

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

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

James E. Boston

Norristown, Pennsylvania

September 13, 2005

G Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division

Landed Guadalcanal August 7, 1942

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is September 13, 2005. I am interviewing Mr. James E. Boston by telephone. His address is: 17 Galbraith Avenue, Norristown, Pennsylvania 19403-3042. His phone number is area code 610-539-3276. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific Wars, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Jim, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country back during World War II. Now the first question that I had was your middle initial and you just told me that was E.

Mr. Boston

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the next thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Nimitz Museum.

"Agreement read."

Mr. Boston

That's fine.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the first question I have for you is what is your birth date?

Mr. Boston

My birth date is April 17, 1924.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Boston

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Boston

Yes. I had one brother and one sister.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was your brother in World War II?

Mr. Boston

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

He came home did he?

Mr. Boston

Yes he did.

Mr. Misenhimer

What branch was he in?

Mr. Boston

He was in the Army.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he in the Pacific or in Europe?

Mr. Boston

He was in Europe as far as I know. I couldn't say exactly where though in Europe. I was gone when he got out.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were your father's and mother's first names?

Mr. Boston

My father's name is John. My mother's name is Lula.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your father's occupation?

Mr. Boston

He was a meat cutter.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you grew up during the Depression, how did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Boston

It made us very conservative. Our background was; we came from a Quaker background; which is conservative and rather religious.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was your father able to stay employed during most of the Depression?

Mr. Boston

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you into the service?

Mr. Boston

I joined the United States Marine Corps on January 15, 1942.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay, just after Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Boston

I committed myself right after Pearl Harbor and that was my date I left home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Speaking of Pearl Harbor, do you recall where you were when you heard about that and how you heard about it?

Mr. Boston

Yes I do, I was at Andrews Air Force Base.

Mr. Misenhimer

And doing what there?

Mr. Boston

I was visiting a friend of mine that was in the Army.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you hear of it?

Mr. Boston

Over the radio in the car.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you feel this would affect you?

Mr. Boston

Very upset.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that the reason you went and joined the service immediately after that?

Mr. Boston

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you choose the Marines?

Mr. Boston

I had a couple of friends that were in the Marines already and had been stationed at the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you felt that was the place that you would like to be?

Mr. Boston

Not where I would like to be but in the Marine Corps would be best.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now I have some questions about your training. If you have a chronology that you want to go into now or does it cover your training and everything?

Mr. Boston

Well I've just got down the list of things, I haven't got a chronology of training; I didn't put any detailed stuff. I joined the Marine Corps on January 15, 1942. I took my, I guess you would call it Oath of Office or whatever, raise your right hand you know with the flag. Then we got on a train and it was a group of probably around 20 or so at the D & O Station in Philadelphia which headed south. We ended up in Buford, South Carolina. In Tennessee I think the train stopped somewhere down there. Then we took another train from there. It was an old fashioned train sort of; it had gas lights in it. We went over to Buford where we unloaded. There were trucks I believe that took us into Parris Island. By the 16th, which was the next day, we were at Parris Island.

Mr. Misenhimer

And that Parris I believe is spelled Parris isn't it?

Mr. Boston

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

On that train trip down, how long did that take?

Mr. Boston

It took all night. I don't think we left until around 2:00 and it was all night pretty well. It was the morning sometime when we changed the train down at the junction wherever it was.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a place to sleep or just sit up in a chair car?

Mr. Boston

It was a coach. We took the backs off of the seats and laid them in the middle between the seats and laid there.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you could stretch out to some extent then.

Mr. Boston

It was a regular train that went down the Atlantic coast line.

Mr. Misenhimer

This was a regular passenger train, not a troop train, is that right?

Mr. Boston

No it was not a troop train.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got to Parris Island, what did you do there?

Mr. Boston

We had training. Let's put it this way, the normal 'go in circles' type of situation where you get off the truck there and there are all the various things that they do. They line you up and tell you to march forward. They start issuing you the various and sundry things that you will need to live there.

Mr. Misenhimer

If you don't mind, go into some details of your training because a lot of people today have no idea of what that training was like.

Mr. Boston

Most of the training seemed to be centered around responsibility, coordination and taking orders. They gave a lot of; some times there were boisterous punishments for not doing things the way it should be done. The idea was to get everybody coordinated to work together including the marching.

Mr. Misenhimer

A lot of physical training?

Mr. Boston

Physical basically, physical training on the various hikes and various things we had to do; running and walking. Ultimately we were issued a firearm. We went to the rifle range at Parris Island.

Mr. Misenhimer

Which rifle did you have there?

Mr. Boston

The Springfield '03 from the First World War.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, the bolt action.

Mr. Boston

That's it; bolt action.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you got quite a bit of weapons training did you?

Mr. Boston

We had quite a bit of weapons training. We had bayonet practice on dummy people, that kind of thing. Crawling under obstacle courses and various things of that nature.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they fire the live ammunition over you when you were crawling?

Mr. Boston

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's kind of exciting isn't it?

Mr. Boston

Well a little bit.

Mr. Misenhimer

How were your drill instructors? Were they pretty tough?

Mr. Boston

They were rather tough, yes. When we went into the tent, you were not allowed out of the tent for anything other than when they came and got you; then we went into a barracks. You were confined; you were not allowed to go anywhere. You were not allowed to go to commissary, the PX they called it at the time; they still call it that I guess. You were not allowed to eat candy. You were not allowed to eat anything except what came out of the chow hall, things like that. They would get you up early in the morning; sometimes in the middle of the night to get everybody's attention for whatever reason, and various and sundry kinds of hazing I guess you would call it; that's part of the game. We were issued; when we went there our finances were minimum, meaning that I

got \$21 supposedly a month, but we didn't get the money because we hadn't had a payday or anything while we were there. What they did, they issued you these various things; P&G soap, a galvanized bucket, scrubbing brushes and various things for the purpose of your cleanliness and those kinds of things; shoe polish for your shoes and that was to come out of your money. They also dealt with a little bit of determining where you wanted to go. There were consultations on that basis and a few testings.

Mr. Misenhimer

What uniform did you wear there?

Mr. Boston

Basically wore the fatigues. They were not camouflaged type fatigues like you have today.

Mr. Misenhimer

They were green I believe, right?

Mr. Boston

That's right, they were green and there was sort of a coat and your regular pants. These things were issued to you including the undershirts, which were not colored at that time; they were white and other things, and your shoes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they give you any kind of a dress uniform?

Mr. Boston

We did have green pants and a green coat.

Mr. Misenhimer

And a khaki shirt with that?

Mr. Boston

I never wore it but yes we also had khaki pants and a khaki shirt and hat.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall from your time there at Parris Island in boot camp?

Mr. Boston

It was an interesting time. It was something that you knew you were going to have to endure, that kind of thing. When you came out of there the object was to graduate from boot camp. I was in platoon number 100 and something. I know I took aptitude tests

there because I have them listed here.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some of those that you have listed?

Mr. Boston

I had an aptitude test of 128 and a general test of 126.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything humorous or funny happen to you there in boot camp?

Mr. Boston

Not to me. The object you know was that the platoon was supposed to graduate at a certain time and you had a specific objective for the graduation. The thing is if you get held back then it's like a disgrace.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many people were in your platoon?

Mr. Boston

I think it was about 80 or something like that; 75 or 80. I have a picture of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they all graduate?

Mr. Boston

There were two guys that didn't go through that I know of. One guy he was a, he never woke up. He was kind of a laggard. The other guy he didn't go through because they didn't have a suit big enough to fit him. They had to move him back because they were having a suit and clothes made to fit. I don't think you could leave there without the green uniform.

Mr. Misenhimer

Am I hitting your chronology or am I messing up your chronology?

Mr. Boston

The chronology handled Parris Island in one sentence, in one line. We graduated from there and we moved out of there. We were moved up to the Fleet Marine Force in New River, North Carolina and that was March 12, 1942. That was almost three months after we started. I was attached to G Company, 2nd Battalion, 1st Marines.

Mr. Misenhimer

1st Marines in the 1st Marine Division, right?

Mr. Boston

1st Marine Regiment and they were forming the 1st Marine Division.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about your experiences there.

Mr. Boston

The experience there was mostly boon docking. We still marched but we were supposed to be pretty well coordinated. The platoon didn't all move together; some people were moved out of the platoon and went some place else. So there were several people that joined that same company with me. I don't know who they were because I was not that well acquainted with everybody. When I got into G Company there were other people from other platoons who were there before and there were still more people to come. So they were just forming the nucleus of the 1st Marine Division.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there?

Mr. Boston

I was there until June. I don't know the exact date in June. I have written here June 14th; that sounds good to me; somewhere around there anyway. We bivouacked a lot, we went out on maneuvers and I have some in my write up here. I think I told you that I have a little write up. I shouldn't tell you how little; it's pretty big, like 28 pages. But I say here in the write up, "We went down through all kinds of hardships and training; weary faces and soaking wet clothes were a very common sight around the camp. They climbed cargo nets, again and again; bobbing in the boats until nearly sick, and then making landings rain or shine on the rough coast of North Carolina. From there across the beach and inland they would go following all disciplines and war tactics. Then came the long awaited orders and the start of the best thing; we were to move out of there." That's what I said about that period of time. We did other things too.

Mr. Misenhimer

You practiced going down the nets from the ship to a landing craft, is that right?

Mr. Boston

That's right, on the Carolina beach.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of landing craft were these?

Mr. Boston

The landing crafts that we had were Higgins boats. They were not boats with fronts on them, like the LST's and stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

No ramp on them.

Mr. Boston

These were like old whaling boats. Wooden Higgins boats that you had to go over the side. That's the kind of boats we practiced on and then we went up and down the cargo nets. When we crossed the area where we had landed, there is an inland channel down along the coast; we would go to the inland waterway as a practice kind of thing.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many times did you do that, several?

Mr. Boston

Many times, until we were nearly sick. They wanted to make it a habit so that you would do it automatically.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you climbed down the net, what are some of the secrets to climbing down the net to do it right?

Mr. Boston

Climbing down the net is not the biggest problem. The biggest problem is the boat comes up to meet you. You didn't have that much on the mock trials because the boat is sitting out in the water. The waves against it, because there are a lot of other boats out in the water moving around and there are waves coming and the boat will go up three to four feet, or it will come down three to four feet. So when you go to jump for the boat, it's not there or it comes up to meet you; which ain't the greatest thing. You have to be very careful and there is usually somebody else there trying to help you to keep you from falling between the two boats. On the coastline we didn't have it quite like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

More calm water there, huh?

Mr. Boston

Well, the water was calm and we didn't have a moving situation.

Mr. Misenhimer

I've heard when you climb down those nets you have to be careful that people don't step on your fingers, is that right?

Mr. Boston

That's true when you were practicing but I didn't find that to be a problem when you were not practicing because they weren't coming down that fast. When you come down the net, the net is like 15 feet across and there could be two or three different people coming down at different places alongside you or below or above. They are not on top of you that quick.

Mr. Misenhimer

I've heard some people say that you need to make sure that you hold on to the vertical up and down rather than the horizontal to protect your hands better.

Mr. Boston

That could happen but in my real life time I never had that to be a major problem.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else from your time there at Parris Island?

Mr. Boston

This is now in New River, North Carolina.

Mr. Misenhimer

New River, yes, you're right, I'm sorry.

Mr. Boston

We were also used as a firefighting team. In the Carolinas there at that location there were a lot of fir trees. A few times there were fires out there and we were used to fight fires. But that was a supplemental job kind of thing. We bivouacked out there and did maneuvers, with two sides, that kind of thing. There were winners and losers, with umpires. They weren't quite umpires; they were not as sophisticated as today.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Boston

Then one night, let me see what I have in my write-up here. "Then came the long awaited order and started the best thing the boys had ever encountered, like Pullman trains. A seven day trip across the USA for reassignment. Sights were the best. The food was very good. Arrival at San Francisco they saw the first glimpse of the small transports which were to carry us into the next 65 days." We had a fabulous trip across the country. I think the federal government could give me another trip across the country that way. We had a Pullman there. We had one person in the upper bunk and one person in the lower bunk; they were regular Pullmans. They had porters there; it was luxury.

Mr. Misenhimer

First class.

Mr. Boston

They weren't ever used to this thing, but they told me afterwards that the Army slept two people on the bottom and one on the top when they used a Pullman. The Marines wouldn't do that. They want to be sure of what they are doing. It was a nice trip. We went through the Royal Gorge. Have you been to the Royal Gorge?

Mr. Misenhimer

No I haven't. I've been to the Grand Canyon but not the Royal Gorge.

Mr. Boston

We went through the Royal Gorge and through the Hanging Bridge that is down there. In later years I went back there with my wife and the train doesn't run through there anymore. But the train ran right through there; they had a big incline with the Hanging Bridge up above, over 1,000 feet up. This railroad track is attached to the wall of the Gorge. It is interesting. We went through there and we went all over in places. It seems like they were zigzagging the train because they were afraid somebody would know where we were going. The enemy probably knew before we left where we were going; if they wanted to know.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had you done much traveling before you went in the Marines?

Mr. Boston

Not really. The most traveling I ever did was down to Washington to Enders Air Force Base and to Baltimore to the airplane plant there; I tried to get a job there. They manufactured air planes there. Not too much. Atlantic City.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Boston

I went to high school in Philadelphia. I don't know how familiar you are with Philadelphia but it's a big city. I went to three different high schools there; West Philadelphia High School and I went to what they called Overbrook High School. I guess a lot of people are familiar with Overbrook High School because the guy that went to Overbrook High School that you may know of was Wilt Chamberlain. Everybody knows Wilt Chamberlain. I went to Overbrook High School and then I went to another high school called John Bartram High School. That was a brand new school. I was in their territory, so to say. When they opened the school up the people that lived in their territory went to that school.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Boston

In 1941. I finished high school in June. They bombed Pearl Harbor in December. I was in the Marine Corps 18th of January.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do between high school and December?

Mr. Boston

Between the time I left high school I went to work for an electrician. I was installing electric ranges. There wasn't a lot of electricity around. So people were getting electric ranges and previous to that they had gas ranges. We installed electric ranges. I did that for a short period of time. Then copper wire got a little bit difficult to get a hold of; the price went up as things started up in the war effort. The war was going over in Germany. Then I got a call from the telephone company and I got a job with Bell Telephone Company in Pennsylvania I guess around October of that year. It was just a messenger's

job. They wanted me to be an installer but I was still too young to quote unquote "work outside" at that point. So I went in the Marine Corps from working in the telephone company.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you got to San Francisco and what did you do there?

Mr. Boston

In San Francisco we got onboard ship. The ship was the USS *George F. Elliott*. That was June 30, 1942 that we boarded the *Elliott*. We were in dock maybe a day or two; shortly thereafter we headed out. We went out by Alcatraz, through the Golden Gate Bridge, we went under that and then we headed south. At that time I think the Battle of Midway was going.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was in June or May; I've forgotten exactly when.

Mr. Boston

I think it was in May but I think whatever; I wasn't in the water there.

Mr. Misenhimer

June was the Battle of Midway; I've got a chronology here. So it was just over about the time you all left there then.

Mr. Boston

Yes. We went down; there was a convoy of us that went down. We didn't know where we were going; everything was secret in those days. We were on that ship 65 days. Now we got off the first 25 days, did I tell you it was 20 some days after we physically got on there? We pulled into the harbor at Wellington, New Zealand. We had a job to do down there because evidently the people were directing us to what they were going to do. We had to unload our ship and get all the heavy gear off; this extra gear I guess you would call it, and put it on the docks. Then they loaded the ship for combat.

Mr. Misenhimer

I understand that the stevedores were on strike down there, is that right?

Mr. Boston

They went on strike yes, so we were the stevedores as much as we could be. It was pitch black down there; you couldn't see your thoughts; I mean nothing. We spent most of our

time doing that. Some people could get out. They had the whole dock area a; hurricane fenced in. We didn't get out much; some of them got out places but you couldn't get out because you were always either working or sleeping. We slept on the ship still. Then we left there and headed north. The next thing I have listed here is that we headed north and went to the Fiji Islands to one of the islands in the Fijis. I'm trying to look and see, it says Suva. We made a couple of dummy runs there. I call them dummy runs because we lost some; some of our landing craft as I said were wooden ships and they put them on the coral and they lost them and wrecked a couple of ships there, some Higgins boats. They decided, I guess they decided, maybe they didn't decide, maybe it was just that they were going to leave anyway; some of us got ashore there and some of us didn't get ashore. That was kind of, or was supposedly a mock landing. Then we moved out of there and back on to the ship and headed northwest. The way I look at it was west but I don't know. I was always upside down on the islands. We headed for Guadalcanal. They didn't tell us where we were going until sometime near the end of the trip. Let's see what did I write there. I said this, "We were in Wellington, New Zealand a place where there was little liberty and much work. Heading north on the *George F. Elliott* in a convoy to make a landing on the Fijis. Fatal day came, it was the something, I'll tell you about this in a minute. A small destroyer pulled up along the ship and shot a water proof satchel aboard and the destroyer then told the gray faced Marines they were to head west with the great convoy until they reached their objective, a placed called Guadalcanal." I get emotional at times. In the Solomon's an airport was being built by the Japanese; that's what we were told. The plans were conferred and given to every man. On the morning of Friday, August 7, breakfast was served, it was about 4:00 in the morning; not much but enough to ease the stomachs for the eventful morning. The packs were arranged on the backs; faces were blackened and slowly they went up on the decks to wait their turn to disembark. There was little firing from the shore. The cruisers soon eliminated any resistance. With all of this behind them, they set foot on landing boats to take them to the real thing. Thoughts ran through their minds of home, of loved ones, of the outcome of this landing. The boats went on a rendezvous. That's what the guys do on the Higgins boats; they circle around until all the boats for that particular group that is going to go in were in the circle; then at the appointed time they headed wide open to the

shore. Many times they had done this, but what awaited them on shore? There was little firing as they went out of the boats with their rifles in their hands running knee deep in water to the beach and up through the coconut grove up to the beach head. There was little resistance as the Marines continued their conquest. Various outfits proceeded as planned. We will follow these boys, that's our company, who came from the *Elliott* and see what was in store for them. They marched across the bridge and made it to an abandoned amphibian tractor and a few boards found nearby and traveled on through a small dense jungle and came to a high grass open field. The heat was terrific. The sun above and newly trodden grass beneath as they made their way across the field winding like a large black snake slithering like rivers. Sweat was pouring like rivers off the brows. They reached the other side of the field going on to encounter the thickest jungle in the tropics. A path was slowly cut as the tired and hungry boys took equal share in the work, cutting with knives, bayonets and machetes they slowly came to a small, but fast flowing river. Down the steep banks they tumbled to be refreshed with such invigorating water. Some filled canteens and others didn't as they continued upward by the river and off to the jungle on the other side. This was thicker than ever but onward they went. Some fell by the wayside only to continue with the organization to the rear. Through thorns, vines and over fallen trees they pressed forward. Then the great hazard of darkness overshadowed as night drew nigh. A place to encamp in safety was the hope of the officers. It wasn't but an hour before dark as they advanced to an open field with a lonely coral ridge in its foreground. This was the likely spot. Taking all precautions they advanced to the crest of the ridge and set up defenses for the night. Settling down they opened their only food rations for the trip and devoured them without hesitating. Lying down among the high grass to rest their weary heads, they soon were dreaming of good homes and families. The night was quiet and day broke clear and fast on the boys, only to resume their onward journey across the coral ridges into another jungle as great as the first one. Cutting fast and furious, it wasn't until noon they met, along with the jungle, a large bamboo cluster. Hacking and chopping for an hour, there was only a continuation of more and more bamboo, getting thicker and thicker until it was almost impassable. This was too much. The boys were tired and hungry and dying for a drink of water. A conference was then held and it was decided to withdraw back to the river. It was hard to

return but once they felt the cool refreshing water, their bodies were free and muscles loosened. A small stay and they continued on the mission taking a new course down the river to attempt communications with a friendly outfit. This was hard. The water in some places was as high as their neck and others as low as their ankles, only to see before them a telephone communications line running inward through the jungle. Following this trail they soon found the headquarters of a friendly unit and the tired Marines lay down. Ah, here was rest and food. Cleaning rust off their firearms and arranging packs were the first doing of the fellows. Then came an order that many of these men will never forget. "Move Out." But where? They had no food, no rest of any account, or any signs of such. The order was slowly fulfilled. Following the lonely wire they continued on a long trek through the jungle, over streams and across a long and winding field only to see night fall once more. They continued during darkness to find another camping place for the night. With the necessary assistance they found another hill side on which to rest. Under the shining stars came large clouds. The Marines fell asleep, some with packs on, others with ponchos wrapped around them; they were all awakened by a mighty flash. The roar of naval guns firing; and there on the crest of the sloping hill they witnessed the start of the greatest naval battle of the war. The ships fired numerous shells, while Japanese seaplanes dropped flares to produce better targets for their comrades. Small bombs were dropping on the island and gunfire died off in the distance. That wasn't all for those boys. Hardship came one after another; the clouds then burst in a tropical storm. Drenching wet the men were assembled to resume the push forward. Some were sick and others were tired; still many with no water. They wound their way down the side of one hill and up another much steeper hill. The going was hard and the path slippery with mud from the rain. Up and down the slimy hills they struggled. In places they were aided by the use of ropes; they tumbled, fell and slid down the steep banks only to find at the foot of the hill that they just came over that a withdrawal was imminent. Disgusted with what they had behind them and what loomed up in front of them, they took a much needed rest. After the time of rest, the troops filed slowly back encountering the same obstacles which they had conquered before. At the top of the last ridge their came a bright smile across the hard faces as they saw in the field below two amphibious tractors with a load of water and canned rations. It didn't take long for them to descend that hill and to be

sitting on the edge of the trail eating and drinking with a smile on their faces. There was still a good distance for them to go as their objective was a coconut grove which was at the far corner of the field. Heading directly for it, trees finally had companions under their long shady limbs, water and more food waiting there as they formed a defense along the ocean and the Tenaru River. Which I have indicated here as 'Alligator Creek area'. Night came down on the scene but there was an all night alert as an attack from the sea was expected. None came. In the morning they began to dig trenches. This was the main doings for the next few days. Nights came and went. There was firing almost all night long. Patrols were sent out to take up positions to strengthen different parts of the lines. Sleep was almost unheard of although some people got as much as five hours some nights. Working all day and guarding at night; this could not last for long. Tired, weary and hungry as their food was running low, they kept good faith and worked as good as could be expected. In the evening there came the roar of motors and they were overjoyed as they were protected against the bombing and shelling. They all fell calmly asleep. The usual firing went on until 3:00 in the morning. There came heavy firing and bursting of shells. The Japanese Army was pressing down along the Tenaru River. The defenses on the American side were firing on this troop movement, not knowing the strength of the enemy, there was little alarm. At 3:40 a.m. the Japanese started to move across the river and across the sandbar which kept the river from emptying into the ocean. This bar formed a dirt bridge across the river and at a likely point for attack. It wasn't until five minutes later that a violent attack came across this point. There was a roar of guns from either side of the river as the Japs started to press forward. The Marines were outnumbered and the enemy began to squeeze through a breach in the lines. The word soon got to the command and the reserve platoon was called to the front. Under heavy artillery fire and through the burst of machine guns they advanced to the command and from there came their orders. Colonel Pollock directed the movement of the troops into the breach. Four squads were moved forward to fill the breach; the rest awaited the outcome. The advance was rapid and uncertain as time was the great factor. Then came the horrible whistle as a shell burst directly over the group of men. The machine gun got its range and split the party right in half. The half pinned down by the firing; continued to move forward. Forming an L which slowly pressed toward the point. The river to the

right, the ocean to the front, the positions were almost gained, resistance was high, but the Marines would soon overcome the attack. There was enemy behind the lines as was shown when from the rear a tommy gun ripped a Jap in half and the Marine suffered a deep bayonet wound. The firing was heavy and the Marines were fighting with bayonets, thick and fast to overpower the enemy. With the use of machine guns, mortars, guns and automatic rifles, bayonets, the United States Marines overcame the enemy attack. More reinforcements moved up to the firing line and filled in the break. Darkness still prevailed over the heads of the men. Prayers for the daylight were soon answered. Soon after, firing was still great as the Japanese tried to get undercover. Marines fired at will at any moving object. Sunrise came with a large burst of machine gun bullets from the enemy. The machine gun kept firing and it seemed to dominate the situation. Then they were able to locate and eliminate the gun. Many Marines were hit. After a few minutes there were mortar shells searching out the enemy. A few came close and then a direct hit. The enemy was well on its downfall. The men rising up slowly and looking toward the point and then down on the beach, a sight remembered by everyone: Japanese soldiers lying one over the other for 75 yards as if piled there. Many more were floating in the river. They were being pounded into the shore by the ocean. A sorrowful sight for mankind to be reckoned with such a tragic ending. I uttered a slow and silent prayer and all of us Marines continued on to finish what we had just begun. Many of the men helped drag the wounded and the dead from the battleground as the firing continued. The Nips had only a little to say after many mortar barrages were laid across the river. In one incident a Jap gave himself up and walking across the beach and the river, the Marines could hardly keep from firing. Not at all trigger shy, they picked them off from 200 to 400 yard positions as the enemy attempted to retreat. Late in the afternoon when bullet fire was scarce a group of tanks was organized for the mopping up. Moving across the beach to the other side of the river, guns from the tanks rang out numerous times at the Jap positions killing many and causing others to run only to be brought down by well aimed shots from the opposite river bank. A tank of ours hit a coconut tree at an acute angle, knocked a tread off and was disabled. Several other tanks moved close to the invalid and formed a complete circle about it. Personnel from one moved into the other tank. The rescue was executed with skill and the drivers were commended for their good

work. After the rescue the tanks again turned on the enemy, and along with the supportive fire of their companions devoured the remains like hungry wolves. A reorganization and food was the next thing put to their weary minds at this point. The line was then put to its full strength as the Nips might endeavor to break through again. Dusk began to fall slowly across the camp as the Marines sat by their holes with arms in one hand and food in the other. The boys had earned this food and ate it like it was well cooked dinner from home instead of a can of hash and a hard biscuit. It wasn't long after that half of these weary boys were asleep while their comrades stood watch over the river bank. The night went slow and often the sleeping men were awakened by a barrage of firing from their buddies. This firing was after each flare, which were being sent up at regular intervals throughout the night. Dawn broke over the blood stained beach a beautiful blue sky appeared. The stink of the Nips was getting to be almost unbearable. Something had to be done about this and it was at this moment that trucks arrived from the Japanese prison camp and out they came showing no emotion whatsoever. With grim faces they carried the dead to the side of the holes which had been blasted; throwing them in and counting them as they fell were the Marine MPs. The day went slow but work's end finally came when the last of the, I had written here that 1,364 men were buried. The news was hot; everybody happy until our casualties were announced, 28 dead, 72 wounded. Prayers for these men were silently uttered by many as one of ours was worth more than all of theirs. I have notes here that say the troops that were there in that particular conflict were the Japanese Colonel Ichiki Shock Troops. They were defeated and annihilated and they both died there and my G Company, I have the list of them. G Company men killed in this encounter were: George Gibbs, John McHale, Richard Stitt, Thomas D. Lynch, Knight Farr, Leo Carvalis, Dick Holcome, Russell Butter weck (of wounds later) Vincent Roger, Joseph Faso, Don Davidson, George TeFertiller and Amos Coomer.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was 13 right?

Mr. Boston

I have 13 there listed, right. There were more of them. There were 28 shown in my record, there were others from other companies. The H Company had other people there,

machine gunners, some of the most prominent people you've maybe heard of, Al Schmidt, which a movie was made of. (tears) I'll get through it. This is the worst part in my life.

Mr. Misenhimer

I can imagine, yes.

Mr. Boston

Like I say they were all friends. Because in the lines, when we set up our lines, we had the machine gun company interspersed between the heavy weapons people. There were a lot of wounded people there. I did not get wounded; I did not get touched.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had mentioned earlier that you were close to Jim Wilson when he got wounded.

Mr. Boston

Yes I was, I could probably almost touch him.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did that happen?

Mr. Boston

This is when we went up. Let me tell you a little bit about that. First of all our company had the perimeter, I guess you would call it, right at the point between this, I'll call it the back wash and what we called the point and the ocean was on one side and the river was on the other side. The point was right up there in the sandbar. Our company was stationed along that area there. The platoon that I was in was held in reserve. Remember about the breach in the line? Colonel Pollock who was in charge of the defense I guess you call it, at that point. If you could imagine, our platoon was in reserve. The lines were lined up towards the ocean a little bit and then over across the river right at that point. Our platoon was in the back with the reserves; when this occurred and they started filtering through they called the reserve platoon up to fill the gap. There were four squads that were moved forward, well Colonel Pollock was standing, or crouched kind of behind some coconut trees at a place back maybe 40 feet behind the point. When you were coming up there he was telling you to go to the one side or to the other side. In other words they were pushing you in to fill in. The creek, or the river we'll call it, we were out towards the ocean to fill in the middle so that we could push these guys back; he

was taking care of that. Jim Wilson was one of the ones that went out towards the beach and I went out towards the beach, probably right after Jim; maybe we went side by side or almost right together at the beach. My Sergeant he went over towards the river and my Sergeant ended up in the machine gun emplacement that was blasted out. I don't know if that was the one Indian Joe Rivers was in or if it was the one Al Schmidt was in. They were both in the machine gun site, but Jim and I were on the beach side. That's why most of the people in that area got really clobbered. I didn't know until not too long ago that in our encounter there were so many people unaccounted for. In our company some weren't privy to that; they were at the end of the line on the river. They were trying to get across. They were bunched up. These guys were trying to get across the point and get across the river. There were some, not our company, had some stragglers, but not the major push. They broke through a little bit and we had to get up and push them back. I think I gave you 13 names?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes you did.

Mr. Boston

I can send you a copy of this.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay.

Mr. Boston

I was in the hospital and I had written a note. I'll just read the note that I wrote. I said, "Pages 1 - 22 were written in the hospital in Australia." In January 1943 I sent this to my mother but it was censored and cut up considerably. The original I have in plastic. I tried to insert into the original what I thought was out, to fill in the holes, but I couldn't, I don't remember what I was saying. There are small lines on this thing where they had cut this thing out. So the original I sent in January to my mother. The original was not delivered to my mother's house until June 12, 1947. It was held by the U. S. Treasury Department. Then I picked up a little bit and tried to write some kind of chronological things to finish it after the 22nd page. Pages 23 to the end were written some time after 1947, but I never finished it. I have lousy spelling and all that kind of stuff. We had one other guy killed in Guadalcanal in our company. He was killed; I've written about it and gone further. I

don't know if you want me to continue to read it?

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back and ask you a few questions here. I understand that there was a 37 mm canon on our side, were you ever close to it?

Mr. Boston

Well, first of all we don't call them 37 mm canons, Pack Howitzer. No I was not close to it.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was little further inland that you were.

Mr. Boston

Yes. They are usually behind and fire with a trajectory over top; they were loading it.

Mr. Misenhimer

I understand that this one was using a canister and direct fire.

Mr. Boston

I don't know about that.

Mr. Misenhimer

I think it was kind of like an anti-tank gun or something.

Mr. Boston

I didn't see anybody using one. We had 30 caliber machine guns, water cooled and also air cooled. They are the ones that were used in gun emplacement that was for direct fire. The biggest problem that they had was the tank, or the amphibious tractor or something in the water. They had a machine gun in there at that point and they couldn't get it. Finally our artillery did get it. I can't answer to tell you how they got it, you know what I mean? I know that they did get it because it was creating a major problem. In fact this Pollock was quite concerned because he was looking around for somebody at one time, and I don't know if he ever found them; he was looking for a scout. He wanted a scout to climb up in one of the trees and locate where the darn thing was. But whether he found it, they were backed up 30 or 40 feet back or so, but he was looking for it. During that ruckus we took all the ammunition that we could off of every body once they got hit and used that. It was the first defeat that the Japanese had in I don't know how many years; thousands of years from what I understand.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was their first defeat in a very long time.

Mr. Boston

Because they had pushed all over China and everywhere and they never had a problem. Every place they went, they won.

Mr. Misenhimer

The first day that you all came in, when you left the *Elliott*, were you in the first wave or when did you go in?

Mr. Boston

No we were not the first wave in. We were probably the second wave or so. There was somebody in before us.

Mr. Misenhimer

But there was no opposition on the beach?

Mr. Boston

No opposition. That was another thing that I wanted to tell you, and probably one of the guys has already told you that the *Elliott* was sunk. It wasn't sunk really, it was hit by an airplane and burnt up and finally it was grounded. Somebody put in a torpedo and I think it was our own people. On that ship we lost all our gear, everything. My understanding was that most of the medicine was on that ship for the regiment; so that left us without medicine. All of the cargo ships, all of the troop ships and everything had to get out of there; they didn't stick around. There was no food, no supplies, nothing coming in.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes you all were left there by yourselves for several weeks really.

Mr. Boston

Well for a long time really because actually we got what was left over in some cases. I think one of the aircraft carriers was shot up and the planes came in from the aircraft carrier because they had no place else to go. They weren't too happy being there. There was another one fellow that was killed on, I have it down as September 18, I'm not sure whether it's accurate. Ed Bishop from our company was killed by friendly fire. It was when we were backing up the field in a later deployment. That was another problem with what people call friendly fire; then we didn't call it anything. What happened was that

we didn't have enough personnel to have a perimeter around the airfield. So where there was thick jungle and places like that we didn't have anybody there. They could filter in through the jungle. What they did was our artillery laid down barrages in those jungle areas; that and mortars. We would do it in the night time to keep it in case somebody was trying to get through. We were deployed to go out and this one time we were to expand the line out into one of these jungle areas and the communications didn't tell the artillery. That night all heck broke loose and that's when Ed was killed. I don't think he was killed right that night but he was brought out, he was hit there. So that was another situation. The toughest; we had a tough time and it seemed like when the Japanese had the superiority at sea the cruisers and destroyers would go up and down the coast, along the coast just down about five miles or whatever it is as far as their guns would reach and they would just drop the shells. Sometimes the battle wagons were out there dropping 16 inch shells to destroy the airport, just trying to keep holes in it so our fighters could get in and out. Later in this document it said, the rumor was that sometime at this point, I think it was around October or November, General Vandegrift was asked to leave his troops and fly to Australia and he refused. Of course he didn't want to abandon us. They wanted him to go and get out of there. I don't know whether that was so but it was rumored. But he wouldn't go, I know that. MacArthur sent a flying fortress over every day; it would come over at noon time and check to see that the flag was flying at Henderson Field. As long as it was flying they turned around and flew back. They had us written off almost.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, it was quite a controversy in Washington, could they hold it or not?

Mr. Boston

That's right. We were sitting there doing what we could.

Mr. Misenhimer

You landed on the first day and you gave me a chronology a while ago of going up through the jungle and up through this ridge and all, that was your company, right?

Mr. Boston

That was our company, yes. We had some kind of thing they were supposed to follow, a certain azimuth. I don't know whether they read the azimuth right or not but there was

no deviation and that was the reason everybody was dying; you can't cut through bamboo. You were in trouble, you know. Nobody wanted to deviate, to go over or around something. Our Captain of the company, his name was Sherman; he was from Boston or someplace, Massachusetts some where. Quite a few people from our company were from Massachusetts and the Greater New England.

Mr. Misenhimer

When was your first encounter with the Japanese?

Mr. Boston

The first encounter with the Japanese was the 20th, the night of the 20th, the 21st of August.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that the Tenaru?

Mr. Boston

That was the Tenaru.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Alligator Creek or Tenaru was your first encounter with the Japanese?

Mr. Boston

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

About almost two weeks after you landed?

Mr. Boston

Yes about two weeks. We witnessed the battle south of us but we didn't know what we were witnessing. It was like a picture. Not a good one but we didn't know whether it was good or bad. We didn't know who was winning the war.

Mr. Misenhimer

After the Tenaru, after the Alligator Creek, what did you all do?

Mr. Boston

They deployed us out; there were two or three other deployments. We moved out of that area. I don't know who moved in there; somebody else must have moved in that area. But we moved behind the air field and we had that time out there where the one fellow was hit, that was Ed. Then we also had people infiltrate through there from time to time

and we had small skirmishes, not big hits. Then we were moved up on the ridge. I can't identify what ridge it was; Bloody Ridge. If it was Bloody Ridge it was the end of it or something like that. There were three other deployments. Each deployment that we had in that particular case, mainly we had too little people to be able to cover a perimeter. We kept moving. In the daylight we would send patrols of people out in the front to see what kind of movement we might have out in front. Hopefully we were thinking they won't amass 1,000 or 1,500 people or 2,000 people out there right in front of us and us not know until nightfall and then they would come flying in. We had patrols out in front kind of circling the place. In some of those cases we ran into friendly fire, but no major engagements as far as our company was concerned.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the Battle of Bloody Ridge, where were you all when that happened?

Mr. Boston

That's what I'm trying to say, I don't know if we were on the end. Because we weren't deployed too large. I will say that the Ridge might have been 2 ½ to 3 miles long and they could be fighting heavy on the one end and very little happening on the other. The same thing happened there at the Tenaru. Some of the people that were deployed along the river at the end of the river, all the way down a little bit, they had very little. They had maybe a few stragglers because they weren't trying to get across there. But we had the majority of the whole thing trying to get across the bridge.

Mr. Misenhimer

There at Alligator Creek how close were you to Al Schlemmer when he was there?

Mr. Boston

I do not know where he was. I know where Wilson was. I know where some other guys were. There was one guy there who was an Indian; he was a Browning automatic rifleman; he got killed there. I picked up his automatic rifle and used that for a little while. I didn't come home with it; I went back to Australia with it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Schlemmer was not too far from the ocean up there a ways. He was behind a little sand bank or something.

Mr. Boston

It's like you're behind berms with your nose practically down in the sand along the edge. They didn't have the berms like four feet high that they have around the ocean here; there's went into the coconut trees practically and maybe it was four or five inches. There was nothing; no holes there. You would get as skinny as you could get.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some other things that happened to you there on Guadalcanal?

Mr. Boston

My greatest adventure on Guadalcanal, you've heard. But I did get, there were a couple of incidents, but the incidents were not battle oriented. We had deployed in a location where we; well first of all, we stole a lot of stuff. We had three groups of people every morning. We had the people that stayed on the line, we had the people that went out on patrol to seek people out and things like that, and then we had people that went back to the beach in case anything came in, whether ships or anything like that where they could help unload the ships, or maybe the working party at the airfield was burning palms and the oil tanks and oil barrels. So you had three kinds of things every morning. You had to divide yourself up, it wasn't just taking care of that, it was trying to make sure that all of the other kinds of work got done too. We had cases where various explosions occurred and then the tank situations. Food, we scavenged for anything. When the Japanese warehouse was blown up it had barley and rice in the warehouse. They gathered that up off of the floor and off the dirt and around it; that's what they took out and used for food along with the various and sundry animals that were in it.

Mr. Misenhimer

When the first planes came into Henderson Field were you around where you could see that?

Mr. Boston

The first set of planes that came in, the first time that we saw planes come in, they weren't ours. They had big red balls on the bottom and they were strafing and everything else. Really the first set of planes that came in there, I think came from the *Enterprise*, it was one of the aircraft carriers that had gotten wounded out there. They dispatched them and they had no other place to go. Those airmen when they were with us, some of the

airmen came with us because those airplanes were shot up. Also after one or two dogfights some of them crashed or they landed sideways on the airfield or something like that and they had holes in them. They were grounded and these guys got really upset. They said they would rather be in the air. Of course we would probably rather be on the ground. They were unhappy being on the ground I'll tell you that. They came and helped us.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you see many dogfights between their planes and ours?

Mr. Boston

Yes. Some of them were like you see in the movies. Some of the days there were like cotton clouds and you would think somebody in Hollywood was making a moving picture; but it wasn't a moving picture, it was real life.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you saw quite a few planes on both sides shot down?

Mr. Boston

Yes, every day the bombers would come over around 12:00 and drop off their bombs and the Zeros would come over with them. There would be some dogfights. It was every day.

Mr. Misenhimer

I understand the Japanese had a canon up there they called Pistol Pete.

Mr. Boston

That's right they had that and they also had Washing Machine Charlie; that was like an old, I say it was old, the motor sounded like that, airplane that flew out during the night and dropped flares. The canon from up at the high ground, which was Grassy Knoll, the canon from the high ground would lay in on different spots at different times, you never knew. Their main objective was to puncture the airport. When the battle wagon came in, they not only punctured the airport, they puncture a lot of people.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get malaria while you were there?

Mr. Boston

Yes I did. That's why I came home.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about dengue fever?

Mr. Boston

Not that I know of. Actually I don't think, what we had there was half of the company, or maybe even half of the battalion had dysentery. One time we had a situation where dysentery had taken at least 50% of the people; they couldn't move hardly. The doctor said that all we can do is give you sympathy, because there was no medicine. They weren't flying things in and out of there because they didn't fly things in and of there. There were a lot of things going on that I didn't know about. There were a lot of destroyer situations that were running back between the New Hebrides Islands and here at different times.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said you were unloading the ship; the *El Shebra* was that it?

Mr. Boston

Yes and that was hit by a torpedo on one side. I jumped off the ship and several other people jumped off the ship. The ship itself sank. For a while it didn't sink below the top deck; it settled right down into the ground, into the sand I guess that was underneath it. In the meantime you were in the water. That was some of the things we did when we were down there. When something got in there they had people down there to try and get stuff out of the ships and to handle it. They were using, I could say stolen, but acquired Japanese trucks and stuff to kind of carry the stuff back to wherever they wanted it. Anything we got back here, if it was anything of any value as far as food was concerned we buried it. You had to remember where you buried it.

Mr. Misenhimer

When this ship was torpedoed it was being unloaded right?

Mr. Boston

It was being unloaded.

Mr. Misenhimer

How far off the beach was it?

Mr. Boston

Not too far; probably about 100 yards or 200 yards.

Mr. Misenhimer

So what you all would do is unload into a smaller boat and take it into shore is that right?

Mr. Boston

That's right. Most of the time they were using amtraks. That was the first of them that they had. They needed a lot of man power to do that. Everything had to be picked up and put down in and then you had to take it back out that way.

Mr. Misenhimer

Right, you had to get it off of the ship, on to the amtrak, off the amtrak and then on to the shore.

Mr. Boston

Yes. Some of the ships had the cranes to drop it down off. It depended on how big it was and how heavy it was.

Mr. Misenhimer

After this ship was sunk could you still unload part of the cargo off of it?

Mr. Boston

We went back on it afterwards, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

They were able to get more off of it then?

Mr. Boston

Well I don't know if they got it all off. I think they floated it later.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the name of that ship again?

Mr. Boston

El Shebra

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some other things that happened to you there on Guadalcanal?

Mr. Boston

Not too much more. I'm just thinking of the routine things here. I hit myself in the right leg with a machete; not a machete really, it was a pickax. It had the flat side and a pick on the other; you're supposed to dig whatever with.

Mr. Misenhimer

We called them a grubbing hoe.

Mr. Boston

I swung with that and it bounced off a rock and hit me in the leg. When you are down there none of the sores ever heal. It just couldn't heal and we had no medicine to help it heal. It was infected and the flies got on it; there were a lot flies. Not only that but there were several places but that particular hole was like about an inch around. We didn't do anything; the corpsman took care of putting a little patch on it. There wasn't anything else he could do because we didn't have any clothes; all we had was shorts, so you didn't have any socks and your shoes, the soles were all wore off and gone and had holes in them.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did the Springfield '03 rifle work for you?

Mr. Boston

Great. The fact is I felt that the Springfield was fast enough to do the job. I don't know anybody that would have had to have it any faster than we had. You don't waste ammunition. When I had a BAR you could take that clip too fast and the first thing you know you are out of ammunition and you have a couple of guys in the squad carrying ammunition for you but hey you know, there are only five rounds in the Springfield and you would take care of them. You can fire fast as you need to upon occasion.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then when did you leave Guadalcanal.

Mr. Boston

The 22nd or the 23rd of December, that's when the whole company left; the whole battalion left. That's one of the pieces in this piece of paper here. *Johnson* I think was the name of the ship. Somewhere I have it written; like I said I have a million pieces of paper.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you there when the Army came in?

Mr. Boston

Yes. There were two sets of Army that came in. The first set of Army came in and they

deployed right in the line with us. The first ones that came in I'm not sure but I think they were from North Dakota. They were from some place like that. When the Army came in one of the things that we had, our mess situation was such that we had two meals a day. I call them meals but it was like a tablespoon of rice in the morning and maybe a couple of figs, I think they captured the figs somewhere. Then there was a _____ full of rice or barley at night and a couple of figs or something like that. When the Army came in; before they came in they had to have a whole commissary there; they set up a whole thing. We were the ones trying to set the darn thing up for them; the working party. So you know what happened to some of their food. (laugh) They had it all gated in and everything else. When they finally got in there and they really started to serve food our guys went over there and started trying to eat. Some of our kitchens closed down. There was no sense in having anybody there; we were still getting rice and barley. This was similar to the situation in New Orleans; some of the people are getting the best and the other people still stay with the old stuff. The ship that we come out on was the USS *Johnson* and it was on the 23rd I think. It was a merchant marine ship. We got a meal on it for Christmas. It was shoe leather. They tried to serve us steak but it tasted like shoe leather. If you chewed it all day I don't think it would have ever melted. They took us to Espiritu Santo in New Hebrides.

Mr. Misenhimer

How much weight did you lose on Guadalcanal?

Mr. Boston

I was about 125 pounds and I went on there at about 185.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you lost around 60 pounds then.

Mr. Boston

Somewhere around there.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's quite a bit.

Mr. Boston

This gave us problems at Espiritu Santo because when we got to Australia we ate too much and everybody got jaundice. It created a problem, gluttons I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you went to Espiritu Santo first then?

Mr. Boston

That's right. We were there about two weeks, but it might have been three, I don't have an absolute record.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do there, just rest?

Mr. Boston

Basically yes, basically we watched the monkeys eat the bananas. There's a lot of ripe stuff on that particular island. I never wandered too far from where I was. Some people did, I know other people went here and there; went down to the ports and stuff like that and maybe on a ship or something. I never did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you went from there to where?

Mr. Boston

We went from there to Melbourne, Australia. We got into Melbourne in January 10th of 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do there?

Mr. Boston

We went to the Melbourne cricket grounds. The cricket grounds didn't have any place for us to sleep actually so then they found people in Australia who were very fine people, very Christian people and we were deployed to various homes. Actually I went to a town called Kahuna which is probably about 20 miles or so I guess outside of Melbourne and lived with a family for about two to three weeks; out there with a family called the Majors. He and his wife had a milk farm and two young children, probably about 3 or 4 years old. Most of us were deployed out there because there was no place for us to sleep at the cricket grounds. Eventually they brought in metal bunks and set them up on the grounds; you know where they cut the legs off short and stuff, but they were places where you could sleep. Otherwise you would be trying to sleep on a board or on the concrete. We were deployed there. I got transferred out about August of 1943. My time

there was spent at the cricket grounds and then I spent it at Fourth General Hospital which is an Army hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer

And that's where?

Mr. Boston

It's in Melbourne. I spent quite a bit of time in the hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer

For what, your malaria?

Mr. Boston

Basically malaria. They had a 21 day treatment for malaria. It was a routine treatment. You would go in there and they would give you whatever they gave you and stuff like that. You got fairly decent and they put you over in a rehab section. You would stay in the rehab section for about a week or so, I think was the 20 days. When you got out of the rehab section you would be back at the cricket grounds at our encampment doing whatever they were doing there. There they weren't just doing nothing at the cricket grounds; they were doing other things like maneuvering and parading. A lot of the guys went back from there to try and build up the forces back here. By the time the 20 days came up I was back ready to go to the hospital again. It just recurred. I would get three or four good days and then it would recur back again. It obviously became their idea that I wasn't going to be able to be of any value. That's when they decided to ship me back home.

Mr. Misenhimer

When was that then?

Mr. Boston

I was shipped back home, I have written here, August 14, 1943. I went back to Oakland, California to the U. S. Naval hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you come back, on a ship?

Mr. Boston

I came back on a ship but I don't remember the name of the ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

But it wasn't a hospital ship though?

Mr. Boston

No, it was a regular ship. There were a lot of empty ships coming back because people were going over still. I keep thinking every now and then that it was the USS *West Point*; it might not have been though. I don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you went back to Oakland?

Mr. Boston

I went back to Oakland to a Naval Hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did they do to you there?

Mr. Boston

Nothing except treat me for a short period of time. The idea of me going there was to get me cleared out and ship me back home. What happened then was that I was transferred out of there. I wasn't there too long and I got transferred to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital; from one to the other. I had a leave. I think it was a 30 day leave or something like that. I left there in September of 1943 and on October 6th I think, got to the Oakland Naval Hospital. Then I had a 30 day leave and I went to the Philadelphia Naval Hospital but I wasn't there that long. I had a 36 day leave is what it says here. Then they transferred me to the Philadelphia Navy Yard. I joined the Philadelphia Navy Yard Marine Barracks and stood guard duty there. That was late November of 1943. In the meantime I was married, in between there. I was there until April of 1944 and I was transferred to the Philadelphia Depot which is the headquarters of Philadelphia. That's where all the uniforms and materials come out of. Then that was in April of 1944. In May, 1945, which is a little over a year later I was transferred to Camp Lejeune, 1st Casualty Company in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. June 12, 1945, which is a month later or so I was joined up with the 67th Replacement Draft on the USS *Sitka*. I don't show it here but I went by way of Pearl Harbor, by way of Hawaii to Guam. I joined Guam in August of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer

After the war?

Mr. Boston

No, it wasn't over; it was over shortly thereafter though. There was no battle there, no. I was in the C Company, 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. I was transferred from there a month or so later, in November to come back home.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do on Guam?

Mr. Boston

Nothing. Played baseball, really because the war was over in Germany. The bombs were dropped; I was in the harbor when the bombs were dropped in August. They were preparing everybody to go into Japan for a landing. Then when they signed the documents on the *Missouri* the war was over. I was in the company at that time. Because when I joined the Marine Corps on January 15, 1942, my enlistment was over; I was a four year regular Marine; my enlistment was over January 14, 1946. According to the rules of the game they were required to get me home in time to be discharged. At that time there was a lot of point systems and things but that didn't have anything to do with me. I was put on a ship called the USS *Claremont* and sent back home to Camp Pendleton, California; transferred to Bainbridge, Maryland to have my discharge papers.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was this your second Pullman ride then?

Mr. Boston

No. By the way when I left to go to Hawaii we went out of Norfolk and through the Panama Canal that second time. Coming back I was on my own; I had a leave from Camp Pendleton and I was to appear in Bainbridge, Maryland for discharge. So I was on my own coming home. I mean they paid the cost, but it was Pullman. No it wasn't Pullman because I had to pay.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had mentioned earlier that twice Uncle Sam had given you a Pullman ride.

Mr. Boston

They could give me one now, I'll take it out.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was it like going through the Panama Canal?

Mr. Boston

It was interesting. I read a few papers on the Panama Canal; I don't know where they are at anymore. I think somebody secured them and I think the government is probably still looking at them, like they looked at these other papers I had (laugh). I did enjoy that. I enjoyed looking at the town going through there, going over to the other side. It was a miraculous situation. I had been in the locks up in New York along the Lawrence River.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Boston

I tell people that I got two promotions while I was in the service; one by act of Congress. One was I was a PFC when Congress said that everybody that was a Private for x amount of time and didn't do anything wrong they should promote them to the next higher level, that was to PFC and I got a promotion when I was discharged. That was also an act of Congress.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was to Corporal?

Mr. Boston

That was to Corporal. I am supposedly a retired Corporal.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you stay in the service to retire, or was the four years all that you were in?

Mr. Boston

Four years was all that I was in. I think it's a nice place to be from. I think it was worthwhile. I think it builds character.

Mr. Misenhimer

In the Marines they talk of Lance Corporals and things like that; what is a Lance Corporal?

Mr. Boston

I don't know what a Lance Corporal is. That used to be something that the British had. I

think that Lance Corporal is like a PFC.

Mr. Misenhimer

I just hear that once in a while.

Mr. Boston

That didn't come into play for some time. In other words when I was in there was no such thing as a Lance Corporal. I just think it's a PFC because I don't hear anybody say Private First Class anymore.

Mr. Misenhimer

I've got a couple of other questions to ask you here. What all medals and ribbons did you get?

Mr. Boston

I have a piece of paper that has a list of the things. First of all I have the American Campaign Medal. I think everybody that was in that particular war has that. I have the Asian Pacific Campaign Medal with two stars in it because I went twice, that sounds logical anyhow. I have the Presidential Unit Citation. That's a ribbon with one bronze star.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's for the 1st Marine Division?

Mr. Boston

That's right and it has one bronze star in it. Originally it was issued with a blue star in it but somewhere along the line the blue star got lost somewhere, I don't know where it went. But now they tell you to put a bronze star in it. You were there when it was awarded. And I have a World War II Victory Medal. I have a Good Conduct Medal. I have a Combat Action Ribbon. I don't know anything else I have.

Mr. Misenhimer

Combat Action is probably similar to the Army's Combat Infantryman's Badge?

Mr. Boston

I don't know. All I know is that you had to have action. I think that anybody got it that was in action, whether it was Army, Navy or Marines. It was the latest thing that I got.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Boston

No, I never took any. Really I never took a souvenir home. It wasn't allowed supposedly; but people did. I know that. I know a lot of sabers and stuffs like that. The only thing that I had, I have a piece of map that is about 14 inches by 10 inches that's torn in jagged forms of Guadalcanal. They gave out maps when we were onboard ship. That came along with me somehow or other; I don't know how. Don't ask me how it survived because I didn't even know I had it until later. I have a map but it's not a souvenir.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. Boston

Yes I did. I saw the first. No I shouldn't say that, that's the wrong words to use. Before there was a USO, do you remember Joe E. Brown?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes.

Mr. Boston

Joe E. Brown's son died; he got killed. He took off and did shows in the South Pacific before anybody even knew anything. Yes I did see Joe E. Brown.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you see him?

Mr. Boston

I saw him in Australia. We had no shows any place where I was. In other words, they didn't have any shows on the island. We had a few memorial services for people that got killed but there wasn't anybody coming on that island; not while I was there anyway.

Mr. Misenhimer

Bob Hope did come to Guadalcanal probably somewhere near the middle of 1943; somewhere around there.

Mr. Boston

I don't remember any USO shows even when we got back into Melbourne, Australia. The only thing we had there was the Salvation Army. I don't remember any USO shows. There may have been a USO show in San Francisco or something like that. When we

went out from San Francisco that was the first time but we didn't even hardly get off the ship. Somebody might have gone to a USO show but I didn't. I didn't frequent them things anyhow, not too much. I wasn't looking out for those kinds of things.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Boston

Red Cross is my supposed contact I guess you would call it. I am a disabled vet, 10%. I'm a 10% disabled vet getting nothing. I don't get anything because I didn't fight for what I had.

Mr. Misenhimer

You got it for the malaria, is that it?

Mr. Boston

That's right. I was getting a little bit. I'm called a disabled vet but I'm down to zero down as far as physically getting anything. I had to take a day off work every six months or so to go to the doctors to keep that up. So hey, I lost more money taking the day off from work than I got for the 10%. So I said, "I'm not going to do that any more." Plus the fact that it's not the easiest place to get to sometimes. I am a disabled vet.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose?

Mr. Boston

Oh yes. Tokyo Rose spoke highly about a lot of people that she should not have talked about. I don't know if they ever tried her or not.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, she was convicted and then she was pardoned after about 7 or 8 years.

Mr. Boston

Was she? I didn't know. Some things have passed me by.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of the officers that you had over you?

Mr. Boston

The Captain was like about a 4 out of 10. The Lieutenants were okay. There were about four or five Lieutenants in the company. There was no communication. One of the

things I always felt was that if you kept your nose clean and you kept out of trouble, then nobody knew you were there so you never got lined up for any promotion. We had guys in different places that were rascals, I'll call them, okay? And they got promoted. I was a Private for a long time and when they were going to make a Private First Class and so and so over here hasn't been in trouble lately so let's promote him. I don't know how they picked them because I don't think there wasn't that much difference between a lot of them. But anyway so when you get into the upper officers I think they just flipped a coin but they were all relatively okay.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about Colonel Pollock?

Mr. Boston

He was a great guy.

Mr. Misenhimer

He was your battalion or was he regiment commander?

Mr. Boston

He was a Lieutenant Colonel. He was the battalion commander. He became Commandant I think later.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes I think so.

Mr. Boston

I thought he was okay, particularly after I encountered him a number of times. We never had too much encounter with these guys. I mean these guys were far above us. When you get down into the NCO's, we had great NCO's. They were "people" people; you could rely on them. They did things to help you as much as they could. They took care of you like you were theirs. I went in there at 17 and some of these guys were 20 years old, 21 years old; they were old men so they took care of you.

Mr. Misenhimer

When Germany surrendered in May of 1945 did you all have any kind of celebration or did you hear about that?

Mr. Boston

Actually you know I heard about it, yes. I was married then.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were back in the States then.

Mr. Boston

I was kind of sliding around between there and Lejeune. I had one experience which was a little different experience that people might think was unusual. Today when you go in the service I don't know how they handle insurance for these guys. We had to buy our own. I suspect that maybe you did. We had to buy our own insurance and as I said we made \$21 a month. It was 65 cents per thousand and they wanted you to take \$10,000 worth of insurance and that was \$6.50. \$6.50 out of \$21 doesn't leave you any money for stamps. So I decided that since I wasn't married or anything, I wasn't too concerned so I took \$2,000 of insurance. That was unheard of. We got all that ironed out and I wanted to come home and when I wanted to go back I was married and I had one child. I said okay, I want \$10,000 worth of insurance; I want the other \$8,000. First they said they didn't know about that and that I had to fill out the form. So I filled out the form and they started taking the money out of my check, it might have been 70 cents a thousand since that was a couple of years later. They started taking it out of my paycheck when I left for Camp Lejeune. When I got into Hawaii I got a letter from the government saying that I was denied insurance because you are not qualified. I said what am I doing over here, going back overseas if I'm not qualified for insurance? But they wouldn't insure me, I kid you not. I went into the office there and I said, "Hey you're taking this money out of my paycheck and my wife needs the money." We didn't have too much money. She said, "We have no form, we can't stop the deduction." So they didn't. My wife wanted to know what was going on and I told her, "I just want you to know they are still taking the money out and I'm heading now over to Guam and then going to Japan." It just so happens that didn't happen and I came home. When I got the money, they told me I could put it in war bonds. I did get the money back. He said, "If they were taking the money out, they would have probably had to pay the \$10,000." That's how things work.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned earlier awhile ago that they dropped the bomb; how did you all hear about that?

Mr. Boston

I was aboard ship. On the ship you know we get announcements on little pieces of paper that come out and we were to read this. We were happy. We were happy with the first one and happier with the second one. We were in the harbor I think at Guam when the second went down. I was with a company actually when they announced the surrender. Now when do I go home?

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have a celebration?

Mr. Boston

There really wasn't much of anything there. We were in tents there is why. We never had a big celebration really; not like crossing the equator or going cross the International Date Line; they had big celebrations for that.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you crossed the equator did you have a celebration for that?

Mr. Boston

There was a little something yes. One or two people got the celebration but everybody that was there got credited.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got out did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Boston

Not exactly no. I didn't have any trouble adjusting at all because I had a job waiting for me. I went back to the telephone company. I got a job with the telephone company. I didn't get my messenger job back because I didn't want that one back. I was older now so I went out to be a lineman.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your GI Bill at all?

Mr. Boston

I did use my GI Bill for two things; one for buying a house. The other I guess wasn't the GI Bill, but it was part of my GI Bill because of my disability, I did get some money for work training.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Boston

Yes, we have a reunion every year.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you been to them?

Mr. Boston

I was at the one this year and last year and the year before I wasn't, but the one year before that I was. I hope to go this year.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where is it going to be, the next one coming up?

Mr. Boston

Denver for this one coming up.

Mr. Misenhimer

In 2006?

Mr. Boston

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

You just had one in Kansas City in August.

Mr. Boston

That's right and its supposed to be in Philadelphia in 2007.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall?

Mr. Boston

Not too much else. I'll give you a copy of this thing that I've read from.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay. Well anything else that you can recall from your time in the service.

Mr. Boston

Not really. I always thought that, I'm kind of an ornery person but I always thought that the government could afford to send me there someday. They sent me the first time; I think they ought to be able to send you back if you would like to go back. It's not the

kind of place like Normandy. I've been to Normandy. It's not like a place like that because there is more travel to Normandy. It's not as easy to get to a little island somewhere.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Boston

That's fine.

Mr. Misenhimer

And again, thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Boston

I had written a couple of things last night. Really these are off the cuff things that I said myself. "Dreams are created by God on the battlefield of freedom." And then I said here, "Marines give their self for their country willingly." That's what we did. Whether you are a Marine or not or whether you are just a citizen, there are things that you should be doing to try and keep peace in the world.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was that story?

Mr. Boston

It's a little story, Jim Hancock wrote it. Jim was a good writer. That's all I can say.

(end of the interview)

Transcribed by:

Lesle W. Dial

Beeville, Texas

January 10, 2006

Oral History by:

Richard Misenhimer

P. O. Box 3453

Alice, TX 78333

Home: 361-664-4071

Cell: 361-701-5848