

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

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

**Albert C. Finley
Spokane, Washington
April 11, 2006
Headquarters Company, 4th Marines
Radar Mechanic on Corsairs**

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is April 11, 2006. I am interviewing Mr. Albert C. Finley by telephone. His address is: 2652 40th Avenue, Spokane, Washington 99223. His phone number is area code 509-448-1719. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Al, I want to thank you very much for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II. The first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Nimitz Museum. When I do these in person I give it to the person to read and sign but since this is by phone let me read this to you and make sure it is okay with you. "Agreement read." Is that okay with you?

Mr. Finley

Sure.

Mr. Misenhimer

The next thing I need to do, I would like to get an alternative address. An address of someone that we can contact in case for some reason we aren't able to get you at this address and phone number.

Mr. Finley

Dan and Trudy Nims. Trudy is the one you would call. Her address 2450 Wallula Avenue, Walla Walla, Washington, 99362. Their telephone number is 509-529-1800.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that your daughter?

Mr. Finley

Yes, that's our oldest daughter.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you first what is your birth date?

Mr. Finley

May 10, 1923. I was born in Dayton, Ohio.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Finley

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your father's occupation?

Mr. Finley

This is a peculiar thing you see, I am adopted. I don't know who my parents were. My father's occupation, my birth father I can't tell you, I don't know. All I know about that is their name was Long, Albert C. Long. Then when I was born, shortly thereafter my mother died and this man, my father, he didn't want a little kid, a little baby. He didn't have any other kids I don't think. So he gave me to the Finley's who were my foster parents. He was a clerk in a store. My mother was a housewife, a launderer, housekeeper and washed clothes and stuff like that. Then they took me up to Montana and lived with my relatives up there for a while and they had to bring me back because I was getting seizures. They took me out because I was having spasms caused by the seizure then they brought me back to Dayton. That didn't work so they moved out to Madison Valley. I

wasn't adopted until I was ten years old. That was after my foster father died in the mines. I remember I came home and she was crying and talking about how somebody wanted to take me back. Well I had suspicioned something all the time because whenever I signed anything of any legal nature, a life insurance policy I had to sign it Albert C. Long, Jr. Well this guy's name was Albert C. Long, Sr. So anyway she finally adopted me so I became Finley but I never had any brothers or sisters. Sorry about all that.

Mr. Misenhimer

No that's fine; that's good. Now you grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Finley

Oh my goodness that Depression was a bad, bad thing because as I told you my dad was working in the mines. The Depression started when I was a little kid. The miners struck, they had a big strike and he had to strike with them. When he went back, he was a big boozier, a big tough Irishman and he liked to drink. During the Depression we didn't have much money. After he died my mother was still cleaning houses, taking in washing. We had some shirttail relatives, a guy in Butte by the name of George Augunt and he ran what was known as George's Coffee Cup; a little hole in the wall where he served breakfast and stuff like that. Every so often we would go down there and get coffee and we would take a lard bucket can that lard came in and he would fill that up with soup and give us a loaf of bread. "Sit down and eat that" he would tell my mother and I. So it wasn't good. Candy bars were a nickel and hamburgers were a nickel. One of the ways I made my money was to go around with a gunny sack and pick up whiskey flasks and take them down to one of those dark hotels and sometimes they would slip you a dollar. They

sold for a nickel a piece or something like that. It was during Prohibition too. We didn't have any money. In the winter time, ladies who would bring home their groceries; I would help them and take them up to their house and they would give me a nickel or a dime. I would tell them "I'll shovel your sidewalk for a quarter." And they would say okay and let me do that. So that's how I made money. We had gangs in Butte and we were in fights all the time. Butte was divided up into sections; Hungarian Section, Mick Town, Dago Town, Wop Town, Jew Town and people lived in all those different sections. Butte really had quite an effect on me. It made me get to the point where I was very frugal. My mother was too because any money we got we couldn't spend very frivolously. It was a hard time for us.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Finley

Well I'll tell you. I went to high school at the Consolidated School of Ennis, Montana. It was a four year high school and we had 80 kids in it. Most of us came in from the country by bus. I rode 7 miles. My uncle was the school bus driver for 50 years and he was a Mason for 50 years. He was a Star Mason. That's where I went to school out there.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Finley

1941.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you actually go into the service?

Mr. Finley

I went into the service; well let me tell you about the service. I would go home to the town of Jeffers where I lived and there were no boys around. They were all gone into the service for one or two years and here I am third year in college. The draft board, whom I knew everybody, they said, "As long as you keep getting C's we'll send you to school and you don't have to go into the service." My mother was widowed and so they did a good turn by me. But I got tired of coming home and not finding any boys to pal around with. The girls were alright but I didn't want to be with them all the time. Going back to Bozeman one week I got to thinking, "I think what I'm going to do is volunteer. But what am I going to volunteer for?" I didn't know what to volunteer for. I certainly didn't want to go into anything that caused me to swim because all the time I was going to college I had taken swimming. I never took ballroom dancing or anything like that. I always took swimming because I didn't learn how. They were forcing me to do this. So I didn't want to get into the Navy. I didn't want to get in the Army because I was in the ROTC and they had those dadgum itchy monkey suits and I didn't like that either. So the Army and the Navy and then the Air Corps. I went down to get tested for the Air Corps but my eyes; you put your finger out there, you hold one finger and you draw it towards your eyes and you are going to see it eventually go into two, or start crossing over. My eyes didn't do that consistently so they said they didn't want me in the Air Corps either. So I got to thinking, "By God I'm going to go into the Marines. The Marines are the place for me because I won't have to wear an itchy suit and I won't have to learn how to swim." I was in the Marines three days down in boot camp when they called us all out after supper. They told us we were going to go swimming. I about died. This was in

November. Actually when I went into the service was after Thanksgiving in 1943. I had enrolled sometime before that but they gave me an extension time over the holiday. They got us all naked standing up there in line. We would go take our turn to jump off in the deep end. I got down there and the DI said, "Jump in." I said, "I'm not jumping in the water, I don't know how to swim." He said, "Jump in." I said, "I'm not going to." He said, "You either jump in or we're going to throw you in." I said, "I can't swim." He said, "How do we know that you don't how to swim unless you jump off in the deep end and you can't get out?" He said, "We've got this 15 foot pole here with padding on the end; we'll pull you out of there." That was great; I thought that would be not too bad. But all he was trying to do; I think he was trying to drown me with that pole. But anyway I finally got out. Every place that I went in the service, except overseas, I had to go take swimming. I finally got down to Utah State and the guy said, a nice fellow from Massachusetts, he said, "I see you're having trouble swimming. I can teach you how to swim." I said, "Fine." He said, "Just meet me down here on Saturday about such and such time and we'll have the whole swimming pool to ourselves." By gosh he taught me how to swim around on my back, but not very efficiently. But I felt comfortable in the fact that I could swim a little bit. Boy oh boy, I'm telling you that was something I've always remembered. Then when I got down to the Marines to boot camp we had a DI there by the name Sergeant Cheney, a big rough husky guy. He had been on Guadalcanal and he had a bayonet mark right across his face. He turned out to be a really nice guy but he impressed you as being pretty mean. He told us, "Do you know why you are down here swimming?" He scared the pee out of me. He said, "When we went in on Tarawa we had 3,000 Marines die because they could not swim out of that tide where they accidentally

dropped us off. That scared the beejeebers out of me. I knew that I should learn how to swim but I avoided it with a deep passion.

Mr. Misenhimer

On December 7, 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Finley

Oh do I ever, you bet I do. I was on the parade ground with the ROTC when that came out. They announced it over the PA system. Boy there was a silence and a lot of people started to cry. Oh yes I recall when they announced that you bet your life I do.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you think this would affect you?

Mr. Finley

I knew that it was going to get me into the service. That's why I went over to the draft board and talked it over with them. They said, "You don't have to be worried because we'll take everybody else before we have to take you." So I was all set but I got to feeling guilty about all those guys being over there and that's why I volunteered. One reason I volunteered for the Marines was because they got more honor, they got more glory and hullabaloo about them and they had that beautiful uniform, the dress blues. That was beautiful. Speaking of dress blues, I never bought one, I never got one. I always remember and sometimes I've been asked "What was the best duty town that you were in?" I always say Chicago and the reason I say Chicago is because whenever we went on leave from radar tech school the people, you would go to buy a drink and there would be five guys trying to buy your drink for you. If you went into a place to eat they would say, "Hey, let us buy your dinner. You can have it on us." Always, always very generous

people; I'll never forget that.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you start to college?

Mr. Finley

I started college in September of 1941, right after I got out of school. I had a scholarship to go to Billings Polytech but it was a work scholarship. The idea was that you worked one year in the dairy and then you got to go two years for free. That was killing me because when we got through with our dairy duties everybody else was through and the mess hall wasn't open and you had to eat cottage cheese or something like that. I called up a friend in Bozeman and he told me, "Come on down, we'll let you stay with us for \$25 a month." That was board and room. I missed two weeks of indoctrination. I never did make that stuff up because had I done so I don't think I would have ever gotten into chemistry. The results of my tests were not that good but they put me in there and I stayed there for another two years.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get a scholarship to there?

Mr. Finley

No scholarship to Montana State; just a scholarship down to Billings Polytech.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you pay for it then?

Mr. Finley

Well okay, I didn't have much money. But the summer that I graduated from high school I went down to Thornton Camp, ten miles north of West Yellowstone, Montana and I

worked on that as a chore boy. My duties were if the chickens squawked I collected the eggs. I split the wood and fired up the fires. Former President Hoover came there and I met him personally. When he left he gave me a full complement of wages; \$60 a month is what I was making. So I saved that money but that still wasn't enough to go to college. So I came home and I had a friend working in that small town at the Farmer's Union Gas Company. I don't know what he was making but I went to see him. His name was Wellington Angle I think, but we all called him Guinea because his face was all marked with freckles. I said, "Do you have any money you can loan me?" He said, "Sure, you're honest. What do you need?" I said, "I sure could use \$250. I've got about \$400 saved up." He said, "You take the \$250 and pay me back when you can." So like I say, I was staying at this place and they were giving me some money. They charged me \$25 a month but they gave me money for working around the house and all that kind of stuff. That's how I got through there. I got that kid paid back as soon as I could.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you went three years there is that right?

Mr. Finley

Well, not quite. I went from September of 1941 to November of 1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

So two years?

Mr. Finley

Yes, that's right, two years. I was majoring in chemistry at the time. That's why when I went into the service. I went to boot camp and the tests they gave you, I could almost get everything right. So three times they asked me to go and gave me the chance to go to

Officers Training School down at Fort Benning. I never liked to take orders and it was pretty obvious that I didn't want to give any and so I didn't want to get myself in a position like that and besides I wasn't any dummy. I knew that if you went and got Officer's Training then you owed the Marines some years and when it was over with I wanted to be out and away from there and go back to college. So I never did go do that although it was wonderful that they gave me the opportunity to do so.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about boot camp, what was that like?

Mr. Finley

Oh ho, let me go to boot camp, by golly. In boot camp we had a lot of types of things that we called busy work. For instance let me tell you some of these things. I went down to San Diego and I went to the boot camp there and it was in November. I told you about going swimming. That was the first thing that I had to do. Another thing about that swimming and then I'll tell you about that boot camp. The only time that I really got scared about not knowing how to swim was one time I don't know where we were going to, but we were going from one island to another aboard this big troop ship. I was sitting along the deck on a cable and it was at night. I was half asleep. It was so hot downstairs you couldn't sleep. So I was up there and I looked out and my God, we're being torpedoed. Right out of there, off to the side, here came this streak of phosphorescence right towards me and I jumped up and finally I woke up and it was a bunch of fish moving right straight towards us. Thank God because I knew we were going to be torpedoed. They also told us when we were on those boats that they didn't want anybody messing around smoking because you could see a lighted cigarette for half a mile; I think

is what they said. Back to boot camp, I'm trying to think. They would give you things such as, they liked volunteers and one time they wanted a volunteer truck driver. I knew how to drive a truck. Do you know what they gave me? One of those little hand trucks that you put crates on and wheel that around (laugh). Then on the obstacle course; I was in very good shape because I was out for the Montana State track team and I kept myself in pretty good shape. We had to run the obstacle course; nothing to it. I and another guy would just breeze over it. The DI said, "How did you like it?" "Oh, it was okay." "How come you finished so fast?" "Well, it wasn't very difficult." "It's not difficult? Go over it a second time and see how difficult it is." Then for inspection, we had clothes inspection, by gosh, each of us, not each of us but a lot of us that were wise, we would get an issue of clothing that was not dirty at all, no specks of dirt on it at all. Otherwise they would tell you to go do the laundry; we're going to inspect it. So you would do your laundry; you would put your arm out; put your laundry and your skivvies over it and the DI would come along and he would look at it and he would said, "Humph, it doesn't look too clean to me." He would flip it off in the dirt and he would rub his foot on it and the he would say, "Okay, now go do it right." But if you got a set of clothing that had not been touched, hadn't been worn, then you were okay. So we got that down pretty well. I was always kind of slow about getting around so I very soon found out that they wanted you pretty clean shaven. I was two years older than some of these kids so I had quite a beard. You had to stand in line and the tall guys would usually stand behind and the shorter guys would stand towards the front and you would alternate so that you could see the mirror because there was only one mirror in there to shave by and you had a straight edge that you shaved with. If you didn't get all that stuff off your face why they would say, "Okay,

what's that fuzz you've got on your face?" A lot of those kids did just have fuzz on their face because they were just that age. They would put you underneath the cot you were sleeping in and give you a razor and now they would say, "Shave." No nothing, just dry shave. That was pretty miserable. Then another thing they had and the word may not be appropriate they used to have fellows that wanted to get out of the Marines. They thought they could do it by wetting the bed. But all they got for themselves was this: they would wet the bed and when they got up in the morning they would take that small mattress, the thin mattress that they had they would have to go out on the parade ground and hold that thing up in the air above their head until it dried. Then if that didn't cure them they would give them what was known as a 'piss call' every half hour all night long. That was my duty one time, one week while I was on guard duty. We had to go around and hit these guys on the feet and make sure they went down to the toilet. I'm trying to think of some other things. One of the things I hated was boxing. They would pick out one of the biggest guys in the company to go against a little one. I'm only 5' 8" and the other guy might be 6' 2" or something. We came out there and he would punch the hell out of me. Fortunately I never got hurt; I don't know why I didn't, but I didn't. We had to march to Camp Matthews, that was the rifle range. You had to qualify on the rifle range or they called you a 'shit bird' and they ridiculed you. There were different positions and there was a standing position and prone position and sitting position and squatting position. I had the devil of a time qualifying with the M-1. Being from Montana everybody thought, oh boy, there's a good shot; he can really knock a gnat off somebody's eyebrow without hurting the guy. Hell with the M-1 I couldn't do anything. I had never shot one of those. My uncle gave my cousin and me a .22 to go out and shoot jack rabbits. So the day they

had us fire the carbine, I just knocked the hole out of everything; straight 100's or whatever the center of the thing was. The whole group thought that was great. How could I do that and not be able to fire the M-1? The big test came on qualifying day. To qualify you had to get marksman; the lowest you could get. So I'm out there trying. I got through all the first positions and I came to the squatting position. I couldn't get down into that position. So this big DI, he must have weighed 300 pounds. He said, "You'll qualify but by golly you shoot right when you're supposed to, don't wait around." He climbed on top of my shoulders, it's a wonder he didn't pull some muscles in my body but he got me down in that thing and I fired off. I barely qualified for marksman. Boy was I a happy camper at that time because I never thought I was going to. There was no way I could. Anyway, I didn't get called a 'shit bird'. I knew what was going on.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the food like there at boot camp?

Mr. Finley

Not bad if you could get it. I'll tell you why I said, "If you could get it." We went to the rifle range and our platoon was late getting back for some reason. We went back to the mess hall and all they had was pitchers of cocoa and loaves of bread. I ate it up. Some of those poor guys didn't; they didn't like that at all. I just ate and ate. I loved that. It was one of my favorite meals. But you know even overseas they would feed you all these old potatoes. There were dehydrated potatoes, dehydrated eggs. The eggs sometimes were green and cold; it was pretty hard to down that stuff but we made out. I remember one time speaking of those things, I worked in the mess hall there someplace and I think they had 5 gallon cans of onions and 5 gallon cans of potatoes; dehydrated. We had never

messed with those things. So the Sergeant or somebody that was in charge said, "Take one of those big wash tubs and put some water in it and pour all of those in." Goodnight we poured that in and they came out and they were all over the floor, jiminy Christmas, we never could catch up with all of those potatoes and all those onions. He wondered what had happened. Some of the best feeds we had were overseas. That calls to mind; we used to go out with the natives fishing in the surf. Those guys had a stick that they would stick down and catch those fish but they were eating them raw. I couldn't bring myself to eat raw fish. Then they would get some for us and say, "Fix them how you like them." We would take them back and those were really good. I couldn't march particularly well. When they marched you out I didn't keep time, they would march you out to Camp Matthews to go on the rifle range; you had to keep up or practically perish. The DI Sergeant was back there with his swagger stick and he would hit you across the legs and you'd yelp. If you yelped too loudly he would hit you again. I don't remember how far it was. It must have been ten or twelve miles out there. I can't remember on that thing. But that was that. In boot camp I think that's about it. I can't think of anything else right now.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then where did you go when you finished boot camp?

Mr. Finley

After taking all those tests and they offered me the chance to go to Fort Benning and I said, "No, no." They said, "We have to send you some place." So I ended up going to radar tech school. I went to radar tech school back in Chicago. That's when I learned how nice the folks in Chicago were. From there I went to Logan, Utah to Utah State Agricultural College. From there they sent me down to Camp Miramar. The reason they

sent me to Camp Miramar was because I was really enrolled in the Air Corps, the Marine Air Corps but I never flew any planes. I never flew or anything like that. That was just a name and what I ended up doing was spending most of my time fixing up the Corsairs. I think we fixed radio gear. Most of it was radar gear that had been shot up or they would have to get new ones put in. So I and this fellow by the name of Gibson, from Cleveland, we worked there and that was our job mainly to keep those machines flying with some good operable gear in them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where was that?

Mr. Finley

That was on Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back. What did do in radar tech school? What all did you do there and how long was that?

Mr. Finley

Radar tech school, you took mathematics and you built a super heterodyne radio and then you did some lab experiments with electricity and magnetism. Then they gave you a test at the end of it to check how well you were coming along. Then they sent you to an advance school when you got out of there. I think it was Majuro down in the South Gilbert Islands, I think it was. That's where we landed and from there we went to Kwajalein. It was a pretty rigorous type of thing.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long was that school?

Mr. Finley

Maybe, just a guess because I don't know, two months.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you actually repair radar sets then, or what did you do?

Mr. Finley

That's what we were trained to do. If the radar wasn't working, it was up to us to find out what was wrong and put in the pieces that were missing.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you leave to go overseas?

Mr. Finley

I left to go overseas about; it had to be about maybe September of 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you leave from to go overseas?

Mr. Finley

Camp Miramar at San Diego. I never thought of it until right now. Why did they send me to Camp Miramar? My other buddies went some other place. The reason they sent me down there was because I was in the Air Corps and that was an air base. (laugh) I never thought about that until just now. That's something you might like to know. At that time we were sent overseas for a tour of duty of 14 months after which we were supposed to get leave to come home; change shifts so to speak. I never completed that shift because of having so many points. They gave you so many points; I can't remember what all they gave you points for. I didn't get any medals or anything. These guys were going out and fighting and I was in several different Marine Air Groups. These guys would take off and

go fight someplace and they would come back and I didn't find this out until I was getting ready to be discharged from the service that that was why I got discharged. I an this Gibson guy got so many points because we were actually working on the aircraft. I just couldn't believe it. But I think I got out after maybe 11 months after I went overseas.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you went overseas what ship did you go on?

Mr. Finley

I can't tell you, I just know it was a big old troop ship. I can tell you about some of that stuff going over there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Go ahead.

Mr. Finley

Aboard ship wasn't much fun. The reason it wasn't much fun is because they were crowded. We were really, really crowded because of the fact that the bunks that you slept in were only, maybe you could barely turn over in the doggone thing. I thought that was bad until we went by way of Hawaii and we stopped at Pearl Harbor to see some of the remnants of where the bombs had landed on the air base. My friend was in the Navy on submarine duty and he asked me to come down and take a look at his sub which I did. I'm glad I never got in, those things were really crowded in there. I don't know how he stood it. When we were aboard ship it was bad enough. For instance if it was rough water you had a hard time hanging on to your tray; they had these Navy trays. Also keeping the food on your tray; keeping it in front of you, it was terrible. A lot of the guys threw up and the food and vomit would get all over the place and fall on the floor. Afterwards they

would send me, along with some of my friends and we would clean all that mess up. When you went to the toilet, the motion of the waves pushed you off so you often slid around in the feces and urine; it was a real mess, just terrible. One time we had the duty of emptying out the garbage cans. Strung along the decks were a couple of cables which went through posts and you would unlock these or untie them or something. Then you would have nothing between you and the sea to catch you except the water if you went over with these cans. We sure as heck weren't going to go over with those cans because the fish and sharks would sidle up along there and they would eat up that garbage as fast as you could put it out. I remember one time the damn can went over and this kid was hanging on to the can and had another hand on the post. I said, "Let that damn can go buddy. They're not going to miss another can." I don't know how many we threw over deck but we threw a lot of them. Here's something that happened. I was on deck where I spent most of my time because it was cooler up there. I noticed that there were some crates of oranges with some ropes around them. The ship was pushing and I looked and I said, "Boy, those oranges are going to come loose and when they get loose I'm going to get me some of them." We never had any fresh fruit like that down below. We stuck around and those doggone things broke. The crates spilled down and the oranges went all over the place. The officers came around and gave us buckets and they wanted us to pick those things up after things calmed down we had to take and put them in the bucket. *(tape side ended)*

Mr. Misenhimer

So you got the oranges.

Mr. Finley

We got maybe 15 or 20 buckets of oranges but you know what; they just didn't get all of them. Some of them ended up down in the enlisted men's quarters. Boy were they good. We were real popular for getting them down there. They tasted very good because we never got anything like that. I think that's about all for going overseas. Oh, yes, you know the hold where we slept was so doggone hot that you couldn't really sleep in there. Being sort of investigative, I went up on the deck and found out that if you went back to the stern there was a breeze coming up from the propellers where they were turning over and swishing up this water and the water got it a little cooler. Heck I stayed up there all the time, I never was uncomfortable. Some of those poor guys were sweating it out.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long did you stay in Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Finley

Three days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get liberty there?

Mr. Finley

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that?

Mr. Finley

Oh fine. That was when I went down to the submarine and saw the boy. In the harbor they had a lot of booths along the way where there were some pretty promiscuous women

on there; a lot of sex taking place. I had a fiancé back in the States and I didn't mess around. I didn't want to do that anyway. One thing I forgot to tell you about boot camp was they used to have nice shoes. I think they gave us Florsheim shoes; I had never had as nice a shoe in my life. But they wanted them kept nice so we had to spit polish them. One time when I was overseas I got my shoes all shined up really nice. I'll be damned if three of my friends, I guess they were people I knew anyway, came along and urinated all over them. That ticked me off to no end so what was I going to do to get even with those guys? They slept around with just their shorts on. They maybe had a sheet. You would take these sheets and get water on them and put them over on you to get cooler. So I waited around until they were all asleep and I got a friend to come along and he pulled the sheet off. I knew where they made ice and this ice was made for the mess hall to cool drinks and stuff. So I got three pans of ice and just dropped that and strung it right over their bare chest down to their shorts. They jumped out of there and were running around like mad. I told them, "I don't want any more of those shenanigans. We're even." "Okay." That wasn't too bad but now to tell you, to get back to this business of ice. I don't recall exactly but we were issued a case of beer every so often; maybe once a month, maybe twice a month. The beer was called green beer and the reason it was called green beer was because it was in beer cans painted green. Then when you drank it, it had not been cured, left to age. Some of the guys really liked it so we would sell that to them or trade it for something. Then the same with coke. With the coke, we would get a case of coke and we didn't get as much coke as I think we did beer. The coke sold better anyway, but I kept all of my coke and got rid of the beer. I found the ice making machine for the cafeteria, for the crew, for the mess hall. It was placed up in the air maybe six or seven

feet tall and had louvers going across it and the water dripped down and as it dripped down they had some cooling mechanism that would form ice flakes so to speak. So that's where I got all of the ice flakes and that's how I kept my drinks cold. I didn't have much trouble getting rid of that coke. Nobody got that idea. I would get a cold coke and I could sell it for \$2 or \$3. All they had was warm coke to drink.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you left Hawaii where did you go?

Mr. Finley

We went to Majuro. That was the Gilberts or Marshall's.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was this the same ship you had been on before?

Mr. Finley

Yes it was a troop ship going overseas. That ice machine wasn't aboard ship; it was out in the islands. We got down there to Majuro and we climbed down off that rope ladder. I hated those rope ladders. I was always sticking my feet through them. There were Marines, I guess they were Marines, they had souvenirs to sell. So they would sell you these souvenirs. They had bracelets, necklaces, pendants made out of the shells of these sea snails that were along the ocean bottom. Later on when I was on Guam with this guy Gibson, he and I would take off and go down to the seashore, to the beaches and we had a square box with a plexi-glass bottom on it. You would look through that and you would go along and find these animals, these sea snails all over the place. We would put them in there and then we would take them and put them out by our tent or our Quonset hut, whatever it was and they would decay. Then we would both clean them out and I would

take them and he would take them and make these same bracelets and necklaces that we bought, he would make them because he was really handy. He would get some wire and cotton and glue and make these. I sent them home to my fiancé and I sent them home to my mom and so forth. Some were really nice. There were some big snails, I can't remember what they called them, they were big brownish speckled snails. He would take one of those and make a nice turtle out of it for you; a little shell for the head and little ones for feet. I sent those home too. We started making those and I was the seller and he was the provider. We had Air Corps, Navy, Marines and Seabees out there. I would go around to all these places and I would get the orders. They didn't have any money during the month, but on payday they had lots of money. If you got there before they gambled it away then they would pay for what they ordered. We used to do that all the time. I ran into some pretty weird things. One time I went into this place and this guy said, "How about trading me some of that stuff for these?" He pulled out a Prince Albert can or Velvet or something, a tobacco can. In there he had them filled up with Japanese teeth, gold teeth. I said, "Where did you get those?" "I kicked them out of the skulls of dead Japs." I said, "What in the world do you plan to do with them?" He said, "I'm going to make a nice necklace for my wife and a couple of bracelets for my daughters." This guy was ready to go home. He had had enough. I didn't do any business with him. Another time I got into officer's territory. They were offering me liquor for this stuff. He said, "You ought to trade for these. You could make a lot of money off of those." I said, "I'm not too anxious to trade that alcohol for anything, that's really against the law." He said, "If you get up to the front," this was right after we went into Iwo and I had occasion to go up there to help fly out wounded, he said, "they'll give you as much as \$100 to \$200 for a

fifth." I said, "I'm not interested." One souvenir that I got from Iwo, they issued 17 jewel Hamilton watches when they went in to invade. They had to have these people synchronized so they would get there at the same time and not get shot or bombed by somebody else. The guy had this watch and he said, "What will you give me for the watch?" I said, "Where did you get that?" He told me. He said, "Look, it doesn't have a number on the back." It didn't have a number on the back so they couldn't trace it anyway. He said, "I'll give that to you for a couple of necklaces." So I jumped at the chance. Then my friend Gibson got busy and he would make watch bands and arm bands and wrist bands. So he made me a nice one. I've still got the watch with a wrist band that he made. That was quite a deal. Gibson used to even take the plastic liners from the gas tanks that the Corsairs carried their gas in and he would make those up into wallets and we would sell those. We had a lot of stuff for sale. We made quite a little bit of money on this stuff. When I got sent home I was just in the mood to buy a jeep so we could cover more territory faster, but that never did materialize.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about working on the radar on the Corsairs. Where was that?

Mr. Finley

That was just the doggone screen might get shot up and you would go in and install a new screen so they could pick up that signal. Then if a piece of the gear maybe, some of the electronic gear would get blown. If it was so damaged that you couldn't repair it they would authorize you to just take it and install a whole new unit. It was sort of complicated. That's why they sent us to school I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where was it that you did that?

Mr. Finley

That was mainly on Guam. I was trying to think. I'll tell you one story about Guam. I was on guard duty most of the time I was on Guam. I got pretty friendly with the Sergeant of the Guard. He would grant me some privileges once in a while. Anyway, one day he came to me and said, "Finley, you are going to take the POW's today." I said, "I'm going to take the POW's?" "Yes" he said. I said, "What am I going to do with them?" "Well," he says, "You are going to teach them to chop off the tops of palm trees and then they will take cross cuts and we'll cut the palm trees up and we'll use them for barricades or for huts or for something like that. So I thought, "Well okay." I had worked in the woods in Montana so I knew a little something about that. All these Japs, there were about 40 of them, were standing around me watching to see what I would do because I was going to demonstrate. I grabbed this double bladed axe and jumped up on the palm tree and swung away at it. I never hit anything so spongy and so hard in my life. The force tore my hands loose and the axe went up in the air about 10 or 15 feet and started heading for these Japs. Boy you should have seen them scatter. That was so funny I can still see them today running like mad and yelling. I don't know what they were yelling but the guards got them all back together. Then when I went to take them out again, they would push their hands toward me for me to go away. They would say in Japanese, "No. No. No go." They didn't want me for any leader I can tell you that. I was sort of glad. Another time on guard duty. When I was in Montana I used to correspond with a fellow in the Navy by the name of George W. Gregg. He and I never got together. He was in the Navy before the

war started. He was down in San Diego and he was going to come see me. He started up to see me but the rod in his car blew out and he called me up and told me, "I don't have any money and I can't come and see you so I'm going to go home." Burnt House, West Virginia is where he's from. So I got this postcard that was marked the day before. I thought, "Gee, the day before, where is he. He must be right here pretty close." So I went to see the Sergeant of the Guard and he said, "You're in the Marine Air Corps you ought to fly someplace up there. Why don't you fly over to Roi and see your friend?" That was only 40 miles away so I jumped aboard the mail plane and went over and landed and by gosh here was where all my friends were. These guys that were in my platoon were right there, four or five of them. So we had a grand confab and then I said, "Where's the ship located?" The name of the ship was on his postcard. So I got aboard that and climbed up the rope ladder and when I got up to the top this sailor was there and I said, "Where can I find George W. Gregg?" He said, "That's the gunner's shack over there; he's in that." I went over and I was about to knock on the door and the door opened and he said, "Finley, I've been expecting you." I said, "What are you talking about? How did you know it was me?" He said, "I don't know. I'll never be able to explain it. Here we are 10,000 miles from home. We've never met one another before and now we're meeting out here in the middle of the war." We had a big confab but you know what? I never have seen him since. I would appreciate very much if anybody knows somebody by the name of George W. Gregg who lived in Burnt House, West Virginia to get a hold of me and let me know. I would sure like to get a hold of him again. Let's see what else was there? I mentioned I think about the fact that they had us do a lot of things that weren't absolutely necessary. I remember when we landed on Majuro they were fixing it up for the officers, they were

finishing the officer's quarters. One of the duties, my duty and these friends of mine, not friends but acquaintances, we had to pull up any grass that we saw growing there. I would think that they would want grass but nope, pull all the grass up. Another thing they had us do was to sweep the sand; take a broom and sweep the sand to make it smooth for these guys. One of the things that they impressed upon us I recall, this was in boot camp; they had you marching, they had you hit your heels, first on the ground and then slap the ball of your foot down. They wanted to make noise. They were doing that all the time too. I wanted to tell you a little about the natives; particularly the natives on Guam. I don't think we were ever in Kwajalein long. Anyway they issued us New Testaments when we left the States and each of us carried one of those. So this fellow that I was friends with, we would stand in line and memorize verses back and forth. Then we found out that the natives were having some church services. We thought it would be interesting so we went over there and by gosh they were pretty neat because you couldn't understand anything they read; the message was in their language but every one of the hymns were out of the Methodist or something and they were familiar to us. They sang them in a cadence kind of thing but I loved that. We used to go every Sunday to hear those people. One of the saddest things that happened to me was on Guam. The Japs were still in the jungle and every now and then they would come down and they would take your dungarees off the clothes line. We would dry them out at night and they would steal them. So whenever you heard a noise someplace near the line there would be two or three Marines beating up on a Japanese prisoner; he wasn't a prisoner but he was going to be when they put this guy in the brig. Somehow or other one time they, I don't know, they killed four or five of these natives. They called them gooks. They shouldn't have. They took and chopped

them up and they buried them in a hole. They didn't really bury them; they threw them in a hole alongside of a forest trail. They were found by some of the Marines. I got the job, there were about five or six of us, and we were in charge of burial detail for those guys. Some of them I knew; it was a sad thing to happen. We wondered at the time, of course we didn't have any way of really telling, but they chopped them up. The meat was slowly spoiling and it had a heck of an odor to it but we thought maybe those Japs were eating them. They could have been a form of cannibalization but nobody ever proved it, but that was one of the thoughts that were going around. It was one of the saddest days that we had in the Marines. They were nice people and they used to get out and we would play volleyball with them and some of the natives would come in sometimes and do our laundry.

Mr. Misenhimer

These people that were killed; were they Americans killed by the Japanese?

Mr. Finley

No. These were natives, gooks were natives.

Mr. Misenhimer

And killed by whom?

Mr. Finley

By these Japanese guys that were wandering around in the jungle.

Mr. Misenhimer

Okay, by the Japanese.

Mr. Finley

Who else would have killed them? We weren't going to kill them because we were

friends with them.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did the natives look like there?

Mr. Finley

They were nice looking. They looked mainly like; well I can't tell the difference between the Orientals, Japanese and Chinese. If there would have been Chinese over there I probably would have killed them instead because I couldn't really tell the difference between them. These were very nice well developed people; very friendly. Some of them had long hair. Most of the time they had it, I don't know how they got it chopped off but they had it chopped off. They were friendly.

Mr. Misenhimer

They weren't real black right?

Mr. Finley

No. They were sort of like a light colored Indian or something like that or a light colored Mexican; something of that nature.

Mr. Misenhimer

Chamorros I think they called them.

Mr. Finley

Yes that's it. I couldn't think of the name. Chamorros, that's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you actually get into any combat at any time?

Mr. Finley

Not as such. I started to go to Iwo Jima because they had so many casualties that the

Navy Corpsman couldn't carry them all out to get them to the ships. I started up there and I don't know what happened, the pilot turned back. That was about as close as I got.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were on a plane heading there?

Mr. Finley

Yes. We took off on this plane and got up there somewhere. Why he came back I don't know but he turned back. I guess he got a radio message or something. The only way I can explain having picked up all of these Battle Stars and stuff of that nature was because I was always in a headquarters company in the 4th Marines and there were Marine Air Groups, they called them MAG's. They went up through 22 or something. I was in about four or five different ones. I was attached to them. When they went out they would get credit for this battle and I would get credit for the battle. But I never knew anything about this until I got back and got ready to go to work at Camp El Centro to finish up my career. The Sergeant pulled out my little black book and he said, "God almighty Finley, you went through hell over there. Look at all those battles." I didn't say anything to him because I wanted to get a good job. I finally ended up tending bar at the NCO Club. That's why I never really formed any friends in the Marines because some of these guys would come back pretty well shot up. They would take them off to the hospital and they would die; you would never see them again. Some never came back. They were going out on strafing and bombing expeditions and reconnaissance. They were always getting knocked out of the sky.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you work on any kinds of planes besides Corsairs?

Mr. Finley

No, mainly them. Once in a while they would fly in a Maverick. They had some Lockheed's, what did they call them?

Mr. Misenhimer

A Lockheed P-38 with the twin tails?

Mr. Finley

Yes, they had a few of those. I think these people that I was working with just had mainly the Corsairs. I didn't really pay much attention to the plane, just the installing of this stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the only thing that you worked on was the radar, is that right?

Mr. Finley

Yes that's all.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many different islands were you on down there?

Mr. Finley

I know we were on several in the Gilberts. We didn't stay much there, we just stayed and they would ship us off to another one and in Marshall's. We got to Eniwetok. That was just a stopping place then I went to Guam. Tinian. Saipan. That's about it that I can think of. Majuro.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do on Tinian?

Mr. Finley

We just went over there one time to check on some gear and I think what they did on this thing, was check on the radar gear and then they got busy and flew those planes over to our island in Guam. We got busy and repaired them. We didn't have all the stuff. We could have; I suppose we could have but most of our stuff; we were in a Quonset hut I think it was. I'm trying to visualize it. We had all of our gear and tools and materials stacked up on these benches around. It was pretty nice. Something else. One time, I don't know if this was Kwajalein, most of the stuff happened in Guam, but anyway, I don't know where this record player came from; an old 75. They had one of those. I loved that record. Do you know what it was? Bob Wills and *The San Antonio Rose*. It makes tears come to my eyes every time I think about it. I played it so much that they said, "Finley you are going to quit playing that record or we're going to break it." So I would only play it when nobody was around. We used to, I didn't care for it, but some of these guys when we met after work in the mess hall, we would take these galvanized cans that the vegetables came in and we would put them in there and put some sugar and mix it all up and take it out to the jungle where it would heat up and then you could pour the liquor off. So I tried that but that was the most awful stuff that I ever had. Another thing, overseas we had a lot of sand. They would make a hill and then they would stick a pipe down in that hill and they would put a funnel in the top of the pipe and that's what you used to urinate in a lot of the time. A lot of the guys couldn't do it. If they caught you urinating on the ground some place, boy oh boy, they gave you a time doing something you really didn't like.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose?

Mr. Finley

Yes, once or twice. Not very much.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were going to say something else there.

Mr. Finley

I was just checking in my mind. Smart alec guys sometimes. One camp that I was in I just remember that there were toilet seats in there. There was no partition between you, you just sat down and went to the toilet. So I'm in there one day and here comes a guy smoking this cigarette. That son of a gun, he took that cigarette and took it out of his mouth and flipped it right between my legs. If that would have hit me I would have been burned but good. Luckily I didn't get burned.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you say anything to him?

Mr. Finley

I just said, "What the hell are you doing buddy?" He just laughed and he was about two times or three times as big as I was so I didn't make any big deal about it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you gone through most of your notes there?

Mr. Finley

I'm looking here. I've got a page back here that I put at the end. Before the war ended, I can remember and other fellows had these dreams too, we dreamed about the war being

ended. You would wake up in a real happy state and still the thing was going on. We just couldn't believe it when they announced over the PA system that the war had ended and they had dropped the bomb on Hiroshima. That was really something. When we came home, we came home on the tail of a hurricane. Man alive that ship bounced and almost turned over on its side, side swiped and so forth. The main thing that I liked when I got home was the fresh vegetables, the lettuce, the tomatoes, the cucumbers, oh man that was good. And ice cream. We had ice cream overseas but it just didn't taste as good.

Mr. Misenhimer

I've heard people say that they liked fresh milk when they got home.

Mr. Finley

Oh yes, milk, you bet your life; I liked that milk, cold and smooth. It was really nice. I wanted to tell you in addition to what I've told almost all that I can remember, probably there are lots of other things; I spent a little time on this; I want to tell you a little about who I call an unsung hero. His name was Richard Aguinaldo. He and his wife, Em, were Presbyterian missionaries to the Philippines before the war broke out. When the war broke out he knew that he should get his wife out of there. So he put her aboard a ship which he claimed and she claimed was the last ship to leave Manila Harbor. He stayed behind and he wanted to go down and volunteer. He went down to the recruiting office and I'll be doggone if the Japs came over, strafed and dropped bombs so they closed the place up. He never did get back because then the Japs came in and invaded. He ended up doing several things of noteworthiness. One time when the Japs were coming into Manila he was a good swimmer so he swam the river twelve times. Each time he had a little child on his back; sometimes he had two. He saved a lot of lives. Then when the Japanese

caught him they put him in a line with others of these people that were insurgents, or whatever you want to call them and the Japanese were going to machine gun them. Standing up in a line they turned a machine gun on them. They shot everyone except one guy right behind him and 20 to 30 guys in front of him; they were going down the line. He watched and when the machine gunner was distracted he fell on the ground among the other individuals. Fortunately they didn't come along and bayonet them or anything like that so he got out of that. Another thing he told me and probably the greatest thing that he had happen, the greatest act of valor or greatest act of courage that I can think of. He and some of his friends had read in the Filipino newspaper that on such and such a day the Admiralty was going to be in the harbor and they were going to throw a big feast. He and his friends went down and got hired on as servers. They knew that the Japanese were crazy about canned food like corn and beans and all that sort of stuff. So he and his friends went around and opened up all the gallon cans and let them sit around there for two or three days and by gosh the Japs came in and ate that stuff and about two or three days after that they had it in the newspaper, big headlines, half of Admiralty dies of botulism. He was responsible for that. He got away by getting in a garbage cart. You can imagine one of those carts full of garbage. He got in there and they covered him up with garbage and he got out. They caught him later and that's how I found out about all this. They took him and beat him across the back with barbed wire. One day when I was getting ready to go to church he was across the hall from me. He roomed with me down in Greeley, Colorado. He had these barbs, he had little things like an asterisk two or three inches apart from one another two or three inches all up and down his back. Then there was a red slash where the barbed wire itself had cut him when they beat him. They caught

him and they also put a garden hose into his mouth and turned it on water ran out of his ears and eyes and nose and everything like that. When he died he had pernicious anemia and Parkinson's and he finally died of that. He was about 55 when he died. He lived in Lebanon, Nebraska and is buried out there in their little cemetery. I went out there to see his grave one time. His widow is now 94 or something to that effect. He was a talented musician and Aguinaldo is a revered name in the Philippines because it belongs to the high mucky-muck so to speak.

Mr. Misenhimer

How do you spell that last name?

Mr. Finley

Aguinaldo. If you get that in I would really appreciate it because he is a real hero.

Mr. Misenhimer

It is on tape and it will be on the final copy. You met him in college you said?

Mr. Finley

I met him in college and I didn't know anything about him until I was talking to him and he told me all these tales. I've been trying to get his wife; but she's gotten to the state where she can't write too well, she is still coherent, but she can't do this. She's got a couple of nieces but I don't know if they're really interested in Uncle Dickie's adventures or not. There are a lot of people out there that ought to hear about it. The thing about it was he never did get enlisted. He was always POW classification insurgent. He never got a cent, never. It made me feel guilty because I was on the GI Bill and he was getting nothing and spending his own money. So then I called his wife up and found out that she had been the mayor of this little town of Lebanon, Nebraska. She couldn't do it the next

year because she just didn't have the money. Too many trips to take and places to go.

Mr. Misenhimer

I believe you told me the other day that the way you found him out was because you saw him one day with his shirt off and you saw all these scars.

Mr. Finley

That's it exactly. He had all these scars on his back. I knew something sure as heck had happened to him. He was one of the real heroes that I ever met.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back and ask you some questions. On April 12, 1945 President Roosevelt died, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Finley

Yes but not too much really. I don't really recall too much about it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then May 8, 1945 Germany surrendered, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Finley

Yes I heard about that. Of course that became pretty evident because I had friends, those ones that had gone into the service before me, had been drafted in, they went to Germany and when that was over with they started heading for the Pacific.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have any kind of celebration when Germany surrendered?

Mr. Finley

Not that I recall.

Mr. Misenhimer

When they dropped the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima did you all hear about that?

Mr. Finley

Yes. Let me tell you a little about that. The kids from this little school that I went to, the boys we all had a code that would indicate; if we mentioned something about apples that would mean that we were in the Pacific. If we mentioned something about cherries we were on such and such island. So we could keep track of each other that way. Then the B-29's were sent out from Saipan and you could see them take off and land. Some even landed over there on Guam. One of these deals had a Z painted on their tail. I knew the Z stood for the outfit that this, I told you about Guinea Angle that lent me money? He was in that outfit; he was a mechanic. I went over there and saw him before he got killed. That was sort of nice. There was a fellow in Montana by the name of *(tape side ended)*.

Mr. Misenhimer

So this guy that lent you the money; what about him now?

Mr. Finley

His name was Wellington Angle but we all called him Guinea because he had freckles all over him, a Guinea hen you see. He, I think I told you a little before about how I got to go to college, how I paid for it was because of a loan from him, \$250. He worked for the Farmer's Union Gas Company. Anyway he was working as a mechanic on that plane. We had a real good talk but then he got killed somehow. Anyway, this guy Clark Inbody was a machinist, as far as I can determine, on Tinian. I think that is where the bomber that bombed Hiroshima took off from. There was an article in the paper here some time ago talking about him working on this plane and he knew where it was going to go. We knew

something was happening and weren't surprised at all because they had been talking quite some time about bombing Hiroshima and getting the doggone war over with. We were all very pleased about it because of the fact that some of us owe our lives to the fact that they did that thing. If they hadn't of we could have easily been invading the islands and a lot of us dying. A lot of people don't realize that but it sure saved American lives. It was a good thing to happen. I think the announcer on the PA system woke us up with that announcement. There was a lot of happiness and cheering going on around there.

Mr. Misenhimer

When Japan surrendered, did you all have a celebration then?

Mr. Finley

I cannot remember any celebrations. I think if you were to talk to officers they might have had something. But another thing you might care to know about me, I was not so hip on seeing Bob Hope or any of those gals in their short skirts or anything so I never took those in. But we had them on the island but I never did go to them. Maybe I was too busy installing radar or something, I don't know. Just a peculiar sort of individual I suppose.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Finley

Yes. I better tell you about the Red Cross. This friend of mine, Roy C. Counts, he was always bemoaning the fact he never did get a letter written to his mother. I told him, he and I were the ones that read the New Testament together, I said, "You've got to write your mom. She's worried sick about you." "Oh I will, I will." Finally I pinned him down

and I said, "Roy, why don't you write her?" "Well," he said, "I always get started and then I think of something that I didn't say and I might have to go back and say it right. I just really don't know how to write letters." I said, "I'll help you write a letter to her." So he wrote the letter and as far as I know he sent it. I can't remember him saying anything else about it. But one time, shortly before or shortly after this incident, a Red Cross worker, a couple of them appeared and wanted to see Roy. I wondered what in the heck they wanted to see him for. They were there to let him know that his mother wanted to hear from him. That was my experience with the Red Cross.

Mr. Misenhimer

You never got any donuts from them or anything?

Mr. Finley

No I never did. I used to get, I didn't get too many boxes, but I used to get a cake once in a while or cookies from my girl cousins in Montana but that was about it. That's something I forgot to tell you. You know you were talking about the Depression? The Depression made my mother and me pretty frugal. We wore our clothes out; our shoes out and so forth. We didn't have too much to eat; we struggled. So when I got into the Marines I felt that the waste was terrible. I would go down to the showers in boot camp and the guys would have taken a shower and left all of their underwear lying around, socks and stuff. They were still good. There were no holes or anything. So I would get them out and wash them up and dry them out and box it home to my mom. When I got out of the service I had plenty of underwear at home. Another thing too, I don't really remember when they started issuing green skivvies to us. I think it we got an issue before we went overseas and the stuff was green and the reason it was green was because it

would take care of the mildew so to speak. I don't know if it did; I never had any mildew. But it was warm and moist over there. That was one of the things I forgot to tell you. I wore green underwear for quite a while. That was sort of different.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you come back from overseas?

Mr. Finley

I came back from overseas, it must have been; I got back and I had three months that I stayed in down at El Centro, probably it had to be in 1946. That's when I came back from overseas. I don't remember the exact time. That was another thing I was going to talk about a little bit. The waste of these guys. We all had sea bags full of stuff. They would let you bring that stuff home. Boy when we hit San Diego harbor, I'll be you 90% of the guys threw all that stuff overboard. It was floating around there in the harbor. Nobody could get down to it; nobody could use it. Another couple of things that bothered me. Coming back from overseas there were some guys on there that had Purple Hearts, Bronze Stars and I'll be damned if somebody didn't reach their hand down inside sea bags and steal those things. I couldn't believe it. To this day, that anybody would do that to somebody that put out that much, and to steal those things. There was one guy aboard ship that after we got into this bad weather situation, the birds, I don't know where these stupid birds came from, we must have been near land or something. But they would get up and they would land on the railing and the cables. They would be almost dead they were so tired. A character, one of the Marines, he got up there and started hitting at them with his jacket. So I grabbed his jacket and threw it. We almost got into a big fight over that. I couldn't see those birds being treated that way at all.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you came back from overseas, how did you come back? On a ship?

Mr. Finley

Oh yes. We rode the end of a typhoon all the way home. It was really terrible. Everybody was getting sick and staying up on the deck trying to get rid of what they had eaten. When you get in those rough seas as far as I'm concerned, they're not very pleasant.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when did you get discharged then?

Mr. Finley

I was discharged from San Diego about; I'm trying to think of some month. I was down in El Centro through the summer. It had to be in the fall of 1946. That's what I would say it would be. I'm sorry I can't give it to you definitely.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's close enough. So you came home sometime in 1946 from overseas.

Mr. Finley

I got home from overseas in 1945. Now I'm thinking. It was in March that I got discharged. I was in the States at El Centro for about five or six months.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you came home in like October or November of 1945?

Mr. Finley

Yes. That's what I would say.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got discharged, did you stay in the Reserves?

Mr. Finley

No. I got busy and separated myself entirely from everything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Finley

No. See I was in the third year of college. I was majoring in chemistry at Montana State University in Bozeman. While I was over there I met a lot of guys that to me weren't very diplomatic acting. I met a lot that were but the guys that I had to associate with, were guys that you couldn't, well like you and I sit and discuss something, when you got to the point where they didn't agree with you, they wanted to fight. I hated that sort of thing. I thought about all of this and when I got back to Montana State University I went to them and told them, "I want to get out of chemistry. I want to change over and get myself a teaching degree." Of course they advised me not to but I did and I never have felt bad. I've had a couple of chances to go on and get myself a doctorate but I never did take them. I finally got an honorary one but I never did the whole process. I just got that honorary one from the Physical Sciences Academy. It is located back East and I was recommended by one of my former students who is a Doctor of Nuclear Science at Berkeley. What they were doing is giving these out to people who had done well in teaching physics. That was my weakest subject but that's what she got it for me in. I thought, "That's okay." When I came back I went to work on this degree in science teaching at Montana State. I finally got it without any trouble. I had abandoned most of the science stuff, the strictly science stuff so I could get some credits that would help me out in teaching.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions since you've been out?

Mr. Finley

With the Marines?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes.

Mr. Finley

The 4th had one here in town. I talked to a couple of guys. We used to walk down through town past where this reunion was going to be. I just took a look in the door but I didn't go in. I wasn't too interested. I just never did attend one.

Mr. Misenhimer

You used your GI Bill to go to college when you got back?

Mr. Finley

Yes. That's how I got two Master's Degrees. I just recently met a fellow; we went down to the Senior Citizen's Center here in town. This guy had a bunch of memorabilia from the World Wars. I got to talking to him and I said, "I've got a cap, a hat, and I've got my coat and I've got my trench coat. My pants have been worn out because my son wore them hunting all the time because they were heavy and nice in the winter. If you really want them, I'll give them to you. But first I've got to talk to my grandsons." My grandsons didn't want them so I'm going to call him up and tell him to come get them. He's got a good idea to put all this on display. He takes it around to different schools and libraries where people can see it. It's hanging in my closet gathering dust. He may as well have them. I don't wear them for anything. But I never did go to any reunions. I would

like to get a hold of some of the guys that I can remember, which are only two or three but I don't know how the heck to do that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else that you can recall from World War II?

Mr. Finley

I can't think of too much off hand anymore. Oh yeah. When I got out, discharged, I was a PFC; they gave me Corporal stripes, which was nice. Then they encouraged me to reenter. That's why I said they talked about going into the Reserves and stuff. I didn't want to be obligated. If I had done that then I would have been in the Korean War probably. I didn't need anything like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

The unit that you were in was Headquarters Company, 4th Marines?

Mr. Finley

Yes. Always Headquarters Company and attached to some MAG group. I can't remember the names of them. I think they were the 11th and 15th. I just don't remember. I used to have letters around here where I had written home but I can't find them anymore. Heat rash. I had pustules all over my body. These were the size of my little finger. I hadn't been messing around with the local women or anything. So I went to the medic and he said, "What you've got is a bad case of heat rash. We can cure that." So they put me in the sick bay and this big old Corporal came in one day. In those days all they had to treat anything with was penicillin. So he had this needle about two inches long and had this vial filled up with this penicillin. He said, "Son, just turn over." He was an older man. "It's not going to hurt you. You're not going to feel a thing." By God I didn't

because he took the fingers of his left hand, three of them straight out there in front of you and his thumb and other little finger cocked, he plunged that doggone fool syringe in me and hit me at the same time. I never felt a thing. That was my experience in the sick bay with those guys. When we were in boot camp we had to get all these shots. People think I'm lying but it's the honest God's truth, they would line those corpsman up and they would have two or three needles stuck in their hand and one guy would hit you on one side and the other guy would hit you and you would get about six shots at one time. Oh boy, that was fun. I know one thing I forgot. Just before I went overseas, do you remember Kay Kayser's College of Musical Knowledge? I applied for that someplace when I was down there. I think it was just before I went overseas. I got on the show. Do you know what? I won a \$25 Savings Bond which I cashed in years later. I sent it home to my mom and she put it in the bank or something for me. I had forgotten all about that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Kay Kayser and his College of Musical Knowledge.

Mr. Finley

Yes, that's what they called it.

Mr. Misenhimer

And Ish Kabibble.

Mr. Finley

Yes for crying out loud.

Mr. Misenhimer

He was a comic with them.

Mr. Finley

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else?

Mr. Finley

I'm checking over my notes now.

Mr. Misenhimer

Well Al, I want to thank you for your time today and all of this information.

Mr. Finley

How long did we talk?

Mr. Misenhimer

It's been two hours and a half.

Mr. Finley

That's plenty. My wife says I can talk longer than that.

Mr. Misenhimer

(laugh)

Mr. Finley

I don't remember anything else. You might give me a call when you get to Indiana.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thank you for your time today and for your service to our country.

Mr. Finley

I'll look forward to that. I know my kids will like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thank you. Bye now.

(end of interview)

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