

*National Museum of the Pacific War*

*Nimitz Education and Research Center*

*Fredericksburg, Texas*

Telephone Interview with

**Mr. Gerard J. Carrier**

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# **National Museum of the Pacific War**

## **Fredericksburg, Texas**

### **Telephone Interview with Mr. Gerard J. Carriera**

Telephone Interview in progress.

Pete Jensen: ...8. I am interviewing Mr. Gerry Carriera who is in Bristol, Tennessee and I am at the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas. This interview is in support of the 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. So Gerry, if I can call you Gerry,...

Mr. Carriera: Sure can.

Pete Jensen: ...if you'd like to start with a little of your background; your...your family and we'll go from there.

Mr. Carriera: Okay, my dad was a designer with Steinway back in 1906, and then he got a job...transferred to Stamford, Connecticut for a company, a German company, upright pianos. So he was really deep...in designing pianos and he was manager of the company in Stamford, Connecticut where I was born. So that's the history about my dad.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: And also he would tune in the big church organs.

Pete Jensen: Oh!

Mr. Carriera: They'd call him and he knew exactly how to master the tube by using...remember the old razor...where they used to sharpen razor blades on leather?

Pete Jensen: Yes, yes.

Mr. Carriera: Well, he would make his own tools then have the organist play the notes and he would tune in the organ.

Pete Jensen: Huh!

Mr. Carriera: And the organ firm, the name of the organ firm is no longer there is Dalton, an Old Greenwich, Connecticut...well, Electrolux bought the property and built up a big firm, but they saved the front office, the Dalton office, the plaque of the organ company...is still at the employment office.

Pete Jensen: Huh!

Mr. Carriera: So he left that part of the Dalton Company, so that's a part of the history for my dad.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: And he was also in World War I. And he had...he was...he was born in Italy in...in Florence; came to America before the Spanish-American War. And when the war, World War I, started my dad joined the U.S. Army, and his three brothers in Italy...they...they would join the Italian army which was part of our...they were united with our country at that time. So that's the history of my dad.

Pete Jensen: Where'd you go to school at?

Mr. Carriera: What was that, sir?

Pete Jensen: Where'd you go to school?

Mr. Carrieria: What year?

Pete Jensen: Yeah, and where...where did you attend school?

Mr. Carrieria: Oh, I was born in Stamford, Connecticut, November the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1919; I attended the schools, public schools, in Stamford, Connecticut. One school was Rogers (sp?) Junior High School; uh, Stamford High School, and I went to J. M. Wright Technical School. I graduated at the age of seventeen...high school, and then I joined the...I...I took an Engineering course of Drafting and Designing at J. M. Wright Technical School, and here's what the system was - you spent four hours at Stamford High; you take a break for an hour, then you report to J. M. Wright Technical School for four hours. So it was an eight-hour course.

Pete Jensen: Huh!

Mr. Carrieria: So, it was a tough one, but I enjoyed it to no end! And I became a very good designer and I also have about six patents for Electrolux.

Pete Jensen: Oh, what type of patents?

Mr. Carrieria: What was that, sir?

Pete Jensen: What type of patents?

Mr. Carrieria: A floor polisher was one of them.

Pete Jensen: Uh hum.

Mr. Carrieria: See, they had a two-brush polisher, and it was very hard to get into the corners when you're cleaning your flooring.

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carriera: So I came up with the idea of a triangle, so then at ninety degrees you can go right into the corner and sand that corner.

Pete Jensen: Ah ha.

Mr. Carriera: So they gave...they gave me...they...they gave me ten dollars for the patent. (laughter) 1939...I worked in the Stamford office, then I was transferred to the main plant in Old Greenwich, Connecticut where I became a designer of products. Then they transferred me to manufacturing and engineering which I graduated from Bridgeport Engineering and I'm a member, a senior member, of S.M.E. That's the Society of the Manufacturing Engineers. And also I took many exams with this Society so I could become a consultant for different firms around the country. Once you meet those requirements, I had a number of companies that I consulted for like Ful...Fuller Brush Company, and here's a good one – White Mop (laughter). White Mop is a company, if you're in the hotels or hospitals, it's a unit that carries all the brooms; mops...

Pete Jensen: Oh yes!

Mr. Carriera: ...and there's a gear arrangement where you put the mop in there, and you...the girl...all she has to do is pull that gear arrangement and squeeze the water out of it. So that was one of my patents for Electrolux. Electrolux owned White Mop; they owned Fuller Brush Company; we had three manufacturing companies in...in Canada, so that's the history of Electrolux. Then back in 1968, Homer Cummings (sp?) from Canada, he bought Electrolux and then...Sara Lee came in on the project. Cummings sold it to Sara Lee...Electrolux; the big firm was...in Old Greenwich, Connecticut. We

employed four thousand people. Then we started another plant in Brushville (sp?), Tennessee; that's where I played the part...down here I started with them down here flying back and forth home because I was in charge of manufacturing and engineering. And we had a good sized plant of fifteen hundred employees, so we were making Clean and Sheer and Bristol and cleaners in Old Greenwich and floor polishers. Then we started a motor division at Piney Flats in...in Tennessee making motors for Electrolux and other companies. Then, as time went on, the company was sold to another group; then three years ago Electrolux came back and bought all the patents and bought the name back. And their manufacturer and their cleaners...in...Sweden, under the name of Electrolux again, that's where it all started...in Sweden. And there's also manufacturing of (unintelligible) in America, and if...it's sold at Lowe's, you've heard of Lowe's?

Pete Jensen: Yes, yes.

Mr. Carriera: So when you go in there, you'll see Electrolux products and all the Sears products like refrigerators; vacuum cleaners; whatever you see in Sears...is guaranteed by Stockholm, Sweden Electrolux. So they got their fingers in many...many areas of our country.

Pete Jensen: Well how did you...you were working at Electrolux when they...during the war, right, when they started making cluster bombs?

Mr. Carriera: Uh, well, that was in 1942.

Pete Jensen: Uh huh.

Mr. Carriera: I got my deferment; I joined...they drafted me and I wouldn't accept it and I said, "I'll join." Ninth...October the 30<sup>th</sup>, 1941; I joined the Navy and they deferred...the Defense Department deferred me. And so I reported back to Electrolux and I got involved in the incendiary bomb. What we did in Electrolux...we made all the parts; we... manufacturing the tooling to make the parts. You know what that means? Manufacturing...you have to have tooling...

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carriera: ...and the dyes and all of that...

Pete Jensen: Correct.

Mr. Carriera: ...and what we did, we made a bomb that was thirty-six inches long and it had a tail end of it which was hexagon, and all the parts were shipped to DuPont for loading and assembly, and they would be stacked in thirty-six to a package. In other words, they'd have a package of thirty-six bombs and they had a ripcord to it, so when Doolittle flew over Japan, he dropped his five hundred pounds bombs, but then they would pull this...this special arrangement we made and then they used them for scatter bombs. So it would be like a rainstorm.

Pete Jensen: So you have a five hundred pound bomb go off and then these cluster bombs in addition...

Mr. Carriera: Right, right.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: That's what happened. So then I had to report to the Navy and a month later I got orders to report back to Electrolux, so I said to my company, I said, "What's going on?" And he said, "Well, Gerry, pack up; you'll be there for a week." So they got me down to Electrolux and I had the high honor of presenting them with the flag, a banner, for Excellency. In other words, you have an American flag, then they run a big banner underneath the American flag and every time you'd do a big program, they'd put a star. So Electrolux came out with fourteen inch stars.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carriera: They were building...I got involved with Sperry gyroscope for a short time because then the government figured well I...I had enough of Electrolux, you better get into the Navy!

Pete Jensen: This gyroscope was what they used in the airplanes?

Mr. Carriera: What was that, sir?

Pete Jensen: The spiral gyroscope is that what they used in the airplane?

Mr. Carriera: Yes, yes sir.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: And also I was involved in a special mortar for twenty millimeter guns aboard ship, and that motor would trigger off the twenty millimeter gun and stop within one revolution; we had a brake system inside the motor. So when you pull the trigger, you could shoot one bullet at a time, and the brake would stop and that stops your firing; you keep on...if hold your finger on a trigger, she'll



keep going. And then when the...the minute comes that...to stop it, she would go one revolution; the brake system would cut in and stop the firing.

Pete Jensen: Oh okay.

Mr. Carrieria: Okay?

Pete Jensen: Uh huh.

Mr. Carrieria: That gives you an idea of that motor. Then, we also did the prop motors for the...the big prop motors...years ago, the powers used to have...be out there and hand-wind that...

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carrieria: ...propeller to get that motor started. So we got involved in making a special motor with Pratt & Whitney in Hartford, Connecticut. Pratt & Whitney was known to make good parts and also test planes; I had a cousin that was a test pilot for Pratt & Whitney. And Electrolux...I have a...a copy of all their motors that they made; it's a range of about twenty motors for the Defense Department.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carrieria: Then I...while I'm on this subject, I got out of the war and I was in the Reserves, and in 1952 I got a call to go to Korea, and the Navy Department comes along and gives me another deferment!

Pete Jensen: Huh!

Mr. Carrieria: 'Cause...and I...I got involved in air purification because I had...did a lot of investigation of water purification. And what it was...is a box about sixteen inch square and it has a number of filters with special paper and silver

carbonated charcoal, so we used the standard hose of Electrolux and the boys that were in the tanks...AMP Incorporated, Aircraft Incorporated in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania they made the head piece. So in other words, if the helmet that you wear...so you don't breathe the fumes that are inside the tank...

Pete Jensen: Oh, okay.

Mr. Carrieria: Okay?

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carrieria: So we manufactured hundreds of them at Electrolux; we made our own carbonation with silver; we made all the special paper that come out of...let's see, what company...I'm trying to think, the tissue paper company? Oh gosh, there's so many companies...

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carrieria: ...and uh, let's see, I'm trying to think...was in Connecticut; they made the tissues that you buy in the...

Pete Jensen: Kleenex?

Mr. Carrieria: What was that?

Pete Jensen: Kleenex?

Mr. Carrieria: Yes! Kleenex; you...you're sharp! (laughter) I'm eighty-eight; I...I'm trying to forget a lot of things.

Pete Jensen: Yeah, yeah. (laughter)

Mr. Carrieria: So they made the special paper according to the specification of the government, and it was like a cartridge. So you had...three different paper

cartridges where you go through step one, two, three; the final step...the air would then filter through the carbonate...silver carbonated that attracted all the monoxide gas that's in the tank so the boys could breathe, you know, without breathing all the fumes.

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carrieria: And we made, oh geez, several thousands of them, so where do we go from here?

Pete Jensen: Well where'd you...well first of all, I just...make a comment. I didn't know Electrolux made anything but vacuum cleaners, but uh, what about when you went to Guam and with Mr. Nimitz, or, Admiral Nimitz?

Mr. Carrieria: Uh, to Guam?

Pete Jensen: To Guam...where you met Admiral Nimitz.

Mr. Carrieria: Yes.

Pete Jensen: Could you...?

Mr. Carrieria: Oh, you mean for his...headquarters?

Pete Jensen: Yeah, I'd like to know about that and also a little bit about Mr...uh, Admiral Nimitz himself.

Mr. Carrieria: Okay, They...they transferred me...I was in the Navy...and they looked up my qualifications and they...said, "You're going to be a Seabee." So, they put me in the 103<sup>rd</sup> Battalion and when the war in Guam...when we got to Guam, it was three-quarters of the battle was over, so we got...a reconstruction of Guam, so one of the big...that became the headquarters for

the U.S. Navy for the Pacific Fleet under Admiral Nimitz. So what he wanted was a headquarters' room. I...I think you saw the prints?

Pete Jensen: Yes, I've got the prints in front of me.

Mr. Carriera: Yeah, so my job...I met him four times; we wrote down the qualifications of what he wanted. In fact, they used to make wooden blinds at that time, and if you notice...looking at the picture, I show wooden blinds in the windows.

Pete Jensen: Yes, I see those.

Mr. Carriera: Right?

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carriera: Then he wanted sort of a greenhouse running the whole length of the conference room; do you see the picture of that?

Pete Jensen: Yes, yes, I do.

Mr. Carriera: And he like flowers and things of that nature. Then I built him a small bar room; they didn't drink too much in the conference room to be very honest with you because that's where all the different Captains and Admirals would meet when they had their big meetings.

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carriera: And the room was thirty feet wide; sixty feet long; had a big...tremendous old table made in U.S.A. shipped to Guam. Then I got involved; I designed the World War II Monument and Fountain.

Pete Jensen: Oh, one...one thing; could I go back to just one thing?

Mr. Carriera: Yes.

Pete Jensen: I noticed in the...the...one end of this room, operations room, was a big airplane.

Mr. Carriera: Oh yes, that's a C-43, Navy plane, Cessna C-43...

Pete Jensen: Uh huh.

Mr. Carriera: ...was a Navy carrier where they would carry blood plasma; cables and, you name it.

Pete Jensen: Who did that? Did you paint that on there or...?

Mr. Carriera: Yes.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: I made a sketch of the C-43; went down to the airport to look at it (laughter); I forgot...but...study what it looks like, so I drew that and he liked that to be framed on the end of the conference room.

Pete Jensen: Looks nice!

Mr. Carriera: So, he would walk four miles a day with Marine guards; sharpshooters. I was a sharpshooter myself; I shot a hundred and ninety-two out of a hundred.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carriera: And then...

Pete Jensen: Did he have a dog?

Mr. Carriera: What was that, sir?

Pete Jensen: Did he...did Admiral Nimitz have a dog? Somebody told me he had a dog and he used to walk the dog.

Mr. Carriera: Yes...yes, he did.

Pete Jensen: And he lived...the...his headquarters or his...where he stayed was on top of a hill?

Mr. Carrieria: Yes sir.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carrieria: It was on a high hill so he could overlook, oh, totally...Guam, you know? It was the highest point.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carrieria: And it was a beautiful area, so the Japs were still on the island but we secured them so they could starve themselves out; you didn't have to go out and shoot them anymore. (laughter)

Pete Jensen: Did you...how did...how did you get selected to design this or were you the one engineer or designer that was there or...?

Mr. Carrieria: Well, they looked up my background...

Pete Jensen: Oh, okay.

Mr. Carrieria: ...'cause I took a course in architectural design in New York City, Pratt Institute. I loved architectural work; I'm going to jump...uh, when we...I have another story to tell you about Commodore C. Seabury.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carrieria: But continue to ask me what you want first.

Pete Jensen: Well, did...did you get to see the finished project then?

Mr. Carrieria: No I didn't; unfortunately I didn't.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: Because...here's what happened. When I got through with these certain drawings, in fact, I'm going to send you a copy...I have it framed, of the World War II Monument.

Pete Jensen: Oh, yes; I'd like to...

Mr. Carriera: Would you like to have that?

Pete Jensen: Sure!

Mr. Carriera: I have to bring it down to a copy machine.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: And it's going to take me a week or so, but I'll send you a...will enlarge it...

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: ...so you can see the World War II Monument I designed and the fountain. And they had...they were building a three thousand-bed hospital.

Pete Jensen: And where...where's this at? This is at...where was this located?

Mr. Carriera: What was that?

Pete Jensen: Where was this...?

Mr. Carriera: On Guam.

Pete Jensen: Guam, okay.

Mr. Carriera: See, they were getting ready...like for Iwo Jima. Then, of course, the big battle at Nu'uaniu (sp?) was Okinawa.

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carriera: So they were planning a three-bed...three thousand-bed hospital. So...let's go on from there; you have to quiz me.

Pete Jensen: Oh, one other thing here, when I talked to you earlier, you talked about you went...I guess, map making...

Mr. Carriera: Okay.

Pete Jensen: ...you went to UCLA for a little to...

Mr. Carriera: Mathematics.

Pete Jensen: Uh yeah, to, uh for mapping and sort of explain who that worked and...

Mr. Carriera: Right. Mapping was...I...I loved mapping, and I don't want to jump into that story...

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: ...until we go down the line.

Pete Jensen: That's fine.

Mr. Carriera: So, it was 1:30 a.m. in the morning...they woke me up; said, "Pack your clothes, and here's your travelling orders." They brought me down to the airport. In fact we had a...we were designing an airport there for...let's see, how many miles? About four miles in length because we didn't know the super bombers were going to come in, so Electrolux...while I was out at Electrolux, they did all the lighting system for the airport.

Pete Jensen: Uh hum.

Mr. Carriera: So, with my background...so what I did...I instructed the electrical boys how to put the lighting system together. Well, we used generators at that time, you know, to run the...the landing lights.

Pete Jensen: Right.



Mr. Carriera: Electrolux made all the lights. In fact, if you go to the local airports, you'll still see the same light that was used on Guam.

Pete Jensen: Hmm!

Mr. Carriera: And anyway...so they woke me up and I didn't know where I was going; they put me on a C-43; they flew me back to Pearl Harbor; got to Pearl Harbor and (unintelligible) met me, and my orders...we changed our dog tags...identification and they secured me in this special barracks where I met five other boys that were going to be on this particular team. And we didn't know; I didn't know them; they didn't know me, but we exchanged...we became very friendly in a hurry. And they wouldn't let us call home; we couldn't write; we couldn't leave the area; we were guarded by Marines. So, four days later they called our names out and we had to report to a big assembly hall, in fact, it was one of the aircraft...uh, where...stored their planes, and so we got there and we didn't know what the subject was...to be about. And I was assigned to Commodore C. Seabury, the 8<sup>th</sup> Naval Construction Battalion they called it. There was only twenty-five members in that group. So, they announced...the introduced General Buckner, and General Buckner was in charge of the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, and the word was you couldn't write home; you changed your address to 3030. My mother was so confused she didn't know what...what I was doing to be honest with you, (laughter) and also assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division. So our group was assigned to the 10<sup>th</sup> Army, and the word was it was going to be the Battle of Okinawa. So we're making all the layouts ready for Okinawa (unintelligible),

and April Fool's Day and Easter Sunday was the initial Battle of Okinawa. It was about sixteen hundred ships and aircraft carriers and all, you name it, and uh, I got there three days after the battle. They brought our group in after they secured the airport. So, on April 1...6:00a.m., two hundred and five Japanese nurses committed suicide...

Pete Jensen: Ooh!

Mr. Carrieria: ...jumping on the cliffs because the Japs told them that the American forces would rape them and, you know, molest them and all that, and, if you go to the library, and look up a National Geographic magazine, and you actually...and you'll read the story about Okinawa. And what America did because everything was underground and they put a photograph after the island was secured...they put a photograph of every Japanese girl that jumped off the cliff.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carrieria: I have my National Geographic here that was sent to me. And then, they got me involved in map drawing, so General Buckner wanted a small map so he could split the island I half. In other words, we already had secured half of the island; the main battle would be up towards north towards Japan. So I drew this small map; pinpointed the areas and I had two Marine guard sharpshooters; it was April the 15<sup>th</sup>, ten minutes to twelve, and I'll never forget this as long as I live, two Jap...Jap fighter planes came over and riddled the side of a cliff and a piece of coral hit the General right in the heart and he died before we got there.

Pete Jensen: Geez!

Mr. Carriera: And I had the map. In fact, I hate to tell you, I saved the map; I have it here in my war room. (laughter) I could send you a copy of it.

Pete Jensen: That would be great!

Mr. Carriera: And...so that was a sad moment, and we buried him in the First Marine Division cemetery.

Pete Jensen: So you were actually...General Buckner was in charge of the 10<sup>th</sup> Army...

Mr. Carriera: Yes.

Pete Jensen: ...but, he...you were assigned to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Divis..., uh, Group?

Mr. Carriera: Yes, also...and then our group under C. Seabury, was the 8<sup>th</sup> Naval Brigade. In other words, that's where all the planning, designing and everything was under Commodore C. Seabury. He was a great guy!

Pete Jensen: It was...bury? How...?

Mr. Carriera: Wonderful; right down to earth!

Pete Jensen: C. Seabury?

Mr. Carriera: C. ...C.C. Seabury.

Pete Jensen: Oh, okay.

Mr. Carriera: S-e-a-b-u-r-y.

Pete Jensen: Oh, okay.

Mr. Carriera: I think you have a letter with it.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: Is there a letter in the folder?

Pete Jensen: Uh...

Mr. Carriera: I attached some letters.

Pete Jensen: No, I don't have one of those. I got the letter from...to...

Mr. Carriera: Forrestal?

Pete Jensen: No, Senator...when you went to Washington D.C. (Unintelligible)...

Mr. Carriera: Uh huh.

Pete Jensen: ...but that's...Lamar Alexander, that's the only letter I have in this folder.

Mr. Carriera: I thought maybe I sent you a letter of C.C. Seabury. Well, anyway...we had a great time on that Okinawa deal; it was a mean battle. You know it was the final battle. And then...I was there from April to December, but, here's the story I'm going to tell you,...

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: Oh god, there were so many things going on like...didn't have computers...so the mapping group they just sent photographers over Japan; photograph; come back, and we'd pinpoint the bombing areas they wanted. So you drew a small map, eleven by ten, okay?

Pete Jensen: Uh huh.

Mr. Carriera: And you did it mathematically to show the miles where...pinpoint, you know, different areas where to bomb, and that was a worksheet because you didn't have computers.

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carriera: So when they'd fly over Japan, they'd pick that target that was drawn by our mapping group; it was six of us in the mapping group. So, anyway we secured Okinawa totally, then it became the second main base for the Air

Force and the Marine Corps and the Navy. So my name came up in September to head for home, so Commodore C. Seabury comes in and says, "Carriera, we're going to delay you from going home." I said, "Oh," I said, "Yes, sir!" Said, "Because I have your background that you're a pretty good architect." I said, "Well," I said, "what can I do for you, sir?" He said, "I..." he said, "I love ranch houses," but he said, "I have no concept what I would like to have for a home." And he said, "Do you think you can put your brain together and draw something up that might be appealing?" So I said, "Yes, sir." So I drew him a nice (unintelligible) sketch of a home, and he loved it. And I said, "Do you have any idea of what you would like to have in this home?" He said, "Gerry, you draw the layout, and we'll go over it." So, I have the layout here at home; it's a big blueprint. If you want a copy, I have to go down to Kinko where they make big copies; I can ship you a copy his home.

Pete Jensen: That would be great!

Mr. Carriera: So, I drew him a home that he really loved, and I understand he built in California. And his son, when he passed on, his son wrote me a note; I lost the damned note when I moved...in reference to the house. I drew him a house that had, I think, four bedrooms and uh, activity room; living room; a workshop; garages; terrace...so I'll send you a copy; give me some time...

Pete Jensen: Sure!

Mr. Carriera: ...and I'll send you a copy of what C. Seabury liked.

Pete Jensen: Yeah, send those to the same place that you sent this other information.

Mr. Carriera: What is that, sir?

Pete Jensen: Send it to the same place you sent the other information...to the Foundation.

Mr. Carriera: Yes, to the Foundation?

Pete Jensen: Yes, and 'cause...I'm...the folder I've got here...when I'm through with this interview, I'm going to take it back to them...to Archive people, so just send to the same people.

Mr. Carriera: I'll send it to your attention?

Pete Jensen: Yeah, that'd be fine.

Mr. Carriera: Yeah, I'll send it to your attention...

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: ...at the Foundation?

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carriera: Okay, you have to give me some time...

Pete Jensen: That's fine, yeah.

Mr. Carriera: Because I'll...I'll be honest with you, here's what happened. My wife was a nurse for thirty-five years, and...in Stamford, Connecticut at a very exclusive nursing home, and the government...they wouldn't let out the secret...like the Presidents would send maybe their grandfather to this exclusive nursing home. My wife is a supervisor, so Carter had a member of his family there; Nixon...uh, I got a number of plaques that they would send Fran...like Happy Anniversary; Happy Birthday; I have them all framed. So, then we had a retirement, a very happy retirement and I lost my son, a Marine, with Agent Orange...

Pete Jensen: Oh!

Mr. Carriera: ...in Vietnam, and it was a horrible death. And then on December...2007, no, November the 16<sup>th</sup>, my wife...well, before that...she had a brain tumor, and she went in the hospital and nursing home for a year. And they couldn't do any more for her so they sent her to Aspect (sp?) where...that's the final...end of your life...

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carriera: So I had my wife there, and she was there for nine days; had a lot of visitors; doctors and priests and you name it and it was...I'll never forget it...it was a quarter of five...on the 16<sup>th</sup>...I'm Catholic; I took out my crucifix and I put on her cheek; she opened up her eyes; gave me a kiss and she died in my arms.

Pete Jensen: Ooh!

Mr. Carriera: Then I...buried her on...on my birthday, the 18<sup>th</sup> of November. The next day I got up in the morning, and I had a stroke; I'm getting over it now. But I lost my daughter which was a famous writer in America; she used to script write for Lassie; All Our Children; Wagon Train; wrote many books...

Pete Jensen: Well, she was...like for...radio and TV?

Mr. Carriera: Yes, and also she wrote many magazines; horse magazines; dog magazines; books, and she died of a massive heart attack.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carriera: And she called me, this was the year 2002, April 14<sup>th</sup>; she called me at midnight and I had a heart...I had a heart operation with three stints, and she was in Colorado. At midnight she called me wanting to know how I was

doing. Said, "Dad, I'm going to fly home." And we had a very nice conversation; my wife was well then...we said goodbye, and at four o'clock in the morning, four police officers come to my home; rang the doorbell; they knew me; said, "Gerry, let's go in the family room; got some bad news." I said, "What?" "Your daughter died of a massive heart attack!" I said, "How did that happen?" I said, "I talked to her at midnight." And here's what she did; she called her best friend which I knew her...a husband and wife; they lived next door to one another; she called her friend to tell her how I was feeling; she had two prize dogs with her...single, and they went wild; she dropped the phone; they went wild. So they thought something went wrong; they got there and knocked the door out and found my daughter...dead.

Pete Jensen: Hmm!

Mr. Carriera: And she did research, legal research, for the Supreme Court of Wyoming.

Pete Jensen: Wow.

Mr. Carriera: And...fact, one of...when her casket was sent here, the keys to the Courthouse was with her and I had two...three Supreme judges...came to her funeral here in Bristol. So she was a fam...she won the award through the American Kennel Club as the best writer in America. Her books are so-so.

Pete Jensen: Where's she...where'd she live; Colorado or Wyoming?

Mr. Carriera: Uh, Colorado and she used to go to Wyoming.

Pete Jensen: Oh, okay.

Mr. Carriera: They used to chauffeur there to do research for certain supreme judges.

Pete Jensen: Oh, I see.



Mr. Carriera: So that's what she did in Stamford, Connecticut. They had a hundred and thirty-five lawyers, Cummings & Lockwood, and that's where she got her training in...in legal work. She was a graduate of Fairfield University; had a Bachelor's degree...in law. So anyway, is there anything else you'd like to know?

Pete Jensen: When did you...when did you...did you get out of the service; or when did you leave the service?

Mr. Carriera: Uh, okay, I got home...because of delays...I got home on...let's see I left there the 29<sup>th</sup> of December and I got home , oh, I...I think it was January the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: So, then I went back to Electrolux and I finished my education; become a Senior Manufacturing Engineer, so that's the story.

Pete Jensen: What...were you in the Reserves then for awhile or did you...?

Mr. Carriera: Yes, yes; I was in Reserves for twelve years.

Pete Jensen: So your total career was how many years?

Mr. Carriera: Well, four active and twelve Reserve; I should have stayed right in! (laughter)

Pete Jensen: Uh, when did...you were back at Electrolux then when they dropped the A-bomb?

Mr. Carriera: Yes, sir.

Pete Jensen: What was your thoughts of that?

Mr. Carriera: What was my thought?

Pete Jensen: Yeah.

Mr. Carriera: I said...they're going to find out something very...disaster; it's going to be a disaster, and it was.

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carriera: Put that whole...Tokyo on fire, so that's when Electrolux won their banner, and I have the...a picture of the banner in color here at my home.

Pete Jensen: Huh!

Mr. Carriera: But we had a great time; they gave me a week off. It was funny because I didn't know where I was going. They said, "We're going to get you on a train; you're going to meet a Lieutenant Evans at the clock. You know they had a major clock in the center of the terminal...in New York.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carriera: So I met him; gave him my orders; we exchanged, you know, our I.D. numbers...cards and he said, "Oh," he said, "you're the lucky one." I said, "What do you mean by that, sir?" I said, "I came out of Newfoundland and it's about thirty below zero up there," and I said, "We're headed to Florida?" "No," he said, "you're going back to Electrolux." So I said, "What for?" He said, "You'll find out when you get there." So they gave me a week off, and I presented the flag, and the toolmakers that were involved...he passed on; he was one of the members, and then we had a Lieutenant in the Army that was the inspector. And I had the honor of presenting the flag to Electrolux; they had a Navy band there and thousands of people in the area. So it was a great time. And I had a week of; it was fun...dinners and all! (laughter) So then I had to go back to forty below zero!

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carriera: Then they flew me to Mauna Loa, California; I didn't know what that was all about. We built a runway eleven hundred feet long in the farmland; there was a cornfield on one side and...and tomatoes and peppers on the other side. And they used to train pilots how to take off on an aircraft. That was the whole secret about it. So, in the meantime, I got photographs of Mauna Loa; we had, oh, we were sick and tired of eating Spam or something, so we had a bonfire; big frying pan; we could put peppers; tomatoes and Spam; onions and every time a pilot would come in he'd eat up! (laughter) We had fun!

Pete Jensen: It sounds like it!

Mr. Carriera: Yeah, we were there for a month and that was the end of it. So,...

Pete Jensen: Well, I'm going to cut off the recording then; I've still got a couple of things to tell you, but I'm going to stop the recording for a minute.

Mr. Carriera: What was that, sir?

Pete Jensen: I said I'm going to stop the recording for a minute.

Mr. Carriera: Yes, sir.

Pete Jensen: But...and I've still got a couple of things to tell you.

Mr. Carriera: Okay, sir. (Recording interrupted momentarily). So then, I went back to Electrolux and worked there; I had service with them; they counted my military service and I have a good pension plan from Chevrolet; Chevrolet owned Electrolux.

Pete Jensen: Uh huh.

Mr. Carrieria: And it was... I worked with them for...fifty years then I went into consulting in water purifying...fire unit for home use.

Pete Jensen: Uh huh.

Mr. Carrieria: And I consulted for about three years with them because I had the experience of...you know the carbonated unit we built at Electrolux for the U.S. Army.

Pete Jensen: Correct.

Mr. Carrieria: So they called it AquaLux (sp?), then they sold it to some other company, and that was the end of my consulting with them.

Pete Jensen: Tell us a little bit about your visit to Washington D.C. where you met Lamar Alexander.

Mr. Carrieria: Oh god, oh, that was great! Oh, I have to tell you what happened.

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carrieria: I had a hearing problem, so I went to Dr. Davis here locally, and I told him what was happening because I said I used to get a lot of dizzy spells from an inner ear infection, and he said, "Were you in the service?" I said, "Yes I was." So he charged me twelve hundred dollars for a hearing aid. In the meantime, unbeknown to me, he sends a letter to the Veterans Administration in Memphis. So, geez, I get a letter from the VA from Memphis and in there it gave me a whole report, "Unfortunately we can't help you because you were never in the service." (laughter) This is how the stories that the war started, so I said, "This is crazy." So I sent him a letter and I sent him my reports with it, so it was about four o'clock in the afternoon...I'm a serviceman here; my wife is still alive then in good shape (unintelligible) and he said, "This is Jerry

Mitchell calling from the VA in Memphis.” He said, “I want to apologies to you.” I said, “What for?” He said, “Because we sent you a letter that you were never in the military service,” and he said, “I have to apologize; the girl that had your report just filled it out and sent it to you.” So that’s where I got Lamar Alexander involved and I met him; we had a very good talk; then I went to Washington D.C. two and a half months ago here, and I met, oh, I met General, uh, not General, Dole, Senator Dole at that time when he ran for President.

Pete Jensen: Bob Dole, yes.

Mr. Carriera: Yeah, and he had his own law firm, so I met him and oh, we had a great talk...because what I did, I raised five million, seven hundred and twenty thousand for the Memorial ‘cause I had a list of all the companies I worked for and Electrolux was kind enough to give me time to meet these different companies. Like Sara Lee, Electrolux donated four hundred thousand; General Electric, five hundred thousand, so I picked out all the companies in the State of Connecticut; I picked out all the companies where I did business in Chicago and all over, and we raised...

(end of tape 1, side A)

Pete Jensen: Okay, now we can go again; I turned the tape over. What...how much did you raise for the...Memorial?

Mr. Carriera: Five million, seven hundred and twenty-five thousand.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carriera: And I...I knew General Electric very well; my mother, I mean...my mother...my...my wife took care of the Chair of the Board's mother, so I was introduced to him by Fran. So I approached him; of course, I got in touch with Dole and I said, "Please send me a confirmation letter informs that I can, you know, prove that I am a member of your team that raises money. So I met him at his office at Fairfield, Connecticut and G.E. donated five hundred thousand.

Pete Jensen: Wow!

Mr. Carriera: Then we had all the companies in Connecticut...like Bodain (sp?), oh, you know, all the manufacturing companies. So, in Connecticut alone, we picked up about two and a half million bucks. And other companies that I knew in Chicago and all over where I did manufacturing...and where we had them as building equipment for Electrolux...so Pitney Bowes, they donated a hundred and twenty-five thousand; Norm Hoff (sp?) and Bearing Company...I had a whole list. So when I met Dole, oh, what a great time we had!

Pete Jensen: Huh!

Mr. Carriera: He didn't want me to leave, but they had a tour ride out for us and they had to cut the time, so he said, "Gerry," said, "hold it." He said, "I have a list," he said, "You know...what happened," he said, "we have to maintain the Memorial through funds; the government will not maintain the Memorial." Could you believe that?! So he gave me a list of all the people I had contacted, and some of the major companies didn't live up to their commitment. So most of the...the service people and ordinary citizens were

donating money. So he said, “Now we have to donate money towards the maintenance.” So he gave me the list of all the companies I had, so I started to make contacts, and a week later Dole calls me at home, “Gerry, stop! Return the slip that I gave you,” he said the government just made an order that they will maintain the War Memorial.” Could you believe that?!

Pete Jensen: Geez!

Mr. Carriera: So help me God! Uh, he was a great guy! And I had my lawyer, a very close friend, Curt Palmackie (sp?) was with us; he’s in the photographs...

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carriera: ...with Dole and...I...I don’t know if you have photographs...

Pete Jensen: No, I’ve got when...when you met with Senator Alexander and Curt,...

Mr. Carriera: Palmackie.

Pete Jensen: Palmackie was with you in that...photo, yes.

Mr. Carriera: Yes. Yeah, we toured there about four days; they gave us a special tour; all arranged through the White House, and...and then, oh, we had just a great time! Unbelievable!

Pete Jensen: So you’ve seen the World War II Memorial?

Mr. Carriera: Yes, sir; my name is on there; I saw my name. Boy, gave me a big thrill! (laughter) My brother’s name is on there; he was shot down in...in the Mediterranean; my other brother died in a Veterans hospital.

Pete Jensen: Hmm!

Mr. Carriera: So all our names are up there; my cousins...uh, my son is on the Vietnam Wall, so it was a great thrill!

Pete Jensen: Good.

Mr. Carrieria: Unfortunately, my wife had passed on and she wasn't with me; that would have been a wonderful thrill for her. So I...I have a very sad moment (pause)...I would have got...I prayed for her and the boy that we lost, and they gave an average to us at the White House; it's fifteen hundred World War II veterans dying every day.

Pete Jensen: That's right! And that's why...here at the Nimitz anyway, they're trying to get as many interviews as they can; to record as much of the history as we can. Uh, because that's at least fifteen hundred a day that's...that we're losing.

Mr. Carrieria: That's right. And while we were there, my god, there must have been thirty-five funerals going on.

Pete Jensen: Geez!

Mr. Carrieria: Unbelievable; very sad moment.

Pete Jensen: Yes.

Mr. Carrieria: Well, is there anything else?

Pete Jensen: No, I think right now that's it, but I tell you what, if I think of something else or if you do, we can make contact; you have my phone number.

Mr. Carrieria: Yes.

Pete Jensen: I'd be more than happy to, you know, come back here and do another tape, or you know...

Mr. Carrieria: Will I get a copy of your report?

Pete Jensen: Yes. What happens...now it's going to be...could be a little while because...



Mr. Carrieria: I hope you clean it up...a bit.

Pete Jensen: Well, the...the thing is...they...we have transcribers and they have the hard job; my job is easy doing this, but they have to then take and put that down on paper. Once they get it on paper, you'll have a...you'll get a copy that you can look at and make changes; make additions; whatever you want to do and then they'll put out the final copy.

Mr. Carrieria: Will this go to the local newspaper?

Pete Jensen: Uh, no, I don't think so.

Mr. Carrieria: I...I just wondered if it did.

Pete Jensen: Uh, this will...

Mr. Carrieria: They had a big...you read the report, I think, of...did you read my...write up in the...Bris...Bristol Herald Carrier?

Pete Jensen: No, I didn't get a copy of that.

Mr. Carrieria: You didn't?

Pete Jensen: What I got...I tell you what I got, Gerry, I got the...the letter from Lamar Alexander...

Mr. Carrieria: Oh.

Pete Jensen: ...uh, I got the...your write up...about as far, you know, your service...

Mr. Carrieria: Yes, I could send you...

Pete Jensen: ...and I...then I got the blueprints for the Nimitz Conference Room, and that was what was in this folder.

Mr. Carrieria: Well, it was...I sent you a local newspaper write up they gave me.

Pete Jensen: Well, they...I'll have to check with them over in...

Mr. Carriera: If not, I can send you a copy.

Pete Jensen: Yeah, it...it's probably...if you...

Mr. Carriera: Was...wasn't there a copy of Washington...uh, Lamar?

Pete Jensen: Yeah, Lamar was there. That...that I had, but the other unless they've got...didn't give me everything that you sent them...they...when I went over there I asked for a folder; I wanted the plans, so they may have something else over there that I don't know about, but...

Mr. Carriera: Yeah, I sent you a copy of the newspaper here. Holy god, they had the police department out here to guard my home; (laughter) it was fun. If you don't, I'll send you a copy.

Pete Jensen: Why don't you...when you put that together, why don't you send that, if you would?

Mr. Carriera: Okay, I'll send you a copy of the news prints.

Pete Jensen: Yeah, if you would, and...

Mr. Carriera: It's going to take me a little while, but I'll get them to you.

Pete Jensen: Sure.

Mr. Carriera: I'll give you the plans of the map...

Pete Jensen: Yep, the house.

Mr. Carriera: ...the house map;...

Pete Jensen: You got the...

Mr. Carriera: ...and the house...

Pete Jensen: The house...and any other...

Mr. Carriera: (Unintelligible).

Pete Jensen: ...and any other letters or anything like that you have...

Mr. Carrier: Okay.

Pete Jensen: ...if you'd give us copies of that, it'd sure be appreciated.

Mr. Carrier: Okay, yeah, I'll send you a copy of...The Secretary of the Navy...

Pete Jensen: Right.

Mr. Carrier: ...and I'll send you a copy of C. C. Seabury...

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carrier: ...and...I'll see what else I can send.

Pete Jensen: Okay. In the meantime, I will see what I can find out about a photo of (unintelligible words).

Mr. Carrier: Yeah, I appreciate that; I would appreciate it. I have a war room upstairs...

Pete Jensen: Okay.

Mr. Carrier: ...photographs; books and oh, my god! Everything is framed; unbelievable. I'll take a photograph of my room...

Pete Jensen: Yeah, that would be great!

Mr. Carrier: ...and I'll send it to you.

Pete Jensen: Yeah!

Mr. Carrier: Yeah, I got, oh, Admirals, and where I was transferred, and, oh, I had a great time!

Pete Jensen: Oh, that's great!

Mr. Carrier: My service was just a wonderful part of my life; I'm so proud of it.

Pete Jensen: You should be. I mean...

Mr. Carrier: Yes, thank you.

Pete Jensen: Well, thank you and I'm sure we'll talk again. I...I'll let you know about this photo and...and like I say, if you've got anything else just give me a call; you've got my home phone number.

Mr. Carrieria: Yes.

Pete Jensen: And just give me a call anytime.

Mr. Carrieria: Yes, please send me a photograph of you; you know what I look like; I want to see what you look like! How's that?

Pete Jensen: Okay, alright; I...I'll do that.

Mr. Carrieria: And I'll put it up with my war room, okay?

Pete Jensen: Okay, I'll do that.

Mr. Carrieria: Okay, sir.

Pete Jensen: Very good...thank you, Gerry; I appreciate it very much.

Mr. Carrieria: Yeah, thank you; thank you, and God bless you

Pete Jensen: God bless you.

Mr. Carrieria: Thank you.

Pete Jensen: Bye bye.

(end of interview)

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