

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

Paul C. Candelori
Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania
February 28, 2007
Radioman, 3rd Class
LST 646
Iwo Jima February 21, 1945 Supplied Troops

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is February 28, 2007. I am interviewing Mr. Paul C. Candelori. by telephone. His address is 3119 Jolly Road, Plymouth Meeting, Pennsylvania 19462. His phone number is area code 610-272-5445. 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

Paul, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

Mr. Candelori

We thank you also for doing this service.

Mr. Misenhimer

You are quite welcome. Now the first thing that I would like to do is to get an alternate contact. Do you have a son or daughter or someone that would know where you are in case we try to get you in two or three years and can't find you?

Mr. Candelori

Oh yes. We've got seven of them. I'll give you my daughter Carolyn Kelly. That's an Irish name for you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you have her phone number and address?

Mr. Candelori

I have the phone number. It is 610-272-7723. 1213 Fairview Road, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania 19422.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

When I do these in person I give it to the man to read and sign, but since this is by phone let me read this to you to make sure that it is okay. "Agreement Read." Is that okay?

Mr. Candelori

Sounds good to me. I don't have a problem with it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you first, what is your birth date?

Mr. Candelori

January 26, 1924.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had a birthday not long ago.

Mr. Candelori

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. Candelori

In Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mr. Candelori

My mother died when I was two. So I had one sister and a half sister and a half brother.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were any of those in World War II?

Mr. Candelori

No. They were all younger than me. I was the oldest. No, my sister was the oldest, but she's gone. She passed away years ago.

Mr. Misenhimer

You grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Candelori

I am still concerned about using all of our food and not throwing anything away. I remember the Depression very, very well. We didn't have supermarkets in those days. We managed to survive. My father was a tailor and worked in a factory and we got along fine.

Mr. Misenhimer

Your father was able to keep busy during the Depression?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. He was a master tailor. He designed and made our clothes. He designed my sister's wedding gown. He would go for a walk in town and look in the shop windows at the clothes and he would come home and make his own.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Candelori

It was called Southeast Catholic High School. The name has changed to St. John Newman High School.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Candelori

1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Candelori

Yes I remember. It was on a Sunday and somebody got me to sell newspapers on it. It was in the evening if I'm not mistaken, right?

Mr. Misenhimer

It happened about 8:00 a.m. in Hawaii which was about 2:00 p.m. there in Philadelphia.

Mr. Candelori

I was trying to sell newspapers. The Philadelphia Evening Bulletin put out an Extra right away. I think it was maybe 5:00 when I was selling them. We were outside playing.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you think this would affect you?

Mr. Candelori

Well, I was young and I don't remember really. I was a little concerned about it. We were all up in the arms, the whole neighborhood. They were listening to the radio and I guess we were all 100% Americanism you could say. Not like it is today. We were all for the country. That's how it was in those days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then when did you go into the service?

Mr. Candelori

Right out of high school. They drafted me.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know what date you went in?

Mr. Candelori

It was the same month I graduated. June 15, 1943 I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were drafted?

Mr. Candelori

I was a senior in high school and in December of 1942 they pulled me in and I told them I was still in high school. They were very nice. They let me finish. One week out of high school and then, boom, I was in. I had a choice; Army, Navy or Marines. They were in need of people that day. I picked the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Candelori

In the summer we would go down to the shore. Atlantic City with the Atlantic shore was about an hour and a half away. I loved the ocean and that's how I picked the Navy. That's the only reason.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you take your boot camp?

Mr. Candelori

Boot camp was right after in July of 1943. Right after I was drafted. Sampson, New

York. We have our reunion there every year. All of the men that served that were in the Navy during those years, we get together the week after Labor Day in Sampson, New York. It is a state park now, a state facility. President Franklin Roosevelt made that a basic training ground. We had about 600,000 to come out of there. And the Air Force trained there. There is a museum there now. It is a combination Navy and Air Force Museum.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the name of that town again?

Mr. Candelori

Sampson. It is right by the Seneca, right along the lake. Nice country.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that boot camp?

Mr. Candelori

It was great. I think we had about six large Quonset huts. They were A, B, C and so on. Each had their own drill field to march in. It's a big park now. It was very nice. Seven weeks it took us to get through there.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all did you learn there?

Mr. Candelori

We learned how to do the commando course. We learned how to get on the boat and of course we screwed up. We learned how to swim. I knew how to swim already. How to use the boat and that's about it. We had learned to use the gas mask. We had air plane recognition courses. We had routine exercises. It was sort of like high school.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have knot tying?

Mr. Candelori

I guess we did, yes. I've forgotten them all.

Mr. Misenhimer

How were your drill instructors? Were they pretty rough on you?

Mr. Candelori

No, we had good ones. Not like the Army or Marines. I thought it was pretty good. I had no complaints.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished boot camp where did you go?

Mr. Candelori

They needed personnel to work the cannery near Rochester, New York. The apple season came in and I went to the cannery. They were filling up the cans with tomato juice. We got paid in addition to our Navy pay, which wasn't much. We got paid 65 cents an hour. We stayed with the civilians. They housed us and it didn't cost us anything. They put us up and all we had to do was buy our own food. We worked in the cannery and we got paid I think 65 cents an hour. That was for two weeks and then they sent me to radio school at College Station, Texas for five months. Then from there we went to California. After we graduated we all got assigned to different places. Our group went to Camp Pendleton to learn about amphibious landings. We were with the Seabees. We got attached to the Seabees.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me go back to your radio school training at Texas A & M. Tell me about that.

Mr. Candelori

That was eight hours a day plus homework. We learned how to type and copy code and radio theory and all the rules and different things associated with copying code and all the headings. I don't remember it but I can still copy Morse Code. Then we had to do fire watching. We spent half the day typing and the other half copying code.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you learn how to repair the radios?

Mr. Candelori

No. I never got into that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Just operating them?

Mr. Candelori

Just operating. I would liked to have gone to radio technician school but they needed radio operators for the ships.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long was that school?

Mr. Candelori

That was five months.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then you went from there to where?

Mr. Candelori

Then from there we went to Camp Pendleton. I think that was two months.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you travel out to Camp Pendleton?

Mr. Candelori

That's a good question. How did we go there? I think we went by bus.

Mr. Misenhimer

By bus or by train?

Mr. Candelori

I'm trying to think. Maybe it was train. I don't remember. We didn't fly, I know that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then at Camp Pendleton what did you do there?

Mr. Candelori

We set up camp, tents and we just sort of trained and marched and that's about all. We didn't do any combat. They issued us a carbine and a knife. We didn't have the boots, so they issued us olive green clothes, shirts and pants. And the helmet too, I think. We were part of the amphibious group. GROTAC 11.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of ship were you on there?

Mr. Candelori

We were on the ground in tents. No ship at all.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you train on any ships or anything?

Mr. Candelori

So far, none. Then from there we got shipped out to Hawaii to Oahu.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know what ship you went on over there?

Mr. Candelori

No. It was a cargo ship, I remember. A lot of the guys were getting sick. I remember that. I just laid down when I got that sick feeling. So we went to Oahu to Iroquois Point. That wasn't too far from Hickam Field. We were staying there until they needed us. A whole bunch of us were there. We were getting ready to ship out to the forward ships to whoever needed a radio operator. That's why I lost track of all my buddies except for one guy from New Jersey. I've forgotten his name now, but he and I were buddies because we were on the same ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got to Pearl Harbor was there still much damage there from the bombing?

Mr. Candelori

I never got to Pearl Harbor. We were maybe on the other side of the bay but we never got a chance to go there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get to Honolulu?

Mr. Candelori

Yes we got some leave time. Every other weekend we had a day off or two days. We got liberty at Honolulu to Waikiki Beach and the Royal Hawaiian. I remember that place.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that pretty nice?

Mr. Candelori

Oh yes. We used to walk by but we didn't go in. That's where we could rent a surf board.

We learned how to surf; not very well but it was nice.

Mr. Misenhimer

About when did you arrive in Hawaii?

Mr. Candelori

Let me see. Somewhere in I guess the middle of April 1944 or something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there in Hawaii?

Mr. Candelori

That was about nine months, just waiting to get shipped out.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do for that nine months? Anything?

Mr. Candelori

Not really much except guard duty. I forgot. They sent us for two months to Fort Shaftner, that's an Army Camp, to learn about wireless teletype and how to set up wireless teletype equipment out in the field. I didn't learn too much there because it was too complicated. That's where they sent us to give us something to do. After that we got shipped out and picked up a boat. I forget what kind of ship it was and they sent us to visit a couple of the islands there. Guam was one of them. We didn't know where we were going. Nobody knew where the invasion was going to end up. Then we shipped out

I guess sometime in the beginning of maybe October and visited some of the islands there. The Carolines and Guam, I remember stopping there. I know we went for the Invasion of Iwo Jima. The invasion was the 19th of February and we didn't get there until the 21st, two days later.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were you on, what ship then?

Mr. Candelori

It was an LST but it wasn't the same one. I forget the number. I think we picked it up in Guam, or somewhere along the line. It was another LST besides 646. 646 was the one that I was mainly on. That was the one that I finished on when I went back home.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you get on the 646?

Mr. Candelori

It had to be maybe a couple of weeks before or a month.

Mr. Misenhimer

But at the Invasion of Iwo Jima you were on the 646, right?

Mr. Candelori

Right, yes. I was on radio watch. Just sitting there. Not transmitting, just watching the radio for messages to come in. We tuned into a Marine radio band to hear those guys.

Curse words. Get that guy. More curse words. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

Are you talking about the airplanes or the people on the land?

Mr. Candelori

On the land. They were going after the Japs. Then on Sundays, they were nice because we would sit outside there and watch the planes shoot the rockets. There were a lot of caves there where the Japanese were holding out. They were shooting rockets at them. That was like fireworks, watching those planes go by and hit those caves. After the island was secured and they got the prisoners. We were on ship about a week I guess and then we got situated on the island and we resumed our stay and watch and all that stuff. We didn't get to do much of anything then. I guess we were waiting for those B-29's. We knew about the B-29's bombing Japan. Coming back the sailors on the LCVP's, Landing Craft Vehicle and Personnel, would go out there and rescue the pilots and the men onboard from the ocean. You would see some of the planes coming back with a broken wing or a broken tail. The Seabees had built airfields there. That was very critical. We had to get that island there to establish an airfield so that the planes could land and takeoff and bomb Japan. That was a top secret. Nobody knew where we were going.

Mr. Misenhimer

During the Invasion of Iwo Jima, were you there for the first day, February 19th?

Mr. Candelori

No we got there on the 21st. Coming in there we could hear those big 16 inch guns off the battle wagons bombarding Iwo Jima there. I guess we were lucky.

Mr. Misenhimer

What all did you have on your LST?

Mr. Candelori

We had 50-caliber guns on the side. I never got close to them because I was on radio

watch. The men using that 50-caliber would say, "let's get them." This was at night time. We were having an air raid. The one pulling the trigger, this was our boat, and the tracers, I don't know how many. I would look over and a tracer would go up in the sky. We didn't know what the heck we were looking at. We just heard the shooting. That was one of the raids that I remember distinctly. By then they were pretty well situated.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of cargo did you have on your ship?

Mr. Candelori

We had provisions. There were cases of oranges and fruits and vegetable I guess and of course powdered milk and C Rations and all that kind of other stuff. I remember the cases of oranges going out the door because I was up there on the bridge and I had good luck. I didn't have to help out. Some of the other sailors were helping the Marines unload.

Mr. Misenhimer

You didn't carry any Marines on there or anything?

Mr. Candelori

No but one of the Marines gave me a Japanese bayonet which I still have maybe because we gave them the oranges. I could see the cases of oranges being unloaded. A Marine walked by and he gave me this bayonet. That was about it and then we just stayed there and waited to help out wherever we were needed. No more schooling. No more training. After that the war was practically over.

Mr. Misenhimer

There at Iwo Jima did you see any dogfights between our airplanes and the Japanese.?

Mr. Candelori

No there were none of those. The Japanese didn't have any planes there at all. They were just holed up there on the island until the Marines wiped them out.

Mr. Misenhimer

So your ship was never attacked while you were there at Iwo Jima?

Mr. Candelori

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now I understand that they had suicide boats there. Did you have any experience there with suicide boats or anything like that?

Mr. Candelori

No, not that I know of. We were issued a carbine in case one of the Japanese tried to climb aboard. And that's why they gave us a knife, to cut the cargo net and the carbine, which I never used.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of knife was that?

Mr. Candelori

I think it was about 8 inches. The blade was about 8 inches long with a leather handle. I had that for a long, long time until one day a couple of years ago I went down to the shore on the bridge and crabbing with nets. One of my granddaughter's girlfriends dropped it and it went down into the water there. I tried to get it back, but I couldn't get it back, darn it. I had it all these years. It was no big deal, but sentimental.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that what they called a K-bar knife?

Mr. Candelori

I don't know if they called it that.

Mr. Misenhimer

It was a regular Navy issue, right? My uncle had one.

Mr. Candelori

About 8 inches?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes.

Mr. Candelori

Then I guess that's what it was. The handle was leather, little washers of leather in the form of a handle. Your uncle, was he with the Seabees?

Mr. Misenhimer

No he was a cook in the Navy.

Mr. Candelori

I should remember him. I had to do some KP one time. I remember doing meatballs. I guess he's gone now. My father when he came over, he was about 18 or 19 and he joined the Army and was naturalized and became a citizen automatically. I've got his discharge papers. How do you like that? He comes over and joins the Army. (laugh)

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he in during World War I?

Mr. Candelori

Yes right at the end of World War I.

Mr. Misenhimer

On Iwo Jima, you went ashore, is that right?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. We went ashore. After the island was secure they let us go ashore. They took all the prisoners off. I guess it was maybe a week later. I guess we were on the boat for about a week and then we went ashore. We stayed there until I got shipped home.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you ship home?

Mr. Candelori

We were on Iwo when they declared that the Japanese surrendered. When was that?

Mr. Misenhimer

August 15th.

Mr. Candelori

We must have been there for another; I can't remember. I don't remember. Maybe it was the end of 1945 or the beginning of 1946.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you were on Iwo Jima all that time?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. I was there for nine months.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do on Iwo Jima?

Mr. Candelori

Just hung around and did guard duty and that was about it. We didn't do much of anything. We were just waiting there to get on a boat or a ship out. I guess they knew what was going on and they were getting ready to attack the mainland. I guess it was near the end of the war.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you on the 646?

Mr. Candelori

I guess a few months.

Mr. Misenhimer

Three months or something like that?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. You are going back 60 years. (laugh) I can only remember the things that stand out.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were on Iwo Jima I understand that there were some straggler Japanese left.

Did you ever have any encounter with them?

Mr. Candelori

No. I maybe saw a dead one there floating in the water but that was just about it. I never came across anyone.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about those caves? Did you get to see any of the caves they had there?

Mr. Candelori

Let me think. It seems like my buddy from New Jersey and I went and looked in those

caves. I don't remember. I remember seeing the plane, the B-24 that was crashed. I've got a picture of him in the cockpit. I've got to find that thing and I'll send it to you.

Mr. Misenhimer

A B-29 or a B-24?

Mr. Candelori

I don't know. It was probably a B-29, not a B-24. Because the B-29 was much bigger. He was sitting up there in the cockpit and I took a picture of it. I've got to find that. I've got a couple of pictures of the troops there, the Marines that I took with this Mickey Mouse camera that I had. About all I have is pictures.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you didn't get involved in burying any of the Marines or anything like that?

Mr. Candelori

No. After we landed the Navy took over and I think all of the Marines left as I recall. There weren't any Marines left by then. Like I told you, I was no big deal.

Mr. Misenhimer

Everybody had an important job to do though.

Mr. Candelori

I mostly stood watch. I didn't get a chance to work on the radios.

Mr. Misenhimer

Back on the LST 646, what was your battle station for general quarters?

Mr. Candelori

I was on the bridge.

Mr. Misenhimer

Doing what?

Mr. Candelori

Just staying by the radio.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where was the radio room on an LST?

Mr. Candelori

Not too far from where the Captain was at.

Mr. Misenhimer

Up there on the bridge then?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. They had another radio room but I guess the Chief used that. It had the big transmitter that they never turned off. Ours was a smaller portable job. It wasn't that small. It had the land to ship communications. It didn't put out a lot of power like that. We didn't turn on the transmitter during the war. We copied the five digit code I think it was called NSS. We spent time copying that because it was a message sent in code. Most of the time the radio watch that I did was voice. We would hear all of the calling going back and forth and we would wait until we got a signal that one of them needed to talk to the Captain. It never happened to me. I would just stand there and watch for hours on end. Mainly my duty was radio watch / radio operator. I never got an opportunity to operate the radio. Just to listen.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever send any messages at all?

Mr. Candelori

No, never. I didn't have the honor.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about after the war?

Mr. Candelori

No. We didn't have any radio gear after we left the 646. That ship left and went somewhere. I never saw it again. I don't know what happened to it.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many of you got off there on Iwo?

Mr. Candelori

Not everybody got off, just the ones that were in the amphibious group. The other people that manned the ship didn't. There were some Seabees so I guess about a couple dozen of us all. We lived in tents that the Seabees put up for us. From then on everything was nice and quiet. We were just waiting to go home.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you came home probably in December of 1945?

Mr. Candelori

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were over there did you ever hear Tokyo Rose any time?

Mr. Candelori

No I never got to. We never got that radio station. I heard about it but I never got to. We didn't have that kind of receiver.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get your mail with any regularity?

Mr. Candelori

Yes we got mail; not too often though, but we did get mail. Remember the Victory Letters, the V-Mail? I hated those. We got those. Then we would send out our regular mail and I sent one to my girlfriend. I must have said something in there I wasn't supposed to because it was cut out. I guess they inspected all the letters going out.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned that you got home with a bayonet and that knife. Did you get home with any other souvenirs?

Mr. Candelori

No those were the only two that I got from Iwo Jima. That was it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. When I was at Camp Pendleton I went to a USO show in Hollywood. We got a chance to go to Hollywood and I went to the Brown Derby. I remember that. It was a famous restaurant called the Brown Derby. Jack Benny's partner was there, Don Wilson. I got autographs from the different actresses. I went to the bathroom and I left them on the hopper there. The hanger there where the water is. I left a whole bunch of cards there that were signed. Then in Hawaii we saw a couple of shows. We saw Spencer Tracey, he was there and who was the girl? She died.

Mr. Misenhimer

Carole Lombard or Frances Langford?

Mr. Candelori

I never saw Bob Hope.

Mr. Misenhimer

Betty Grable?

Mr. Candelori

It was another girl but I forget the name. We were lucky. We used to get first run movies. That's when the outdoor movies came about because the Seabees put up a big theater screen and we used to watch movies there. It was nice duty there on Iwo.

Mr. Misenhimer

They tell me that island smelled so bad because of all of the sulphur.

Mr. Candelori

That's exactly right. The beach was black, the sand was gritty and black. Yes it did have that sulphur smell. You are right, now that you mention it.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned awhile ago that you were in boot camp with some famous musician. Al Martino or someone?

Mr. Candelori

Not in boot camp. It was on the ship, on 646.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about that.

Mr. Candelori

He was a signalman. The only reason I got to meet him was because we went up to that 50-caliber machine gun when they were firing it. That's the only time I got to meet him.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was his name again?

Mr. Candelori

Al Martino. That was his stage name. His real name is Al Cini. Then he became Al Martino. If you can get a hold of him, mention my name and get his story. I would like to see what happened to him. I don't know if he left with the ship because I don't remember seeing him on the island. He might have shipped out. Because I don't remember seeing him anymore just our group.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever have any experience with the Red Cross.

Mr. Candelori

Yes I gave blood. I still have the card. This was in Hawaii. It was called the Honolulu Peace Time Blood Plasma Bank. Green Hospital Grounds, Honolulu. October 21, 1944. I still have the card.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you made a blood donation there?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. I have got my cards. That's one and I think I have another card. This one is in red and it says Honolulu Blood and Plasma Bank. A unit of civilian defense acknowledges with thanks a blood donation today. This blood is being used for war supplies and

represents a portion of war effort October 21, 1944. L. G. Pinkerton, M.D., Director.

That's it. This one is red, white and blue. The other one is in blue.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any other experiences with the Red Cross. Did they give you any cigarettes or donuts?

Mr. Candelori

One time in Honolulu I was at Fort Shaftner and somehow I missed the boat going back to my base. I contacted the Honolulu Red Cross and they helped me get back to my base.

I don't know what happened. I was training with the Army for a couple of weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Candelori

They were pretty good. I didn't have any problems. I pushed them a little bit I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there any time that you ever felt threatened or frightened?

Mr. Candelori

Yes during the air raids.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you have air raids?

Mr. Candelori

On Iwo Jima.

Mr. Misenhimer

What happened with that?

Mr. Candelori

They came over and I remember being downstairs on my bunk and I wasn't really frightened but nervous. You know how it is when you are 19 years old. That's the only time I remember being a little worried about it. I forgot to tell you. When we were stationed at Iwo we had a typhoon. We had to go for a couple of days to get away from the eye of the storm. Twice we did that. The waves got big. The big mountains of waves and we were at sea. It was not a seagoing ship. We would ride that big wave and then come down and slap; that was a little exciting.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was on Iwo, right?

Mr. Candelori

At Iwo, right.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was after the fighting was over?

Mr. Candelori

Yes after the fighting was over was when it happened. I think it was about a week apart that we had to leave. I guess we were on that ship a couple of weeks then. After we got stationed there in the tents I never saw that ship again anymore. That's why I wanted to find out what happened to Al Martino. I was talking to a computer salesman and I told him about me. He looked up the 646 and he got a whole history. I don't know how he did it but he got the whole history of the 646. I don't know how he did it. He had how long it was, how big it was and all that. I should have told him to make me a copy, darn it. That was at the computer store Micromedia in Wayne. I do have a picture of the ship. It's not

very good but it's a picture of the ship there on the beach. Would you like a copy of it?

Mr. Misenhimer

That would be fine, yes.

Mr. Candelori

I'll download it and send you a copy. How does that sound?

Mr. Misenhimer

Sounds good. Let me ask you, did you ever cross the equator?

Mr. Candelori

No I never got to do the Shellback. I did cross the international date line but we didn't do a ceremony or anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now on April 12, 1945 President Roosevelt died. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Candelori

Yes and I remember in 1932 when he got in office. When they were marching down the main street there and he was giving a speech. I was a youngster then. I was away when he died. What happened then was Truman took over and gave the permission to drop the bombs on Nagasaki and Hiroshima.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Candelori

Yes we heard about it. I was still on the island.

Mr. Misenhimer

On August 15th when Japan surrendered, did you have any kind of a celebration then?

Mr. Candelori

We were just shouting and drank some beer I guess. We did have access to beer. It was in a can. 3.2 was the alcohol content and it was called 3.2 beer. Do you remember it? Have you heard of that?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, I've heard of it. When were you finally discharged then?

Mr. Candelori

April of 1946. I've forgotten the exact date.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the highest rank that you got to?

Mr. Candelori

I only made Third Class. My son beat me, he made Second Class. But he was in for four years though. He joined. My other son he made Lieutenant jg. He probably came out as an Ensign and then he made Lieutenant jg.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get any medals or ribbons or anything?

Mr. Candelori

We got three ribbons. We got a Commendation Ribbon with One Star and two others, I don't know what they heck they were. I would have to look them up. My son was supposed to get me medals for it, but I never got them. Four ribbons. One had a Bronze Star and that was for the Invasion. That's the only one that I remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Candelori

Yes it took a while. It really did, believe me. I was lucky that I met this girl that I'm married to. We got along very well and I got over it but it took me a few months. It was strange, very strange getting used to it. I remember it was a funny feeling. It was great to be home, don't get me wrong. Everything seemed small. I can remember walking down the street and everything seemed small, like it had shrunk. That was the feeling that I got. I was away for two years.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you join the 52/20 Club?

Mr. Candelori

Yes. I've still got the card. \$20 for 52 weeks. Then I went to radio school. Television was just coming out. So I went to Radio School on the GI Bill. *(tape side ended)*

Mr. Misenhimer

You went to radio and television school and you went to work with whom?

Mr. Candelori

I got a job with RCA working in the factory for about six months. They laid me off from production and I went to Motorola and became an outside serviceman and I was there for about five years. Then I started going to night school and I went to University for eight years at night and became an engineer. Then I went to work for Univac. Computers had just come out. It was Honeywell first for five years and then Univac until I retired.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of engineering degree did you get?

Mr. Candelori

Electrical.

Mr. Misenhimer

Univac was the first computer.

Mr. Candelori

That's right. The plant is about a block away from here. I was working for Honeywell and I thought to myself, "I could just walk over here." I got a job as a components engineer where we did a lot of testing of the different parts. Then I became a product safety engineer. Then I left and went to Precision Data, another computer outfit. I got to go to Germany twice a year for the printers and monitors to be tested and radio interference and safety. I liked that job. Then I retired.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you retire?

Mr. Candelori

December of 1989. I love it.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you went back to get your engineering degree did you use your GI Bill for that?

Mr. Candelori

No. The company was helping me to go to school. They would give me bonuses at Christmastime, Motorola. Then I went to Honeywell and they paid for that too.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Candelori

No I never went to any of the reunions. I lost touch with everybody; too busy.

Mr. Misenhimer

You weren't really with any unit all that long, any one time.

Mr. Candelori

We were never really assigned to a ship's company. We were always an addition whenever they needed help. That's how I got to go on these two ships. The other time I spent on land. I didn't have a really rough time compared to some of my friends that went through hell and highwater. One of my high school buddies got killed at the Battle of the Bulge. In our neighborhood, I grew up with a lot of boys in South Philadelphia, and almost everybody came back. I don't remember anybody being killed outside of my friend from high school that was killed at the Battle of the Bulge. Everybody was happy and there was a big celebration. The good old days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thank you for your time today.

Mr. Candelori

Thanks a lot. I learned a lot today.

Mr. Misenhimer

So did I.

Mr. Candelori

I will send you a picture of the 646.

End of Interview

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