

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Frank Kullman

Date of Interview: September 12, 2006

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 12th of September, 2006. I'm in Fredericksburg, Texas and I'm interviewing Mr. Frank Kullman, Jr. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site. Let me start out, Frank, by thanking you for spending the time today to share your experiences with us and to add to our archives in the Museum. And if I could get you started by just giving us a little family history - when and where you were born; who your parents were and the like and then we'll get right into how you came to be in the armed forces.

Mr. Kullman: I was born in Jersey City. We didn't spend so much time there; we moved up to Cliffside Park, and then...

Ed Metzler: What's your birth date?

Mr. Kullman: 3/21/25.

Ed Metzler: Alright.

Mr. Kullman: ...and we moved back down to Jersey City. Dad was hurt on...on the job; he was a carpenter. He couldn't do the work anymore so things went downhill during the Depression. Anyway, we all survived. I have three...two sisters.

My sister, Juanita, is the oldest and she passed away a couple of years ago...on my birthday. And my younger sister lives in Fairfield, Connecticut. My mother...my grandfather on my father's side was a small man whose second wife was a big woman. My father's mother died when he was six years old. On my mother's side, my father...my grandfather...his name was Rashon (sp?), French; came from Alsace-Lorraine, and his wife, my grandmother was Welch and a school teacher.

Ed Metzler: You have a little bit of everything mixed in, don't you?!

Mr. Kullman: I got more than that! (laughter) And...

Ed Metzler: I just wanted to make sure. Alright, press ahead.

Mr. Kullman: That...that's pretty much the family background on...on my mother's side. On my father's side...the Kullman came from Germany. There are people from the Isle of Man; people from Ireland. My wife...my father's mother was Bohemian and my mother's name was Juanita and her mother's name was Juanita, but I can't find out if there were any Spanish in the family. Probably was but...

Ed Metzler: So where did you go to high school?

Mr. Kullman: Went to high school in St. Michael's High School in Union City. I lost a year in school when...around the first, second grade, so I was eighteen as a junior and I wound up in getting conscript. I...when I went down for the physical...after the physical was over a fellow asked me what...what branch I would like. I said...

Ed Metzler: About what year...that was '43 then, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yes, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you were still in high school when...when the war started.

Mr. Kullman: When...yeah.

Ed Metzler: Gotcha.

Mr. Kullman: And I went in on Flag Day, June 14th. Anyway, he asked me, you know, what branch I would like. I said, "Navy." He says, "Okay, you're a Seabee."

(laughter)

Ed Metzler: They must have needed Seabees that day!

Mr. Kullman: And they...and...I tell people about it. Everybody was given tickets to get back home on...by bus. There was a bus that came from town to put us down, but no bus to bring us back. We had to find our...everybody had to find their own way back I guess. And there was a couple of fellows who...evidently had a ride and they gave me a ticket to get home; Seabees were not given a ticket to get home.

Ed Metzler: Already being prejudiced against, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, and I broke my glasses. So I had to send home to get my glasses fixed. You know they...they didn't back you much of anything back then! (laughter)
Being a kid going down to Williamsburg...we left Washington...steam locomotives and I had to check out the scenery. I had my head hanging out the window, you know, all the way down and checking out everything. We got down to Camp Perry; they lined us up on either side of a ward...boardwalk...just...sidewalks are all boards...and the DI is giving us instructions and then he indicated that all the black people would...should

step out. So a couple of fellows stepped out of line and I'm, you know, looking straight ahead and first thing I see him walking down the...the boards. You know he's looking...looking; he was looking at me; he thought I should have stepped out with them. With my head hanging out the window, I was covered with soot! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh, I hadn't thought about that! (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: And one of the fellows that was supposed to be with us had spinal meningitis, so they had us quarantined for a couple of days. They loaded us all in a...in a...a semi truck and moved us into quarantine. They had taken one fellow out of the line...

Ed Metzler: So how did they know he had spinal meningitis?

Mr. Kullman: I...we have no idea...what...you know...how that happened. It just...they just told us that he had spinal meningitis, so we were...and it was one fellow who was supposed to be...sent back home. But he was part of the crew, so they picked him up and put him in the truck with us and he wound up staying the whole time.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, only the Army! (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: And we did boot camp in...in Camp Perry, and the DIs were pretty strict. And we do the...at least I used to do it...and kind of several of us used to the...they had obstacle course. And...I don't know whether we were showing off or what; we used to run it three or four times. And...

Ed Metzler: Now did...at this point, did you know you were going to be a Seabee?

Mr. Kullman: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so...

Mr. Kullman: Yes, Camp Perry was a Seabee base.

Ed Metzler: Strictly a Seabee (unintelligible).

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Gotcha, okay.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. And you'd be out on a parade ground and somebody would pass out.

Usually it was one of the huskiest guys there that would...would pass out...not...

Ed Metzler: Too much flesh to support, I guess.

Mr. Kullman: Well whatever. I don't know what the reason was, but they...they did, and I'm like, "What?!" I had guard duty one time, and...just walked up and down the post...make sure...there was a visitors area right across from where we were and we had to make sure that nobody was going from their barracks to the head in shorts or anything like that. And I saw one fellow...going over to get to the head and I called to him, and he looked at me and just kept on going. So I went...went up in there...and I went...stuck my face in the head and I...I recognized him. I said, "Hey, you know you're not supposed to (unintelligible) here; I'm going to have to put you on report." He was a DI! (laughter) He said, "Well, you better get back where you were; you're not supposed to be up here!" So anyway...

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kullman: ...he...because they didn't want anybody in the visitors bureau seeing guys walking around in their skivvies.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that was (unintelligible) off.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. But that was a *huge* building; a huge Quonset hut shaped building. It had to be...oh, couple of hundred feet long, fifty, sixty feet wide. And we had little training sessions there, and what to do if you have to handle a machete, you know, let the other guy swing first and stuff like that. And they had a big...one of those hanging punching bags; one of those big, heavy punching bags, and I used to punch at it myself. And I got...so I used to stand where the bag was and kept it from getting back where it belonged.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. Kullman: And...when...went to chow one time; we was supposed to have steak for dinner and so I...sawing away, sawing away and I...not getting any...not getting any place and I said, "To hell with it, I'll just eat the vegetables and stuff!"

Ed Metzler: Trying...trying to cut it!

Mr. Kullman: And I got up to go; I was going to trash it. And some fellow said, "What are you going to do with that?" I says, "Well I can't eat it!" "Give it here!" So I gave it to him! He...I guess enjoyed it, I don't know...I...

Ed Metzler: He must have been hungrier than you were.

Mr. Kullman: Camp Perry was...the commanding officer was a fellow by the name of Ware. I don't know whether it was Commander or Captain; I don't know what his rank was.

Ed Metzler: W-a-r-e?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, and he had a pig farm, so all the waste from the mess halls went out to his pig farm. Maybe...you know, that's old, ancient history and nobody's going to get hurt by it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, as far as I know it wasn't illegal anyhow. It was just...

Mr. Kullman: Probably not, no.

Ed Metzler: ...just efficient!

Mr. Kullman: Yes! Yeah, yeah. We shipped out...after...by about five or six weeks there we shipped out to Camp Endicott, up in Rhode Island. And I guess the main thing that I remember up there was...it was...this was in...I don't know, September and there was no heat...in the showers...the water, and you could hear people *screaming* (laughter) just taking their showers...*Oh, Owe, Oh!*

Ed Metzler: Cold water shower!

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, we left...then we had...think we had ten day leave from there, and I went down, by bus...there was one of the fellows in the outfit was a bus driver and he knew somebody that was driving those buses from Endicott down to New York City and so we got a front seat going down! And that was...Bill Keating (sp?) who was supposed to have been sent home; I was with him. We got down to New York City and we're walking down 8th Avenue to the bus terminal. And as we're walking down, a couple of girls stepped out and started talking and he stepped out ahead of me and...and he's talking to them and saying, "No, no, forget it, no, no forget it. Come on, Frank, let's go." So we started walking and he says...and I said, "What the hell was that all

about?” He said, “Never mind, it wasn’t...it was nothing.” So we just kept going. So I hadn’t...didn’t have the foggiest what that was all about!

Ed Metzler: You were young in innocence!

Mr. Kullman: Oh man! (laughter) And I got my bus home to Cliffside Park; at a.. port authority bus terminal there. And I thought I was going to...no, I got home and that was no problem. And I stayed with...you know, visited with the family for...for the time...and then back...go back up to Endicott. I forget the exact dates, but then they piled us on two separate trains heading for California...not that we knew it.

Ed Metzler: They didn’t tell you a thing, huh?

Mr. Kullman: No, and...a funny thing happened; well, it’s funny now. It was pretty serious then, but anyway, we went through the night; we were in Pullmans and we stopped in some town I think in Indiana. We got out...to get out and (unintelligible) out...but before we got out, you know, pulled the shades back and I looked out and the first thing that popped into my head is, “Gee whiz, these people look the same as they do at home!”

Ed Metzler: Amazing! Normal people! (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: But these...but that’s what...that’s what ran through head; it was really...I guess I...I don’t think anybody was more naive than I was. And we got...got to Camp Parks in California. We went over to...over the Salt Lake...they got train tracks that run over...Salt Lake. We stopped up high one time for...for something or other. I don’t think we got off the train at that time; we just stopped at some station and then went the rest of the way...to Camp Parks.

Something I forgot to mention...in...but it goes through the whole deal, so I can do that all in one shot.

Ed Metzler: Go ahead.

Mr. Kullman: I was in...we were trained with carbines; we had a...spent a week on a range with carbines. And I spent the week at a thirty caliber, Browning machine gun, and I wound up in a machine gun squad. And the...the tests that were given...I found out later from other people that different instructors were giving different tests...didn't make too much sense to me, but that's beside the point! Anyway I came out top in the class, but there was a Chief in the class; usually top in the class winds up squad leader. Well, they're not going to make a...Seaman Second Class in charge of a...of a Chief or anybody else that's got a stripe. So I was First Gunner. When we got to Camp Parks we had to...we had a little practice run and I was Second Gunner. Then we moved down to Port Hueneme; we had a practice there and I was First Ammunition Carrier.

Ed Metzler: You're going backwards!

Mr. Kullman: When we got to Ebeye in the Marshall Islands, I was down another notch, and by that time...I'd seriously lost interest in the military. Before we left to go overseas...a lot of stupid things I did...looking back on it, but I got an Iroquois Indian haircut.

Ed Metzler: Really?! That must have been an eye opener for other folks!

Mr. Kullman: And then...after that I didn't get a haircut for three months. I looked like an African fuzzy-wuzzy. I...I was just...if you're not going to treat me the way

I, you know, possibly think I should be treated, you know, let's bring him along, he seems to be bright or whatever, no...he just kept pushing me down. Anyway, when we did get to Ebeye I was a Chief Feely (sp?) who was now in charge of the...of the group.

Ed Metzler: A Chief...?

Mr. Kullman: Feely. He's from Pales...he's from Paradise, California, and so I asked him if there was any chance I could take the gun apart and reassemble it blindfolded. He said, "Well, if you think you can do it." I said, "Yeah, I think I can do it." So he laid out a blanket or towels or something on the beach and I got a blindfold; disassembled it completely...not...detail...and put it back again in about a half hour. And couple of fellows moved a couple of pieces someplace else but I found them and...and I...I completed it. Not that it did me any good, 'cause I...I still didn't get any place with anybody...

Ed Metzler: At least you proved that you could do it!

Mr. Kullman: ...*except* Chief Feely; he put me up for promotion, three or four times. I spoke to him; my son visited him when he was in a Marine Corps stationed at Mare Island in San Francisco...and he visited him a couple of times and told my son that he...he had put me up for promotion...to...three or four times, but I was always put down. Well after awhile I don't... I can't blame them for putting me down, I wasn't being very militarily respectful. But there was a...our company commander...I kind of suspected that he was voting for me...not against me because we had the opportunity to request...get permission to own a forty-five automatic or some kind of an arm, and I put in

my request and he okayed it. And they shipped me...a friend of my father's...somehow or other he got hold of one and they shipped me the forty-five. And I never got in any trouble with it or anything like that, but somebody told me, "Well, he might have stuck his neck out doing that." But anyway I never got in any trouble with it. And so I figured he was kind of on my side, but I think the other people in the...in the unit weren't too happy with me. I was...somebody said "implied insolence." I think you're either insolent or you're not insolent, but anyway.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kullman: Now I...see...now I...I've jumped ahead of myself.

Ed Metzler: Well where did you end your training before you went overseas?

Mr. Kullman: Port Hueneme.

Ed Metzler: And where is that located?

Mr. Kullman: About sixty miles north of Los Angeles; Ventura, California.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And this is still Seabee training?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Strictly Seabees?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So were they...?

Mr. Kullman: I didn't...I...I never got any training as far as something constructive.

Ed Metzler: Well I was going to ask that. I mean...I have this mental image of these...being builders...and you know people who pushed dirt around and make landing strips and ports and buildings and stuff and you never really got trained on that.

Mr. Kullman: Uh-hum, no.

Ed Metzler: I guess it was going to be on the job training.

Mr. Kullman: I guess so.

Ed Metzler: So what did they do...pile you guys as a group onto some troops carriers and take you out?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about that.

Mr. Kullman: February 22nd or 20th...22nd...something like that...we got on board the...what was called the Seapike (sp?).

Ed Metzler: So this is '44?

Mr. Kullman: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, February of '44, and they piled on there and left that evening; ran into a storm and we had the bunks...I don't if you're familiar with them but they're just about one...this much space from one to the next and some of the fellows were getting sick; people down below paid for it.

Ed Metzler: Oh brother! Oh boy! Were you up high or down below?

Mr. Kullman: No, I was down low and I got out.

Ed Metzler: Just got out on deck, huh?

Mr. Kullman: I got out on deck and I spent the whole trip on deck...rain, shine...

Ed Metzler: Did you get sick?

Mr. Kullman: Huh?

Ed Metzler: Did you get sick?

Mr. Kullman: No.

Ed Metzler: You're lucky.

Mr. Kullman: I don't know why I didn't. You had to go through the chow...in order to get to the chow hall, you had to go through the head, and there were fellows on the bowl puking in the urinals and all this stuff slopping around back and forth on the deck, and you had to go through there to get into the chow line. You know, who'd want to eat?! But when you get hungry you eat.

Ed Metzler: Yeah that's right! Boy! (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: And we wound up in Pearl Harbor. We spent, to my recollection, we spent one night there; didn't do much of anything else except get back onboard ship and leave. And then we wound up on...in the Marshalls on Ebeye Island which is the next island up from Kwajalein.

Ed Metzler: Spell Ebeye.

Mr. Kullman: Hum?

Ed Metzler: Spell it.

Mr. Kullman: E-b-e-y-e.

Ed Metzler: Okay, I knew it wasn't as straight forward as it...sounded. Okay, go ahead...in the Marshalls.

Mr. Kullman: In the Marshalls...

Ed Metzler: Up one from...

Mr. Kullman: Kwajalein.

Ed Metzler: Kwajalein.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, it was the Kwajalein atoll and we were one island up. The Army military took the lower islands and the Marines took the northern islands - Roi-Namur and up there.

Ed Metzler: So when you got there the island was secure?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah. We built...

Ed Metzler: So they unloaded you guys as a battalion?

Mr. Kullman: Uh-hum.

Ed Metzler: On...and...what was...what was...what did it feel like to be on a tropical island all of a sudden? Here's this boy from New Jersey.

Mr. Kullman: I don't think I ever gave it any thought; I was there and just doing what I was told to do and...

Ed Metzler: Just get on with it, huh?

Mr. Kullman: We had...yeah, we had...our tents...you had to share...two...two halves with somebody, and there was a nice breeze that would come off the ocean, so we put one up and then one out and post it up that way. The only problem is...if a little rain storm came in, we were out of luck! (laughter) And occasionally they would...storms come in and the rain would come in and you would get wet. And they built hospital and all kinds of stuff that the Seabees built on that island. They...they reconstructed everything on there.

Ed Metzler: They basically started from scratch, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yes, yeah. And they built three fuel...oil tanks; ten thousand barrel oil tanks. I worked on that crew. I was one of the last teams to leave Ebeye to go back up...to go up the...up a mile or so up the lagoon to the island of Begej which we called Bennett (sp?). And that was...became like our R&D island; it was baseball field and rifle range and I think they had a golf putting deal with...

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Kullman: ...they had a...

Ed Metzler: This is kind of for R&R types, then huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, R&R; that's what I meant...R&R not R&D...R&R. And the...the beer hall...you could get two beers or two cokes...and that had to be a hundred feet long. It was like an oversized Quonset hut. And you could go get back in line and just go to a different guy and get a couple more beers. (laughter) And...

Ed Metzler: So you built...fuel storage tanks?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, we built three on Ebeye.

Ed Metzler: Now what else was built there?

Mr. Kullman: A hospital; repaired the float plane ramp; accommodations for, you know, the people that were going to be there. I guess nurses, doctors and what have you. And evidently a conference room for Admiral King and Nimitz. (Unintelligible) they...they had our conference room there.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I want to hear more about that.

Mr. Kullman: Well I don't...that's about all I know about it. I'm going to bring...I've got a log book of the battalion; I brought it with me.

Ed Metzler: Good.

Mr. Kullman: And if you'd like to go thumbing through that I...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, maybe we can have a look at that...maybe when I and get some of the other interviews with the guys on Friday or whenever we try and do that.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah...which covers from when we started to when we ended...pictures of different things that we did and photographs of the cooks; photographs of the mechanics; photographs of, you know, all different things. And...

Ed Metzler: So how do you think the Seabees were viewed by others in the...

Mr. Kullman: The regulars.

Ed Metzler: ...in the Navy?

Mr. Kullman: The regulars didn't like us at all.

Ed Metzler: Why is that?

Mr. Kullman: Because if you were a Seabee, not like me, I was just a grunt...but it was made up of people with years of experience as a carpenter; as a mechanic.

Ed Metzler: Did they have engineers in...in this?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. Woody Echels (sp?), Lieutenant Wechels (sp?) was an engineer and he made a map of Tinian with all the roads and every battalion and every unit that was on the island. And he was a engineer in Pennsylvania area...from...that's where he came from...and...but the Navy didn't like the Seabees because these people would come in as Third Class Petty Officers; Second; First; Chiefs, you know. They had thirty years experience; they had ten, fifteen years experience and they came in with a rank. And the people that were...that joined the Navy they started as...as Seamen.

Ed Metzler: So they didn't like the fact that the experienced Seabees had been in for awhile and had...had rank on them then?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, they got their rank when they went in. I mean they...

Ed Metzler: Oh, okay.

Mr. Kullman: ...they wouldn't go in, you know...with thirty years experience you're not going to make me a Seamen, you know, forget it! So they were all given...any...some...a rank equivalent to what their knowledge was.

Ed Metzler: Right. And so you had a lot of older guys there then in the Seabees, is that right?

Mr. Kullman: Oh yes; oh yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: Tell me...tell me about that. I always had this image that they were...they were young just like most of the armed forces.

Mr. Kullman: Uh-hum , no, I don't know their names but there were fellows that were...there were just a couple that were sent home before we left the States. And then after we were over in...in the Marshalls I think a couple more went home. And then we got to Tinian and some more were sent home; the older fellows.

Ed Metzler: So you...you started out on Ebeye Island...

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and then you...you worked on the R&R...island.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, it was...it was Begij, B-e-g-i-j.

Ed Metzler: I need to get that down. B-e...?

Mr. Kullman: g-i-j.

Ed Metzler: i-g. What an unusual name.

Mr. Kullman: We called it Bennett.

Ed Metzler: Bennett Island.

Mr. Kullman: Uh-hum. At one...at one time we had a theater made up and a USO group came in and one of the women was a niece of the skipper.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. Kullman: So...and we...they put on a lot of shows for us. We had Roy...Gene Autry with his group and some other groups that they came in (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Did he bring his horse, Champion?

Mr. Kullman: Hum?

Ed Metzler: Did he bring his horse, Champion? (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: No, and I forget his name with...but...at one time...the Catholic Bishop from New York City came to Tinian and said mass for anybody that was interested, and that was a crowd!

Ed Metzler: So when did you go to Tinian then? That was after...

Mr. Kullman: Well...

Ed Metzler: Bennett Island?

Mr. Kullman: ...I forget now...yeah I forget now how long we were there. We all were loaded on...I don't know, it was three or four LSTs and then went up to Eniwetok and we stayed overnight there and then continued the trip...that's where we found the concrete oil barges. They were only maybe a foot out of the water, but the fact that they had oil in them, I guess, is what made them float. Anyway, and then we headed for Tinian. I forget now exactly what the

date was, but we always get there after...after the island is secured by the Marines. The Army didn't secure it for another two or three months...and we were there at the time.

Ed Metzler: You were there before it was totally secured?

Mr. Kullman: Before *they* secured it. And then the Air Force came in and it was another couple of months before they secured it. So they all got ribbons for...for the battle and we wound up with nothing.

Ed Metzler: Everybody got the ribbons but you guys who were there building everything for them to use.

Mr. Kullman: Yep!

Ed Metzler: So what was the first project on Tinian for you guys?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, I guess one of the main things was the...the roads. We got there in a rainy season and the roads were all coral but it was all muddy. You could just barely get past one another; the trucks could just barely get past one another. And road construction and...and rebuilding, I think, was one of the primary things and...and then the air strips – north strip and...and the other air strips there that they started working on those big time, and then also the accommodations for the aviation crews.

Ed Metzler: Was there a air strip already there when the island was taken?

Mr. Kullman: Yes, yes.

Ed Metzler: The Japanese had already...

Mr. Kullman: They had two...they had three. They had one on North Field and there was another couple built next to North Field and then about half way down the

island on the left side was...a fighter strip. And there was a P- 51 parked on there that was decommissioned or whatever; it wasn't working and was still there. And then the other one was...was center of the island and south...further south. The island was basically sugar fields; the whole island was just all sugar fields and the people that worked there were all Koreans.

Ed Metzler: The Japanese were busy herding the Koreans around as their workers.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah, and they convinced them that when we, you know, when the invasion happened and then we started moving into Tinian, they had the Koreans convinced that...that the Americans were going to kill them. And they were jumping off the cliff...both the...the Japanese and the Koreans. It took eight days to take Tinian. I've got a video at home where they start off at the northwest beach and work their way down day by day. Tinian Town is the south end and that's where the sugar mill was.

Ed Metzler: So there were native Tinian...?

Mr. Kullman: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ...Tininians or whatever they call them then, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kullman: Tinian Town was a disaster; I mean that was just shreds!

Ed Metzler: It had been pretty well leveled?

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah, and...

Ed Metzler: Did you guys do any rebuilding of the town?

Mr. Kullman: Yes, oh yeah. Built...there was a Navy hospital; there was a Army hospital. Up on Mount Lasso there was quarters for nurses; only officers were allowed up there. And one fellow...turns out his sister was up there, but they...they wouldn't give him permission to go. So somehow or other he wangled...borrowed a uniform from one of the officers that would let him...(unintelligible)...

Ed Metzler: Use...him in, yeah.

Mr. Kullman: ...take a...take a...yeah, took a chance letting...(unintelligible)...take and get up there to visit his sister. And...I...drove a truck from time to time. I pulled one stupid – I had a day off and our tent was in this corner of the...the battalion area and everybody was talking about an abandoned ammunition dump or whatever and so I had to trip over...take a look at that. And I went over and...so I...got down in...in the dump and I'm looking; there was hand grenades and bandoliers of thirty caliber machine guns and...and you know, all kinds of...

Ed Metzler: Now this is an abandoned...ammunition dump?

Mr. Kullman: Yes, yeah; they just...

Ed Metzler: So what is this...Japanese...?

Mr. Kullman: No, no, U.S. They just didn't want to gather it all up and...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kullman: They gathered it from here, here and here and then just threw it in there. So I was curious as to what...hand grenade would sound like, so I...pulled a pin on one; heaved it over; ducked down and, oh, okay, that's what it sounds like.

But I took...I had...I took the cap off five hand grenades and dumped all the powder out and then put it back together again. And I had oh, two or three bandoliers of thirty caliber machine gun ammunition and maybe even some fifty caliber. And I had a hand grenade on each finger; I had my finger through the ring on...on five hand grenades and on the way back...I was looking through a little opening in the...in the cane field and I see some kind of vehicle so I walk through that to check it out. And it was just an abandoned truck that had been wiped out, you know. And I headed back to my tent and as I stepped out of the cane field there's a jeep there. Two officers in the back and a driver; it turns out it was the Provost Marshall from the island and an officer from...I forget now what officer it was from the battalion...they confiscated everything I had and I had not gotten a pass, so I was charged...I was charged with being AWOL.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Kullman: And I wound up with a Summary Court-Martial.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Kullman: Evidently the...the skipper's yeoman felt sorry for me or whatever, but they used...those things used to drag out for maybe a month or two months before, you know, they would go from one step to the next. And...but I had...the Captain's Mast one night or afternoon; Summary Court-Martial the following afternoon and a Read Off the following. So within three days I was on KP for six months...and a sixteen dollar fine. That takes a big bite out of twenty-one dollars a day...once a month.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, doesn't leave much, does it? But that's alright...you're on KP anyhow, so you can't do anything with the money! (laughter) Six months!

Mr. Kullman: And...and the Chief that was...no he wasn't a Chief, I think he was a First Class Petty Officer, Charlie Grillo (sp?)...when it came time for me to leave, he asked me to stay...he wanted me to stay, and he said he'll get me a rate. And dopey me, I said, "Well, if I get a rate I want to get one for what I'm doing." Well you (unintelligible) and that's the way it was with the Seabees; I don't know if you're familiar with that.

Ed Metzler: No.

Mr. Kullman: You might be a Machinist's Mate and the rates come through...what are available...you get what's available. If there's one for Machinist, you get it. You might get a Carpenter's rate; you could get any kind of a rate.

Ed Metzler: Even if you'd never...?

Mr. Kullman: Hadn't anything to do with it.

Ed Metzler: I see.

Mr. Kullman: That's the way it was with the Seabees. And he promised me he'd get me a rate and I said, "No I want a...", I didn't know that at the time, so I said, "No I want to get one doing something...that I've earned." But that didn't work out. I drove a truck for awhile. I forget now why I wound up off that.

Ed Metzler: So tell me about six months of KP; that must have been interesting.

Mr. Kullman: Well...

Ed Metzler: What were you doing?

Mr. Kullman: Basically it was...you know, you have to get up early in the morning for breakfast and you'd have an hour or so off and then you'd have to get up and take care of lunch and you'd help in the kitchen peeling potatoes...

Ed Metzler: So the peeling of potatoes icon is real then?

Mr. Kullman: Yes absolutely! And set up all the tables and, you know, make...make sure the salt shakers were working and all that kind of stuff. And then you had to clean up everything after...you know, after chow is done...three times a day. It was...I guess it would be good duty if that was what you were looking for, but I wasn't looking to be on KP.

Ed Metzler: But you survived it.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. We did have one fellow; fellow by the name of P.D. Moore, he joined the Seabees because he read the...the posters, "We build; we fight!"...and he wanted to fight! When he found out he wasn't going to do much fighting, he went on KP; he was on KP the whole time he was in the service...with the Seabees. Six months after he got out of the Seabees, he joined the Army; eventually wound up...Special Service...he is the first Sergeant Major in Special Service and his uniform hangs in the Smithsonian occasionally.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Kullman: So, he got to fight! He came to a couple of reunions and somebody asked him, "You know to you...did you...did you get to the enemy?" He says, "The end of my bayonet." (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Just close enough.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, he'd been wounded several times. There are books that were written about Special Services and his name shows up in it.

Ed Metzler: Well now you have a picture...a photograph here of the two hundred foot communications tower...

Mr. Kullman: That's correct.

Ed Metzler: ...of you guys...built on Tinian. Tell me about that.

Mr. Kullman: Well I don't know everybody that worked on it. It was built on the highest point on the island, Mount Lasso; it was built by a crew from the 107th. The one fellow whose name I know is Norman Joseph, and I think Lieutenant Echols, I believe, was the engineer on the job, and they built this two hundred foot communications tower for the B-29s from some new material and some that they got from the...salvaged from the sugar mill that was in Tinian Town.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kullman: And evidently it worked pretty well. We...we usually...

Ed Metzler: Did you ever...did you personally work on it or was...?

Mr. Kullman: No, I...I didn't work on it.

Ed Metzler: You never had to crawl up to the top of that rascal?

Mr. Kullman: No.

Ed Metzler: That's good.

Mr. Kullman: I knew it was going up and I got a look at it from a distance, but one fellow I was talking...I was talking to one fellow a couple of days ago and he's got pictures of it in stages of construction.

Ed Metzler: Now that is quite a tower!

Mr. Kullman: We lost three people. One fellow was lost in the compound when a steam washing machine short circuited, and he was electrocuted. Another fellow hitched a ride on a 29...lot of did, but the plane crashed on takeoff, and we lost him. And we had another fellow who was out roaming around the island with a buddy and he wound up getting killed by a sniper.

Ed Metzler: A Japanese sniper?

Mr. Kullman: Evidently, yeah. There was something like...if I'm not mistaken...according to the book, Enola Gay, you can get a lot of information from that book about Tinian. There was some...I think it was a hundred and sixty-nine Japanese still on the island; they used to send teams out with dogs to try to locate them because they couldn't bathe; they couldn't do anything else. So they were easy to find.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, they were easy to track! (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: In this one story about...they feel that the Japanese...they did find that the Japanese got through the security fence around the B-29 crew, and soaked the soup and everybody wound up with Dysentery.

Ed Metzler: How...how did they...tell me about that.

Mr. Kullman: Well I don't know exact...that's pretty much about all I can tell you about that.

Ed Metzler: This is hearsay then?

Mr. Kullman: That...that this is what happened. And I don't know whether I mentioned about...yeah, I told you about the B-29 and the officer from our outfit?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kullman: Went up and modified the bomb bay door so the bomber couldn't get in?

Ed Metzler: Oh, tell me more about that. You and I...

Mr. Kullman: I don't know a lot about...I mean...it was Woody Echols, the engineer...well there were several engineers, but when they tried to load it, they couldn't get the...the bomb into the Enola Gay.

Ed Metzler: This the first one?

Mr. Kullman: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the Enola Gay is...is Hiroshima; that's Fat Boy!

Mr. Kullman: And so they needed somebody in a hurry to make whatever repair...change modifications and evidently he hit the top of the list and he wound up going up to North Field and modify the bomb bay, and so it worked.

Ed Metzler: You would think they would have measured that ahead of time.

Mr. Kullman: Well it would seem that way, yes. (laughter) They miscalculated.

Ed Metzler: Whoops!

Mr. Kullman: But that's something else that the 107th was involved in.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kullman: And recently on TV I heard...they were talking about having that trouble...getting the bomb in. They mention anything about who did it or anything like that, but just that they had trouble getting the bomb into the Enola Gay but they managed to do it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, in fact they built a special pit or something, didn't they...

Mr. Kullman: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ...that they had to roll the B-29 over and then hoisted it up in.

Mr. Kullman: Uh, that son of the fellow that was in the 92nd...he said he's got pictures of the pits in North Field and...and all that from his father. Not that his father ever told him anything about (unintelligible). (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's another story! Now you mentioned that several of the guys in your battalion hitched rides on B-29s.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about that.

Mr. Kullman: Well, to start with they used to sneak down; you'd go down to the...to the field and, you know, ask them if you could...

Ed Metzler: Okay, we got the tape going again. Now does this mean that when they hitch a ride on a B-29...this is like all the way on a bombing run?

Mr. Kullman: Quite often.

Ed Metzler: Wow! Go ahead.

Mr. Kullman: I took one; I took a trip on a B-29.

Ed Metzler: Well?

Mr. Kullman: And...and we got up and it was nice. I was in back by...with the side...two side gunners. First thing I know I kind of got the feeling that we were, you know, losing altitude, you know.

(end of tape 1, side 1)

Mr. Kullman: ...on a B-29.

Ed Metzler: Well you hoped the test works out okay! (laughter) But you didn't go on an actual combat mission then?

Mr. Kullman: No.

Ed Metzler: That's good.

Mr. Kullman: No, no.

Ed Metzler: That would have been a...a rough ride, I suspect.

Mr. Kullman: Could have been, yes. The only one we lost in a B-29 was that fellow that...plane crashed on takeoff.

Ed Metzler: Did you have...did your battalion have very much contact with any of the crew or the pilots or anything like that?

Mr. Kullman: Some of them might have; I never did. I didn't get involved with too much of anything except what I was told to do.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kullman: The only escapade I got into was going over to that dump and getting in trouble. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that got you in a...in a pack of trouble!

Mr. Kullman: One thing I did though; had a radio that I brought from home, and I had it in a...a wooden ammunition box with straw and everything to...to protect it. When we got to...I think it was in Ebeye I...I found that there was...the tube, radio tube was missing. We got to Tinian and I opened the box again and it...it wasn't missing it was just buried underneath all the...the seltzer I had in, you know, to protect it. And...but we couldn't get much on the radio, so I said, "Well, if we had a big aerial that would work." So one of the fellows in the tent that I was in was a carpenter and I asked him if he could bring some wood home; I was going to make a mast...which I did. He brought some four by eights or four by tens...whatever they were and I spliced them together to

more or less make a two by four, and then I...there was an awful lot of communications wire laying all around the fields...I made guy-wires for it and hooked up an aerial on the top of it. And couple of the fellows gave me a hand to get that up; it was probably about thirty feet tall. And put stakes in the ground and got it so it was secure and...and hooked the other end up to a tree and we used to get Australia.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: You ever get Tokyo Rose?

Mr. Kullman: What...what...wasn't...no.

Ed Metzler: That's good.

Mr. Kullman: We tried; we used to switch around to see what we could find, but the only thing we could get was Australia, and that wasn't a hundred percent of the time either. But the first thing you know I was informed that I either had to put a light on top of it or take it down or shorten it...or take it down. I asked if I could shorten it. "Yeah, you can shorten it." So I hooked a saw on my belt; I climbed up that two by four pole; cut about ten feet off the top; got the wire down off the top and tied it onto the new position and I dropped the...the wood down and then climbed down. Now why I'm not full of splinters, I don't...I don't know! (laughter) Because that wasn't really the sturdiest! But I had guy-wires...like at ten feet and twenty feet and thirty feet.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, sounds like a pretty good construction there.

Mr. Kullman: Evidently, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Must have been a Seabee! (laughter) So how long were you on Tinian...roughly?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, we got to Tinian...oh shoot!...if I had the log book, I could tell you.

Ed Metzler: Yeah that's okay, I mean...I mean was it six months, six weeks...a year?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, we were...we were on Ebeye...uh, for a couple of months and then we were about a month or so up on the other island and then we headed for Tinian. So it had to be somewhere around August or September or something like that. Tinian...when did we get there? Is that what you asked me?

Ed Metzler: Well, how long were you there?

Mr. Kullman: Oh how long were they there? Well we got in...now that I think about it, we got there in September. It was secured in August, mid-August; the Marines secured it and we got there early...early September and then we didn't leave until the war was over.

Ed Metzler: Okay! So...

Mr. Kullman: We were...we were notified one day, you know, the war was over and, you know, get ready to leave because a ship might come by anytime to pick you up and they let everybody know over the loudspeaker system, "Everybody's whose name began with A through J report to the compound first thing in the morning. The rest of you hang tight; sit tight." And they all piled up and left. At noontime they said, "Okay, drop everything you've got; get yourself down to the compound; there's another ship waiting for you." So the first ship went into San Francisco; we went into Portland, Oregon.

Ed Metzler: So you remember when you heard about the atomic bomb being dropped?

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah! After it was all over, naturally!

Ed Metzler: Of course.

Mr. Kullman: We knew there was something going on, but nobody had the foggiest idea what it was all about.

Ed Metzler: How did you know there was something going on?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, the secrecy at the air strip and the...those...that the crew, you know, in a cordoned off area.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, separate squadron...yeah...blah, blah, blah.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah. So nobody seemed to know anything. And the people that were part of it, they're not going to tell you anything.

Ed Metzler: Nope!

Mr. Kullman: So...that...but there...we...the people would say, "There's something going on; they're digging a big hole out the runway there and..." (laughter) You know, what the hell was that all about?

Ed Metzler: And your engineer, and our engineer is gone up to do some modifications on a...on a B-29.

Mr. Kullman: No, we didn't know that either.

Ed Metzler: You didn't even know that. They told him you ain't going to tell anybody, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah; that...that came after we found that out, yeah. He was a hell of a nice guy.

Ed Metzler: What was the food like there?

Mr. Kullman: Good.

Ed Metzler: So you weren't eating out of a...dried food or out of a can...?

Mr. Kullman: We started off...dried off with C-rations or K-rations, oh yeah. On Ebeye we started off with C-rations...K-rations and then they built kitchens. On Ebeye we...I guess they weren't getting all the soap out of the rinse pans or whatever and wound up with Dysentery...and including me. And I left the tent one night; I had to go to the john and I'm walking up to the john; it's raining; I've got a poncho on and as I passed the next tent there's a guy in there, "Ha, ha, ha, where you going Frank, ha, ha, ha!" I got to the door and when I opened the door to the john...it was too late! (laughter) I says...

Ed Metzler: Didn't move fast enough, huh?

Mr. Kullman: I didn't...I didn't move fast enough. I was afraid to move fast!

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh! (laughter) And on Tinian, I mean you...you had kitchens and everything?

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah; ice machines.

Ed Metzler: Ice machines?!

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Kullman: No, we lived...lived pretty good; we lived real good. The food was good; everything...worked out. Our skipper, James Ritter, who was relation of John Ritter the movie star and Tex Ritter, cousin or some darned thing or other...

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Kullman: ...and he had come down from the Aleutians. He was in another battalion...the Aleutians...when he come down and took over this...the 107th.

So we went from one side of the coin to the other. And...and Tex came to entertain us before we went overseas; and the whole crew (unintelligible) and the whole...the whole big crew.

Ed Metzler: Whole western crew, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So were you in...fairly frequent contact back home via letters or...how did that work?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, I was writing letters...probably wrote a letter at least every week, and some of them would be ten pages to fifteen pages...whatever. I had...don't recall exactly what I wrote in them. My father saved them and I never went through them again, but I gave them to my youngest daughter, 'cause she was talking about writing a book. I said, "I don't know what these are worth, but..."

Ed Metzler: Here they are.

Mr. Kullman: Might be a basis for a story, I don't know, but I don't think she ever got to write the book. (laughter) Maybe I should ask her if she still has them or knows where they are.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, might be interesting to go back and look at those.

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah, oh yeah...no I used to write and I...I'd write my letters in black ink; blue ink; green ink; purple ink...anything, you know. My letters were all different colors.

Ed Metzler: Whatever you could get your hands on, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah. Well, no, they...they would send me stuff from home, yeah. And one of...one of the things that...that we had were fire ants. I don't know what...if...what you might call them, but anyway they...little tiny things and they were...they were all over. And one time I walked into the tent and motion caught my eye and...the tents...what we did after we put the tents up...there was a wooden frame put around...and caught my eye as I'm going and gee, looking at all these red ants...are going back and forth on the...and I followed it to the corner...around...and then down. And I had built a...like a storage box on legs; the legs I made out of those pieces that you have with your cot for...to hold...to fish the net...so that's where they were...they were in there! There was a hole that they got through, so I quickly opened it up and I got some water and brushed away as many of the ants as I could...and opened it all up and I looked inside and they got into a can of Nestle Chocolate. You know it was cop...it was cardboard container with a metal top and bottom, so wasn't...wasn't anything I could do with that. But anyway...and then they used to come down the tent pole. People would...you'd get something...you're going to share with everybody and which I did and some of the stuff I'd want to keep...you know, something...nobody liked sardines (laughter), so I didn't have...I didn't have any problem with that!

Ed Metzler: You were the only guy that must like sardines! (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: And anybody eats sardines, you know what they eat! Anyway, but they come down the tent pole, so...and they cut a big hole so that they couldn't get to the

table. And they come across the floor and up the legs; so we had cans...no that came first. The cans with the legs in the can...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kullman: ...of water.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kullman: Or somebody I think bring...brought diesel fuel because that would last longer than water.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, and they wouldn't be...

Mr. Kullman: But then they came down the poles...so then we had to cut a big hole in the middle of the...the table for the pole...and...but that stopped them finally. The tent I was in...you were supposed to have one light bulb; we had two. They were supposed to be...like sixty watt; we had hundred watts. I had nothing to do with it; the people in the tent were pretty good procurers, Seabees. (laughter) They used to make...a cot; they'd make a...what they'd do is get...the one fellow was a carpenter; he'd bring some carp...some material home to the tent and they'd make a wooden frame that was maybe three feet wide; six feet long, seven feet long with legs and then they'd go up to the compound and they'd have tubes from the heavy equipment...tires...and they'd make a gig with a razor blade and they'd cut it in strips maybe three inches wide; stretch it from end...maybe four or five...from end to end and then shorter pieces...weave it through to make a bunk that was nice and soft. And they...then they got to making them...some of the fellows in the battalion were making them and they traded with the Air

Force for a quart of whiskey. (laughter) A quart of whiskey sold for about twenty-eight dollars.

Ed Metzler: And that...that's what...month and a half salary.

Mr. Kullman: Well they'd share, no, they...it's not that one guy would buy it...I don't think I don't I...I didn't drink; I don't drink.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Kullman: But they built those things and sell them for a bottle of whiskey. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Did you ever get a look at an actual Japanese person?

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah, yeah. One...one on Ebeye that was a prisoner on Ebeye and they made sure that nobody got close to him, and on Tinian I got to see a few. One time when I was on...driving a truck on Tinian I was assigned to a Korean crew; I had to take them wherever they were going to do some work for battalion...for the...for the island command or whatever; I don't know what they were doing. And actually I just had to go as passenger; it was a Korean driving. And he spoke English and a couple of things that I found up...found out from...that...in Korea when a baby is born it's a year old.

Ed Metzler: They count from conception rather than birth?

Mr. Kullman: Yes, yes, yeah. So he said he was twenty or twenty-one...something like that and we yakked back and forth. I...I don't recall much of any other information that...that we carried on, but...

Ed Metzler: Well I'm surprised those Koreans...I guess they couldn't get back to Korea just yet because the Japanese still held Korea, didn't they?

Mr. Kullman: At the time, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kullman: Yep.

Ed Metzler: So they were just stranded there to...

Mr. Kullman: They had a special compound for them...set up; they had cattle that was on the island, and they were usually kept in that same area where the...the Koreans were. Their sanitary conditions were not like ours and you...you'd...you knew where you were if you were driving by and had your eyes closed. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Kullman: Tinian Island is...was basically shaped like the island of Manhattan, so the streets were laid out that way. The main drag through the middle of the island was Broadway and it was 125th Street and the battalion was on 86th Street and...if I'd of thought about it, I would have brought a map over and...

Ed Metzler: My goodness.

Mr. Kullman: ...and showed you, but that's the way the whole island was laid out. I got a Marine coming to the reunion.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?!

Mr. Kullman: He was in the 18th AAA which was the southern part of the island...right on Broadway, right next to Broadway. And...cause he saw my ad in American Legion or whatever...VFW...whatever it was and I've been yakking with him and he...he lives in Texas and he'll be show...coming to the reunion.

Ed Metzler: Nice!

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. He told me a couple of stories that were quite hilarious.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, maybe you...

Mr. Kullman: There was one night...I guess it was somewhere around midnight, a hundred and twenty-five tons of dynamite blew and we were maybe a quarter of a mile...maybe a half a mile away from it, so...there was...anybody that had shelves and with anything on the shelves they all wound up on the floor. I thought it was the end of the world. And...but some fellows got up in the morning and didn't believe anybody that it happened.

Ed Metzler: Slept through it.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: My word!

Mr. Kullman: And that Marine...that was a crew from...team from that...uh, that 18th AAA that were guards on that...dynamite group...uh, base. And what happened was one of them accidentally discharged his rifle and everything went. They lost twenty people.

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Kullman: Cause you know, if you're on guard and you're reporting then maybe there were ten guards and ten of them were going to be relieved and they all went.

Ed Metzler: My word! What a terrible thing!

Mr. Kullman: Another story told about...Japanese plane used to come in from the south and basically go up Broadway...no, no firing or anything like that probably just observation. And pretty much the same...late evening, you know, and they got pissed off at him doing it all the time, so they set up two fifties, one on each side of this area that he goes through. So sure enough one day here he

comes, so they shot him down, and...it...you know, the plane crashed and he was a souvenir hunter; an avid souvenir hunter. He was going to go up there and get some souvenirs, so he dashed up to get some souvenirs. On the way he heard some hollering and screaming but he was going for souvenirs. But when he got there it was totally on fire; it was...no souvenirs to be had. On the way back he checked out to see what the...what the...all the hollering was about. It seems when the plane came in it took the top off the latrine which was a sixteen by sixteen tent, and there were two officers in the pit trying to get out! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: That was a much better show than... (laughter)

Mr. Kullman: That's the story he tells; I have no reason to doubt him.

Ed Metzler: My goodness! So when the war was over, I guess there was lots of celebrating there on Tinian...

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...when you knew the war was over, and...

Mr. Kullman: Did a little celebrating before that. One New Year's...some of the fellows were having a party on New Year's Eve and they got to the point where they were firing their rifles through the roof...through the tent tops.

Ed Metzler: Not good.

Mr. Kullman: So the next day all firearms had to be turned in to the Armory. They took everybody's firearm away from them.

Ed Metzler: Including your forty-five?

Mr. Kullman: No. I don't think I had it at that time.

Ed Metzler: Okay, you didn't have it at that time.

Mr. Kullman: Anyway, I got that later.

Ed Metzler: You probably lost that in the Summary Court-Martial escapade, perhaps.
(laughter)

Mr. Kullman: No, it was after that, too, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Oh. So you ended up in Portland, Oregon on the return ship.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah I was there at...at Portland; no equipment; no clothes except what was on our back; most of us were like that. 'Cause it was a quick deal and a lot of stuff, I guess, got lost on board ship or whatever. But when we...when we went on...and I'm going through the...the dock facilities there were people lined up from the door we went through to the door where we went out on the other side and had milk and cookies and donuts and everything else; passing it out to everybody as they...we were going by.

Ed Metzler: Really?! Well that was nice!

Mr. Kullman: And I'm a milk freak, and I hadn't had any in a long time and I'd take one and (gulp sound) and take (unintelligible)...I think I probably had about four or five of them before I got through the line...little containers of milk! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Thank goodness you were home though!

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: How'd it feel to be back in the States?

Mr. Kullman: Uh, I don't know. I guess I'm just somebody that doesn't have much feeling. I guess I felt, you know, great about it, but...then I had to get...be issued all new clothes and stuff like that. And while we were there, one fellow from

New Jersey that I was not really buddy-buddy with, but we'd...used to pal around a little bit and we went to see a professional football game and the star player was Andy Meredith; he could throw the football the length of the ball field.

Ed Metzler: Whoa; what an arm!

Mr. Kullman: And I forget now who was playing or who won, but I know I went to the ball game.

Ed Metzler: Well that was...that was a nice change after what you'd been through.

Mr. Kullman: And I went there...I was...I was stationed there for oh, two weeks or more and a couple of the other people left, you know, long before I did. And when they finally called my name, and I...to get...I was going to be leaving on the train the next day or whatever...and...but...the thing that...my biggest disappointment at that particular time was when I got home...fellow by the name of Bob Crentz (sp?) who I was pretty much buddy-buddy with had called my parents to tell them I was coming home, and I wanted to walk in and surprise them!

Ed Metzler: So you didn't get...you didn't get to surprise them!

Mr. Kullman: So I didn't get to surprise them.

Ed Metzler: You didn't get to surprise them. Well dog-gone it!

Mr. Kullman: He's...

Ed Metzler: What are we looking at here on your arm?

Mr. Kullman: The white?

Ed Metzler: I see the white. Now is this your wound; your war wound?

Mr. Kullman: Okay, the fellows used to party. I don't know whether it was Friday night or Saturday night...that I don't remember. And they'd gather up as much beer as they could possibly gather...

Ed Metzler: Now this is on Tinian?

Mr. Kullman: Yes on Tinian, and then they'd scrounge around and see what kind of food they could get and they'd scrounge...go into the mess hall; maybe get some bacon and...or eggs or something like that and they...they'd party. And one time they...one of the fellows drove a racked truck...with a rack body, and so they went down to the compound, the beer compound or where the food compound...which was barb wire all around; it was under guard with black MPs with machine guns at night; nobody during the day. So they backed the truck up to the barb wire; they jumped over...a couple of them jumped over and then they loaded the truck with cases of beer. And they had a hole cut in the floor and they could lift that up and they stored all the beer under there. So anybody came in, you know, I got nothing here!

Ed Metzler: Just an empty truck.

Mr. Kullman: But party...but party night they...they had all the beer they could use. Anyway, one night Bob Crentz is...feeling pretty good...and I sleep; I never got involved; I was always...never got involved; I didn't drink and so I didn't party with them. And I was laying on my bunk, and I had built that myself. I built a...I got some two by twos and made a frame and I had a board about this high off the floor, no it had to be higher because I had a chair underneath. I made a desk; I had shelves on the other side where I kept my clothes and

stuff like that. So I'm laying on the bunk and I guess I had my hands up like this and all he wanted to do was wake me up. He had a cigar, so he put the cigar...and I guess the heat from the cigar...instead of pulling away from it, I jerked into it, so...

Ed Metzler: So that's your...

Mr. Kullman: That's where I got the...

Ed Metzler: That's your wake up scar! (laughter) Well that's one way to be awakened!

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. But all I did was tell him he was a damned fool and why don't you stop diddling around ; I went back to sleep.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned. Well what other things can we touch on while we're...while we're...talking here? You have this little hand-written note...

Mr. Kullman: It's in the log book; when I bring the log book...

Ed Metzler: Okay, but just mention...mention it for the tape here...the conference room.

Mr. Kullman: Well on...yeah, we...we...after we completed all the work and construction that had to be done on Ebeye, we...the battalion moved up the lagoon...or the atoll, oh, I don't know...maybe a mile or so to another island and while we were up there somebody found out that while we were busy up there building fuel tanks and oil tanks and a...R&R island, we got word that Admirals King and Nimitz were on Ebeye holding a convenience *on our island!*

Ed Metzler: Wow! So they had what...like a conference or something there, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, they must've had, you know, they were...probably some kind of a meeting room that...that was built by the 107th because we were the only ones on the island.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you must've built it...

Mr. Kullman: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ...wasn't anybody else to build it!

Mr. Kullman: No.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so *the man* and his...and his major side kick used some of the facilities!

Mr. Kullman: Yep!

Ed Metzler: I think that's something to be proud of!

Mr. Kullman: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: That's neat.

Mr. Kullman: Actually I just read that recently; I'd gone through the book, you know, the log book a few times but that never stuck in my head. And then, but Nimitz kept coming up, I says...something way back there said I think there's something in there that...that I read. So I...I went through it page by page until I found it. We had a painter in the outfit, I mean a *real* artist, fellow by the name of Lowe (sp?) who...from...New York City and he's got murals at post offices around the country that he did plus the stuff that he did for us. And in our log book there's some that will be in the log book.

Ed Metzler: Hum! Yeah, I'll have to look at that.

Mr. Kullman: I'll bring that over and...or you can come over and visit with us. Well you're going to come over and visit.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I (unintelligible) and do that...would be easier.

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, yeah, yeah. They've got...they've got me in room 17 which is right next to 18 where the continental breakfast is served.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well I think unless you've got some other shots you want to take here I'm going to close the tape down.

Mr. Kullman: When we were in Camp Parks, we went on a twenty-five mile hike up to Camp Mount Diablo.

Ed Metzler: And where is this now?

Mr. Kullman: That was twenty-five miles north of Camp Parks.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kullman: And we left early in the morning and we marched up there and up the side of the mountain and with only summer clothes and it was freezing cold up there. And the only thing we had possibly to keep yourself warm was a poncho...you had...that would help. And in the morning, you know, it's on the...and...your tents pitched on an angle and some pitched it this way...some pitched it this way and they'd all be...slide out the bottom or they come out the side of the tents...whatever...it was a mess! And one fellow from New Jersey, fellow by the name of Victor Mastriano (sp?) was on guard duty...I was on guard duty at the same...too, and I heard a little commotion; I didn't know what it was all about. It turns out a couple of officers tried to get through our...our guards and they were coming down and Victor and the fellow he was on duty with...they tripped him and Victor was all set to crown them with this wooden rifle or whatever it was they had...I don't know. And he says, "Hold it, hold it! I'm Ensign Hazard!" "Oh, okay." Because they didn't...they didn't say...they didn't even know they were coming; they

sneaked in and they didn't hear them. So, but he almost crowned them! And then we marched back the next day.

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kullman: We had...used to play football on Camp (unintelligible)...each battalion...each company had a football team and it got so the best team which was Company B, and I played on Company B's football team for what it was worth...and...but the base had a pro on their team...pro back...I forget his name; we didn't win that game (laughter), but one...something that sticks in my head because I...I saw it go down...a fellow by the name of Harry Cox was from New Jersey...and this pro had the ball and he was going to come around right end and Harry came in from behind and shoe laced him; he just caught his foot and down he went! And I...I was observing that whole situation; things you remember! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah, isn't it amazing...after all these years!

Mr. Kullman: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: What was the score?

Mr. Kullman: Oh, I don't remember (laughter). It...it, no it wasn't big; it wasn't a big score because he was...he was the key to the whole thing and if everybody else wasn't as good as he was or come close...because you may be the best (unintelligible) around on...on a team, but if everybody else isn't quite that good...it doesn't work.

Ed Metzler: It is a team sport.

Mr. Kullman: Yes, yeah. So they did win but it wasn't...wasn't by much...maybe one touchdown or something like that.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Kullman: Went into San Francisco with Maxey Gordon...was from Jersey City and we went into a mov...took...took in a movie and on stage was Louie Prima and his orchestra. And at that time his singer was a...a woman by the name of Dolly Dorn (sp?).

Ed Metzler: Guess that was before he linked up with...what was her name Keely Smith?

Mr. Kullman: Keely Smith, right.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kullman: And...so they were going through all their routines and Maxey and I...his name is James B. Gordon but he looked Jewish so they always called him Maxey. Anyway, we were sitting, I guess, in the second row or something like that...on the right...and so she get...there's a couple of songs and then she says, "I...I'm looking around here and I want to dedicate a song...special song to some military individual in the audience there," you know, and she's looking...she says, "Uh, I'd like you to...to stand up." And I looked and I said, "Maxey, she's looking at you." He...he says, "No, no, it's you." So she said, "Yeah." So I stood up. She said, "Well this song is dedicated to you." Okay, so I sat down, so then she sang, "There's a burlesque theater where Frankie likes to go to see Queen (unintelligible)." (laughter)

Ed Metzler: So it wasn't...wasn't "Stardust or anything like that?"

Mr. Kullman: No! (laughter) Dolly Dorn.

Ed Metzler: How about that! You're right; it's strange the things that you remember, isn't it?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah. When we were at Port Hueneme, got...got to take a trip down to Los Angeles with another friend, a fellow by the name of Henry Tazinski (sp?), and trying to get a ride was really rough; most of the time you had to hitch a ride. And finally we hitched a ride...maybe eight or ten of us got on a flat-bed truck; it only had...duals in the back and flat bed; no sides...nothing and he had been yelling...calling "Hey!" But we're going on liberty.

Ed Metzler: I tell you, a ride's a ride.

Mr. Kullman: And so we rode all the way down to Los Angeles on the back of that truck...that's sixty miles...with everybody else. And we get off there and we had our pea coats; it was warm...we wouldn't need them until later, so we put them in a locked in...at...in the bus terminal, and Henry had the key. And we went to the Palladium which is a big, orchestra...be dancing and all that stuff and he said to me, he says, "Hey," he says, "I...I got hooked up with some girl here and I'm going to leave you on your own." Alright; what am I going to do say no. Anyway, he took off and then another fellow stopped by, fellow by the name of Nicky...Nick Eizza (sp?)...small fellow, he was maybe five, two...something like that. Anyway he asked he if I would buy him some drinks for him and his girlfriend. I said, "They're not going to serve me any drinks." He says, "Oh yeah, they'll serve, but they won't serve me." I said, "Well I was taking the bus from camp; we stopped at a bus stop and went in...of course I had to change buses...and we were sitting at the counter there

and I ordered a Birch beer; they wouldn't serve it." I said, "What do you mean you're not going to serve me Birch beer?" "It's beer! If you...if you're not of age, you're not going to get it." They wouldn't serve me the Birch beer. So with this in my head, you know, who's going to serve me drinks?

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Kullman: But I went up for him and I went down and they gave me the drinks and I brought them down and gave them to him. (laughter) But the bottom line is Henry had the key to the locker, so I'm wondering around trying to figure out which way to go; I saw a new theater...theater was all night theater...I had no place to stay; I wanted to get my pea coat...so I went to the theater but that let out about two or three o'clock in the morning...something like that, and I'm standing outside...cold...and I'm looking this way and I'm looking that way and some soldier comes over he says, "You got some place to stay tonight?" I said, "No." He says, "Oh, we got a couple of girls here; we're going to stay with them tonight. I got a ticket to the YMCA; there's a bunk over there...you can stay over there." So I took the ticket and spent the night at the YMCA, and then hitched a ride back to camp (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: My gosh! Did you ever get your pea coat?

Mr. Kullman: Yeah, Henry brought it back; he might...(unintelligible) when he got back he brought the pea coat back, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, he hadn't lost the key then?

Mr. Kullman: No, I didn't lose it. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Boy those were different times, huh?

Mr. Kullman: Yes they were, yep. I...there was a fellow there who lived in a little town just north of Los Angeles, Kenny Piot (sp?); his father was a Seabee...civilian...radio...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kullman: ...and he used to carry on conversations all over the planet with his...his deal, and I stayed with him one weekend and then we caught a ride back to the base. But I used to do stupid things like...when we were on Ebeye...uh, when we were in Ben...uh, Camp...Port Hueneme, we had...it was on a...a some kind of a detail...loading or unloading something from one of the buildings and there was a flat-bed trailer that was supposed to back in, so it could be loaded. And we waited and waited and everybody's grumbling because the driver doesn't show up, so dopey me I said, "Well, I'll back it in." "Oh, you're going to get in trouble...ta-da-ta-da." So I got in the truck anyway and somehow or other...I don't know how I did it...the only driving I had done was in my aunt's old 1929 Buick...but I managed to back the damned trailer in to where it had to be loaded. And that be...might have been a score against me because I was doing something I wasn't supposed to.

Ed Metzler: No, you're not supposed to be able to do that.

Mr. Kullman: No! (laughter) What can I tell you?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kullman: Story of my life! I...I'm handy and I don't take no for an answer; I got to...I can figure out how to get things done...maybe not be the best way to do it, but I can usually figure out how to get something done.

Ed Metzler: Well that sounds like a true Seabee!

Mr. Kullman: Ah, what can I tell you? (laughter) I do what I can.

Ed Metzler: Yep. Well thank you for the time. I appreciate...

Mr. Kullman: You're quite welcome!

Ed Metzler: ...and I look forward to meeting some of the other fellows as well.

Mr. Kullman: Uh-hum.

Ed Metzler: So I'm going to...

Mr. Kullman: I spoke to a couple of them, and "Ah, I don't want any interviews."

Ed Metzler: That's alright; I'll go over there and...

Mr. Kullman: Well, you'll catch somebody.

Ed Metzler: And if they don't want to, that's fine, too. But I'm going to shut this down; then we'll talk about that. So thanks again, Frank, for spending the time.

Mr. Kullman: You're quite welcome!

(end of interview)

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