

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Robert L. Hyde

Date of Interview: September 21, 2007

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Interview in progress.

Brainerd Parrish: This is Brainerd Parrish. Today is September 21, 2007. I'm interviewing Mr. Robert Hyde. This interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas at the Admiral Nimitz Museum...Museum of the Pacific War. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the preservation of historical information related to this site. And your name is Robert Hyde?

Mr. Hyde: Robert Hyde.

Brainerd Parrish: And Mr. Hyde where were you born?

Mr. Hyde: Genesee, Michigan.

Brainerd Parrish: Okay, I'm going to...(recording stopped momentarily). Mr. Hyde, what...what were your parents' names?

Mr. Hyde: My father's name was Eddie Constantine (sp?) Hyde. He never liked Eddie; his name was Ed or E.C.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And my mother's name was Anna Elders (sp?).

Brainerd Parrish: And what did your father do?

Mr. Hyde: He was a blacksmith; ended up being...working for General Motors in early...very early '30s. He was in charge of several plants for General Motors or for Chevrolet. And one of them was welding and in that field he was...went to Chicago (unintelligible)...electric (unintelligible). They...the man there was German and he sent Dad over to Russia for...well the setting up of a tube nail. This was a new type of welder that took flat pieces of steel and rounded...folded it into a round tube and welded it. And he set Dad up over in Russia...had a little problem over there with the communists. This was in 1932 to '34.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And in late 1934 he went to Germany to set up one over there for Hit...Germ...Hitler's Germany. And he done a lot of traveling over there and since I'm on interview I'm not going to dwell on too much on this, but he did...he was working for the government.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And then when he got...come back from that he decided to come back to the farm and he stayed there for awhile until 1940 when him and my mother a divorce and he went back to Chicago and worked for Arnold Schwinn Bicycle.

Brainerd Parrish: I see. Well, did your mother work?

Mr. Hyde: No, no she never worked.

Brainerd Parrish: Did you have any brothers and sis...or sisters?

Mr. Hyde: I had two sisters and two brothers and I was the youngest.

Brainerd Parrish: I see. And where did you go to school?

Mr. Hyde: I started out at Tanner School and they consolidated and then into Cocursley (sp?). And I went through there; I got a job in a feed store...and after school...and finally made enough money to buy me a car; \$125.00 for a 1935 Chevrolet. (laughter) And shortly thereafter, well...come along about the 1st of January when I turned seventeen...I was...went down to join the Navy and they rejected me because...my teeth and my weight; I was too light!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And so I went to work for a feed mill; worked for them for about six...about five months, I guess. And then I went to Chicago to work for my dad at...at Arnold Schwinn.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Then from there I...they was taking anything at that time, so I went back and I was able to enlist in the Navy.

Brainerd Parrish: Okay, so when did you enlist?

Mr. Hyde: Actually it was the 6th of January, 1944.

Brainerd Parrish: Okay, so I take it that when Pearl Harbor occurred you were still in high school?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, there was three...four of us boys that went downtown in the plant and we had been to a movie and we'd come out and it was all...newsboys were talking about the Japs...Japan attacked Pearl Harbor.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Time difference.

Brainerd Parrish: Uh-huh, so you heard about it then after you'd been to a movie.

Mr. Hyde: Uh-hum.

Brainerd Parrish: Well after you...when you enlisted in the Navy where did they send you for basic training?

Mr. Hyde: I went to Great Lakes Naval Station...uh, Naval Air Station. At the...and...and I enlisted in Chicago, of course...and...interesting little fact there...this is one of the things I don't know whether you want to know or not but they used needles; they boiled the needles and reused them to draw your blood. And this one...this one in particular that they took out here...you can still see a little brown spot...

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: ...and they gave me a piece of cotton to put on it and hold my arm up...and I had to walk off about...thirty feet to go up the stairs...and there was a bucket there and a fellow was standing there says, "Put your cotton there." And I says, "I'm still bleeding." "Well, you're in the Army now; put your cotton there!" And I said, "No, I better not; I'm in the Navy!" "I don't give a damn who you are; you put that cotton down there!" So I said, "Okay." Let my arm; walked up the stairs and I was about ready to take that step (*slap sound*) on the landing and I heard a thump. Some men couldn't stand the sight of blood, and there that blood was on that stairs! It wasn't long before I didn't take a couple steps and another...I heard...another thump. And they was come charging up there and... "You told me to put the cotton down there!" Well there was a few unkind words exchanged about that time; I just done what I was told!

Brainerd Parrish: Yes, did you...did you have any permanent injury from it or is it...?

Mr. Hyde: No, no. It...by that time it had pretty well stopped bleeding. (laughter) But then I went on up to Great Lakes and it was in the winter time and had snow

storms and some of it was up to your...half way to your butt! We had couple of storms up there and I know that...there was at least...when I left in the end of February there had to have at least a foot and a half of snow around there yet.

Brainerd Parrish: So did...did you get much training up there in the snow or how did you...was it all inside or...?

Mr. Hyde: No, we didn't get too much. I...we...our company spent most of the time going out there shoveling the drill field clear and then by that time somebody else was ready to take over and they done the marching and we done the shoveling! (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: Well where did they send you after your basic? What did...any advanced school or...?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, I was an old farm boy and I knew how to shoot; done a lot of hunting and fishing. And I scored a ninety-six because...and I wanted...they had a sling there and I wanted to do away with the sling but they wouldn't let me. And my brother...oldest brother had been in the scouts and he knew Morse code and I had picked it up being nose-y with him. And they wanted to send me to Corpus Christi as...for radio train...operator training...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and we rear gunner. And I turned it down because I wanted to be Aviation Machinist Mate and they didn't want me to do that, so they sent me to San Diego with Rangefinder School.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And I didn't like that very well, so being a hard head I...flunked out of that.

Brainerd Parrish: What is Rangefinder School?

Mr. Hyde: Well you looked into this optical...this scope and you had mirrors in there that was on two arms and you...maneuvered them so that they zeroed down on a target...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and then you had the range there that you could look through there and then you seen what your range was...one of these two...beams of light...whatever got together...whatever you want to call it...

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: ...when the reflections got together...that's...then you...then you had the range.

Brainerd Parrish: So you flunked out of that school, huh?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, and then was in Receiving Station there about two weeks, I guess, and then I went down...a bunch of us went down and on the Carrier Franklin, the CV-13. It was a new carrier and it was heading out in the Pacific and I think it took about five or six hundred of us over to Receiving Station in Pearl Harbor.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: I...Receiving Station. And from there...I was up there about a day before I went down to John Rodgers Air Field...and was...was a grease monkey there. And about two more...about two months or thereabouts they...they started getting us a little bit tight on our attire because they was fixing to bring the WAVEs over...

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, I see!

Mr. Hyde: ...the females.

Brainerd Parrish: Uh-huh.

Mr. Hyde: And they was getting a little bit particular about our...way we done things and our clothing and we had to start shaping up...and so I wanted to ship out. And so there was...I think there was about a dozen of us that...put on a bus and we went over to the docks and there was the Enterprise. And I looked at it and I smelled blood, you might say, and I says to myself, "Oh boy, you done made a mistake! I don't think you want on that thing!" But it was too late. Anyway the man come out and interviewed us, his name was Carter, and I...I got selected for the supply department.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: The storekeeper. So I went onboard and I went into provisions storerooms and mostly as a...I was still Seaman...and had a Second Class storekeeper over me...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and we...we got along real well. And we wasn't on there too long before Spillman (sp?) got transferred; he'd been on there since 1939 I believe.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And...

Brainerd Parrish: And who was Spillman?

Mr. Hyde: He was the storekeeper in charge of the provision storerooms.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: We had all the dry provisions...not the...not the meat or anything like that, but all of the dries and cans and coffee and sugar and all that, and that left me in charge.

Brainerd Parrish: Okay.

Mr. Hyde: And by that time I had managed to get up to Seaman First. And I had a Chinese boy in there that actually was born in China and was smuggled into Mexico and he enlisted in Los Angeles...and the Navy took him.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And we got out in the Pacific out there and over a period of time...and naturally when a plane...Japanese plane got shot down, well they picked the pilot up and...if anything well we would be out to sea and they'd try to transfer him onto a bigger ship which we got this one pilot. It turns out that he was a Korean and he was pretty well beat up; bandaged up; smelled of Mecericome and Iodine or whatever, I mean, but he would have to come out of the brig and set there on a hatch where we loaded the groceries down there...

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: It was up there about ten or eleven inches...well he'd come down; sit on that and then the Marines...when he got ready, well the Marines would help him up and help him up the ladder and he'd go up to the...what we called the Airdale's head...to do his daily duty; wash up; shower and so forth, and then he'd come back down and he'd sit there again. Well one morning there, Charlie (sp?) got there ahead of me at the storeroom and I should have snapped, but I didn't. And I went down below and I was in the back and I heard...pretty soon I heard this *thump, thump, thump*...and *slam!* "What the hell gives up there!" And I come running out and Charlie come down there

and he was undoing a rope just real fast...grinning up there...just *he-he-he-he!* Well I walked up there and a Marine says, "What in the *blank* did you do?" I says, "I didn't do anything," I says, "I think Charlie was up there. Charlie must have said something to him," because Charlie was oriental. Anyway he had taken off, and Charlie had made a hangman noose and he...Charlie told me he'd taken that hangman's noose and said, "Hey!" And the guy saw it and took off; he hit some lockers; he...where...where he's supposed to turn to get to brig...he hit them lockers and that's what made so much noise...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and after that it was hard getting that man (unintelligible) past that (unintelligible)! I mean he...he just didn't want to go either way! The Marines had to get up there and almost carry him past! (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: But anyway...and I could have got into big trouble over that one, believe me, 'cause...

Brainerd Parrish: Did you say anything to Charlie...or?

Mr. Hyde: I...I said a few words to him, but I didn't know a thing about when I...when I had to talk to the...the officers! (laughter) The exec wasn't very happy about it but they knew...had to have been a hangman's noose...somehow they knew that...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...but they didn't see it! The Marines did not see the (unintelligible).

Brainerd Parrish: Oh they didn't see it?

Mr. Hyde: They didn't see it, but they just figured that's...either he said something or was able to convoy [s/b convey] what was going on or what taken place...but we...they...they give me the third degree!

Brainerd Parrish: I see!

Mr. Hyde: And I would have been responsible for it. Anyway, we got over that one! (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: Okay. So...so you were in the...really the supply room and everything even though you hadn't been trained for supply?

Mr. Hyde: No.

Brainerd Parrish: And so what...what happened then when...while you were on the Enterprise at that point? Where did you all go?

Mr. Hyde: Well we went...let's see...I believe...at first...we went...slipped in under...Taiwan...Okinawa...yeah Okinawa.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, I see.

Mr. Hyde: Their...the Japanese...I mean, at the Chinese mainland...Taiwan, Taiwan.

Brainerd Parrish: Formosa or Taiwan?

Mr. Hyde: Formosa, yeah...Formosa. And we could hear some planes while we...going overhead as we was going through the strait. It was a cloudy, rainy day...kind of...and we roamed up and down from Hong Kong to Singapore. Our planes...night...our planes were going out there and raiding the fields.

Brainerd Parrish: So they were doing night operations?

Mr. Hyde: Not yet.

Brainerd Parrish: Not yet?

Mr. Hyde: No, that was Air Group Twenty.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, so this is before that?

Mr. Hyde: Yeah, and when...this is...first part of October...

Brainerd Parrish: Okay.

Mr. Hyde: ...and we messed around in there and come on out and then we went and got involved in the...MacArthur's Invasion of Leyte.

Brainerd Parrish: Were you involved in that Battle of Leyte Gulf?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, and that's where we...went with our first kamikaze.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And there was a...one that was coming after us, and they managed to shoot the wing off; wing came through...the plane crashed; the wing came flying through...through our...side curtain onto the hangar deck...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and he had about a four hundred pound bomb...that exploded under our bow. And my battle station was back on the fifth, sixth deck...ammunition magazine.

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: And it made quite a racket down there! It made quite a racket! We run out of that and...and it...it loosened up a few rivets and we leaked a little oil; not much.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: But it was still leaking a little oil. So anyway we got into that typhoon out there.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh you did get into that typhoon?

Mr. Hyde: We got into that monster typhoon!

Brainerd Parrish: And what was that experience like?

Mr. Hyde: Scary...*real* Scary! I mean that's...wind was screaming around that flight deck. I've read since then that...and there's one about two or three years ago in...that hit Tahiti...that...winds was up around two hundred mile an hour. And at the time they said there was supposed to be three typhoons in the last hundred years or so that they figured was that speed, and the one we were in they figured was that speed! It really done some damage over in China!

Brainerd Parrish: I see. Did you get sea sick in the...in the typhoons or...?

Mr. Hyde: Not...not during that, no. No it wasn't that rough because the wind was blowing over the top of the waves...off.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: You couldn't...tell me...it was just a fog out there, really. And that wind would hit that carrier...it didn't come straight on all the time, you know...it was a little bit here and there and...and it would just slap that ship immediately!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: I mean it was just like a...kit, it would just whip! And when we got...got out of it...it took, I think, three or four days before everybody got back together again in that task force. And there was four destroyers that didn't show up.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Well one of them did show up, but it was in another task force. And so we knew or figured that three destroyers just went down.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: That was pretty rough! That wasn't...wasn't real happy over that one, but back then we had no advanced weather systems. We didn't...didn't know what we was going into.

Brainerd Parrish: Yes. Did...were you...did you have to go in for repairs after that, or were you on your way to get repaired?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, we...we went back...well we were going back anyway...was scheduled to go back to Pearl, but what we did...we went into drydock and then they scrapped it again and then tightened up a few rivets and repainted and...

Brainerd Parrish: Then back out again?

Mr. Hyde: ...then back out and we got our night air group, Air Group Ninety.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And that there...was from then on it was real interesting!

Brainerd Parrish: What do you mean by that?

Mr. Hyde: Well, the...another carrier...jeep carrier was on a cruiser haul that they...I don't remember, I think it was the Independence...they called it the Independence...had a night air group...and this was all experimental; this was...this was something that they...planes had been out at night before but this was where the planes had the radar in the wing.

Brainerd Parrish: I see

Mr. Hyde: The first planes that had the radar in there...to operate at night.

Brainerd Parrish: Okay.

Mr. Hyde: And these pilots had trained for months!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And...because...though we'd had night landings before, but anyway we went out there and we would go up...oh, Hong Kong, Kyushu, Honshu...all around Japan...might get up there...oh, I heard one time about thirty-five miles off, and our planes would go out raiding all night long...just raiding. And it was kind of scary because every now and then that...that ship would just lean! Well I found out later that it was a torpedo coming our way!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: So (laughter), you know, we was out there just roving at high speed! And then we'd go...by daylight...we'd...you could rendezvous and go out with the main fleet.

Brainerd Parrish: I see. So when you were at night...were you out by yourself or some...?

Mr. Hyde: We was out...just us two carriers and two destroyers.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And every night they'd change the (unintelligible) because they didn't like running their...running all their fuel out because we run at pretty high speed.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: We were not cruising; we were...we...

Brainerd Parrish: You were moving, huh?

Mr. Hyde: We were moving it! (Laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: I see. And...and what happened next?

Mr. Hyde: Well I know one night they got us...they, as I understand, that they brought up some different power for the five inch guns. We had a powder and projectile; we didn't have the one cartridge type five inch guns.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: There were what they called the Long Toms. P-38s I believe they called them. But they was a long-barreled gun and I think they'd shoot over twenty miles.

Brainerd Parrish: Wow!

Mr. Hyde: Anyway, they come over the loud speaker one night and says, "Anybody wants to see the fireworks, come up on the...flight deck." And so we went up...several of us went up on the flight deck and they had the loud speakers up there...there was...there was a bogey coming up over there and he's...oh Charlie's just watch and see...trying to watch us and so we're going to see if we can nail him. Had this one five inch gun on the...on the starboard side on the back there. They loaded up with the smokeless...uh, this flashless power and they give the countdown. When he fired...he didn't...wasn't a flash it was just a red glow that kind of...come out the end of that barrel...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and we watched and watched and pretty soon there was an...an explosion up there in the sky and the sparks flew and pretty soon we could see the...it wasn't long, it was just seconds...you could see the red flame going down there and hitting the water. So they hit him...in...in total darkness without radar!

Brainerd Parrish: Oh man!

Mr. Hyde: I mean...radar...had to have something to do with it.

Brainerd Parrish: ...had something to do with it, but they...but that...they hit the plane, yeah.

Mr. Hyde: They hit the plane!

Brainerd Parrish: That bogey, yeah!

Mr. Hyde: Yeah.

Brainerd Parrish: Did you have any more or were you there when they had any other kamikaze attacks?

Mr. Hyde: Oh, definitely! March...what was it...March 14th, I believe...I was down...we was down there in the magazines and we had been on alert...we...I mean we...we stayed on alert all the time.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And we had to go down there and grab our breakfast and be down there before dark...I mean before daylight. About six thirty, we had to be down in the...magazines all buttoned up.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And the...we could hear the...come daylight...we...we could hear the guns fire; we could hear the twenties...even down there, and there was a couple of episodes; a little firing and a little bit of that...and then (unintelligible) then you could hear the five inch, of course, they had...they kind of shook things up when they let go! And it was about seven, I think, when they...we...I was informed that it was a torpedo warhead that that suicider brought in.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And it was enough of an explosion that it bent the shaft, the number four shaft...that couldn't work anymore...we couldn't turn.

Brainerd Parrish: I...I see.

Mr. Hyde: The...the explosion was such that...it...it broke everything. We went dead in the water!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: We...there was three of us, the whites, and then five of the blacks that was the officers' stewards...

Brainerd Parrish: Yes?

Mr. Hyde: ...they didn't...didn't let us mingle. Of course I...I made friends with everybody, and I had friends among them.

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: And anyway we started out the bomb elevator; I was kind of shook up; got our brains back together...what...somewhat. And they opened the hatch there for the...get on the bomb elevator where we took the...called them bomb elevators...where we put the ammunition up third deck so they'd pass it on...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and we head for the five inch; we had a...conveyer down below that we would load from there. But...but the twenty and forties we put on that bomb elevator and they'd take them up and transfer up to another elevator...up on there on the flight deck.

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: Well anyway we...they opened that up...we only had one battle lantern, by the way; our lights went out.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Bulb broke. And gas...gasoline was flowing down in there, so they closed it up very gently and I started up through the hatch; got up on the third deck and it didn't want to move, so I put my shoulder on it...took a gasoline bath!

Brainerd Parrish: Oh really?!

Mr. Hyde: "Well, boys, we got to go back down," 'cause gasoline, the first thing on our mind...okay we took a bad hit and there's gasoline here; there's got to be a fire up there! So anyway, about that time the boys had got one of the turbines running again, so we went on back down and we sat there and that was kind of interesting listening to all that banging around going on and the planes hitting the water. We could hear...tell whether they was close or not...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and some of them you could hear when they was knocking the barnacles off.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And...after about...it was...I think it was around four-thirty the next morning...it was about twenty-two and a half hours we'd been down there...that the C&R, Construction Repair Department had...they'd cleaned up the gasoline. There was no fire. They...they got...they cleaned the gasoline up...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: There was no communications...that was destroyed, too...I mean shot. And long about four thirty I thought I'd heard something and so I got up to port and I heard it again. I got up to the third deck there...I got...I had found a wrench in the dark...I knew where they were and I pounded on the top of that hatch and got an answer back...so they opened it up, and I went on down and got the rest of them together...in the dark...no light...

Brainerd Parrish: No light still.

Mr. Hyde: ...and got them up there, and I was the last one up. And the C&R guys, there was three of them there; they kind of helped us up; none of us could stand.

Brainerd Parrish: I see. Why...why was that?

Mr. Hyde: No oxygen.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, so you...the oxygen was being depleted all the time you were down there, huh?

Mr. Hyde: That's right; the oxygen was depleted.

Brainerd Parrish: So it's a good think that they were able to come get you...it...

Mr. Hyde: We probably wouldn't last another thirty minutes or we'd have all been gone.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: 'Cause one of them was...the first one down there...when he got down on the...where we were...he just dropped.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And the other two realized what was happening and they grabbed him; they held their breath, I guess, and grabbed him and got him back up. But of course he wasn't out, but he...he was staggering because there was no oxygen.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And anyway, it was shortly after that they decided that we weren't going back down there again unless we had to!

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: And...only for ammunition! And I guess probably within the next week, they transferred me up...on a...on a flight deck up there on the Marine guns...the twenty millimeter guns.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And so they made me a loader.

Brainerd Parrish: So you were a loader on the twenty millimeter guns that...for that...

Mr. Hyde: So that...just for that green Marine battery, yes.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: We...there was twenty of them on each side; there were forty barrels of twenty millimeter, and there was twenty on each side and the Marines operated them.

Brainerd Parrish: Okay. I see.

Mr. Hyde: And the first time I had to reload a couple of canisters, I made a mistake. It was supposed to have been...I...I...if I remember right...it was two HE...what they call high explosive; one armor piercing and one tracer. Well the tracer was to see where everything was going...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: The gunner could see where the tracers were going so they knew they could aim it.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, yes, right.

Mr. Hyde: And I made a mistake and I put two tracers in there instead of high explosive armor! (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: I see! (laughter)

Mr. Hyde: So anyway...they threw two of them in on me...very abruptly...which I straightened up in a very short order! And I don't remember now, but every two or three canisters...they was continuous fire...they had to change barrels.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh did they?!

Mr. Hyde: Oh, they get too hot!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And we had asbestos gloves...they was fast on that...they...them Marines were pretty good about that. They didn't waste no time getting that done!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And also, I was kind of surprised; they showed me the operations of the twenty millimeter.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Not that I ever got to shoot one...but!

Brainerd Parrish: I was going to ask you if you ever got to shoot one of those.

Mr. Hyde: No, no. And then in Mar...March, April we...April we got...the 11th...we...we got damaged again. We had one Betty come in and dropped a bomb on our flight deck but it was too low and it broke in two...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and the tail fuse flew into the quad-forty in front of the island structure...into the ammunition...and the other part of it was rolling down the flight deck and this kid that I knew...went out there and grabbed it; picked it up and threwed it over the side. And then they had tail fuses, by the way.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh is that right?!

Mr. Hyde: Yeah, and about the time it hit the water, well that blew!

Brainerd Parrish: Did it do any damage to the ship?

Mr. Hyde: Most the powder was...I mean the powder was coming out of it pretty well, so it didn't have that much powder in it.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, okay.

Mr. Hyde: And what it was, it just had a place to go out, so...

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: And apparently it might...must have been some bad powder because...I'm trying to think of his name...he got some burns on his arm over it.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And then it was only about four...three, four or five days later..one of the other carrier's was shooting at a plane coming in there between us...and a five inch projectile...theirs...landed into our five inch battery up there.

Brainerd Parrish: Uhhh!

Mr. Hyde: And I...knew one of the boys up there; he was hanging around with us in the GSK (sp?) quite a bit...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and I asked Christie (sp?), I says, "How was it like when...to hit that water?" "Well when you're going about forty mile an hour...hitting that water from about seventy feet," he said, "I don't know how many times I skipped!"

Brainerd Parrish: I see!

Mr. Hyde: And he was kind of bruised up when we got him back on a couple of days later!

Brainerd Parrish: Okay, was he injured though in the...?

Mr. Hyde: No, no because the officer said, "Grab your knees and don't let loose till you quit!"

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: (Unintelligible) went over... 'cause it was all afire!

Brainerd Parrish: Well you had said that you'd met him in the GSE or something?

Mr. Hyde: GSK.

Brainerd Parrish: What's that?

Mr. Hyde: Main...G...means...Main GSK....main general stores.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, okay.

Mr. Hyde: That was...there was one there that was Main where they kept a lot of different...most of the items went out.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: I don't really know what all they had in there, but they had transferred me by that time out of the provisions up into what they called electrical storerooms.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, okay.

Mr. Hyde: And we had about four thousand items up there altogether; medical; cleaning; engineering...things...

Brainerd Parrish: I see. So actual...so this was actually hit by friendly fire from another ship?

Mr. Hyde: Well, we had...we had been damaged though, but in April.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: No that...it...that forty quad was...was out...out of operation...it...it burned up.

Brainerd Parrish: I see. What did you all do next? What did the ship do? Did it...?

Mr. Hyde: Kept on going.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, you didn't have to go in for repairs or anything...you just kept going?

Mr. Hyde: No, no...our flight deck...we could operate.

Brainerd Parrish: You could still operate on the flight deck?

Mr. Hyde: Yeah, the flight deck was fine; we just kept operating, you know...just like everything it was normal! (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: But then...and then...it was..and then about that time that the Franklin got hit...for the second time. She'd been damaged, I think, out there in October in...around the Philippines somewhere.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And as I recall when we got hit in March there was two carriers coming out of the States; there was two carriers in the States; there was two carriers heading back to the States...and our flight deck was good so we was still there. Had two carriers that was damaged...going to head for the States.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: That's how rough things were!

Brainerd Parrish: And was...was this around the operations of Iwo Jima or...?

Mr. Hyde: Iwo Jima...Iwo Jima, yes.

Brainerd Parrish: Were you there when they had the operations off Iwo Jima?

Mr. Hyde: Oh yes. Our...our air group put in, I think, let's sees...a hundred and seventy some hours I the air...continuous hours in the air!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: I forget...I...I don't have the statistics...how many tons of am...ammo they dropped or strafed or any of that, but they operated twenty-four hours...they was...out there strafing and bombing for twenty-four...I mean...hours a day for over a week! And it was the weather that shut them down from going more!

Brainerd Parrish: I see. Wow! And then after that...what happened?

Mr. Hyde: Then we stayed out there alone until the Marines had secured it!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Yeah.

Brainerd Parrish: And then...and then...then what...after incident where you had the...that five pounder hit, what happened? What...anything happen after that or were you...in other battles or...?

Mr. Hyde: Oh yeah, we went on...and then that...we kept going around Kyushu and...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: What...I think, if I remember right, they was after the Battleship Yokohama...uh, not the Yokohama...started with *Yokosomebody*. That was the battleship that had eighteen inch rifles on it.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, I see.

Mr. Hyde: And they were afraid of it! It had already sunk the (unintelligible) sister ship...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Not the...Matsu? I'm not familiar with the Japanese names here.

Brainerd Parrish: But there were two...I know there were a number of battleships that were off that Battle of Leyte Gulf...

Mr. Hyde: Yeah, it was our planes that...that got that one.

Brainerd Parrish: I see. That's right...the Enterprise planes got one of them.

Mr. Hyde: That was it.

Brainerd Parrish: Uh-huh.

Mr. Hyde: And they was looking for this...other one.

Brainerd Parrish: Other one.

Mr. Hyde: And I've talked to some of the pilots...couple of the pilots and they...they said, "We...we just out there looking for targets."

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: We weren't supposed to bring any bom...ammunition back. And the Japs...see they had basic radar, too, then...I guess because one of them was telling me about...they would get...radio back to them...said, "That Jap that you're following is...right there and they would take...he'd take...and he going this way or going that way...and because he would be following and then the...ring in the radar didn't go out that far..."

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...I was told the day...yesterday that it would only go out for about five miles.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and if they was six or seven miles back there; they knew they could...the Japanese plane up there, but...they had to catch it first. And they'd probably shut it down because they usually followed the exhaust...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...if you could see the exhaust or not... 'cause they didn't have any stack on them, but almost a straight shot out of them cylinders...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and so anyway he said they...the Japanese knew when they was behind them when they'd take evasive active and they couldn't find them because they was too far away. The ship would tell them where they at...and they'd try them again.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: So that...that was interesting. I mean I...I talked to these people and I learn something new all the time. And anyway...the night before the...let's see the...when was it?...the 15th of May...I should remember that date...anyway that was a fateful day. The...the night before we'd been bothered all night by bogeys; they would come on in and they was keeping track of us.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And after about...well nine o'clock they...I was called up to the office and told I was being transferred from the forward gun mount...'cause I...(unintelligible phrase) ship...was fantail...last of the Marine guns.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, okay.

Mr. Hyde: And so anyway...long about ten o'clock, oh Wolf and I...we decided we'd been bothered so much I says, "Well fellows we're going on up to...I'm going to go on up and spend the night up on the gun mount...what was left of it.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And so we went up...Wolf and I both went up and spent the night up there at the gun mount. And we wasn't bothered so much in there; we could sleep a little bit on the life jackets, and of course the (unintelligible) were up there too, because it was...general quarters and then general quarters and then...

Brainerd Parrish: I see, so you were...

Mr. Hyde: ...torpedo defense and...all night long!

Brainerd Parrish: All night long!

Mr. Hyde: So we didn't get much sleep. And anyway...the next morning...well that's when...that's when interesting things started.

Brainerd Parrish: Was that the other kamikaze attack or...?

Mr. Hyde: Yes!

Brainerd Parrish: And what happened then?

Mr. Hyde: Well when he hit all hell broke loose! I mean...the...up there at the gun mount that I was...it was several got blowed over the side...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: So I didn't...I...I wasn't there.

Brainerd Parrish: Is that because you had gone to the rear (unintelligible)?

Mr. Hyde: I had gone back...yeah back there towards the last of the Marine guns.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And...no, I've got a...history here of all...what happened that day...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and all the bogeys that come in there and all the splashing and...

Brainerd Parrish: So they were really after you at that point!

Mr. Hyde: Oh....

Brainerd Parrish: This was off of Okinawa wasn't it?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, yes, yes! No, when the Franklin got hit there in April...

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: ...we...the...they was in a task force that was two...big carriers, Essex class...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and two of the...what we called the jeep carriers on a cruiser haul.

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: And they usually had four or five cruisers and...they were getting low on destroyers by then...but usually around...sixteen destroyers. Well when the Franklin got hit and she went dead, they went and took off; left her there; they left one cruiser there, and I think it was...I better not name names...one of them was the Pittsburgh and one was the Santa Fe. One of them took her under tow and she managed to get underway again...they managed to get underway...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And then they transferred to a light cruiser there for protection. They sent us over there with one destroyer to protect the Franklin...evacuations.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And of course they knew...they was always around there. I mean they...they kept watch...plenty of planes...they knew that the Franklin was hit and so they come on out there to get her.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And I don't know how many was on the radar screen, but there was times...it was more than you could count.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And they was...for one reason or another they was always dropped. I don't know...have no idea how many got to us that our gunners dropped but I know it had to have been at least a dozen!

Brainerd Parrish: Well on that day that that Kamikaze hit you off Okinawa...it hit the front part of the plane...I mean the ship?

Mr. Hyde: It went into the...it went in...just into...just in front of the elevator...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...just in front of it...just...and the...and then bomb blew up underneath and it blew up two acetylene and one oxygen bottles. And it went at least a thousand feet in the air. Yeah!

Brainerd Parrish: And how did you stay on without getting thrown overboard?

Mr. Hyde: Well I was...back there where...I wasn't there where the explosion was.

Brainerd Parrish: Oh I see, you just...you were back to the rear.

Mr. Hyde: Fact was I was back there about probably five hundred feet from there.

Brainerd Parrish: Could you feel the...the hit?

Mr. Hyde: Oh, oh yeah! Oh yeah, it was quite a shake! Oh yes! It...it raised that flight deck up there...it...oh, I guess, probably about close to three or four feet there...around that elevator! And all the planes that was parked underneath...uh-uh!...they was all shredded...I mean *all* shredded!

Brainerd Parrish: Did...and...and so what happened next?

Mr. Hyde: Well got the fire under control and...managed to keep things going. So...about time for us to head back for Ulithi anyway for refueling, (unintelligible), so...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...we went back and got into Ulithi and they checked it out and then we got a destroyer escort to head for Pearl. And that poor guy...they wasn't...that fast...they was just...they couldn't even run half as fast as we could...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and we...(unintelligible) used to running about four...fourteen to sixteen, eighteen knots all the time and that boy (laughter)...

Brainerd Parrish: He had a hard time keeping up?

Mr. Hyde: ...(Unintelligible) about thirty minutes, "I can't keep up with you guys!" We had to doggle along about ten, eleven knots into Pearl. (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: That poor guy...that was about all that...you know consistently that's all that ship would do!

Brainerd Parrish: Yes.

Mr. Hyde: It could get up to fast at...at times for a short period, but not for the long haul!

Brainerd Parrish: Not...not for consistent periods.

Mr. Hyde: No.

Brainerd Parrish: And what happened at Pearl?

Mr. Hyde: Well they just checked things out...and cleaned things up a little bit and then we went into Bremerton.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And...lot of transfers and...they done all the repair work there; got it rebuilt.

Brainerd Parrish: Did you get transferred?

Mr. Hyde: No, I stayed on and they...we got rebuilt and the war was over there; I was onboard ship the day...the word that we got that the war was over.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, so you were in Bremerton on the Enterprise, huh?

Mr. Hyde: Yes, and no, we knew about both the atomic bombs...

Brainerd Parrish: Oh okay.

Mr. Hyde: And after we got...they finished repairs...we went to Pearl...back to Pearl and I think it was about five hundred POWs that we got put on board...a lot of them they carried on, you know Japanese POs?

Brainerd Parrish: Uh-huh.

Mr. Hyde: They...they didn't treat our boys very well.

Brainerd Parrish: No, I know they didn't!

Mr. Hyde: Anyway they brought...brought about five hundred on them...and we took them back to...see'd, we take them back...I think we took them back to Bremerton...then we went to San Francisco.

Brainerd Parrish: ...the tape with the interview of Robert L. Hyde. So basically you were taking prisoners of war...

(end of tap 1, side A)

Brainerd Parrish: ...and how long were you in the service after that? I mean...

Mr. Hyde: Uh, through June...to June of...of '45...I mean '46...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...'46.

Brainerd Parrish: So you could...did you continue on the Enterprise?

Mr. Hyde: Yes...

Brainerd Parrish: ...with the rest of your service?

Mr. Hyde: We...we went on down through the Panama Canal; went up to New York; we got a hero's welcome, and went up to Boston and they was...I think about five thousand bunks that was put up on the hangar deck...five high; we went over to Southampton, England...picked up troops...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and nurses and WACs...about I think around five thousand females; brought them back to New York...Staten Island; went over again and I...little bit fogger there, but I'm not real sure whether it was first or second trip...I think it was the second...we found out what the English fog was all about.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: We would drop anchor; sound the (unintelligible) horn and get up...we...we was about, I think, a day and a half or two days getting into the dock. Move

just a little ways and...and stop...then move a little ways and stop...move a little ways and stop...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...'cause you couldn't...you couldn't see from here to that wall! And we picked up some more troops and brought them back. And we'd just left Southampton and that evening we had...we got into some pretty rough water...bow was going under water and the first...what we called the wolf (sp?) locker was...got flooded. The vents in the front of the...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and they had quite a trouble covering them vents...and since my storeroom was right behind that...then they called me and I went down with one of the C&R boys and we had some timbers and we would...blocking up that bulkhead over there 'cause we'd go into that wave and you could see that bulkhead kind of *weave* just a little bit...(unintelligible)

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...and that didn't make me feel too good down there doing that, but anyway we got them braced up with timbers and so forth.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And the bad part about...this time I was going to stay in the Navy.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: I...I had a commander, Commander Walsingham, Vice President of the St. Louis Cardinals...a real nice guy. Him and a...the Lieutenant...and Warrant Officer Carter...we were called up to the Executive's offer...office and I was informed that there was going to be a sheet there and I was going to inspect my storerooms every hour on the hour...and that I would come in and sign that book...that everything was all. If anything was amiss, I was to...notify them.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: And Commander Walsingham says, "Well Commander, you've got...rocks and shoals," and that's when the Exec blew up! "I'm running this blankety blank ship, not you...you...he will do as I say! No he will not get any relief!" For five days I didn't sleep!

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Wasn't happy about it!

Brainerd Parrish: Well what is rocks and shoals mean?

Mr. Hyde: That's rules; regulations...

Brainerd Parrish: Oh, I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...it was eleven hours on and you had to have four hours off.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Eleven hours on and four hours off; that was the rules.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, but that didn't apply in this case?

Mr. Hyde: That didn't apply in this case. And...one of the things going back...one of the...we had a couple of bakers down there...the Pieper (sp?) brothers; they was a little bit...playful...to say the least. And one of the sergeant would come down there and he run into one of the Pieper brothers and he says, "I got one of my boys up there and he's just deathly sick," he said, "what do you boys do when you get sea sick?" Well they knew we were fixing to have pork chops...

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: ...for supper. He says, "Well what we do," he says, "like tonight we're having pork chops. We'll just take...cut that rind of fat off; we tie a string and swallow it...pull it up; get rid of all that stuff," and he says, "we're fine!" Well they carried that poor man off when we got to Staten Island...he's still almost dead!

Brainerd Parrish: I see!

Mr. Hyde: And they were looking...who...for that cook...just told him that! (laughter) I mean that whole unit...whatever company or whatever it was...that's what went looking for him!

Brainerd Parrish: Oh boy!

Mr. Hyde: But anyway...we got down there. Then another time we had to...oh, have to hurry up here. We had to...we got an urgent call...the first of the year to go to the Azores and pick up some troops. Well I later found out that I worked with a man. I was machinist and I was...went to this one place and

went to work and I took him home one night 'cause his buddy...that...where I worked there...(unintelligible) drove...well he was sick or something...anyway I said, "Yeah, I'll take you home," because I lived by him. And it developed that he was on that troop ship.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: They...he had been from...started the very first at Normandy, I mean at...in Africa; went through southern France and all through Germany and they'd been over there about...almost five years.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: That...from the very start of the war! And this leaking tub they was on...they had to pull into harbor to keep from sinking I guess; wasn't seaworthy and they were just sitting there. And the boats would come out there and they had fruits and vegetables and that and they'd drop a line down; tie it onto a basket; they'd put some money in it and...she'd fill it up how much every...they thought it was worth; they'd pull it on up and it was a newspaper in the bottom of one of them, and Tom got to reading it. Next day they come out there and he was...Walter Winchell said something about the Enterprise was being...decommissioned.

Brainerd Parrish: I see.

Mr. Hyde: Had a little history about it being a troop ship. So they made...hand signals or whatever, but anyway they let the man know and the man said, "Yeah, I'll send a telegram to Walter Winchell." So they lowered down some money and he...I don't know how much they lowered down, but they had plenty...bit on them. And Walter Winchell got a hold of somebody and...*go!*

Brainerd Parrish: I see!

Mr. Hyde: So we went over and picked them up! (laughter)

Brainerd Parrish: Okay.

Mr. Hyde: And after that...after we got back all we did was just sit there at Staten Island and I got out in...in the first part of June.

Brainerd Parrish: I see, so you...

Mr. Hyde: Uh, '45, yes.

Brainerd Parrish: You got out in June of '45?

Mr. Hyde: Uh-hum.

Brainerd Parrish: Well I'm going to stop this briefly...

Mr. Hyde: About everything.

Brainerd Parrish: ...okay.

Mr. Hyde: I thought I...run my mouth about twice as long as I imagined I might.

Brainerd Parrish: Well I appreciate every...your letting us take this history and thank you very much, Mr. Hyde!

(end of interview)

FINAL copy
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