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE KELLY IS.

JIM

NOBODY DOES. IT'S FIFTEEN MILES FROM THE HOME OF GEN. ERWIN B ERSKINE (SP????), COMMANDER OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> MARINE DIVISION ON IWO.

DWIGHT

IS IT NEAR ANYTHING?

JIM

IT'S ABOUT HALF WAY BETWEEN MONROE AND ALEXANDRIA.

DWIGHT

OKAY, I KIND OF KNOW WHERE IT IS THEN. THAT REALLY IS A SMALL TOWN. NOW, WE WILL TALK ABOUT HOW YOU GOT TO TUCSON COUNTRY FROM LOUISIANA LATER ON.

WHAT DID YOUR FATHER DO?

JIM

HE WORKED IN A PAPER MILL.

DWIGHT

WHAT DID HE DO IN THE PAPER MILL?

JIM

HE WAS A PAINTER. PAINTING EQUIPMENT.

DWIGHT

AND MOM WAS A HOUSEWIFE? AND A MOTHER. HOW MANY BROTHERS AND SISTERS DID YOU HAVE?

JIM

ONE OF EACH.

DWIGHT

DID YOU LIVE IN LOUISIANA MOST OF YOUR CHILDHOOD?

JIM

YES.

DWIGHT

WHERE DID YOU GO TO HIGH SCHOOL?

DWIGHT

IN MONROE LOUISIANA.

JIM

THE BIG CITY

DWIGHT

YEAH. THAT'S WHERE I LIVED ACTUALLY. I WAS BORN IN KELLY BUT LIVED MY WHOLE LIFE IN MONROE, REALLY.

JIM

DID YOU GRADUATE FOR HIGH SCHOOL IN MONROE?

DWIGHT

IN THAT ERA, IT WAS UNUSUAL TO HAVE PEOPLE GRADUATE.

JIM

WE HAD ELEVEN GRADES WHEN I WENT THERE IN LOUISIANA.

DWIGHT

I KNOW, MY FATHER, HE HAD A CHOICE BETWEEN GOING TO JUNIOR HIGH AND GO IN THE COTTON FIELDS. HIS FATHER DECIDED, WE KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT. HE WENT TO THE COTTON FIELDS. IT'S CALLED ,”MAKE MONEY FOR THE FAMILY FOLKS”. SO, YOU DID GOOD.

LET’S SEE “26. YOU WERE ABOUT FIFTEEN WHAN YOU HEARD ABOUT PEARL HARBOR.

JIM

THAT WOULD BE ABOUT RIGHT.

DWIGHT

WHERE WERE YOU?

JIM

I WAS ON THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR READING THE SUNDAY FUNNIES.

DWIGHT

THAT’S A GOOD THING TO DO. STILL DO THAT IN FACT. HOW DID YOU HEAR THAT, ON THE RADIO?

JIM

ON THE RADIO. RIGHT.

DWIGHT

WHAT DID YOU THINK ABOUT IT?

JIM

I WAS TOTALLY UNAWARE OF WHAT WAR REALLY MEANT. I THOUGHT IT WAS EXCITING.

DWIGHT

WAS YOUR FATHER IN WORLD WAR I?

JIM

NO. HE BARELY MISSIED IT. HE WAS BORN IN 1900.

DWIGHT

HE JUST BARELY MISSED THE DATE.

JIM

MY OLDER BROTHER WAS IN WORLD WAR II.

DWIGHT

YOU GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL, I WOULD GUESS ABOUT 1943. CORRECT?

JIM

RIGHT. ON MY 17<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY I THINK.

DWIGHT

DID YOU JOIN THE MILITARY IMMEDIATELY?

JIM

WHILE IN SCHOOL, I JOINED THE AIR CORPS AS A RESERVE CADET WAS AWAITING CALL TO ACTIVE DUTY AND JUST BEFORE MY 18<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY, I RECEIVED A DISCHARGE IN THE MAIL, "ERRONEOUS ENLISTMENT", 20/40 RIGHT EYE AND A HEART MURMUR AND THEY DIDN'T WANT PILOTS WITH ALL THAT, SO I WAS DISCHARGED AND WENT DOWN AND JOINED THE NAVY. I HAD TO BEG TO GET IN THE NAVY WITH THAT HEART MURMUR.

DWIGHT

WHY THE NAVY INSTEAD OF MARINES OR ARMY OR ANYTHING LIKE THAT?

JIM

A GOOD DRY BED.

DWIGHT

YOU ANSWERED MY QUESTION. I UNDERSTAND PRIORITIES. DID YOU TELL THE NAVY ABOUT THE HEART MURMUR?

JIM

YES I DID AND THE DOCTOR DETECTED IT. AT FIRST, HE TURNED ME DOWN AND THEN I BEGGED AND HE SAID, "GO IN THE CORNER AND JUMP UP AND DOWN ON ONE FOOT FOR A HUNDRED COUNT AND THE OTHER FOOT FOR A HUNDRED COUNT AND COME BACK." I DID, AND HE PASSED ME. IT HAD NO EFFECT, I GUESS.

DWIGHT

EITHER THAT OR THE HEART WAS SO BAD THAT HE DIDN'T CARE ANY MORE. WOW. WHERE DID YOU ACTUALLY JOIN THE NAVY? WAS IT IN MONROE WHEN YOU TOOK THE OATH?

JIM

I KNOW I WENT FOR MY EXAM IN SHREVEPORT BUT I PROBABLY DID JOIN IN MONROE.

DWIGHT

PROBABLY SHREVEPORT.

JIM

I'M PRETTY SURE IT WAS SHREVEPORT. THAT'S WHERE I HAD TO GO FOR THE PHYSICAL.

DWIGHT

WHA DATE WAS THAT? DO YOU REMEMBER?

JIM

I WENT ON ACTIVE DUTY JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>, 1944 SO IT WOULD HAVE BEEN LATE MAY, JUST PRIOR TO MY 18<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY. I THINK I WAS 18 IN THREE DAYS WHEN I WENT ON ACTIVE DUTY.

DWIGHT

CLOSE ENOUGH. WHERE WAS THE FIRST PLACE YOU WENT WHEN YOU JOINED?

JIM

CAMP WALLACE, TEXAS FOR BOOT CAMP. YOU NEVER HEARD OF IT.

DWIGHT

THAT'S OUTSIDE OF HOUSTON.

JIM

RIGHT. NEAR HITCHCOCK, TEXAS. TEN THOUSAND OF US WENT THROUGH THERE AND I 'VE ONLY MET ONE OTHER AMONG THE TEN THOUSAND.

DWIGHT

THE ONLY REASON I KNOW THAT IS BECAUSE I VOLUNTEER FOR THE TEXAS MILITARY FORCE MUSEUM AT CAMP MABRY.

JIM

THE SUMMER OF '44.

DWIGHT

I KNOW HOUSTON. WHAT TOWN IS IT NEAR?

JIM

HITCHCOCK.

DWIGHT

I DON'T KNOW WHERE HITCHCOCK IS. WHAT TOWN IS IT NEAR?

JIM

IT IS NEAR ALVIN.

DWIGHT

OH, I KNOW WHERE ALVIN IS. YOU MEAN, THEY HAD A MILITARY PLACE THERE?

JIM

YES. IT WAS AN ABANDONED ARMY NATIONAL GUARD POST.

DWIGHT

OH, THAT'S RIGHT.

JIM

THEY BROUGHT IT TO LIFE FOR TEN THOUSAND OF US.

DWIGHT

SEEMS KIND OF STRANGE TO HAVE A NAVY BASE NEAR HOUSTON.

JIM

WELL, IT WAS NEAR THE GULF FOR SWIMMING LESSONS. NEAR GALVESTON.

DWIGHT

HOW LONG WERE YOU AT CAMP WALLACE?

JIM

TWELVE WEEKS.

DWIGHT

SO YOU HAD BOOT CAMP THEN. MARINE INSTRUCTORS, WE HAD. IT WAS A TRIAL PROGRAM, TOO MANY AMPHIBIOUS SAILORS HAD BEEN KILLED, STRANDED ASHORE AND COULDN'T DEFEND THEMSELVES SO THEY GAVE US HAND TO HAND COMBAT TRAINING SO, IF WE GOT STRANDED ASHORE, WE COULD DEFEND OURSELVES AND HAVE A FIGHTING CHANCE.

DWIGHT

YOU SAY YOU HAD MARINE DRILL ??????

JIM

YEAH.

DWIGHT

WHEN YOU WENT TO CAMP WALLACE, DID YOU KNOW YOU WERE GONG TO BE IN AMPHIBIOUS?

JIM

YEAH.

DWIGHT

DID YOU HAVE ANY CHOICE?

JIM

NO. ACTUALLY, I DID NOT AT THAT TIME.. BUT WE ALL WERE, THE WHOLE TEN THOUSAND OF US WERE IN AMPHIBIOUS BUT, WE WEREN'T AWARE OF IT.

DWIGHT

THAT'S WHY YOUR BOOT CAMP WAS SO LONG AND SO RIGOROUS.

JIM

NOT SO MUCH AS A MOVIE IN THOSE TWELVE WEEKS.

DWIGHT

I CAN BELIEVE THAT. THE PREVIOUS PERSON HAD ONLY LIKE FIVE WEEKS OF BOOT CAMP. HE HAD A REALLY HIGH MATH SCORE. THEY SAID, WE NEED ELECTRICAL PEOPLE AND THEY SENT PEOPLE TO THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS.

JIM

THEY OFFERED ME THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA FOR 16 WEEKS. I BELIEVE IT WAS RADIO SCHOOL BECAUSE I DID WELL ON MORSE CODE. I TURNED IT DOWN FOR MOTOR MACHINIST, DIESEL MECHANIC IN GULFPORT MISSISSIPPI. IT TURNED OUT TO BE FULL SO I WENT TO SEA INSTEAD.

DWIGHT

LET ME EXPLAIN THE CONCEPT OF MILITARY, WHEN THEY OFFER IT TO YOU. IT'S PRETTY GOOD TO WAIT FOR A BETTER ONE. THAT'S WHY I WAS AN OFFICER.

YOU MISSED OUT ON THE UNIVERSITY OF INDIANA, WHICH WAS A-----

JIM

A RADIO SCHOOL.

DWIGHT

A REAL GOOD DEAL.

JIM

TOP OUT OF THE CLASS. TOP RADIO SCHOOL. TOP OUT OF THERE AND WENT TO RADAR SCHOOL. I COULD HAVE SERVED OUT MY NAVY TIME GOING TO SCHOOL.

DWIGHT

WE'LL LET YOU SLIDE PAST THAT ONE. BOTH MY PARENTS TOLD ME ABOUT THINGS LIKE IF AN OPPORTUNITY LOOKS REALLY GOOD AND IT REALLY IS, DON'T WAIT AROUND FOR A SECOND OPPORTUNITY. THE MILITARY IS NOT GRATEFUL. YOU EITHER TAKE IT OR DON'T TAKE IT BUT, DO SOMETHING.

YOU LEARNED THAT THE HARD WAY. WHERE DID YOU GO AFTER CAMP WALLACE?

JIM

I WENT TO CAMP MACARTHUR IN CALIFORNIA. EAST OF OAKLAND, A RECEIVING STATION, THEN FROM THERE TO CAMP ELLIOT IN SAN DIEGO. I WAS TRANSFERRED TO THIS LSM 40 IN SAN DIEGO. THEY HAD COME THROUGH THE PANAMA CANAL.

DWIGHT

THE QUESTION I HAD FOR YOU, WHEN YOU WERE IN BOOT CAMP, I REALIZE A PERSON FROM LOUISIANA WOULD'NT KNOW WHAT A LSM WAS FROM-----, DID THEY START INTRODUCING THOSE TO YOU AT BOOT CAMP?

JIM

NO. NO SHIPS AT ALL IN BOOT CAMP. NO SHIPBOARD TRAINING AT ALL. KNOT SCHOOL. WE LEARNED HOW TO TIE KNOTS.



DWIGHT

THAT'S INTERESTING. WHEN DID YOU FIND OUT WHAT A LSM WAS?

JIM

WHEN I STEPPED ABOARD IT FOR DUTY.

DWIGHT

THE MILITARY HASN'T CHANGED ANY IN 50 YEARS.

JIM

I HAD NO IDEA WHAT IT WAS.

DWIGHT

YOU KNEW YOU COULD DO AMPHIBIOUS WARFARE BY THIS TIME OR NOT?

JIM

YES. AT THAT TIME, I DID REALIZE WHAT I WAS INTO.

DWIGHT

AND THAT'S BECAUSE YOU SAW A LOT MORE MARINES AND YOU SAW A LOT OF OTHER PEOPLE  
TOO?

JIM

YEAH. WE DID.

DWIGHT

THE MARINES WERE GIVING YOU LOTS OF GUIDANCE ABOUT HOW TO DO THINGS?

JIM

YEAH.

DWIGHT

WHAT WAS LSM LIKE BEFORE YOU GOT THERE?

JIM

IT WAS FAIRLY NEW. IT HAD JUST BEEN COMMISSIONED IN CHARLESTON, SOUTH CAROLINA AND  
HAD COME THROUGH THE CANAL. IT HAD SEEN NO DUTY.

DWIGHT

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN A NICE CLEAN SHIP WHEN YOU GOT ON.

JIM

YES IT WAS. IWO TOOK CARE OF THAT.

DWIGHT

I UNERSTAND THAT. MINOR DETAIL. WHAT WAS YOUR JOB WHEN YOU FIRST GOT THERE?

JIM

I WAS A FIREMAN 2<sup>ND</sup> CLASS. I WAS JUST A HELPER IN THE ENGINE ROOM.

DWIGHT

WELL, THAT'S GOOD TRAINING. WHAT DO THEY CALL IT IN THE MILITARY? NOT ENGINEERS.

JIM

THEY CALLED IT THE BLACK GANG.

DWIGHT

WHO CARRIES THE ACTUAL LAW? WHO RUNS THE ENGINES?

JIM

MOTOR MACHINISTS. I WAS A HELPER FOR THE MOTOR MACHINISTS, OR ELECTRICIAN. IT WAS ALL THE ENGINEERING DIVISION REALLY.

DWIGHT

SO, YOU GOT THIS SHIP BASICALLY AT THIS BASE JUST OUTSIDE SAN DIEGO. THEN WHERE DID YOU GO?

JIM

WE WENT UP THE COAST TO SAN FRANCISCO, PICKED UP A LOAD AND WENT TO PEARL HARBOR.

DWIGHT

DO REMEMBER ABOUT WHAT TIME THAT WAS?

JIM

NO. IT WAS LATE IN 1944. WE WERE IN HAWAII FOR CHRISTMAS.

DWIGHT

OH REALLY. WHERE WERE YOU WHEN YOU OFF LOADED IN HAWAII? WAS IT IN HONOLULU?

JIM

IT WAS ACUALLY IN PEARL HARBOR, OUT NEAR PEARL CITY. THERE WERE THREE LOCKS THERE. THEY CALLED THEM LOCKS. EAST LOCK, I THINK.

DWIGHT

BUT YOU WERE AT PEARL. SHORE LEAVE?

JIM

NOPE. LIBERTY A COUPLE OF TIMES. ENOUGH TO GET THE TATTOO. IN HONOLULU.

DWIGHT

WHAT WAS THAT LIKE OR A KID FROM KELLY, OUT SIDE THE WORLD?

JIM

I DON'T THINK I HAD EVER VENTURED AS FAR AS TEXAS.

DWIGHT

IT WAS AMAZING WHAT WORLD WAR II DID. HOW DID YOU LIKE HONOLULU?

JIM

I LIKED IT VERY MUCH.

DWIGHT

WHEN YOU WERE THERE, DID YOU STAY ON THE SHIP? I GUESS YOU COULDN'T GET TO THE HOTEL,

JIM

WE COULD JUST GO FOR A FEW HOURS ON LIBERTY.

DWIGHT

BETTER THAN NOTHING THOUGH. NOW, WE OFFLOAD OUR CARGO, IT'S CHRISTMAS. I ASSUME THE FOOD WAS PRETTY DAMN GOOD BY THIS POINT. I DON'T KNOW ABOUT LSM'S. DID THEY HAVE THEIR OWN GALLIES ON THEM?

JIM

YES, WE DID . TWO COOKS.

DWIGHT

HOW WERE YOUR COOKS?

JIM

GREAT. ONE TURNED OUT TO BE OUR HERO.

DWIGHT

WE'LL TALK ABOUT THAT. DIDN'T KNOW IF THE LSM HAD THEIR OWN COOKS OR NOT.

JIM

A VERY SMALL GALLY.

DWIGHT

AND THEY WERE GOOD COOKS. THAT'S WHAT MATTERS. THE MEALS WERE HOT AND NOURISHING AND GOOD.

JIM

RIGHT.

DWIGHT

YOU LEFT PEARL JUST AFTER CHRISTMAS?

JIM

BY NEW YEAR'S WE LEFT THE ISLANDS TRAINING MARINES. THE AMTRACKS. WHATEVER THEY CALLED THEM.

DWIGHT

DID YOU CARRY L V T s ON THE ----- WHAT DID YOU CARRY?

JIM

THAT'S WHAT WE CARRIED. THAT'S THE ONLY MILITARY EQUIPMENT WE CARRIED FOR OUR FIGHTING VEHICLES. THAT IS NOT WHAT WE TOOK TO IWO.

DWIGHT

BASICALLY, YOU CARRIED THE L V T's AND YOU LAUNCHED THEM ONTO THE SHORES.

JIM

IN HAWAII. WE PICKED THEM UP AT SEA TOO. THEY COULD COME ABOARD. THAT'S WHEN WE REPAID THE MARINES FOR BEING UGLY TO US. WE WOULD LOWER THE RAMP INTO THE WATER BUT NOT DEEP ENOUGH SO THEY WOULD TAKE A TUMBLE. THEY WANTED TO KILL US.

DWIGHT

THE FUNNY THING, AFTER YOU DO THAT A COUPLE OF TIMES, BOTH SIDES GET REAL MELLOW. OK, YOU TRAINED WITH THEM. DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU TRAINED?

JIM

IT WAS ON THE BIG ISLAND. THAT'S ALL I KNOW. I KNOW ALL THE YANKEES ABOARD WENT CRAZY BECAUSE THEY SAW SNOT UP ON THE MOUNTAIN. IT DIDN'T MEAN MUCH TO THIS SOUTHERN BOY.

DWIGHT

NOW, A QUESTION FOR YOU. YOU TRAIN WITH THESE GUYS TO BEGIN THE NEW YEAR, THEN, WHAT HAPPENS?

JIM

SHORTLY AFTER, WE PICKED UP OUR LOAD FOR IWO, WHICH WAS A CRANE, A BULLDOZER, A CHERRY PICKER, A BIG SIX BY TRUCK. THAT TYPE EQUIPMENT FOR BUILDING THE LANDING STRIPS.

DWIGHT

YOU GOT THE CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT.

JIM

THE MARINES WE CARRIED, A COMPLMENT OF MARINES, PROBABLY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF FORTY FIVE WERE CALLED "PIONEERS". THEY WERE THE EQUIVILENT OF ARMY ENGINEERS. THEY WERE SEABEES, CALLED PIONEERS.

DWIGHT

THEY ARE THE GUYS THAT WERE THERE FIRST IN TO BUILD EVERTHING. DON'T BUILD WITH HEAVY EQUIPMENT BECAUSE THAT'S UNAMERICAN AND THE LAST ONES OUT. I ALMOST GOT INTO THE COMBAT ENGINEERS. I UNDERSTAND THE CONCEPT.

JIM

THE TWO PIECES OF EQUIPMENT THAT WE CARRIED WERE VERY IMPORTANT. ONE WAS A LITTLE QUARTER TON TRACKED VEHICLE. IT WAS VERY VALUABLE.

DWIGHT

OH, YOU ACTUALLY HAD ONE OF THOSE THINGS. WE'LL HAVE TO TALK ABOUT IT.

JIM

IT WAS VERY VALUABLE IN THE BATTLE. IT IS THE ONLY PIECE OF EQUIPMENT THAT WAS USEABLE THAT WE TOOK OVER THERE. ALL THE REST SANK ON THE BEACH IN THE VOLCANIC ASH.

DWIGHT

THAT WAS BECAUSE THE WEASEL WAS SO LIGHT WEIGHT.

JIM

RIGHT. EXACTLY

DWIGHT

OUR MUSEUM HAS ONE.

JIM

IT WAS FAST. THEY SHOVELED AMMO TO THE FRONT. IT WAS INVALUABLE. THE OTHER PIECE OF EQUIPMENT WE TOOK, WAS ROLLS OF THE MATTING FOR LANDING STRIPS. THAT'S WHAT GOT US INSIDE ON D-DAY, JUST ON THE BEACH ON D-DAY THEY NEEDED IT DESPERATELY. WE DIDN'T UNLOAD IT D-DAY. WE DID THE DAY AFTER. D+ 1.

WE HAD A COUPLE OF ROLLS OF THAT MATS.

DWIGHT

NOW, LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS. YOU NOW HAVE ALL THIS EQUIPMENT. YOU OBVIOUSLY KNOW WHERE IT IS GOING TO GO. WHEN DID YOU FIND OUT YOU WERE GOING TO IWO?

JIM

AT FIRST, WE WENT TO ENIWETOK, I THINK. THEN DOWN TO SAIPAN. I BELIEVE IT WAS SAIPAN OR GUAM. I BELIEVE WHEN WE LEFT THERE, IS WHEN WE LEARNED, IWO. WE WERE EN ROUTE TO ISO. OF COURSE, WE ONLY TRAVELED ABOUT 10 KNOTS SO IT TOOK US WEEKS TO GET ANYWHERE. IT TOOK US TWO WEEKS TO FROM SAN FRANCISCO TO HAWAII.

DWIGHT

ABOUT HOW BIG WAS THE LCM?

JIM

TWO HUNDRED AND THREE FEET.

DWIGHT

LONG. DO YOU WANT TO GUESS HOW WIDE IT WAS?

JIM

ABOUT THIRTY, I WOULD THINK. IT WAS AN OPEN DECK. IT WAS A SEAGOING TRUCK, FLAT BOTTOM. WE CALLED IT A FLOATING BATHTUB.

DWIGHT

A NECESSARY THING YOU NEED.

JIM

FIVE MEDIUM TANKS OR THREE HEAVY TANKS WE COULD CARRY.

DWIGHT

NOW, LET'S TALK ABOUT THIS. DID THEY TELL YOU GUYS WHY AMERICA OR THE MARINES WERE GOING TO TAKE IWO?

JIM

NO. WE HAD NO IDEA. JUST KNEW WE WERE GOING TO SOME ISLAND.

DWIGHT

I ASKED THAT AGAIN BECAUSE SOME OF THE COMMANDERS TO THE MARINES ABOUT THE AIR FORCE B-29's.

JIM

I'LL TELL YOU SOMETHING YOU MIGHT WANT TO TOUCH ON LATER. I WENT TO A DEDICATION IN TUSCON, THE ?????? MUSEUM. THE 330<sup>TH</sup> BOMB GROUP, 29's, DEDICATED A PLAQUE OF GRATITUDE TO THE MARINES FOR TAKING IWO. I HAVE THAT IN MY OTHER PACKET, A PICTURE OF THAT THING, FROM MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>, '45 UNTIL THE END OF THE WAR, WHICH WAS LATE IN '45. OVER 2,400 B-29's MADE EMERGENCY LANDINGS ON IWO, CARRYING OVER 25,000 AIRMEN IN A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS. I ACTUALLY WITNESSED THE FIRST B-29 LANDING, THE "*DYNAMITE*" (CORRECT ???). ON MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>.

DWIGHT

YOU ARE DOING IT FOR ME. YOU ARE GETTING AHEAD OF ME.

JIM

I DID MY HOMEWORK, THEN FORGOT TO BRING IT.

DWIGHT

I'LL TALK FOR HOURS NOW. YOU GOT ME TURNED ON. WHEN DID YOU FIRST SEE IWO?

JIM

D-DAY MORNING. WE ARRIVED ABOUT 4:00 AM. ALL WE COULD SEE WAS THE BOMBARDMENT WAS UNDER WAY; THE BATTLESHIPS AND CRUISERS, I GUESS.

DWIGHT

WAS THE BOMBARDMENT IMPRESSIVE?

JIM

VERY. WE WERE EXCITED BECAUSE WE SAID, AN ANT COULDN'T BE ALIVE AFTER THIS. WE KNEW THAT IT HAD BEEN BOMBED BY AIR FORCE FOR A LONG PERIOD BEFORE. WE WEREN'T WORRIED AT ALL.

DWIGHT

WHEN DID YOU HIT THE ISLAND?

JIM  
1428 HOURS.

DWIGHT  
YOU KNEW THIS?

JIM  
YEAH. I HAD TO LOG IN.

DWIGHT  
MORE IMPORTANTLY, YOU LANDED ABOUT 6 OR 7 HOURS AFTER THE INTIAL STRIKE.

JIM  
I THINK THE INITIAL WAS 9:00 AM, SOMETHING LIKE THAT. ABOUT FIVE HOURS INTO IT.  
FOR THAT MATTER, WE WOULDN'T HAVE GONE IN FOR DAYS WITHOUT THAT MATTING.

DWIGHT  
WE WANT TO START GETTING INTO THIS. TELL ME ABOUT THE BLACK SAND.

JIM  
ONE MARINE SAID IT WAS LIKE TRYING TO WALK IN A BAG OF OATS. THAT'S A PRETTY GOOD  
DESCRIPTION. YOU TAKE A STEP FORWARD AND HALF WAY BACK. YOU GO HALF WAY UP TO YOU KNEES  
AND THERE WAS ABOUT A 45 DEGREE ANGLE. YOU JUST COULDN'T MAKE ANY PROGRESS AT ALL. I  
VIVIDLY REMEMBER GOING INTO THE BEACH, WHAT I SAW, MARINES IN THE WATER THRESHING ABOUT.  
WOUNDED AND A FEW FLOATING DEAD. THE LIVE ONES WERE, THIS WAS PROBABLY FIVE FEET AT 45  
DEGREE ANGLE, THEIR FEET WERE ACTUALLY IN THE WATER. THEY WERE FIGHTING THE ENEMY. THEY  
WERE PINNED DOWN.

DWIGHT  
WHAT BEACH DID YOU GUYS LAND ON?

JIM  
BEACH TWO, WHICH IS THE THIRD BEACH DOWN FROM MT. SURIBACHI. I HAVE THAT IN MY  
PACK.

DWIGHT  
I HAVE HEARD HORROR STORIES ABOUT HOW DIFICULT IT IS TO WALK WITH ALL THE WEIGHT OF  
THE EQUIPMENT. TELL ME ABOUT WHEN YOU LAND. WHAT HAPPENED?

JIM  
IT PROBABLY SUNK IN THIS VOLACANIC ASH. I HAVE PICTURES OF THAT IN MY CAR.

DWIGHT  
DO YOU REALLY?

JIM

YEAH. I HOPE YOU HAVE A COPY OF THAT FOR THE NIMITZ MUSEUM. ALL YOUR EQUIPMENT EXCEPT THAT WEASEL WENT DOWN? DID YOU GUYS TRY TO RETRIEVE IT?

JIM

IT WAS OF NO VALUE. IT WAS BEACH LITTER. IT GOT TO THE POINT AFTER A COUPLE OF DAYS, WE ACTUALLY HAD TROUBLE FINDING AN OPEN SPOT ON THE BEACH TO BEACH THE SHIP. WE HAD TO GO UP AND DOWN THE BEACH TO FIND A SPOT BIG ENOUGH TO GET IN THERE.

DWIGHT

BECAUSE OF ALL THE LITTER. I HEARD THAT AND I HAVE SEEN PICTURES OF IT. YOU ARE THE FIRST GUY I HAVE TALKED TO ABOUT THAT. WHAT DID THAT DO TO YOUR TIMETABLE, JUST GOING UP AND DOWN THE BEACH TRYING TO FIND A SPOT?

JIM

THAT, I COULDN'T ANSWER.

DWIGHT

BOY. THAT HAD TO SCREW UP A LOT OF THINGS. WHEN YOU LANDED YOUR EQUIPMENT AND WATCHED IT SINK. HOW ABOUT THE WEASEL. LET'S TALK ABOUT IT.

JIM

IT DID NOT SINK. IT WAS PRETTY WIDE TRACKED. YOU SAY YOU HAVE ONE. IT IS A QUARTER TON VEHICLE. IT DIDN'T EVEN ATTEMPT TO SINK. MAYBE AN INCH OR TWO.

DWIGHT

EVEN THEN, THERE WEREN'T TOO MANY WEASELS OUT THERE.

JIM

THAT'S THE ONLY ONE I EVER SAW.

DWIGHT

YOU WERE LUCKY THEN. BASICALLY THEN, YOU ARE TRYING TO TELL ME THEN, YOU MOVED EVERYTHING WITH A WEASEL.

JIM

TAKING AMMO TO THE FRONT. I GUESS IT WAS THE HELP THEY NEEDED UP THERE. WE COULD SEE IT. THE ISLAND WAS AT AN ANGLE. IT WAS DAWN AND OFFSHORE EVEN-----WE WEREN'T IN THERE. WE COULD SEE IT. IT WAS LIKE A SHOW GOING ON OVER THERE. WE COULD SEE THAT WEASEL RUNNING BACK AND FORTH.

DWIGHT

WHEN YOU WOULD GO BACK TO RELOAD?

JIM

TO CARGO SHIPS.



DWIGHT

THEN, YOU WOULD GO OUT TO MEET MR. WEASEL SOMEWHERE?

JIM

RIGHT. THEN ALL THE MARINES WE CARRIED WERE TRANSFERRED----- WERE SENT TO THE FRONT BECAUSE THEY HAD NO EQUIPMENT TO OPERATE WITH SO, THEY WERE USED AS FIGHTING MARINES. MOST OF THEM GOT KILLED. THE ONES WHO SURVIVED WOULD COME DOWN TO THE BEACH WHEN THEY SAW US AT THE BEACH AND GIVE US UPDATES.

THEY WERE ABOARD MY SHIP PROBABLY UP TO SIX WEEKS MAYBE. WE WERE PRETTY WELL AQUAINTED.

DWIGHT

WHAT WAS THE JAPANESE FIRE LIKE AT THIS TIME WHEN YOU LANDED? INTENSE?

JIM

VERY. WE MADE A POWER RUN TO THE BEACH AT TWO THIRDS AHEAD ON THE SHIP TO DRIVE IT UP ON THE SHORE. WE HIT IT AND IT WAS A PRETTY GOOD JOLT-----TO DRIVE IT UP. THEY WAITED UNTIL THE SHIPS WOULD GET INTO THIS POWER RUN AND YOU WERE TOTALLY HELPLESS. THEN THEY OPENED WITH CROSSFIRE WITH 30 CALIBER MACHINE GUNS. THEY USED HOLLOW NOSED. ABOUT EVERY THIRD ROUND WAS A DUM-DUM, WE CALLED THEM. THEY REALLY MADE A MESS OF A GUY. WE HAD ONE OFFICER KILLED, ONE OFFICER WOUNDED AND NINE ENLISTED MEN WOUNDED IN SEVEN MINUTES ON D-DAY. THE FIRST TIME WE HIT THE BEACH. THEY MOWED US DOWN GOOD.30 CALIBER MACHINE GUN CROSS FIRE AND HEAVY MORTAR FIRE.

DWIGHT

DID YOU ACTUALLY GET HIT BY A MORTAR?

JIM

YES. WE HAD WOUNDED FOR MORTAR SHRAPNEL.

DWIGHT

HOW MANY RUNS DID YOU MAKE INTO THE BEACH.

JIM

TOTAL? I NEVER COUNTED. IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD OF TWENTY. IT WAS A BUNCH. AS SOON AS THEY COULD RELOAD US OUT AT THE SHIPS. WE HAD THAT OPEN TANK DECK SO WITH THE CRANES, THEY WOULD DROP IT IN AND AWAY WE WOULD GO. WE CARRIED, I REMEMBER, CLOTHING, BOXES OF MARINE UNIFORMS. WHICH WERE VALUABLE BECAUSE THEY WERE PRETTY SCRUFFY AFTER A COUPLE OF DAYS. WE CARRIED FOOD, C-RATIONS, WHICH WE GAVE OUR FOOD TO THE MARINES. THAT'S WHY I SAY, OUR COOK WAS A HERO. ONE OF THE NINE WOUNDED ENLISTED MEN WAS THE SECOND COOK, WHICH LEFT US ONE AND THE GUY WORKED AROUND THE CLOCK WHEN THAT WAS NECESSARY TO COOK FOR THE MARINES. WE WOULD GO ASHORE AND GATHER THEM TO COME IN. AND SHOWERS, THEIR SHAVING GEAR. WE MADE THEM HUMAN AGAIN. 17

DWIGHT

THAT'S A GOOD DEAL. I HOPE THAT COOK GOT SOMETHING FOR THAT.

JIM

THE WORD GOT OUT TO THE MARINES. WHEN THEY WOULD SEE THE LINES FORMING, THEY WOULD GO DOWN THERE AND GET SOMETHING HOT, DRY UNIFORMS.

DWIGHT

YOU ARE LIKE SANTA CLAUS.

JIM

THE MARINES DID REALLY APPRECIATE IT.

DWIGHT

IF YOU HAVE NOT BEEN IN THE MILITARY, PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT FOOD MEANS. I HAVE EATEN C-RATIONS, MRE'S BUT I DON'T CARE ----- A CUP OF COFFEE. IT'S HOT, WHAT MATTERS.

JIM

ARE YOU AWARE THIS VOLCANIC ASH WAS HOT? I MEAN, ACTUALLY HOT. THE MARINES WOULD TAKE C-RATIONS, THE CAN, DIG ABOUT SIX INCH HOLES, BURY IT A FEW MINUTES AND HAVE HOT CHOW.

DWIGHT

I HAD HEARD THAT. I DIDN'T KNOW IF IT WAS TRUE OR NOT.

JIM

YES, IT'S TRUE. THEY ALSO, THERE WERE PITS OR LITTLE POOLS OF WATER, SULPHUR, IT SMELLED TERRIBLE, BUT THEY WOULD TAKE THEIR BOOTS OFF AND SOAK THEIR FEET IN SULPHUR WATER. IT WAS WARM. THE WATER ITSELF WAS HOT. STEAM ROSE FROM THE WATER.

DWIGHT

AT LEAST, THEY HAD HOT C-RATIONS.

JIM

YEAH. THE CANNED MEAT THEY COULD EAT. IT WAS PRETTY HOT. IT WAS HOT TO YOUR FEET TO WALK WITH SHOES. IN SPOTS. IT WASN'T THAT WAY ALL OVER. IT WAS LIKE A MOONSCAPE. IT DIDN'T SEEM EARTHLY AT ALL.

DWIGHT

HOW LONG DID YOUR WEASEL SURVIVE THIS WHOLE MESS?

JIM

I DO NOT KNOW BUT I KNOW FOR WEEKS. IT WAS STILL GOING. IT WAS GOING PRETTY FAST. THAT THING COULD DO ABOUT SIXTY ON DRY LAND.

DWIGHT

SO, IT WAS A HAPPY CAMPER. THAT IS AMAZING. I DIDN'T KNOW ABOUT IWO. I READ THAT THE MARINES SOME OTHER PLACE WERE MADLY IN LOVE WITH THAT WEASEL.

JIM

IT WAS A GREAT MACHINE. FANTASTIC. THEY TOOK IT ASHORE ON THE WAY TO IWO FOR A MARINE OFFICER ABOARD. I BELIEVE THAT WAS AT GUAM. WE WERE ANCHORED OFF OUT THERE. HE TOOK IT ASHORE AND GOT DRUNK AND CAME BACK. HE ALMOST BROKE HIS LEG ON OUR DECK.

DWIGHT

WE WERE GOING TO TALK ABOUT A WHOLE BUNCH OF THINGS. LET'S GET BACK TO SOME OF THE OTHER STUFF I NEED TO ASK YOU ABOUT.

HOW LONG DID YOU RUN THIS INTO THE BEACH, BACK AND FORTH?

JIM

FROM FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup> UNTIL MARCH 29.

DWIGHT

SO, YOU WERE THERE FOR THE WHOLE DEAL. I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT.

JIM

I BELIEVE THEY DECLARED IT SECURE EARLY. I THINK IT ACTUALLY ENDED ABOUT MARCH 26.

DWIGHT

YOU WERE THERE FOR THE WHOLE THING. VERY FEW SHIPS DID THAT. ONLY THE AMPHIBIOUS GUYS DID THAT. YOU GUYS MUST HAVE BEEN WORKING REALLY HARD.

JIM

WE WERE THE WORK HORSES. EVERYTHING THEY USED, WE CARRIED. JUST EVERYTHING. THERE WERE THIRTY OF US. L S M 's, ACTUALLY THIRTY ONE AT THE END. ANOTHER CAME LATE.

DWIGHT

THE MARINES LEARNED A LOT, A LOT AT TARAWA, THEY LEARNED THE HARD WAY AND THEY LEARNED THOSE L V T 's ARE A GOD SEND. THEY LEARNED THAT THIS NONSENSE OF TRYING TO OFFLOAD TO SOME KIND OF SHIP AND THAT SHIP OFFLOAD TO MARINES IS KIND OF STUPID. YOU NEED TO SAY, OFFLOAD TO A SHIP AND SOMEHOW GET IT DIRECTLY TO THE BEACH WHERE THE MARINES ARE. WITH THE L S M's AND THE LITTLE WEASELS-----

JIM

WE WERE A SEAGOING TRUCK. DELIVERY TRUCK.

DWIGHT

YOU SAID YOU CARRIED FOOD, AMMO. WHAT ELSE?

JIM

I REMEMBER WE BROACHED ON THE BEACH. NOT TOUCHING WATER, HALF THE LOAD WAS FIFTY

FIVE GALLON DRUMS OF AVIATION FUEL. THE OTHER HALF WAS FIVE HUNDRED POUND BOMBS. WE WERE DELIVERING THAT. THAT WAS TO BE USED BY THE ARMY AIR FORCE, FOR P-51's, MUSTANGS THAT WERE FLYING ESCORT FOR THE B-29's. WE WERE SITTING HIGH AND DRY FOR SOME TIME. I COULD LOOK AT THE LOG BOOK AND TELL. IT WAS OVERNIGHT. THERE WAS OF COURSE, A SMOKE SCREEN AS THERE ALWAYS WAS. SO, WE COULDN'T SEE ANYTHING BUT WE COULD HEAR THE JAPANESE PLANES OVERHEAD, THE ENGINES AND HEAR THE BOMBS FALLING AND BURSTING. ALL WE COULD SEE WAS WHITE., THE SMOKE SCREEN. AND RED. WE WOULD GET A BRILLIANT RED. SOME FEW SHIPS HAD RADAR CONTROLLED GUNS AND OUR ORDERS FIRE IN THE DIRECTION OF TRACERS. YOU TELL THAT TO A BUNCH OF CRAZY SAILORS AND YOU GOT A SKY FULL OF RED.

DWIGHT

HOW DID YOU FINALLY GET OFF?

JIM

ALL THE TUGS THEY HAD WORKED ON US. I THINK THERE WERE FIVE. A COUPLE OF PRETTY GOOD SIZED ONES AND THREE LITTLE ONES. THEY HAD TO SEESAW US OFF. THEY TRIED TO PULL BUT, THAT WOULDN'T WORK SO ONE PULLED AND THE OTHER SLACKED OFF. WE REALLY PLOWED INTO THAT. TRYING TO GET AWAY WITH THAT LETHAL LOAD, WHEN THAT AIR RAID STARTED.

DWIGHT

YOU HAD TO SEESAW THINGS OFF WITH THOSE BIG TUGS BEFORE YOU BURIED YOURSELVES.

JIM

YEAH. WE WERE ON THERE PRETTY GOOD.

DWIGHT

LET'S CONTINUE TO GO THROUGH HERE NOW. I'VE HEARD THAT THE SIZE OF THE INVASION FLEET WAS REALLY MASSIVE AND VERY IMPRESSIVE. DID THAT IMPRESS A LITTLE BOY FROM LOUISIANA?

JIM

THERE WERE OVER EIGHT HUNDRED SHIPS OUT THERE IS WHAT I HEARD. ONE OF THESE PICTURES THAT I HAVE, YOU CAN SEE 'EM, JUST ALMOST SOLID SHIPS. THIS ONE PICTURE IS EXCELLENT. IT HAS, I ASSUME HAS OUR CRANE MIRE, A BULLDOZER, AN L S T, OUR SHIP, 40 IS RIGHT ON THERE IN THE BACKGROUND, ON THE HORIZON IS ALL THESE SHIPS.

DWIGHT

THEY USE THIS AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT SAND WAS DOING TO THE EQUIPMENT. THAT WOULD MAKE SENSE THEN.

JIM

JEEPS WOULD GO IN ALL THE WAY TO THE FRAME

DWIGHT

I HEARD THAT. I FIGURED THE JEEPS WOULD AT LEAST BE LIGHT ENOUGH TO FLOAT BUT I GUESS NOT. WHEN ALL THIS EQUIPMENT GOT BURIED, WAS THERE EVER ANY WAY TO RETRIEVE IT.

JIM

IT WAS RUINED FOR THE MOST PART EVEN IF THEY TRIED TO RETRIEVE IT. IT WAS SUCH A GRIT, THIS VOLCANIC ASH. IT'S TERRIBLE STUFF. IT'S LIKE CINDER.

DWIGHT

I KNOW YOU HAD THE MATS AND WE TALKED ABOUT THAT. WERE YOU GUYS EXPECTING IT TO BE THAT BAD?

JIM

NO.

DWIGHT

LET'S GET BACK TO THE MATS. WHAT DID THEY TELL YOU ABOUT THE MATS?

JIM

THAT THEY WERE TO BE A TEMPORARY LANDING STRIP. THAT'S WHAT WE CARRIED THEM FOR.

DWIGHT

YOU CARRIED THEM FOR THE AIRCRAFT, NOT FOR THE BEACH?

JIM

YEAH. THEY WERE FOR THE USE OF THESE PIONEERS IN REBUILDING THE LANDING STRIPS.

DWIGHT

DID YOU ACTUALLY USE THE MATS AT THE AIR STRIP OR JUST USE THEM ON THE BEACH.

JIM

THEY WERE USED ON THE BEACH. THEY NEVER MADE IT OFF THE BEACH

DWIGHT

HOW DID THEY WORK ON THE BEACH?

JIM

I DO NOT KNOW THAT. I NEVER SAW THEM IN USE. I'M SURE THEY WERE BUT I DIDN'T SEE THEM. WHEN WE WENT IN THE SECOND, D + 1 THE FIRST TIME IT WAS TO GET THOSE MATS OFF AND SOME FLAME THROWING TANKS ASHORE. WE JUST THERE LONG ENOUGH TO UNLOAD THE MATS AND AWAY WE WENT. WE WENT BACK IN THAT EVENING AND GOT RID OF THE EQUIPMENT AND THE MARINES.

SO, YOU JUST OFF LOADED THE MATS AND GOT SOMEBODY TO FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO WITH THEM.

JIM

IT MUST HAVE WORKED. THEY HAD TANKS AND FLAME THROWERS ASHORE SO I GUESS I'M SURE IT HELPED.

DWIGHT

I'VE SEEN PICTURES LIKE A SHERMAN TANK BURIED IN THE SHORE. THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.

JIM

IT WAS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE WITHOUT THOSE MATS.

DWIGHT

WHAT WERE THE SEAS LIKE. THEY WERE NOT SUPER ROUGH BUT THEY WERE NOT LAGOON.

JIM

THAT'S WHAT IT DID. IT BROACHED US. IT WAS BAD. IT WAS REALLY BAD, THE ROUGHNESS. WE WENT THROUGH SEVERAL PROPELLERS, FIVE I BELIEVE. SEE, WE HAD A STERN ANCHOR THAT WE WOULD DROP TO PULL OURSELVES OFF. PROBABLY A ONE INCH CABLE OR SO. AT TIMES, WE WOULD BACK OVER OUR OWN CABLE IN HASTE. WE HAD TO GO ABOARD A FLOATING DRY DOCK THERE AND CHANGE PROPELLERS. IT WOULD TAKE A DAY. A LONG PROCESS.

WE DID THAT. I ACTUALLY HAD PICTURES OF THAT TOO. I DON'T THINK I HAVE IT WITH ME. IN THE DRY DOCK, CHANGING THE SCREWS.

DWIGHT

I WAS HOPING THERE WAS AN EASIER WAY OF FIXING THEM. I GUESS NOT. I WAS HOPING YOU COULD SEND SOME DIVERS FOR A QUICK FIX BUT OBVIOUSLY NOT.

JIM

NO. YOU ARE UP UNDER. YOU COULDN'T REACH THEM. HAD TO GO TO THE FLOATING DRY DOCK. I GUESS THEY SAW IT COMING. THEY HAD AT LEAST ONE THERE.

DWIGHT

THAT WAS ANOTHER THING THE MARINES LEARNED. THE EQUIPMENT HAD TO BE AS CLOSE AS YOU CAN TO THE BATTLE. THAT WAS SMART ON THEIR PART.

YOU GOT ALL THIS STUFF FIXED AND GOT ALL THESE RUNS OUT. WE KNOW ABOUT THE ROUGH SEA, WHAT WAS THE WEATHER LIKE? WAS IT COLD, TOO HOT-----?

JIM

IT WAS PRETTY COLD.

DWIGHT

WERE YOU GUYS PREPARED FOR THAT?

JIM

NO. THAT WAS PRETTY FAR NORTH, REALLY. IWO, IN THE PACIFIC. IT WAS PRETTY COOL OUT THERE.

DWIGHT

WHAT KIND OF GEAR DID YOU HAVE. JUST REGULAR—? WERE YOU COLD?

JIM

YEAH. AT TIMES. ESPECIALLY AT NIGHT, STANDING WATCH. THERE IS ANOTHER INTERESTING THING. THE JAPANESE CAME UP WITH THIS SCHEME OF HAVING SWIMMERS, SWIM OUT AND COME UP THE FANTAIL OF THE SHIP WHILE WE WERE BEACHED. THERE WERE LADDERS THERE AND THEN CUT THROATS. THEY PUT A WATCH BACK THERE, A CREW MEMBER AND THEN ALL THEY DID WAS TO WAIT UNTIL HE WAS LOOKING ANOTHER DIRECTION AND GET HIM FIRST. FINALLY, THEY PUT US BACK TO BACK, ACTUALLY MAKING PHYSICAL CONTACT, TWO MEN WITH THOMPSON MACHINE GUNS ON THE FANTAIL. THAT, I THINK STOPPED IT.

DWIGHT

I WAS WONDERING WHY THEY STARTED DOING THAT.

JIM

I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY GUYS WERE LOST BEFORE THEY GOT WISE TO THAT. THEY ACTUALLY GOT SOME OF THE AIR FORCE AND THEY WERE INTENSE AND THEY WOULD SLIP IN AND SLIT THROATS.

DWIGHT

BAD FOR MORALE, I WOULD THINK. IN TERMS OF SEA WORTHINESS, HOW WAS THIS L S M?

JIM

IT WAS PRETTY TOUGH. IT TOOK THE BEATING, BUT IT WAS A VERY ROUGH RIDE, TOTALLY FLAT BOTTOMED, JUST LIKE THIS TABLE TOP. IT ONLY TOOK ABOUT SIX FEET OF WATER, LOADED. IT JUST RODE THE TOP OF THE WATER LIKE A MATCH BOX. YOU LEARNED TO LIKE THAT. THAT FAST SNAP AND ROLL. IT WAS OVER AND UNDER. THEN I RODE A CRUISER ONCE TO OR FROM PEARL. I HATED THAT. THAT'S TOO SLOW. I WAS WAITING FOR EVER TO MAKE THAT ROLL.

DWIGHT

IT'S WHAT YOU GET USED TO. YOU READ SOME OF THESE STORIES, IT'S AMAZING. I WILL INTERVIEW SOMEBODY FROM A DESTROYER AND THEY WILL SIT HERE AND SAY, "OH, MY GOD, THE SEAS WERE HORRIBLE. I WOULD INTERVIEW THE SAME BATTLE ON A CARRIER AND THE SEAS WERE OK.

YOU LIKE THIS L S M THEN. IT COULD TAKE A LOT OF PUNISHMENT.

JIM

WE HAD FIFTY MEN AND FIVE OFFICERS. SMALL CREW. IT WAS CASUAL. REALLY, ALL CIVILIANS AND MOST, JUST KIDS. IT WAS NOT LIKE NAVY DUTY AT ALL, THE REAL NAVY. WHAT I WOULD CALL THE REAL NAVY.

DWIGHT

WE TALKED ABOUT A BUNCH OF THINGS. WE TALKED ABOUT THE MATS, WE TALKED ABOUT THE ROUGH SEA, SAND, WEATHER. WERE YOU THERE OR COULD YOU SEE THE FLAG RAISING?

JIM

YES I DID. BOTH. I HAPPENED TO BE LOOKING AT THE FIRST FLAG WHEN IT CAME DOWN AND I ASSUMED THE JAPANESE TOOK IT DOWN. I THOUGHT, OH NO, THE JAPANESE HAVE TAKEN OVER AGAIN. WITHIN SECONDS, UP WENT THE BIGGER FLAG. I KNOW QUIET A BIT ABOUT THE FLAG STUFF.

DWIGHT

HOW DID EVERYBODY REACT WHEN THAT WENT UP?"

JIM

WE BLEW OUR WHITSLE UNTIL IT WAS RUINED. WE JUST WENT CRAZY. YOU CAN'T BELIEVE HOW GOOD THAT FLAG LOOKED. WE KNEW, WE WERE RIGHT THERE AT THE BASE OF SURIBACHI AND WE KNEW HOW FEROCIOUS THE FIGHTING WAS ON SURIBACHI. ACTUALLY, IT WAS IN DOUBT. THE OUTCOME WAS VERY MUCH IN DOUBT IN OUR MINDS ANYWAY, UNTIL WE SAW THAT FLAG. THAT DID IT. WE KNOW WE GOT IT.

THE FLAG ACTUALLY CAME OFF AN L S T, THE SECOND ONE, THE BIGGER ONE, AND HE WAS ABOUT A HUNDRED YARDS FROM US. I THINK IT WAS RENNY GAGNON (SP????), ONE OF THE FLAG RAISERS CAME DOWN TO THE BEACH SENT BY LT. SHOWER (SP???) AND HE CAME TO MY SHIP FIRST BECAUSE WE WERE NEARER TO THE BASE OF SURIBACHI. OUR O.D. OFFICER OF THE DECK SENT HIM DOWN TO THE LST BECAUSE THE FLAG WOULD BE BIGGER. L S T 779 WAS THE STORY THAT THE SECOND FLAG CAME FROM.

DWIGHT

THAT FLAG STAYED UP UNTIL THE VERY END, I THINK. DID THEY EVER LIGHT IT UP FINALLY ATTHE END?

JIM

I THINK TOWARD THE END, THEY DID. DURING THE BATTLE, WE HAD FLARES UP ALL THE TIME, PHOSPHORUS FLARES. IT WAS BRIGHT WHITE AT NIGHT.

DWIGHT

NOW, DURING THE BATTLE, WERE YOU ALWAYS GOING INTO THAT ONE BEACH THERE? THERE IS REALLY ONLY ONE BEACH THERE.

JIM

THERE WERE ABOUT SIX ADJACENT BUT WE WERE BASICALLY IN THAT AREA THE WHOLE TIME. SOMEWHERE NEAR THAT RED BEACH TWO. I'M SURE AT TIMES, WE WERE OFF A LITTLE BIT.



DWIGHT

NOW LET'S TALK ABOUT----- YOU WERE TALKING ABOUT THE WRICKAGE ON THE SHORE. DID THEY EVER CLEAN IT OR JUST LEAVE IT THERE 'TIL THE END OF THE BATTLE?

JIM

IT WAS STILL THERE WHEN WE LEFT. THERE IS NOTHING THERE NOW. IT IS ALL DEEP SIXED SOMEWHERE.

DWIGHT

I IMAGINE THEY JUST STARTED PULLING IT ALL OFF.

JIM

THE ISLAND HAS ACTUALLY RISEN SINCE THEN. WERE YOU AWARE OF THAT?

DWIGHT

NO.

JIM

I CANNOT RECALL THE NUMBERS. THE NUMBER THAT COMES TO MIND IS 65 FEET. I CAN'T BELIEVE THAT. IT HAS ACTUALLY RISEN UP OUT OF THE OCEAN. IT'S VOLCANIC AND NATURE RAISED HER UP. I HAVE PHOTOGRAPHS OF THAT AT HOME.

DWIGHT

OK. WE WERE TALKING ABOUT A WHOLE BUNCH OF THINGS. WE ARE STILL IN LOVE WITH THE WEASEL. IN CASE YOU ARE WONDERING, OUR WEASLE DOESN'T RUN YET. IT HAS THE EQUIPMENT IN THE MUSEUM. IT DOES RUN. WE ARE GOING TO WORK ON THE WEASLE. TOMORROW IF YOU GO TO THE REINACTMENT, THE SHERMAN TANK IS OURS. MR. WEASLE IS NOT A HAPPY CAMPER.

THE ROUGH SEAS WE TALKED ABOUT, COLD WEATHER. DID YOU EVER SEE ANY OF JAPANESE ROCKETS THAT THEY FIRED?

JIM

I'M NOT SURE I SAW---TRACERS, WHAT I SAW I'M NOT SURE. I COULD SEE THEM COME FROM THE OTHER SIDE OF THE ISLAND. JUST KIND OF OVER THE ISLAND, AT US. THAT WAS AN EERIE FEELING BECAUSE YOU CAN SEE IT COMING BUT YOU DON'T KNOW WHERE IT'S GOING TO LAND. WE COULD HEAR THEM.

DWIGHT

THEN THEY HAD THE SPIGOT (????) MORTAR THAT WOULD TUMBLE THROUGH THE SKY.

JIM

THAT'S WHAT THEY CALLED THEM THE FLYING TRASH CANS. DWIGHT BECAUSE YOU HAD NO IDEA WHERE IT WAS GOING TO GO.

JIM

RIGHT. YOU HAD NO IDEA WHERE IT WAS GOING TO DROP. IT WAS A BIG ARC.

DWIGHT

WE WERE TALKING ABOUT THIS BEFORE AND SOME OF THESE THINGS YOU CAN PREDICT WHERE IT GOES. YOU SEE THIS THING TUMBLE AND YOU SAY, "WE'RE IN TROUBLE." THAT'S BEEN ONE OF THE BIGGEST PROBLEMS WITH THE SCUD MISSILES AT ONE TIME. THEY WERE SO POORLY DESIGNED, THEY DIDN'T FLY RIGHT, WHICH MADE THEM MORE DANGEROUS.

THE OTHER THING IS ABOUT----- OK LET'S TALK ABOUT THE B-29's WHICH WAS THE WHOLE PURPOSE OF THIS EXCERSIZE TO GET IWO JIMA. YOU SAID YOU SAW THE FIRST ONE. TELL ME ALL ABOUT THAT.

JIM

WE SAW IT ON THE APPROACH AND WE THOUGHT THE GUY WAS OUT OF HIS MIND. THEY WERE FIGHTING LIKE CRAZY UP THERE. NO DECENT LANDING STRIP. AT THE TIME, IT WAS A WRECK. I ASKED, WHAT IS HE DOING AND OF COURSE, HE HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO DITCH. HE CAME IN AND HE STAYED A WHILE, THEN HE LEFT AGAIN. HE MADE IT. THE STORY WAS THEY INVITED THE PILOT TO STAY AND SPEND THE NIGHT BECAUSE IT WAS LATE IN THE DAY. HE SAID, "YOU THINK I'M CRAZY? TOO ROUGH FOR ME" AND AWAY HE WENT. WE WATCHED THE TAKE OFF TOO. HE MADE IT.

DWIGHT

WHAT DID YOU GUYS THINK OF THE B-29? IT WAS PROBABLY THE FIRST ONE YOU GUYS SAW OR NOT?

JIM

NO. WE HAD SEEN SOME TAKING OFF AT GUAM AND TINIAN. WE HAD SEE THEM FLY. ONE AFTER ANOTHER. I'VE BEEN ALL OVER THEM IN THE MUSEUM AND THEN OF COURSE, I WORKED FOR THE AIR FORCE IN TUSCON FOR A WHILE RECLAIMING. ACTUALLY I WAS ON THE ONE THAT DROPPED THE SECOND ATOMIC BOMB, THE **BOX CAR**. IT'S AT WRIGHT PATTERSON NOW. IT WAS THERE IN THE DESERT AND WE HAD TO MAKE IT FLYABLE. IT WAS ROUGH AND HOT IN THAT THING. WE DIDN'T THINK IT WOULD FLY BUT IT MADE IT.

DWIGHT

I THINK **BOX CAR** ACTUALLY CAME BACK INTO IWO. THE IRONIC THING ABOUT THE PLANE----- I THINK THE FUEL CPACITY WAS FOR 13, 14, 15 HOURS. FOR MAXIMUM RANGE. THEY FLEW ALL AROUND TO FIND THE TARGET. I THINK THEY DRAGGED INTO IWO AND BASICALLY WHEN THEY LANDED, TWO OF THE ENGINES DIED FOR LACK OF FUEL. THE GUY WAS A HAPPY CAMPER ABOUT IWO. HE NEVER QUESTIONED ABOUT IWO.

JIM

AT THE DEDICATION CEREMONY, SEVERAL SPEAKERS, ONE SAID THAT HE LANDED ON IWO FIVE TIMES. ONE OF THE PILOTS AND DITCHED OFFSHORE ONCE. SO, SIX TIMES, THAT ISLAND SAVED HIM. THE STORY THAT ONE HAD, JOHN JENNINGS, HE WAS SEC. OF STATE OF THE STATE OF ARIZONA AND HE

IS ALSO PAST PRESIDENT OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> AIR FORCE. HE SAID. THEY ONLY HAD ABOUT A THOUSAND B-29's AND THAT THEY WERE BEING LOST PRIOR TO IWO. THEY WERE BEING LOST FASTER THAN THE AIRCRAFT AND CREWS COULD BE REPLACED. HE CREDITED IWO WITH EXPEDITING THE END OF THE WAR. BECAUSE WE WERE LOSING THEM TOO FAST.

DWIGHT

WE HAD GOTTEN TO THE POINT WHERE WE COULD TURN THE AIRPLANE OUT PRETTY FAST, JUST AFTER IWO. THEY GOT THE WAR OVER IN KANSAS AND THEY GOT THAT SOLVED. THE PROBLEM THAT PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE, A CRACK CREW TOOK EXTENSIVE TRAINING.

JIM

AND IT WAS AN EXTREMELY HARD PLANE TO FLY.

DWIGHT

SO, WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT EVEN THOUGH YOU HAD THE AIRPLANES, YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE TRAINED CREW. IT TOOK FOR EVER----- I'VE INTERVIEWED BOMBARDIERS IN THE BOMBARDIER SCHOOLS AND I ASKED THEM HOW LONG THE SCHOOL WAS. YOU COULD PICK A NUMBER AT RANDOM. SOMETIMES, THEY WOULD GET LIKE 8 OR 9 MONTHS OF TRAINING, THEN THEY WOULD STAY THERE AND WORK WITH THEM. ONE GUY, HE BASICALLY WENT TO SCHOOL AND HE LEFT LIKE IN A MONTH. I SAID, "COULD YOU HIT ANYTHING?" HE SAID, "NO." THEN, THE OTHER GUY TOLD ME, WHEN WE GOT THE AIRCRAFT, "WE WERE GOING TO DROP BOMBS AT LOW LEVEL. THIS NORDON OMB SIGHT AND WHO CARES."

THEY SAID, "THE GUYS IN FRONT WOULD DROP, WE WOULD DROP THE SAME PART." YOU COULD PICK A RANDOM NUMBER FOR THIS TRAINING. YOU COULD TELL HOW BAD WE NEEDED BOMBARDIERS, HOW LACK OF TRAINING THEY GOT.

IT WAS AMAZING. I'M GLAD THE GUY BROUGHT UP ABOUT THE FACT THAT HE LANDED ON IWO FIVE TIMES. THE ENGINES TYPICALLY OVERHEATED ON B-29's. THE EARLY ONES AND THEY WERE A REAL PROBLEM. IT WAS GOOD TO HAVE IWO THERE FLOATING AROUND, PARTICULARLY WHEN THE GUYS DIDN'T USE GOOD FUEL MANAGEMENT CORRECTLY. THAT'S IMPRESSIVE.

JIM

ALL THE SPEAKERS THERE HAD USED IWO MULTIPLE TIMES. I REMEMBER THAT FIVE LANDINGS AND ONE DITCH OFF SHORE THAT SAVED THE CREW.

DWIGHT

THE CREWS WERE ABLE, THE AIRPLANE WASN'T.

JIM

I DIDN'T REALIZE THAT UNTIL YEARS LATER. I QUESTIONED THAT. WAS IWO WORTH THE LOSS OF LIFE? I WAS VERY UNHAPPY ABOUT IT. I DIDN'T THINK IT WAS. IT WAS VERY MUCH LATER THAT I LEARNED THAT.

DWIGHT

THE PROBLEM IS----- YEAH, YOU WERE IN THE NAVY BUT FOR INTENTS AND PURPOSES, YOU WERE ON THE FRONT LINE LIKE MARINES. IT'S HARD TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE: I WANT TO SAVE THIS AIRPLANE. WHAT THEY DIDN'T REALIZE WAS THAT IWO WAS A PRACTICE FOR THE INVASION OF JAPAN. I HATE TO SAY THAT BUT THAT'S REALITY. IT WAS NECESSARY TO DO. THERE WAS THE FIRST JAPANESE TERRITORY, OFFICIAL JAPANESE TERRITORY THAT WE TOOK SO THAT WAS IMPORTANT. SECONDLY, EVERY TIME THE B-20's FLEW OVER. THE JAPANESE RADIO BACK HOME WOULD SAY----(MISSED PASSAGE) . WHEN WE GOT IWO, THAT ENDED. THAT WAS CRITICAL. ONCE WE GOT IWO AND WHAT MOST PEOPLE DON'T REALIZE IS THAT BASICALLY, WE HAD DOMINANCE OF THE AIR. WHEN THE B-29'S WANTED TO THEY DIDN'T HAVE TO FLY IN FORMATION. THEY COULD SAVE THE FUEL. BY THAT TIME, THEY WERE BOMBING THE HELL OUT OF JAPAN.

OK. LET'S GET BACK----- DID YOU EVER SEEN THE CLOSE AIR SUPPORT FROM EITHER THE MARINES OR THE NAVY,

JIM

YES I DID.

DWIGHT

WHO WAS THAT?

JIM

IT WAS GREAT. IT WAS IMPRESSIVE JUST TO WATCH THE PRECISION. I ALSO SAW THESE P-51 MUSTANGS COMING IN IN FORMATION. I BELIEVE IN FOURS. THE FIGHTING WAS GOING ON LIKE CRAZY. THEY CAME IN VERY LOW, RIGHT OVER SURIBACHI AS A MATTER OF FACT. THEY WOULD DO----- BARRELL ROLL I GUESS YOU WOULD CALL IT, PEEL OFF ONE AT A TIME. BY THE TIME THEY COMPLETED THAT, THEY WERE ON THE GROUND. I JUST COULDN'T BELIEVE THEY COULD FLY THAT WELL. THEY DIDN'T HAVE TIME TO MESS AROUND THERE. THEY WERE GETTING SHOT AT LIKE CRAZY. THAT WAS FUN TO WATCH. I HAD NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

DWIGHT

THE GOOD THING, THE TROOPS ON THE GROUND COULD SEE THE AIRSTRIP WAS WORTH THE BLOODSHED. IN FACT, THE P-51's ALLEDGEDLY WERE GOING TO BE ESCORTING THE B-29's,

JIM

THEY DID. THEY WERE THEN. THEY ALSO USED THEM TO DO CLOSE AIR SUPPORT.

DWIGHT

IT WAS KIND OF INTERESTING, THE AIR FORCE IS USUALLY NOT DESIGNED FOR THAT. WHAT ELSE CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT IWO.

JIM

OF COURSE, I HEARD ALL KINDS OF RUMORS, LIKE THERE WERE 22,000 JAPANESE AND WE TOOK

216 PRISONERS. TOWARD THE END, THEY BACKED OFF INTO THE OCEAN AND DROWNED OR WERE KILLED. THEY HAD THE AMTRACKS OR WHATEVER THEY CALLED THEM TO CIRCLE AROUND THE END OF THE ISLAND TO SHOOT THEM, THEY WENT RIGHT ON INTO THE WATER RATHER THAN SURRENDER. WE WERE BARBARIANS. IT WAS AN HONOR TO DIE FOR THE EMPEROR.

DWIGHT

HE MADE SURE OF THAT. ANYTHING FUNNY HAPPEN TO YOU THAT WOULD STAND OUT?

JIM

YEAH. NOT REALLY ANY THING COMES TO MIND IMMEDIATELY. A LOT DID.

DWIGHT

OK. YOU LEFT IWO. WHERE DID YOU GO AFTER THAT?

JIM

BACK TO GUAM FOR REPAIRS. WE WERE BEAT ALL TO HELL. NOT FROM THE ENEMY. WE DID TAKE SOME HITS. FROM THE CARGO SHIPS. WHILE TIED TO THEM AND LOADING, WE WOULD DRIFT MAYBE THREE FEET AND BAM! THE ENTIRE PORT SIDE OF THE SHIP WAS JUST CAVED IN.

DWIGHT

DID YOU GUYS TRY TO PUT ANY KIND OF OLD TIRES OR ANYTHING?

JIM

NO. NO FENDERS. EVEN THE STOVE WAS ON THE PORT SIDE AND IT WAS AT A 45 DEGREE ANGLE. THE COOK HAD TO USE A STICK TO KEEP THE OVEN DOORS CLOSED. WE WERE REALLY TORN UP. ALL OF US.

DWIGHT

YOU FIGURE WITH THE ROUGH SEAS. THAT'S GOT TO BE AWESOME TO TRY TO DOWNLOAD ALL THAT EQUIPMENT.

JIM

THEY WOULD LOSE A DOOR. THEY WOULD LOSE A BOW DOOR. JUST FALL OFF IN THE OCEAN. WE WERE SO BEAT UP. THEN THEY COULD ONLY GO IN CIRCLES. COULDN'T STEER STRAIGHT. WE WERE A RAG TAG BUNCH. WE WENT TO GUAM, THE WE WENT TO PEARL. NOBODY WANTED US. THEIR YARDS WERE TAKING REAL SHIPS. WE ENDED UP IN NEWPORT BEACH CALIFORNIA.

DWIGHT

YOU'RE KIDDING. YOU CAME ALL THE WAY BACK.

JIM

WE LEFT FROM NEWPORT BEACH TO GO UP TO SAN FRANCISCO AND WE CAME RIGHT BACK. OF COURSE, THE CIVILIAN BOAT YARDS. WE THOUGHT IT OUR HOME PORT. THAT'S WHEN I LEFT THE SHIP. WE WENT ON LEAVE. HALF THE CREW FIRST AND WHEN THEY GOT BACK, I WAS IN THE SECOND HALF. WHEN I RETURNED. I WAS TRANSFERRED OFF. THE SHIP WAS REPAIRED OVER A PERIOD OF TIME AND THEY WENT BACK TO JAPAN.

DWIGHT

WHEN YOU TRANSFERRED OFF, WHERE DID YOU GO TO?

JIM

I WENT BACK TO PEARL HARBOR. IHIA (SP????) HEIGHTS RECEIVING STATION. I HAD BEEN A MOVIE PROJECTIONIST WHILE IN HIGH SCHOOL. ALL THE TIME IN THE NAVY, I WANTED TO BE A MOVIE PROJECTIONIST. COULDN'T GET IT. THE WAR ENDED. I WAS AT IHIA HEIGHTS RECEIVING STATION AWAITING ORDERS. I RECEIVED ORDERS TO GO TO THE CRUISER *PASADENA* WHICH WAS ON JAPANESE PATROL DUTY. THEY WERE FROZEN FOR SIX MONTHS, THE TASK FORCE. I HAD A BABY COMING SO I WENT TO THE OLD YOEMAN. I WENT OVER TO THE CRUISER/DESTROYER BASE AT PEARL HARBOR FOR TRANSPORTATION. I TOLD MY SAD STORY AND THE YOEMAN CHANGED MY ORDERS AND GAVE ME SHORE DUTY ON THAT BASE. I STAYED THERE UNTIL I WAS DUE TO GET OUT. I BEAT THE BABY BY FIVE DAYS. IN FACT, SHE IS HERE IN TOWN, AT THE MOTEL. IT WAS CLOSE.

DWIGHT

WHEN DID YOU GET MARRIED.

JIM

I GOT MARRIED ON BOOT LEAVE, AUGUST 23, 1944. I WAS EIGHTEEN. MY WIFE WAS SEVENTEEN.

DWIGHT

WHY DID YOU GET MARRIED ON BOOT LEAVE,?

JIM

IT WAS HER IDEA, NOT MINE. WE DID NOT EXPECT TO RETURN. I DIDN'T WANT TO GET MARRIED BECAUSE, YOU KNOW, IT IS NOT A FAIR THING TO DO. SHE WANTED WHAT SHE COULD GET OF ME BEFORE BECAUSE I MIGHT NOT COME BACK. THAT'S THE WAY IT WORKS.

DWIGHT

A LOT OF PEOPLE DID THAT. WHAT WAS IT LIKE FOR YOUR WIFE? SHE MUST HAVE FIGURED OUT WHAT YOU WERE DOING. FROM ALL THE NEWS SHE HAD TO KNOW THAT THIS IS NOT THE SAFEST PLACE.

JIM

SHE NEVER HAD ANY IDEA WHERE I WAS. WE WERE A P O. SAN FRANCISCO IS ALL SHE EVER KNEW. SHE HAD NO IDEA WHERE I WAS.

DWIGHT

THAT'S PRETTY GOOD THEN. AS YOU SAID, YOU WERE A FLOATING TRUCK FOR THE NAVY. YOU COULD BE ANYWHERE. SINCE THE CENSERSHIP YOU COULDN'T VERY WELL TELL HER ANYWAY. DID YOU GET A LOT OF LETTERS FROM HOME?

JIM

LOTS. WELL DELAYED. I WROTE A FEW. IN FACT, THAT IS WHAT I WAS DOING WHEN I FOUND OUT

THE WAR WAS OVER. I WAS IN THE TOP BUNK, AT THE RECEIVING STATION WRITING HER AND I HEARD THE WAR WAS OVER. THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN AUGUST 14.

DWIGHT

WHERE WAS YOUR WIFE ALL THIS TIME.?

JIM

SHE WAS WITH HER PARENTS. SHE STAYED WITH HER PARENTS.

DWIGHT

WHEN DID THE TWO OF YOU FINALLY GET BACK TOGETHER.

JIM

I WAS DISCHARGED ON VALENTINE'S DAY, 1946. FEBRUARY 14. I TOOK AN OVERNIGHT BUS HOME TO NORTH LOUISIANA. SHE WAS IN THE HOSPITAL AT THE TIME. THE BABY WAS BREACH AND THEY WERE TRYING TO TURN THE BABY.

DWIGHT

I ASSUME YOUR WIFE SOMEWHERE ALONG THE LINE WAS ABLE TO SEE YOU WHEN YOU GOT BACK TO HAWAII. DO YOU FLY HER OVER OR ANYTHING?

JIM

NO. THERE WAS NONE OF THAT. EVERYBODY WAS TRYING TO GET HOME REALLY. THAT'S WHAT IT AMOUNTS TO. IT'S AMAZING. I CAN'T UNDERSTAND UNTIL THIS DAY HOW THEY RETURNED SO MANY PEOPLE FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD SO FAST. UNBELIEVABLE.

DWIGHT

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, WE PRETTY WELL GUESSED WHEN THE WAR WAS GOING TO END IN EUROPE. BEFORE THAT, THE WAR DEPARTMENT ACTUALLY HAD PEOPLE TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO DO THAT. THEY WROTE HUGE MANUALS ON THIS. IT TURNS OUT ALL OF A SUDDEN, THE PACIFIC WAR ENDED ALMOST AT THE SAME TIME, SO THEY WHIPPED OUT ALL THE MANUALS AND THAT'S HOW THEY DID IT. YOU ARE RIGHT. WHEN YOU HAVE AN ARMY AND NAVY THAT BIG, YOU CAN'T JUST SAY, "OK GO HOME GUYS." IT TURNS OUT IN THE HISTORY OF WAR, ONE OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL THINGS IS BRINGING PEOPLE HOME. I DIDN'T HAVE ENOUGH POINTS AND HE GOT AHEAD OF ME. IF YOU LOOK AT THE NUMBERS INVOLVED, IT COULD HAVE BEEN DISASTER.

I ACTUALLY GOT A COPY OF THIS BOOK. I FOUND SOME USED BOOK STORE AND IT'S SOME ARMY MANUAL. THEY SERIOUSLY CONSIDERED EVERYTHING YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT. HOW DO WE BRING PEOPLE HOME. TOO MANY PEOPLE BACK AND THERE IS NO CIVILIAN TRANSPORTATION. IT COULD HAVE BEEN SERIOUS. I WAS IMPRESSED WITH THAT.

HOW COME YOU DIDN'T STAY IN THE NAVY?

JIM

AS I SAID, MY NAVY SERVICE WAS INFORMAL. ABOUT THE END OF SEPTEMBER, '45, AFTER THE WAR, WE WENT ON PEACETIME REGULATIONS. AT THE TIME, I WAS A WATER TENDER, IN THE BLACK GANG. IN THE MESS HALL. WE GOT A HALF HOUR RELIEF TO EAT. I WORKED IN BLUES, DUNGAREES. I HAD TO GO TO MY HUT, CHANGE INTO A WHITE UNIFORM TO WEAR TO THE MESS HALL TO EAT, GO BACK AND CHANGE INTO MY DUNGAREES AND GO BACK TO MY POST IN 30 MINUTES.

DWIGHT

WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER THE WAR THEN?

JIM

I WORKED IN A RADIATOR REPAIR SHOP. THEN I BECAME IN RETAIL SALES FOR FIRESTONE. SINCE THAT TIME I HAVE WORKED IN TV FOR EIGHT YEARS, PRODUCTIONS., AND I WORKED IN CHEMICAL PLANTS FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS AS AN OPERATOR. MY LAST TWENTY TWO WAS IN AIR CONDITIONING AUTOMATED EQUIPMENT FOR BUILDINGS COMPLEX. GOOD MONEY. IT WAS SEMI-RETIREMENT AFTER WORKING IN THE CHEMICAL PLANTS.

DWIGHT

HOW DID YOU GET TO TUSCON?

JIM

I WENT TO TUSCON IN 1951 WITH OUR NEW BABY, SIX WEEKS OLD. SHE HAD ASTHMA, CHRONIC BRONCHITIS SO I WENT FOR THE DRY CLIMATES.

DWIGHT

WHEN YOU GOT THERE, YOU WERE WITH THE INDIANS.

JIM

JUST ABOUT. IN FACT I WAS WONDERING WHY DID I COME INTO THIS MESS.

DWIGHT

TUCSON IS NICE. IT STILL HAS A BIG FACTORY THERE. I WORKED THERE IN THE CIVILIAN WORLD.

JIM

THERE WAS A BIG PLANT THERE OF I B M.

DWIGHT

I VISITED TUSCON. I WAS THINKING WHAT THAT WOULD BE LIKE A FEW YEARS BEFORE I GOT THERE.

JIM

IT WAS A COW TOWN WHEN I GOT THERE.

DWIGHT

AND YOU DECIDED TO STAY THERE.



JIM

THAT IS WHERE I FIRST GOT INTO TV, WITH THE FIRST TV STATION IN TUSCON. THEY USED MOVIE PROJECTORS. THEN I CAME TO ONE IN LOUISIANA, SET UP A NEW ONE OVER THERE AND THEN TO ODESSA WHERE I WORKED IN ONE THERE.

DWIGHT

YOU HAVE DONE SOME SERIOUS TRAVELING AROUND THE COUNTRY.

JIM

OH YEAH. I HAVE CROSSED TEXAS A THOUSAND TIMES. MY FAMILY LIVES IN LOUISIANA. IN FACT I JUST CAME HERE FROM THERE. WHEN MY PARENTS WERE ALIVE, I WOULD GO AS MANY AS SIX TIMES A YEAR, BACK AND FORTH.

DWIGHT

OK. I CAN'T THINK OF ANY-----IS YOUR WIFE STILL ALIVE?

JIM

NO, NOT THAT ONE. THIS ONE IS A NATIVE OF TUSCON.

DWIGHT

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR ME? I CAN'T THINK OF ANYTHING. YOU HIT ALL THE BIGGIES HERE.

JIM

YEAH. PRETTY MUCH

DWIGHT

AND YOU OBVIOUSLY LIKE THE L S M DUTY. YOU KNOW YOU TORE YOUR SHIP UP CONSTANTLY.

JIM

OUR FAVORITE PASTIME, EMPTY AT SEA. I THINK THAT WAS PROBABLY 20 FEET WIDE WITH ABOUT A SEVEN FOOT BULKHEAD ALONG EACH SIDE. OUR FAVORITE PASTIME WAS TO GET ON ONE END OF THE SHIP AND TRY TO RUN TO THE OTHER END OF THE SHIP WITHOUT GETTING UNDER THE BULKHEADS. NOBODY EVER MADE IT I DON'T THINK

DWIGHT

DO HAVE ANYTHING ELSE?

JIM

NO

END OF TAPE.

TRANSCRIBE BY FOREST J. REES

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MARCH 2011