

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Joseph Gobbi

Date of Interview: June 9, 2009

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: Okay. This is Ed Metzler and today is the 9th of June, 2009. I am interviewing...interviewing Mr. Joseph Gobbi. This interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas at the Nimitz Museum. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, archives for National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

First, let me start out, Joseph, by thanking you for coming all the way from Floresville...

Mr. Gobbi: Alright.

Ed Metzler: ...to participate in this interview, and let me just get you started by giving us your full name and when and where you were born.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, let me tell you that I'm *proud* to be here!

Ed Metzler: Well, good; we're proud to have you, sir.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, my name is Joe Gobbi, and I was born in Escondido, California, and we lived in Oceanside when this side of the war started.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well now, let's see; tell me when you were born.

Mr. Gobbi: I was born December the 12th, 19...1920, uh, '21.

Ed Metzler: Okay. (Recording whistling sound). I'm going to stop this for a second.
Okay, we started recording again; we were getting some feedback between the two microphones.

Mr. Gobbi: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you were born in California.

Mr. Gobbi: Yes.

Ed Metzler: And...

Mr. Gobbi: No...no, I was raised in San Diego.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, and tell me what...what did your father do for a living.

Mr. Gobbi: My dad was a...a...he was a gardener and everything like that...nothing very...because he was old...an older fellow, too.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: My dad came into San Diego Harbor in 1883; he jumped ship in the harbor, and we...we call him the first Italian wetback! (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: The first Italian wetback.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, that ship came from Italy on...and it was a four-mast...four masts and back then they didn't have Panama, so they had to go clear to the Horn.

Ed Metzler: Oh, they went around the Horn?!

Mr. Gobbi: Went around the Horn...they, you know, they had a terrible storm out there; they almost didn't make it but they did!

Ed Metzler: My goodness.

Mr. Gobbi: Because the two oceans...gather (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, its amazing...(unintelligible).

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it was a terrible thing. But he made it back to San Diego in 1883.

Ed Metzler: Now did you have any brothers and sisters?

Mr. Gobbi: Yes, my brother fought in World War II also, and...and not in the Pacific...European war.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So let's see, you said you were born in 1921?

Mr. Gobbi: Yes.

Ed Metzler: So you were...you weren't quite twenty years old then when Pearl Harbor happened?

Mr. Gobbi: No, I was...I was only seventeen.

Ed Metzler: Oh okay, okay.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, they almost...almost didn't take me and...but I told them, I said, "Look in a couple of weeks I'm going to be eighteen, and you might as well get me now...that I'm ready."

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: I was so gall-durned mad that day!

Ed Metzler: Why were you so mad?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, to start out with, it was on a Sunday, December 7th, 1941. I was in the back of my yard; I had a Harley, and I was cleaning it up and polishing it up.

Ed Metzler: You had a Harley?!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, a 1939 stick-shift; I still got pictures of it. So I was outside; it was a beautiful day! I thought, “Well, I better get on my Harley,” you know, it was a stick-shift...no...no problem, and I went to Oceanside...that’s where I lived, in Oceanside, California. And along the bay there, there was a road you could go...close to the ocean.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: So I started going and I...I parked at the...the curb and I could hear a bunch of guys coming in a car singing and hollering and all that, and I thought, “What the heck are these crazy guys?” They were my buddies!

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: They knew that I was there. So they came alongside to me and says, “Hey, Joe,” he said, “did you hear that the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor?” And I was mad, and young, I said, “I’ve never been to Pearl Harbor,” says, “where in the heck is Pearl Harbor?!” One of the guys didn’t...most of them didn’t know. “Well, they say it’s in Hawaii.” “Well, if it’s in Hawaii, I’m going.” So...mad as I was...they struck...they...they bombed all our ships out there in the Harbor.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. Gobbi: And so that...that made me mad when they...they told me that they...they didn’t know that the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor; *that hit me bad!* So, they took off, and I...it was on a Sunday so I couldn’t do nothing about it. So I waited till Monday and I drove my...I had to go from Oceanside to San

Diego...thirty-five miles, and the...the recruiting office was on top of the...post office. One door was for the Marines and then...and then the door for the Navy, and the...the next one for the Army, and I wanted the Navy. I...so I...

Ed Metzler: Why did...why did you want the Navy?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, the Navy's...I don't know, they...clean-cut fellows. They were...I never smoked; I never smoked a cigarette, but I carried a package so the guys won't think I was a square.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Every...everybody smoked I think.

Ed Metzler: All the cool guys smoked.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, everybody, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's right.

Mr. Gobbi: So I carried my package, but that's...I just..., "Hey, who's got a smoke," so I pull it out and fix...make myself pretty big.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: But anyway, I went to that boot camp, I mean...not the boot camp, but the red...

Ed Metzler: Recruiting office.

Mr. Gobbi: ...recruiting office, and the guy said, "What can...what can we do for you, son?" I must have looked young. And I says, "I want to join the Navy." "Okay," he says, "you're in the Navy. How many years do you want?" "Well, how many years do you have?" He says, "Well," he says, "we got four and six." "Give me all six." That's what I told him.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Gobbi: He said, "Well," he said, "yeah, you could make a career out of the Navy." I says, "As long as it lasts, I'm going to be with them." And...but they said, "You're going to have to sign some papers here and fill a...take a...a test for color blind and all that stuff.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: So I took the test and they gave me a blank to...for my dad to sign. "Oh heck," I says, "I'm...how am I going to get the old man to sign; he...he's so stubborn." He's a stubborn Italian; he...he was...he wouldn't listen to nothing (recording interference noise). So when I got home; he was in the backyard, and I says, "Hey Dad," from...I was still on my bike, "I joined the Navy." He hollered at me, he said, "Joined the Navy?!" He said, "You're going to be nothing but a bum and a no-good...for nothing!" And he says, but he didn't know the war had started; he...he (unintelligible)...I says...well, to go in the Navy to make a career or get away from it all.

Ed Metzler: Right, to get a...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. I says, "Dad," I says that..., "we're at war now." I says, "If you don't want to believe, go in the..., " we didn't have no TV back then...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: ..., "you go out there and listen to the radio and you're going to hear Roosevelt declaring war on Japan." So he says, "Well, I guess I'll have to sign, but," I says, "I don't want you to go." "Well," I says, "Dad, I've got another thing," 'cause I wanted him to sign. "If something should happen to me in...in the

Pacific, you're going to get ten thousand dollars." "Okay!"...he says, " Where should I sign?!"

Ed Metzler: Well where then do I sign?! (Laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: I...I showed him where to sign then. And...

Ed Metzler: Well you...you kind of misrepresented that to your dad, didn't you?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I did. Well, that's the only way I could get him to sign. Otherwise he...he thought I wanted to go out there and just to be a...a local sailor working down the beach.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: So I says, "We're in the war, and I want to go." So he signed the papers and I...I took them back to San Diego...thirty-five miles to my...again. "Well, here's the papers." Says, "Well," he says, "we've got news for you. We're not taking any more recruits right now because the boot camp is full."

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Gobbi: He says, "You're going to have to go home." I says, "Go home?!" I...I got mad; I said, "I'm not going home at all!" And...'cause they knew I was mad, and "Well," he says, "I don't know what we're going to do with you, but the only thing we can do is," and says, "and we can put you on the Armed...Armed Service YMCA, and give you a room there until we...we're ready to call you." "Well sir, that sounds good!" And they gave me a chit so I could go to...on Broadway on one of those restaurants and get something to eat.

Ed Metzler: Get some food, yeah!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah. So that's why...I stayed in that room for...maybe a week. Boy, I could hardly wait to get back...

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Gobbi: ...started... 'cause the boot...the boot camps were full. You know they got...a lot of guys wanted to get in the Navy 'cause they didn't wanted no part of the Army or the Marines. Not me; I always liked the Navy. So the time came that they...they got me back in boot camp. And the guys (unintelligible) say, see me say, "Boy, what pretty hair you got!" I used to have black hair and...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: ...(unintelligible). I said, "Well, I don't care." I said to them, "In fact, when they take me to the barbershop, I'm going to tell him to take it easy on my sideburns!" (Laughter) It was a joke! (Unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), well I bet they didn't take care of your sideburns!

Mr. Gobbi: No, no they didn't! Went *zip* (sound) like this.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: (Unintelligible words); I knew what they were going to do.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you were just kidding with them!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I was just kidding, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: And...

Ed Metzler: So where did you do your basic training then?

Mr. Gobbi: San Diego.

Ed Metzler: Right there in San Diego?

Mr. Gobbi: San Diego, yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Gobbi: San Diego. They take me to a...they wanted to find out if I could swim, and they had a pull and they lit it up with...set it on fire, and you're suppose to jump from the...from the diving board into that fire. So when you jumped in the fire, well, they'd spread out, but you had to make sure that if...you get...you get out of it and get some fresh air, and you going like this and kick the flames back and take a deep breath and go underneath again, and that's why they find...whether you can make it or not, and I made it!

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: But that flames, see they come together like this...

Ed Metzler: Come back.

Mr. Gobbi: ...they had...as you come up, you went like this...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and spread the flames away.

Ed Metzler: So how long did training take, basic training; what about six weeks is that what...?

Mr. Gobbi: Something like that. (recording interference)...

Ed Metzler: I'm getting feedback here; don't know quite what to do. (recording momentarily stopped). Okay, I think we got that feedback solved now.

Mr. Gobbi: Okay.

Ed Metzler: Alright, so...

Mr. Gobbi: We had...the guy...the officers came in says, "Okay, you guys, we don't want no peach fuzz!" We were just a bunch of young kids, and we hadn't...

Ed Metzler: Young kids, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and we hadn't even shaved or anything.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: He said, "And this crew...crew, we don't want no peach fuzz! You're going to have to shave it off!" So they giving all kinds of orders and everything, and (pause)...

Ed Metzler: Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Gobbi: So the next day they took us out to Torrey Pines by the cliff, by the ocean, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And there was supposed to have been a plane coming in with a target, and we were supposed to shoot that target...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...see if we hit it, but when my...my time came I was on a forty millimeter, and I got that son-of-a-gun. Believe it or not, I hit there...the rope on that target and down came the target!

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Gobbi: See I...by that time, I had it figured that by that time the...the plane got there it would be a...a straight shot, and that's why...they made me a gun...gun pointer on the forty millimeter...they wouldn't take me.

Ed Metzler: They knew skill when they saw it.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, (unintelligible words). In fact I knocked down...well, my gun and other guns, knocked two kamikazes in Saipan and Tinian.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Gobbi: They came in...and...a direct hit it was going to be, but we knocked them before they get...get over us.

Ed Metzler: So anyhow, you passed then the...the aiming of the forty millimeter...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: you did with flying colors.

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: And so after basic training was over, did they assign you to a ship right away or what (unintelligible)?

Mr. Gobbi: Well I went to (unintelligible) ship.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Gobbi: We were pretty short on transports. We...we didn't have hardly and transports to send the men to the islands to fight or anything, so one night they...they sent us from San Diego to San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: And...and there was a ship there and guess what it was? It was a World War...World War I transport called the USS Henderson.

Ed Metzler: USS?

Mr. Gobbi: Henderson.

Ed Metzler: Henderson?

Mr. Gobbi: Uh hum, old...old transport.

Ed Metzler: Real old...?

Mr. Gobbi: Old son-of-a-gun! We had to chip paint, I'm not sure what caused it.
Fact...we had to chip paint...at spraying (unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: Whoo, you got quite a...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...quite a wound on there!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, and it's gone up, and it's going up and it's up from that ship...poison
from that ship...was a World War I ship that was...send the cavalry to France.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Gobbi: And...they...they weren't using it (unintelligible). When the war broke out in
World War II they didn't have any transports; they got both sides.

Ed Metzler: Now tell me what happened there on your arms.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, when you start chip...or I was, we wore boots, you know, they put us
scraping paint...and paint into everything...that would...that was an old
ship...World War I, so it needed a lot of taking care of. So we was scraping
paint and spraying and painting and a lot of that...they sent it through the air;
there was an acid...that they used during World War I...

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Gobbi: ...and...and it got on...on us...like this.

Ed Metzler: So you really got...what looks like scars on your...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I...I...

Ed Metzler: ...on your arms from...

Mr. Gobbi: No, I had to go to the doctor; they found out...that none...none of the color...glaucoma or something...glaucoma.

Ed Metzler: Some...some sort of a dermatitis of some sort, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, so I had to go to the doctor, our doctor...find out what she's going to do about it.

Ed Metzler: So anyhow, they put you on this old...

Mr. Gobbi: Transport.

Ed Metzler: ...troop transport ship from World War I.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it's called the Henderson.

Ed Metzler: The Henderson, yeah. Now...

Mr. Gobbi: It's an old ship; barely made eighteen knots.

Ed Metzler: Wow, that's...

Mr. Gobbi: Barely made it.

Ed Metzler: ...had you been assigned to a...a ship yet?

Mr. Gobbi: Never before; that was the first one.

Ed Metzler: Okay, but you...you were just being transported somewhere; you weren't an actual crew member were you?

Mr. Gobbi: Well yeah, I was a crew member there.

Ed Metzler: Oh okay.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, they made a crew member out of me.

Ed Metzler: They put you to work did they?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, they sure did.

Ed Metzler: And where did you go?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, the first time we transported a lot of ammunition and bombs to Hawaii...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and made trips to there. Then the next trip we made...from San Diego to...to Guadalcanal...we took the First Marines...First Marines to Guadalcanal.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: I felt sorry for the poor guys; young kids, too, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: They were young. Anyway, we dropped them off at...I think Guadalcanal...there was another ship waiting for them to load them up, and we came back and they're...guess what? We stopped at Pago Pago, Samoa to...deliver some stuff; I don't know what it was and I had the...(unintelligible) gun watch again. And I got there and the natives were all running around with big arms...small...big arms like this...big legs; they could hardly walk, and this...I don't know bug or a mosquito-type that gets them, and this got me and my leg...this one here swells up and sometimes I can hardly put my shoes on.

Ed Metzler: So your right leg, huh?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So it really swells up *even today* on you?

Mr. Gobbi: Even today. I almost missed my crew. That's when we went back to the...to the States again; they...they decommissioned the...the old transport and they

were commissioning it to a hospital ship. So then I went with no ship, and here I am with a big leg...

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Gobbi: ...and my crew...they sent them all to Washing...uh, Bremerton, Washington.

Ed Metzler: Bremerton, yeah, uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah Bremerton. And...and in the meantime, they stuck me in the San Diego hospital to...fix my leg 'cause they...they...aboard ship they...what they'd do is they'd to wrap it around good; they had a pipe going down, a little pipe...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and put some hot water and let it go down and...and sort of take the swelling out, but that wouldn't help.

Ed Metzler: It didn't help much, huh?

Mr. Gobbi: No. When that ship got to San Diego, they put me in the...in the Naval hospital. And I told them, I said, "Look, I don't want to miss my crew," I said, "that crew that's going to Bremerton, Washington; I want to be with them." "Well," they says, "we are going to do the best we can." They says, "It's a situation we...we might have to ampu...amputate your leg." That's what they told me. And that's the reason I got...I got disabled...disabled American veteran...because I'd been...I would be disabled.

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Gobbi: And I said, "Well I don't want no part of that." I says, "Could you get the swelling off so I could get...going to my crew?" I don't want to miss...cruise...I...I got used to it then. And they said, "Well, we're going to do

the best we can so you won't miss your crew," and they did get the swelling down and I was able to get my shoe...*barely* on.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: So...

Ed Metzler: Was there any pain involved or did it just swell?

Mr. Gobbi: It just swelled; just swelled.

Ed Metzler: Fluid build-up of some sort.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I don't know what...sometimes they get big and right now it's okay, but boy, sometimes I cannot get my...get my shoes on.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: Well anyway, they...they...we got to Bremerton, Washington, and even my leg...my foot was...was good, you know, better. And...about a week or so being in Bremerton...got down at...(unintelligible) and right on my...close to my birthday...then...then I was going to be eighteen, so they take me to a hospital in Bremerton and...

Ed Metzler: So it started swelling up again, huh?

Mr. Gobbi: Started swelling up and I said, "What do you think this is?" "Well, they call it Elephantiasis," is all they said. I didn't know what it was.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I've heard of that.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, Elephantiasis. "Well," they says, "we're going to try the best we can to get your foot...," because here my...my group was going to go and commission the ship; the ship was in Astoria, Oregon getting fixed up, you know, with guns and ammunition. Oh, I'm a...I'm a plank owner. Well, I

don't want to be a plank owner no more because you know what they do?
They get all these guys that are plank owners and they have to load the ship
with ammunition; food; water; everything, and it was day and night! Because
all...all our guns had to be plenty of ammunition.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. Gobbi: And then the bombs for the planes and everything...torped...torpedoes and
stuff that we had to use for, you know, submarines in case of a...an attack.

Ed Metzler: So you were back in the hospital again and here was your ship that you'd been
assigned to...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and you were afraid she was going to sail without you.

Mr. Gobbi: Right.

Ed Metzler: So what happened?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, they got me fixed enough...my whole crew had only gotten to Astoria,
Oregon to get aboard it, and boy, here I come! I...and I says, I...I told
them...the doctor and the nurse, I said, "The swelling's going down; I think
I'm all ready to get out of here."

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: And boy, they said, "Well, we like to say...I hope it don't happen again," but it
did.

Ed Metzler: Oh.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it did, but they wouldn't...I told them what they...what they were doing,
you know with hot water and the pipe and everything. Yeah, that's when the

time...when I got transferred...before that I got transferred to the Naval hospital. And the guys...my guys...my...my friends they say, “Hey Joe, let them cut your leg,” they say, “you’re going to get...compensation and all that pay!” I said, “Forget you guys!” I said, “I know (unintelligible words).”

Ed Metzler: I prefer a leg and no pay! (Laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: Hell yes, right!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: I told them. So they had me in pretty good shape; I got aboard that ship and I was Gunner...Gunner’s Mate First Class on the...on the forty millimeter...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and number...Gun number one; I was on gun number one, and my Captain he...he liked that...the way...I, you know, he put a...when he fir...when the Captain first took over the ship, we were a bunch of greenhorns. We...

Ed Metzler: Now this was a new ship?

Mr. Gobbi: Brand new! Yeah, it...it...the thing...they got on the ship...didn’t have no...no bolts...nothing; it was all welded; all welded together. And it was...what it was...there was a transport made into a carrier...’cause really, we needed all kinds of ships. So...the thing is...we stayed on until we commissioned it. But the Captain, he was very unhappy because he didn’t know how we were going to turn out; we was just a bunch of greenhorns from...from civility [civilian life ?] to...to the Navy.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, no...nobody was experienced.

Mr. Gobbi: No, and not...I had a good record for knocking down that targets, so they...I was alright, so he put me on number one gun. And he was on...somewhere...he went...he could hardly wait to get that god-darned ship underway. So went to outside...outside of the bay and he had somebody pull a target and then we were supposed to shoot at it. We...we shot at it and we hit a lot of holes (unintelligible), and he thought well we were alright. He...he got...he was happy about that, and...

Ed Metzler: Now he did that offshore...had you actually left...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I...yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...had you left port yet?

Mr. Gobbi: We...

Ed Metzler: I mean were you headed to the Pacific?

Mr. Gobbi: Well no, we was just...went out of port to try these...

Ed Metzler: Just practicing?

Mr. Gobbi: ...yeah, prac...yeah. But the Captain...good thing that he had that ship camouflaged 'cause when we were in Saipan and Tinian we got two torpedoes shot at...but the Japanese couldn't tell the speed of our...what we were making because of this camouflage and they missed! Boy, that...I mean I sure thanked the Captain for doing that!

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: Because the first thing he did when he got the ship and we were in...we went down to San Diego into the dry dock and they gave her the camouflage job.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, you'll see the...you can see the camouflage job on her.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, let's...oh yeah, I can see right here on the cover!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah, 'cause they couldn't...the Japanese couldn't judge the speed of the...of the carrier; they bombed us and strafed us and everything that time...in Saipan and Tinian.

Ed Metzler: So where...so where did the [USS] Gambier Bay go first? When you left Astoria and headed out to sea; where did you go?

Mr. Gobbi: Uh, we went to Midway.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Gobbi: And what happened...was there...the god-darned...our...our ships, our carriers sighted a...a troop...a...a group of car...Japanese carriers coming to Midway. So Admiral Nimitz he called...he called every carrier in the Pacific...big ones that carried...little ones like this one...he (unintelligible)...and then we were all...decided that...Japanese coming in. But what happened was...it was getting late in the afternoon, and the Japanese weren't quite so close...that we thought, so the planes...they only had enough gas to really come back aboard; some couldn't even make it because they ran out of fuel.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: But you know what? We sank the four carriers!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: We sank them down.

Ed Metzler: Now where was the Gambier Bay when all of that was going on? Was she involved in Midway?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, we were all...all the carriers; every carrier, big...big ones and little ones...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...were...were involved. Had...when the planes would come back a lot of them were running out of gas just as they were getting close to the ships, so Admiral Nimitz says, "Turn all the lights on!" It was just (pause) it was just like Christmas!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: All the lights on!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Boy, if the Japanese would have had a submarine out there...

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Gobbi: ...he would have cleaned up...cleaned up because they were all lit up. They had search lights so the planes...were coming back would see us...'cause it was early getting dark...and not at night time.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, now when...let's see, the Gambier Bay was involved in Saipan...Tinian?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, Tin...Tinian, yeah; we were there. That's another one that we took over with the big bombers...got the atomic bomb.

Ed Metzler: Right, right. Now, so after Midway what...what did the Gambier Bay do then?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, we went to...Saipan and Tinian.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: We fought there until we took over the island. And in the meantime, when we were there, the Japanese came and strafed us; strafed our gun mounts. But...probably...I don't (unintelligible words) Japanese must have been blind; they missed our...our gun barrels. They were...the bullets were hitting the other side in the water.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: And we hit a few of them. And then the next time they came, they came in a bomb...bomb run, and they missed.

Ed Metzler: Now this is was all at Saipan?

Mr. Gobbi: At Saipan...Tinian.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, so what...were there some other escort carriers there...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yes, there...

Ed Metzler: ...along with...?

Mr. Gobbi: ...there...there were ships like ours in the group.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: We had about...four of them...carriers that...maybe flattops of the group.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: So they were always load...loading up and everything and going out to that...Saipan and Tinian and bombing them and strafing them...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...until we took over the...we landed the Marines there.

Ed Metzler: So was the Gambier Bay quite a ways offshore when the Marines went in...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...or were you...floats in?

Mr. Gobbi: Quite a ways; we were quite a ways. I could see with the binoculars...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...making the landings.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: But we were pretty close.

Ed Metzler: Well describe to me those attacks that the Japanese airplanes did on your ship; tell me what happened.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, the...the Japanese...as they were coming in, we were getting prepared for...to let them have it, but they...they sort of missed; they were missing quite a bit, and they weren't hitting us; they were hitting the outside of the...of the ship.

Ed Metzler: So they were just strafing you at this point?

Mr. Gobbi: Yes, strafing. Yeah, they...they strafed all the gun mounts on both sides; they missed.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Boy, that's when I was glad! But anyway, we...we were there giving the Marines...that would make the landing...air support. We were...a lot of the guys...you could hear them on the radio saying, "Here (unintelligible), let's get this guy on the...on the (unintelligible), you know, one of the cars, you know, the...the man cars...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and shot that thing down. But we were just giving them air support. So after...

Ed Metzler: So when you were on the Gambier Bay, did you ever get a chance to talk to the pilots and chat with them or were they kind of separate?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, they were separate 'cause they were in a group of their own, you know?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: But a lot of times they'd tell you that...the places where they'd went was a dangerous place, you know, the...the Japanese had that...pretty good guns. In fact, they had better guns than we did; they had planes that we didn't. They had Zeros that were knocking us down like flies.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Gobbi: But when we got the Corsair and the...the Grumman Wildcat, boy, that then made a different story!

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: We were knocking them down like flies!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah. So what was the closest to being hit that the Gambier Bay was when it was at Saipan; tell me about that.

Mr. Gobbi: Oh that...that was...the torpedoes...that he shot at us...

Ed Metzler: Yeah?!

Mr. Gobbi: ...and they couldn't see us; they couldn't tell...on account of the camouflage...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: ...how fast we were going.

(end of tape 1, side A)

Ed Metzler: Okay, this is side 2, so go ahead. So...so they fired torpedoes at you but they missed.

Mr. Gobbi: Yes, yeah, about three of them.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, you...and I could see them because I was in the front.

Ed Metzler: That's right, you're up...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I was in the front; I could see the god-darned thing going by!

Ed Metzler: Did you think that...think that, "This was it."

Mr. Gobbi: No, (unintelligible)...they would...they would hit us, it would...I wouldn't be here talking to you!

Ed Metzler: That's right!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. But...afterwards...they...we calmed down, they were...we were really taking over the island. Well, we felt sorry for the...the Japanese family. They...the Japanese soldiers told them that...the Marines was...and they was going to harm them, and they were going to harm the kids and everything. And so they went to a big, high cliff out there in Sai...Saipan and (unintelligible words) bottom of the cliff with a lot of big boulders and rock where the ocean come in and go out?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And these...these women threw their kids in the...on the rocks and they jumped after...killing themselves because they...they believed what they had told them.

Ed Metzler: What a tragedy!

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, it was! I...I hated to see that!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, so did you...did you just hear people tell you about that or did you actually see it?

Mr. Gobbi: No, we could see it with the binoculars, we...

Ed Metzler: Did you *really*?!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, we could...we could...we were...we were very close, but you could see it when they were throwing the...the kids over the side and they'd jump out... after that.

Ed Metzler: Man.

Mr. Gobbi: It was a high cliff! I forget what they call that cliff now.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. But anyway, I was going to tell you a funny one. We were out there...after the battle and everything...they...we got a...a call...there were three Japanese planes coming to our direction and *we'd better standby*. So they called general quarters and I went to my gun and stood by it, but had...what happened was...the Japanese that...planes, three of them, turned around and went the other way, so we...so they lost contact. So we were there sitting down on our guns waiting for...either secure from general quarters or what.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Finally, they secured for general quarters and I went down below decks and said, "Boy, this is a good time for me to take a good shower!" And I took all my clothes off and I jumped in the shower; guess what...they called general quarters! (Laughter) And here...

Ed Metzler: Here you are in your...

Mr. Gobbi: ...full of soap!

Ed Metzler: ...in...in your birthday suit! (laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, birthday suit. And you know, it's hard to put your clothes on...on a wet body!

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Gobbi: Oh man, I...I just barely was able to put my pants on and that's it; I didn't have no shirt on and...and I went to my gun. I had a hammer with a...a earphones so it was a big hammer and...I got a...and the Gunnery Officer was next to me on...my gun. And Captain seen me, he says,...he called the Gunnery Officer and says, "Hey, who's that fellow without no shirt on?!" The Cap...Captain liked me because I used to be a fighter, so he...he fin..finally...the Cap...the Gunnery Officer told him, he says, "The reason he's...don't have any clothes on is because he got caught in the shower."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: The Captain cracked up (laughter); he...he laughed.

Ed Metzler: Well, why don't we take this opportunity to have you describe this boxing career that you had...

Mr. Gobbi: Sure.

Ed Metzler: ... while you were onboard because you showed me pictures of you in the...in the ring.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So tell me a little bit about how that got started.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, the Captain found out the...someone...that I had...boxing experience on the outside and I even got a broken finger from it...from one of...one of the fights.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: And...and he liked boxing; he thought that was good entertainment. So he'd...get the...on the...on the hangar deck...he'd put a lot of benches and get all the officers and enlisted guys...could watch, and he'd use the...the elevator for a...a ring.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: (Unintelligible)...the elevator; you had a rail from...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, perfect!

Mr. Gobbi: ...and the guys on top...from the flight deck looking down; it was...quite a thing! And then they...they liked boxing and it's good sport, so...I was number one guy there. (chuckles)

Ed Metzler: Yeah, now...so did you have some pretty tough opponents?

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yes, some guys they were ex-fighters themselves.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you had fought...

Mr. Gobbi: Uh huh.

Ed Metzler: ...before you went in the service?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I (unintelligible), yeah.

Ed Metzler: So did you just do that for the fun of it or when you were in school or what?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I tell you when it was; it was the Depression, and...back then and we weren't...didn't have any...hardly any money; that's the only way we could get it...some money. And especially if you got to make the main eventer, you made more money.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. Gobbi: So, that's what got me in.

Ed Metzler: So did you win the...the championship?

Mr. Gobbi: We...we won the...a trophy for being the best fighters aboard that ship there.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever box any guys from other ships?

Mr. Gobbi: Yes. So they usually come aboard and...they...they (unintelligible) whip us up...

Ed Metzler: But they didn't.

Mr. Gobbi: ...they...they didn't, no.

Ed Metzler: No (laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: They didn't know how well...we were...well trained we were.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, so you...so you were a lightweight, is that right?

Mr. Gobbi: Lightweight, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, did you always fight other lightweights or did you...?

Mr. Gobbi: Always light, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, they didn't mix you...

Mr. Gobbi: No.

Ed Metzler: ...mix the groups up?

Mr. Gobbi: No, they...that's one good thing about; they always...had even...pretty even.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah. So after Saipan, so you had a couple of close...the ships had a couple of close calls...

Mr. Gobbi: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ...in Saipan.

Mr. Gobbi: They did; yes they did.

Ed Metzler: What...where...where...what happened then? Where did she go?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, okay...this is something. When we finished taking over Saipan and Tinian, the Captain took us to a...an island called Espiritu Santo, and I didn't know, but the...the Captain had made Admiral, and then we're going to get...they're going to change command on that island, so the Captain gave us a beer party. They had beer, and it's a good thing that my buddy had made Storekeeper so they made him in charge of the beer. Oh boy!

Ed Metzler: You couldn't ask for anything more on that!

Mr. Gobbi: What a...what a ball that was! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Boy!

Ed Metzler: Now who was your Captain; what was his name?

Mr. Gobbi: Uh, Captain Goodwin.

Ed Metzler: Goodwin?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So he'd made Admiral?

Mr. Gobbi: He'd made Admiral.

Ed Metzler: So he went to what...a...

Mr. Gobbi: He got transferred to the...another...(unintelligible)...I don't...I don't remember now.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: But he...

Ed Metzler: But you liked him as a Captain; he was a good Captain?

Mr. Gobbi: Oh absolutely! I sure...I sure hated to see him go!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: 'Cause he was...he was true. You know, he wasn't...growly...a growling at you or nothing; he was whatever he told you...that exact. 'Cause he...he liked me; I...and I liked him, too, and I missed him when he left.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Gobbi: And then...the new Captain took over command and that's the time we went to the Philippines, and that's what...turned out where we got sunk.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: We...went through all those Japanese...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: ...four...those had four battleships; four heavy cruisers, Japanese, and ten...eleven destroyers...all Japanese. They had...they had the whole god-darned Jap fleet right behind us.

Ed Metzler: What was left, it was...it went there.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, we were...

Ed Metzler: So let's see now, so you went there...you went to the Philippines Campaign right after...Tarawa then?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yes.

Ed Metzler: So...Espiritu Santo and you got a new command...a new Captain...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and then...and then you headed out to the Philippines?

Mr. Gobbi: Right.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so let's just kind of...tell me exactly what happened to you as you remember what happened in the Philippines.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I got...I got my four medals from the government in the Philippines. I don't know...I got a...I got the...Presidential Unit Citation from the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And then the stars here. This...this medal here, the only time you get it, you had to be man-to-man; gun-to-gun, fight.

Ed Metzler: *Live* combat!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: In fact, this is harder than the Purple Heart.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it is.

Ed Metzler: And what do they call that?

Mr. Gobbi: It's the Presidential Unit Citation.

Ed Metzler: Presidential Unit Citation.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Man!

Mr. Gobbi: This is four years of good conduct, this one here.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And this is a Pacific Engagement...all these stars here are...are battles.

Ed Metzler: Battle stars, yeah. Man!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the Gambier Bay went through a lot, didn't she?

Mr. Gobbi: Oh man!

Ed Metzler: So let's see, there were several of you...of these escort carriers and they were part of...what was it...Taffy...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, Taffy Three.

Ed Metzler: Taffy Three, that's right.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, that's what we were in.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, that's where we made it.

Ed Metzler: So tell me how the battle went. So this is the...part of the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Mr. Gobbi: Man! I had to sit...and I had the turret forward watch...Gunner watch at nighttime, you know, it was my time to stand gun watch.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And...so I had on my clothes; I had dark clothes and everything, and we were, like I say, we were getting ready to launch some planes and we were going to

make a starboard turn, and...and got Yamoto right behind us...opened fire and the first shell he shot hit our engine room...*boom!*...and knocked, you know, knocked us dead! We were dead in the water; we couldn't go anywhere. We couldn't even use our guns because they were all jammed up.

Ed Metzler: No power, yeah!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, no power at all. So they kept on coming; kept on coming in and everything. Like I told you, we had...we had a plane on the...on the hangar deck...on the catapult that we threw over the side.

Ed Metzler: And why did you do that?

Mr. Gobbi: Because if it'd ever gotten hit, I wouldn't be here talking to you.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: That thing was loaded with bombs.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, so she was loaded up and ready to go.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah so...yeah, that plane was ready to go and bomb somewhere else...on the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: See, we...we were called there to help them; help MacArthur with air support; that's the reason we were there. We were four baby flattops in a group; ours was the first one that got hit. So when we threw that thing over the side...but we couldn't do nothing about the one that was in the hangar deck, and it was loaded with bombs. And that son-of-a-gun, let me tell you, when we got it; it blew the elevator...clear up to the...up the shaft!...the elevator where we sent them to the flight deck....clear up...went up so high it looked like a flying

saucer! It went so high that they...with the explosion...that plane was loaded with bombs.

Ed Metzler: So was it...and...there was a plane on the...on the hang...on the elevator (unintelligible) time?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And so the elevator went flying?

Mr. Gobbi: Flying...clear to the air.

Ed Metzler: And the airplane that was on it did, too?

Mr. Gobbi: No, that exploded 'cause we couldn't get it in the elevator yet..., 'cause...'cause we had to wait for the other plane to take off to go out and then we could get this one up. Well, they...that wasn't...(unintelligible) have these loaded with bombs...there's no way you could get it out. That thing blew the back end of the ship, and it looked like the whole ocean was coming in! It's...

Ed Metzler: Now where were you when all of this was going on?

Mr. Gobbi: I was on the flight deck. Let me tell you, I was on the flight deck and I seen that god-darned elevator go up! I got to tell you, I got a bump on the head; they're talking about putting me on an earphone! The...they had...see, what it was...they...oh, I was standing on the...on the flight deck on the port side...still that thing was...(unintelligible) not...not too bad.

Ed Metzler: So you weren't at your gun station then?

Mr. Gobbi: No, and so, oh, here's what happened. I left my whole gun crew and I missed getting killed by five minutes; five minutes. I was...we were inside the catapult room, you know, inside the room and shrapnel was hitting all over

that part of the ship and everything; we...and everything...and pieces of iron all over and...so the guys said...I told the guys we wasn't...all of a sudden something hit me and said, "You know I've got a strong feeling," I said, "we're going to get a direct hit...pretty soon." And I said, "You guys wanting to come out with me, come on because otherwise you'll never make it." And a lot of them wanted to go home, of course. And one of...my closest buddy, he said, "If I go home I'm going to get married with my girlfriend," so I was going to go with him (cough). So then (unintelligible words) and said, "Ah Joe," he says, "this shrapnel is going to get us and everything." I says, "Well, you want to stay;" I got mad at that, "you guys go ahead and stay," and opened the door to get out, and here comes a shell *boom!* (Cough), exploded and killed every one of them!

Ed Metzler: Now this is all of your gun crew?

Mr. Gobbi: All the gun crew.

Ed Metzler: And they were still at the gun?

Mr. Gobbi: No, they...after we knocked that...that plane over the side, we came down below to...because shrapnel was all over.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Gobbi: And...and that's the reason we were in that...(cough). I'm going to tell you something. I got to get...water.

Ed Metzler: Get you a little water here.

Mr. Gobbi: Oh! Oh, not tequila!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), that comes later (laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Well anyway, let me tell you something. The guys were all dead; the...the god-darned guy...guys got hit by direct hit and I was only...I was standing by myself...outside that door, and I had a...safety belt, cloth, you know, canvas...canvas strap, and when you wear those things for a long time...(unintelligible words), wear out, too, and I didn't know it and I...I squeezed a CO₂ bottle so it could inflate that thing and it did. It inflated that thing but quick! I felt like I was in a giant donut!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: (Cough) But they...it wasn't doing me any good and all the air just came right out, and I said, "Well, I can't...I've got to do something;" took this belt off and started looking around for a Mae West, I mean, you know, (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Now are you in the water now?!

Mr. Gobbi: No, no I'm still aboard ship.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so how come it went off when you were aboard ship?

Mr. Gobbi: Because I...I squeezed a CO₂ and that blew the thing up.

Ed Metzler: So you did...that was kind of by accident then that you did...?

Mr. Gobbi: No, I did it because I had to inflate it; I thought if I inflate the thing I can go over the side and...and go swim...get away from the ship.

Ed Metzler: So you thought you would need it right away?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, but it didn't do me any good, so I took it...the buckle out and threw the belt away. And here you are with no life jacket; nothing. I knew I could swim, but I don't know for how long.

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. Gobbi: So...

Ed Metzler: Uh, let's go back and tell me about throwing the...the airplane over the side.
Tell me who did that and...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh my...oh my gun crew.

Ed Metzler: Your gun crew did it?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, 'cause we're...we're the number one gun and the plane was right above,
you know, the...the catapult...

Ed Metzler: It's right there next to you, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...so I said, "We're going to have to get rid of this plane because it's loaded
with bombs, and if they ever hit it, we're gone!" So we...we got out there on
the right-hand wing...right...right-hand side of the wing, and threw it over the
side...'cause see, since the ship was leaning over port, it was so easy to drop it
over.

Ed Metzler: So the ship was already listing...

Mr. Gobbi: It was.

Ed Metzler: ...pretty badly after...after taking that hit?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah that big old hit from that...shell from that (unintelligible) that was
in the hangar deck.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: So here I am all by myself; my buddies all killed and everything; I said,
"What the heck am I going to do? I need a life jacket; I don't know where in
the heck I'm going to find a life jacket." Nobody was there but me; they

were...everybody was gone and some of them was dead, so here, out of no wheres, out of the port...uh, starboard side comes a...a life jacket rolling like a ball, and rolled and it came to me, and I got it to put it on. But before I put it on I had a buddy, his name was Hurkestein (sp?), he was a bunk mate...bunk mate of mine out of the First Division (cough), and I says, "Hurkestein," he couldn't swim a stroke, and then I told him, "How in the heck did you get in the Navy?!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: I told him, I said...I jumped his case...his case, I says, "Boy, I don't see how you made it in the Navy; you can't swim a stroke!" Before they passed us, they gave us a test. But anyway, Hurkestein, he jumped...he was on the flight deck...and he was running towards the back end of the ship where the water was coming in and I says, "Hurkestein," I say, "I got a life jacket and you can...I can...I can share it with you." You know, can give...half...(unintelligible)...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: ...I can swim." He wouldn't listen; he kept on going. He just kept on going to the fantail and...and jumped in...and the water was going in...that was it.

Ed Metzler: That's the last you saw of him?

Mr. Gobbi: The last of him, and I tried to help him. So finally I put this god-darned life jacket on, and I had all my clothes on. I jumped out with all my...shoes and clothes because the god-darned sharks start...I got to blow my nose. (recording temporarily stopped). The sharks start coming with...like big schools; I never

seen a...god-darned shark as big as this room here; big son-of-a-guns, and they were all coming around in turn, and...but...

Ed Metzler: And so...so you went ahead and jumped in the water, is that right?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, but the (unintelligible)...

Ed Metzler: Had they... had they announced "Abandon Ship"?

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yeah, they announced it quite a bit.

Ed Metzler: Oh, long, long ago?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, long ago. But I...I didn't want to jump because I still had my buddy with me, and so all those god-darned sharks come...coming around and I...I made sure that the last one went by so I could jump in the water. So by that time...

Ed Metzler: So you can...so you can see them from where you are?

Mr. Gobbi: Hell yeah! They was big son-of-a-guns! You know the ocean's so deep...was seven miles deep, so that's a lot of deep water!

Ed Metzler: That's a lot of water!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, anyway, I got down...my guts were almost hitting the water; I started...I was leaning...it was...leaning like this, so I went and...I swam towards the bow and I kissed the star...the port bow I kissed; I says, "God Almighty; take care of them." (Weeping sound).

Ed Metzler: It's alright.

Mr. Gobbi: I knew...I knew it was going to happen. Well anyway, I swam away from the ship and god-darned Japanese was shooting shells; they were going right over

me and I thought, "Well, I better get going...getting out of there...by myself."
I was...nobody was around.

Ed Metzler: You were the only...you felt like you were the only guy out there?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, (unintelligible) guys that...other crews...some that jumped...had
only...just skivvies on. They...they were sleeping, you know, they'd general
quarters...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...with...four o'clock in the morning.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: And they'd go out there and get on one of those god-darned rafts, and you
know what those sharks do? They'd get under the raft and lift them up; throw
them out of...out of the raft and they'd get them like there was...nothing to
them. One shark got a hold of a guy by the waistline and shook him like rag
doll; big son-of-a-gun. Anyway we...we lost a lot of guys there. But I kept on
swimming because it's late in the afternoon and I says, "Boy, I better get
something before it gets dark!" And yeah, I...I just had my...Mae...Mae West,
but they only last forty-eight hours. And if you can't swim on...forty-eight
hours, you're gone...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...because they get...heavy.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, they get water-logged, I guess.

Mr. Gobbi: So that...it was getting dark; the sun was going over the side...over the
horizon, and...and I could an island out there...way...and...on the horizon. I

said, "Well, I'm going to go and swim for that island." Crazy me! I didn't know it was going to get dark that quick! It seemed like it just...sun just dropped over the side and...and got dark. Well, I seen a...a raft with two guys aboard it, and I heard them talking...'cause I could barely see them through the dark, and I started to swim for them and I wrapped my arm over the side of the...like...raft and I stayed there. But a lot of these guys started drinking salt water, and they went crazy. They could see buildings; they could see stores and...water and one guy says, "I'm going to go down below deck and drink some water." Heck the ship is gone; that...but see how crazy he was? And my Gunnery Officer, he must have drank a lot of salt water because he pulled a gun; he had a gun...gun. Yeah, he was the Gunnery Officer and he had a forty-five and he pulled it...says, "Okay,"...because a lot of the guys are...are piling into the...on that (unintelligible) little raft.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so he was in the life raft...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...that you were hanging onto?

Mr. Gobbi: On the side, yeah. He was sitting in...sitting in the raft, on the edge of the raft, I guess, and he says, "All you guys...get going; get moving," because this...this raft doesn't have...it didn't have nothing; didn't have no food; no first aid; no nothing; everything fell off of it. But what happened was...he passed out, and he dropped the gun in the...on the water; he didn't know. So what made it bad for him was that when he came to he was looking for his gun. I said, "Sir," I said, "you threw it over the side," and...we had a...

Ed Metzler: So you were in the raft now at this point?

Mr. Gobbi: No, hanging on.

Ed Metzler: You were still hanging on, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: (Unintelligible words), right, yeah. And...the Captain's Yeoman happened to be there and he tuned him in...when we...they picked us up. But what saved him was that he drank salt water and it wasn't his fault that he lost his mind. So he...he was a nice guy and everything, but when you go to losing your mind you don't know what you're doing. And so we hung on there...a lot of...a lot of the guys that were there disappeared, and their...

Ed Metzler: Where did they go?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, they took of swimming; they...they could see restaurants. If you told them there's nothing there, they'd get mad at you and kill you, so I didn't say nothing. I...I kept...I held onto that son-of-a-gun! But you know, from the day that our (unintelligible) got there to the day they picked me up, I had drifted sixty miles.

Ed Metzler: Sixty miles?!

Mr. Gobbi: Sixty miles. They...they est...they estimated it. And MacArthur had a lot of ships, landing crafts, and I'm told when he made a landing for the Philippines, and he used those to pick us up.

Ed Metzler: Why do...why do you think some guys drank salt water and some like you didn't drink salt water; what's the difference?

Mr. Gobbi: Because I was raised by the ocean; I know what...what you can do, so they...you know, you drink water like this and the hot sun hitting you; it drives

you out of your mind. So I didn't drink any salt water. If you did it, I could spit it out. And that's the reason these guys...didn't know that. They thought about drinking that salt water...would help them, but it didn't. They'd go crazy. One guys says, "(Unintelligible) get in this so-and-so life raft," and next one, "I'm going to make some knots," so he got better. Like this...go like this and (*ahm* sound) acting like a motor boat.

Ed Metzler: And trying to paddle and...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh he was out of his mind!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: So you don't pay no attention to that guy because he could turn around and kill you!

Ed Metzler: That's right.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, because he...try to keep him from...going for the restaurant or something like that. It was something else!

Ed Metzler: So when you were in the water you had no idea how long you would be there before you were rescued?

Mr. Gobbi: No, no...no way I could tell. I didn't...I didn't...even see a plane come around or nothing.

Ed Metzler: And the sun...so you went through the first night and then the sun came up?

Mr. Gobbi: I was...I was one or two days and two nights...in the water.

Ed Metzler: So did you get on to that...I mean did you hang onto that life raft fairly soon after you were in the water?

Mr. Gobbi: (Unintelligible); I'll tell you what I did. I...(unintelligible) had a little rope; I wound it around and I got it and wrapped it over my hand and I hung onto this because you cannot imagine falling asleep and don't know it, and this way if I fell asleep that...that rope would hold me.

Ed Metzler: You were tied to it, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever think...that the sharks were going to get you?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, there were sharks all around, but they...they left...they sort of left; they went towards the ship. You know, they...they weren't concerned about us and they went...of course, I had dark clothes so they couldn't see me...very well.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: So every time I...I see a shark, a school of sharks, I just get still; I didn't make a move or nothing, and they kept on going towards the ship.

Ed Metzler: So...so the...some of the guys that were killed by the sharks, were they close by to you?

Mr. Gobbi: No, they were quite aways. Yeah, I could see them...I could see them, you know, the guys...you come up and wave like this, and when they come up to wave, you could see them. That god-darned raft's going over the side like this; the sharks came underneath and...but...it was something else. And there were...what picked us up...it was misty that day...that day that we were out there.

Ed Metzler: Second day you'd been in there.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it was misty...and everything...rainy, and in the morning, early morning, it was sort of dark but you could see shadows of ships. And so, "Oh man!" (Unintelligible) because there were Japanese looking for their...for their crew...because they...we had sunk some of the ships. So I...I can only see the ships coming, and out there in the distance somewheres, a guy in a life raft...he shot a...he shot a rocket up in the air, and boy, these ships...they turned on their lights!

Ed Metzler: So kind of a flare type thing?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, flare.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: It was a flare and these...these ships seen the flare, so they..., "Boy, we're getting close to people here," so they turned on their big search lights and, boy, close to the search light was our flag...against the light! (Tears)

Ed Metzler: So you...so you saw it was an American ship?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. Boy, what a thrill that was! I even...I even left the raft and started swimming for it. But what happened was...a lot of ships started getting...gathering together, and they created a...a current.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, a real fast current between the ships, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: And so I got caught in one of the currents and I missed three ships before they picked me up.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. Some of them wanted to pick me up, but I had missed.

Ed Metzler: So...so were these destroyers or...

Mr. Gobbi: No, they were...MacArthur had just made a landing on the Philippines and they used the landing crafts.

Ed Metzler: Okay!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, and the poor guys, they gave us their bed...all clean and everything (tears), (pause)...

Ed Metzler: How did they get you up on the ship?

Mr. Gobbi: That was a good one! They came alongside, and their number was "34" on the...on the landing barge, and they threw the...over the...Jacob's Ladder.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: You know what a Jacob's ladder is?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Heck, whether you are in good shape...you...you have a hard time getting on there because it swings and everything. So the...he...they came alongside close to me, and threw over the Jacob's Ladder. "Hey," the sailor aboard...on the top said, "can you make this; can you get up this ladder?" And I didn't want them to quit or to leave me, so I says, "Sure I can!" I just got a hold of it, but then...and I couldn't even move.

Ed Metzler: You couldn't even lift yourself out?

Mr. Gobbi: I didn't...I didn't realize how weak I was.

Ed Metzler: That's right!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I was real weak.

Ed Metzler: No water; no food.

Mr. Gobbi: No. So what they did...the...the guys...they put a rope underneath my arms like this...on topside, and they were passing the bottom...boost me up and the guys pulled me up; they finally got me up to...to the main deck and they took my life jacket off. And I had a billfold; I had twenty dollars in it. Even my billfold... 'cause I was on topside...(unintelligible) my clothes on, and he said, "Well, go down below deck and...and we...we'll have a doctor look at you and see how you...how you're doing."

(end of tape 1, side B)

Ed Metzler: Okay, this is tape...sorry I interrupted you.

Mr. Gobbi: That's alright.

Ed Metzler: So anyhow, they got you up and the doctor took a look at you.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, they...went down below decks there and they gave me a...a pitcher of water...just a glass of water to drink, and they looked me up and everything and said yeah, I was pretty...fairly good shape, so he says, "We're going to put you on the top bunk." They had about four bunks. A good thing...that they're...because the passageways were narrow...because on a...on a...on those landing barges they're not that wide.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And...oh, Tokyo Rose was on the radio there talking about they had cleaned up the United States fleet, and the Captain of the ship came to us and says, "Don't listen to Tokyo Rose, she don't know what the heck she done...she's talking about!" And says, "You just think about going back to the...to the

States on a thirty-days leave. And we're going to put you in the last bunk and...you going to...you know, you going...we're going to take you in."

Ed Metzler: Now did they get other guys from your...life raft with you when...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...when they lifted you up?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, there...there were about two guys left in that raft.

Ed Metzler: Was that officer still alive?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, he made it to the States. But they were going to give him a court-martial...until us guys told them that he had drank some salt water and he didn't know what he was doing. Well he didn't. Well anyway, they put me in the last bunk, and like I said, the passageways were narrow and it didn't take me long to fall asleep. And I slept and I was dreaming that I was abandoning ship, so I jumped, and I jumped up off of the bed, and here I come between the...the beds as they come...a good thing was...the passageway was narrow, so the fall wasn't so hard.

Ed Metzler: So you could grab onto something! (Chuckles)

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, grab, yeah. I was grabbing onto everything. So, again, I just says...the doctor says, "What's wrong with you, man?!" He says..., "Well," I says, "I'm sorry, but I had a nightmare." I says, "The ship...damaged ship and stuff." "Well," he says, "don't worry about that; you're onboard this ship; you're going back; they're going to take you back to where you'll be safe." So they took me back...and through Leyte Gulf and there was a big transport...out there in the middle and loaded with food and ammunition and you name it; big

old transport. And I got up there aboard, and I had my pants...(unintelligible words) and barefooted and they had taken all my clothes off, so I didn't have...hardly have any clothes on. So one officer went by and says, "Hey, are you one of the survivors coming aboard?" I says, "Yes, quite a few coming onboard." He says, "Do you have any clothes?" I said, "No, this is it." And he said, "Well, we're going to take you to the commissary and give you some clothes," I guess.

Ed Metzler: Thank goodness (laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: (Unintelligible), what a relief that was!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: And then they told me says, "You go back to the fantail and we're going to give you some lunch and sandwich and stuff, so they did – apples and oranges (unintelligible). So they give me a bunk, and they give...they gave me a...the bunk on that transport...a bunk up high. I was there laying down and all of a sudden I heard, "All survivors that don't need no medical attention, lay out to the quarter deck." So I asked one of the shipmates that was on that big ship, you know, "Hey, what's going on?" He says, "Mate," he says, "if you...if you don't need no medical attention, and you're able to walk, you're going back to the States on a destroyer." Well, by gosh, that sounded good! I says,...I thanked him and jumped off of my bunk and I went to the...the main deck, you know, of the ship. And by the quarter deck there was a whole bunch of guys that wanted to get out and get on that destroyer. But the big mistake I made...the...the guys were, the ship's company guys, were telling, "Okay, all

you survivors, put in for your Purple Heart!” And I had been wounded and I...and I said, “Well heck, I’ll get my Purple Heart later.” Here I am still fighting for it; they’re finally going to give...give me the Purple Heart.

Ed Metzler: Just now?!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, just now!

Ed Metzler: Well, it’s only sixty years!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah! (Chuckle)

Ed Metzler: My goodness; sixty-five years!

Mr. Gobbi: It’s right there. One officer that’s...going to write a letter to the Washington...(unintelligible) he said, “Here we’ve got a ship mate that’s only got a few short years to live and he...he needs a Purple Heart,” (tears), and well, that’s what the fight...right now, and they think...they think I got...I got it made.

Ed Metzler: When...when do you...when will you get it, do you know?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, it could happen...any time...any week...any day of the week. In fact, they’ve been us, “This fellow here deserves a Purple Heart because he went through hell.”

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, anyway, I did put in for the Purple Heart. I want to stand by with the rest of the guys, about forty guys. And across the bay there was a destroyer unloading torpedoes because they...they had to take the load off the torped...I mean the destroyer because of on account of us, a whole bunch of guys climbing in.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: So, they...the on...as we were going aboard the ship...we...we got to the destroyer, the guys that were up on the destroyer said, "Hey, welcome...welcome to the Hard Luck Shell (sp?)!" I said, "What do you mean by a hard luck shell?" "Well, let us tell you." As they were...that destroyer was in Pearl Harbor got the bow knocked off and they put a new bow...and when they went out to Bougainville in the Philippines, they got the bow knocked off again, and that's the reason the guys were...they called it the Hard Luck Shell. "Boy," I says, "that's what we need! We need more hard luck."

Ed Metzler: Just another hard luck ship; oh no!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah. And boy, thank god-darn, I wish it was a just that wild one...that...that destroyer looked a submarine better than...more than a destroyer. They usually...go up like this and come down in a hard way and...nose dive on the water, and the screws...you can hear the screws throughout...man, that's hard rough. And man, then we ran into a god-darned submarines, Japanese submarine.

Ed Metzler: Now this is after you got on the...destroyer?

Mr. Gobbi: Yes.

Ed Metzler: And where are you...headed back to Pearl now?

Mr. Gobbi: No, they were going to bring us to New Guinea.

Ed Metzler: To New Guinea, okay.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, but then we were supposed to be...that destroyer was supposed to bring...to take us to the States.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: But, I mean...let me tell you...there...there...let me tell all about it. We had...we...we went out there and made a great big circle around a god-darned Japanese submarine, *Boom!*...and they got...they...they tell..., “Okay, all you survivors don’t go...go down below decks.” Well we were at general quarters. Oh man, I never been below deck with all these god-darned depth charges going on! Boy, that was terrible, but we had...to do...do the best we could. So...

Ed Metzler: So what...it’s just real noisy or what?

Mr. Gobbi: Oh they...it’s just like a god-darned torpedo coming through that ship!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it was! Anyway, when the general quarters secured, I went to the Gunnery Officer aboard that ship; I says, “Sir, I can man any of your guns...any of...your kind of guns here you got,” and I says, “I just can’t it down below decks.” “Well,” he says, “I’m sorry, but we’re supposed to take you...all you survivors...get you out of here safe.” He say, “We get you on topside; you get hit by shrapnel or something, we’re liable.” Well, I understand that! “So,” he said, “the best thing to do is go down below decks and put cotton in your ears and forget about what’s going on.” But we finally made it out and he said that they got the Japanese submarine. But you know what? The Japanese are...are crooks, you know, watch; they’re pretty foxy.

They threw some old clothes in their torpedo tubes and shoot it out and they...really come out there and you...they...would say, "Well, we got them; there's their clothes in there," or that's...that's the only way they could get away with it, so we took off. It was a long ways from...from Leyte Gulf to New Guinea, and we got there with...ran out of food; ran...running out of water, drinking water, and we just barely made it with fuel on that destroyer. And good thing there was a tanker out there and a lot...in...in the harbor. And we come alongside that tanker and we were on...in... we...they had a...a web...or rope...like webs; we climbed on that thing...went up...and we were asking the ship's company guys, "Hey, where's your galley? We're hungry; we haven't had...nothing to eat!" So they took us to the galley and fed us...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: ...sandwiches and...whatever you wanted...'cause they knew we were hungry; we...they knew that the destroyer was running...running out of fuel.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: So then they said, "We're not going to...that destroyer is not coming to the States." "Not coming to the States? They told us they were coming." "Well," they said, "it's not...it's here to stay. You're going to have to wait till you can get a transport for San Francisco and you'll get on then." So man, we had to wait for that transport, and that transport was the [USS] Lurline...Lurline; it was a big son-of-a-gun. It was a good...it was a...a luxury...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it was a luxury liner, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it was.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: All the...all the swimming pools were full of luggage...luggage and everything. So...and so the..., “Yeah, but the...but the Lurline is not going back to the...is not going back to the States again...for awhile.” And I said, “Where in the heck is it going?” “Well, it’s going to Australia.” He says, “It’s going to be...going to go out there and pick war brides.” Because...what did...MacArthur do? Instead of sending the guys to the States for recreation, he sent them to...to Australia. And they...the...the guys that had met gals and they guys had got married and had kids, so...he said, “and we’re going to go out there to Australia to take war brides.” Man, it was...it was a whole bunch of women with kids and everything. There was no room for us to sleep. We had to sleep on the...on the gutter(sp?) then aboard ship. So, we got them; we...finally took fourteen days from Sydney, Australia to San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: So you went from New Guinea to Sydney...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and then from Sydney to San Francisco?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, right. And boy, when we got to San Francisco, the fog was so thick we couldn’t even see the bridge! You know, the Golden Gate Bridge.

Ed Metzler: No! (laughter), yeah (laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: And we had...weighed and anchored out there because of the...on account of the...we couldn’t see the bridge or...we couldn’t maneuver.

Ed Metzler: So this must have been late ’44 then...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...because the Battle of Leyte Gulf was in October of '44.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, right, right. So, I said, "What the heck!" We're going to...we had to stay there until it cleared up and finally got in. There was no TV...TV or nothing like that telling...the...the soldiers coming back Europe or from the islands or nothing; nobody could say nothing. So, I...I happened to have a sister that lives in Berkeley and I told her, I says, "Hey, I got a sister in Berkeley; could I get a pass?" He says, "Yeah, you can have a pass." So I called my sister and they came over to pick me up. But then when I came back, they took us back, all of us survivors, to...what's that...what's that island? It's where the...they took us to Mare Island...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And we had to wait there for more lectures. Says...the...the Officer in Charge said, "We're going to give you some money, but don't take it all to the...San Francisco because they're to roll you."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: But a lot of the guys wouldn't listen. So they took all their money and got rolled up. Not me, I didn't take any money because I...I could go up to my sister...and stay. So we got back...

Ed Metzler: So how many of you survivors are together right now when you're going (unintelligible).

Mr. Gobbi: Well, right now...on our...well, a lot of them are...died from old age.

Ed Metzler: No, I guess I mean when you were on Mare Island and all of that; how many of you survivors were together then?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, mostly about forty of them.

Ed Metzler: About forty.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah, we're together. And...so they gave us money to go...they gave the...everybody...their money they had coming...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and a lot of the guys wouldn't pay attention; they went to the...San Francisco and got drunk and they got rolled.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: And then they...they tried to get the Red Cross to give them some money so they could get home (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Some guys never learn!

Mr. Gobbi: Never learn, you ain't kidding!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Boy, they were so mad because couldn't get no money.

Ed Metzler: But you were a good boy and you...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: ...didn't take your money.

Mr. Gobbi: I kept my money. In fact, my twenty dollars I had in my bill (unintelligible) I kept it for quite awhile. Anyway, when we came back, we went to the island again, and they says, "All you guys...all you survivors are going to go to Gord (sp?) Island." You know, that's with the...the Golden Gate...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...the bridge...there's big buildings, and he says, "There's psychiatrists to check you out...see...what are you going to do with that." So he says, "Okay, all you survivors that don't need no medical attention, you going to...you can put in for any kind of duty you want; home duty right close to your home and...and we'll take of...take care of you from there." But you know what? I was so god-darned mad at the Japanese that I wanted to go back to fight! So they gave me a chit to fill out, and I filled...those chit. And I said, as mad as I was, I says, "I want a ship who's more guns than a porcupine!" I got (unintelligible) in. Oh man, I got called to the...to the head shrinker, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible sentence.)

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, that's what you call them.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Head shrinker. And he says, "Hey, Joe, what's wrong with you?" He says, "You've been in the biggest," he says, "you've been in the biggest battle of the Pacific and you want to go back?" (Tears) "Why?" "I'll tell you why...I want to go back; we didn't have a chance to kill...kill them bastards," (laughter and tears), and I told, I said...

Ed Metzler: You want another chance. (Chuckles)

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah! I want to go and...get even! "Well," he says, "well, you...you...we can't send you out to sea because you've been out there since the war started." "Well," I...he says, "Go to the bulletin board and you'll see your name...your

next assignment.” Yeah, let me tell you about this assignment. It was as bad...worse than being in the...in the battlefield. He said...they went to Mare Island, Ammunition Depot, and I was supposed to blow up all...old ammunition that has come from overseas...

Ed Metzler: Oh my goodness!

Mr. Gobbi: ...on big old boxcars. They had five-gallon cans they had full of five inch, thirty-eight...uh, oh, gun powder...capsules, you know, like this.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: They...they are about five gallons, and I was in charge of it with a bunch of crazy kids that never been overseas; never had been aboard ship or nothing. They...they just put them out there with me for me to tell them what to do. Well, we had a big old pile of...of cans; they're about five-gallon smoke bombs; they were smoke bombs.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: And the Officer in Charge told me that every time that wind blows west, I can turn on the smoke bomb.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I did. I had a big old stack of smoke bombs; I'd turn it on. And it was a cloudy day out there on Mare Island and...where the heat cleaned...cleaned the sky out with a big old hole and...for the...how high...that's how high the island was, and the ones that go west. But you know what happened? That god-darned wind changed and it went east!

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: And I had a traffic jam and...on that...that bridge that goes across
Crockett...Crockett was the big one bridge; I had a traffic jam going from both
sides.

Ed Metzler: You smoked them out! (Laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: I smoked them out, and boy, you could have seen the (unintelligible) of the
Captains and everything in charge of me and he says...he came out there and
rushing and says, "Hey, who's in charge of here?" "I am, Sir." He says,
"What the idea of you blowing...opening them smoke bombs and they're
causing a traffic jam?!" "Well, Sir," I say, "when the...when the wind was
blowing west, I...I opened them up." I said, "But I didn't know that the wind
had changed," and it changed! So they...they let me go. They...they knew
that I was right. Oh, it was a terrible place. I had to blow up all twenty...uh,
these guys were supposed to clean the cartridges out of our twenty millimeter
cardboard thing, and they're a bunch of...they're supposed to take the shell off
and...and leave the cardboard in...in the box. So, we had a deep old hole and
we dumped them in and lit the thing up. In a lot of the places, those god-
darned guys left the shells inside, and boy, if that had blown...a shell, twenty
millimeter shells up in the air and everything, boy, that's like worse than
being (unintelligible)!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), you get shot at more...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: ...in...in ammo demolition!

Mr. Gobbi: You ain't kidding you! And...so...boy, let me tell you something. I had a weapons carrier; I was in charge of a weapons carrier; I was charge of five guys. And these guys were supposed to go to the...to the railroad at...yard, and unload those cars, and then unload it and bring it and put it in this weapons carrier and bring it to where we were in what they called the "Flats." Well, the...the first load was good. You...you (unintelligible) gun and shot it from a distance...because that thing would blow up; big old heat; big old fire! So the next time they made a load, they dumped the (unintelligible) and the first...where they dumped the first, and there was hot ground; hot ashes and everything. Boy, talk about the thing blowing up! Cans and everything was blowing up in the air; the back end of the pick-up, uh, that weapons carrier...burned; it was burning, and it was about a mile or so before I could put...put the fire out. And by the time I got there, someone had beat me to it, and here comes the Marines...(unintelligible) fire...fire engine and trucks. God-darned fire engines were coming; a truckload of Marines were with fixed bayonets...with...some...somebody could saboteur the island.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: And behind that was...I never seen so god-darned much brass in my whole life!...Admirals, Generals and everything; they was all there!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: And I could hear that Admiral...in charge of the island and says, "Who's in charge of here?!" Boy, I almost barely...I barely made it back and I saluted and says, "I am, Sir." He says, "Well, it's a...I want you guys and your men in

my office when you leave.” And we had to go on a...a ferry; we had to cross a ferry to get to our barracks, so I missed the ferry, and my boys, too. They were...they were interviewed first before me; I was the last one. And the...the guys...they were a bunch of recruits; never been at sea; never had any bad...any kind of bad (unintelligible), so they...their record was clear. So finally he came to me, and they...my boys had already taken off. He said, “Well,” he says, “Joe,” he says, “you’re right; you got a good record here. You’ve been in a lot of battles.” “Yes,” I says, “and I’d like to go back.” “Well,” he says, “well, we know what happened in the Flats; we’re not blaming you at all. That could happen to anybody.” He says, “Besides, we’re going to have the fire department, the Marines, fill some tanks up there full of water.” (Unintelligible) them god-darned tanks are...and them things are blowing up, you can’t put it out with the water, but he...he insisted. And says,...that’s the time when I told him...I told him, “I’d like to go back overseas again,” I says, “I...I’d like to go back aboard ship.” “Well,” he says, “you’ve had enough action,” he says, “we’re not going to send you out.” He says, “What we’re going to do...we’re going to give you permanent shore patrol. You can stay in the...in the...on shore.” He says...I says, “Well, there a Greyhound bus that goes by my sister’s house; she lives in Monterrey.” And I says, “I could get on that by Greyhound bus and come back and (unintelligible). “Well,” he says, “if you stand duty on time, you can go there...that...that Greyhound bus.” They didn’t charge at all; they didn’t charge me no fees at all. I don’t know because I’m shore patrol; I don’t know

why. But that was...that was so easy because some guys had...there was a bar right there close and...on the island, and there was a red (unintelligible) patients from the hospital that had been a little off and they'd go and drink...drink beer and hot liquor.

Ed Metzler: Not a good thing!

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, and not, no, especially as crazy as they were. There was a big old mirror behind the bar with all kinds of...kinds of liquor...(unintelligible); you've...you've seen those big...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, well this guy...that was sitting at the bar seen a guy in the mirror that he didn't like, so he got a bottle and threw it at that guy in the mirror, and thinking he hit him; he was right. He was sitting right beside him, and he broke that big old mirror on the bar. They called us; it took about four of us shore patrol to get him down.

Ed Metzler: Man!

Mr. Gobbi: Because, you know, when they're out of their mind, they're stronger than us.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, they're strong! So we got him and took him back to the hospital, and I don't know what they did to him. But we told them...that the lady had to pay for that mirror...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Gobbi: ...either fix it. And oh, awful things happened out there...out there in the field. They...I...I was in charge of mortar guns; about four or five mortar guns.

They shoot the...big old cans of...when they explode up in the air, there's a big old parachute with a light on it...that's the flares (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: They were...also, they were trying to get rid of them. We shot a whole bunch of them out there, and I guess...up in the air and one landed in the dry grass in a field. "Oh man!" I says, and I had a...I went up there with me and another guy with a shell and tried to put the fire out...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Gobbi: ...and here comes the god-darned Commander in Charge; I could tell him because he was always ride a...rode a red pickup. "Well, here comes Commander (unintelligible); what do we do?" So as he came by there was that road...pretty high and this...'cause we were down low like this and, and I had my...I had...I thought to myself, "Well," says, "he's not...warn me, I'm going to clean this barrel of mine." I didn't know if that one guy stayed there with the gun could shoot...and...and put a capsule in there, and I didn't know it. So I got a rag and a can and...and a broom handle and I went like this...and the god-darned thing, boy, that thing blew up. You could see...I don't know you could be able to see where the slivers went through.

Ed Metzler: Boy, you still got scars from that!

Mr. Gobbi: Yep, yeah, yeah...from that...from that broom handle that blew up...I got...couldn't see, I...I thought I'd gone blind because on account of the explosion. That officer got out there and picked me up and picked me up...kind of like a little baby...

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Gobbi: ...yeah, and put me in the truck. He didn't even stop to call the ambulance.

As we go...as we go down to the hospital, there was a half-way...first aid kit...uh, building; he stopped there. They didn't take me direct to the hospital; they put me in the bed and , boy, when they cleaned my eyes and stuff, I could see the slivers. You could see the...one of them.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Right there on your hand.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah, you could see sliver go through my hand like this and I looked and says, "Boy, I'm going to kill that son-of-a-gun that put that shell in my...in my gun!" "Well," he says, "I...with...with your records I wouldn't do it!"

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Gobbi: I said, "Well heck, look what it did to me!" So the...boy, this is another one. He say, "We're going to have to put you to sleep." Ah heck with that noise! I was so god-darned mad; they had to get a knife to cut here so they could get the sliver out...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and every...and it's a painful thing.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And he says, “Well,” he says, “if you can take what we’re going to do to you, you’re tougher than some of these Marines that we bring.” “Well, I don’t care!” I was madder...I was mad!

Ed Metzler: So what happened?

Mr. Gobbi: I was going to go out there and kill...and I never...after that I never did see the guy; they got him...and got rid of him.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), and quick!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, real quick.

Ed Metzler: Before you got him! (Chuckles)

Mr. Gobbi: They know I was really mad. That’s the time...oh, and another time...we had big old guns...uh, shells, like this. They had a...their parachute is a lot bigger and it goes a lot higher. Well this guy...

Ed Metzler: Now this is still mortar round?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: This guy pulled a pin...was looking at it, and my buddy came to see me to say goodbye ‘cause he was getting...he was retiring from the Navy. He came to say goodbye to me and everything and he looked at this guy and says, “Hey, let me see this shell.” Well, the other god-darned young kid didn’t tell him that he pulled the pin, so he gave it to him, and he broke all his fingers!
(tears).

Ed Metzler: Just when he was leaving?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So off to the hospital for him.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, when I seen him out there, he had a wire going around there and all of his fingers separated.

Ed Metzler: At least it didn't kill him!

Mr. Gobbi: No, I just felt bad because he...he was getting out of the Navy and he...he was...wanted to see me (tears), something else. That was...that god-darned...oh, and then there was another time. I started cleaning the...we had to rake and everything; clean the area where...where we was...we had a...I got a little shack; I had to keep reports of all the trips that we make and...and burning up...what they were burning up and...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and I was...I had a pile of...fire...uh, trash that I was burning and right beside it was a...a barge full of rockets, real clean rockets that got things, and you shoot them with a gun.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: But you didn't...we didn't have a gun. Here comes a god-darned crazy kid from outside to visit this other guy and he got that box of rockets and threw it in the fire. Boy, there was rockets all over the place coming flying...and there was..., 'cause they're flying; they got fins...and one went between my legs...'cause I was getting out of the shack and wondering what the heck's going on out there; *boom, boom*, you know, they were hitting the shed, my shack. Crazy guy (unintelligible)! They wanted to put the thing in there, in

the fire. He just stood there and one came and hit him right here in the temple.

Ed Metzler: Good gracious!

Mr. Gobbi: And boy, and I told him, I said,...let's see, we were out there in the open fields on a rough old road, and I got...wanted to drive one of the weapons carrier and I set him back and put him on the bench and I was following my finger on his artery and every time they bounced on...

(end of tape 2, side A)

Ed Metzler: So you're busy keeping this guy from bleeding to death...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yes.

Ed Metzler: ...while you're...while you're taking him to the hospital...

Mr. Gobbi: To the hospital, yes.

Ed Metzler: ...and every time you hit a bump, your...your hand...

Mr. Gobbi: Right.

Ed Metzler: ...would slip off and he...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh yeah, the artery...the artery...he'd shoot me...

Ed Metzler: ...and he'd shoot blood all over you...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and you looked as bad as he did.

Mr. Gobbi: As bad as he did, yeah, (chuckle). So when we got to the hospital...says, "Who's the patient here?" (chuckle) "He is!" Boy, they...they, I'm telling you!

Ed Metzler: But...but he lived, huh?

Mr. Gobbi: Oh he lived, yeah. They...they saved his...they saved his butt.

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Gobbi: But, that was...so they're...that's the kind of the actions I had.

Ed Metzler: You had as much action in that ammo demolition job as...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, that...that was worse than...boy, ammunition...you blowing up. And...and another thing...that god-darned kids. They had...they had old...old hand grenades and they...they used them for...they'd take the powder out and they'd take the pin off and...and I don't know how in the heck they did it, unscrew it and threw the hand grenade out there so they could make cigarette lighters out of them. Boy, I...I say... that's how they used to play...play around.

Ed Metzler: So were you still in that job when the war ended?

Mr. Gobbi: No, when the war ended, I was a...a...I was assigned to a job. It was...oh, I was...I was assigned to Shore Patrol.

Ed Metzler: The Shore Patrol.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, Shore Patrol, yeah. There was a house in Vallejo; it had a cellar down below and the cellar was the brig. And we...so once again, the guys that were drunk and...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: ...and disorderly and threw them in the...in the brig. And me, a lot of times they would sober up and I'd say, "You guys go straight to your headquarters, I'll let you go." And they liked that so they'd go to the nearest restaurant and get me...bring me back a hamburger.

Ed Metzler: Well, they were nice enough to do that, you know!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it was, yeah, and I appreciated it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: They were really nice.

Ed Metzler: So how did you feel when you heard the war was over?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I felt good because at least a lot of good men didn't die. I lost a lot of good friends; I lost one in...in Normandy. He had just hit the beach and he...we both had the same birthday, and he was from the same...from Oceanside, too. I sure felt bad about him.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Gobbi: But that was rough. And I lost my brother, too; he was in the Eighth Air Force in Germany.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: He...he was a...a fighter pilot that...he used to go and...go up in the air and follow the big bombers...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...they...while the other Germans that could come and attack the bombers...

Ed Metzler: He'd jump them?

Mr. Gobbi: ...yeah, he'd jump them, yeah.

Ed Metzler: He must have flown a P-51 then maybe.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, he did.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. He came back...he landed on a farm he said, and he...something happened with the engine and it wouldn't run, and a lot of his buddies had

seen him down below and they were going to give him a ride and he...he waved them away; he...he said he was alright. But what happened was...that farmer that had...when he landed...must have killed him because they never did find him; never did find him again.

Ed Metzler: So he never came back from the war?

Mr. Gobbi: No, never came back and never got married, and he was young and had...educated himself in college and...

Ed Metzler: What a shame.

Mr. Gobbi: He did...he did a...lot of...he was a nice guy.

Ed Metzler: When you were onboard the Gambier Bay, did you write letters back home?

Mr. Gobbi: Yes, I usually write some, but...the old...the old man could care less whether I...I wrote or not. He...he didn't care. You know, my dad was something else. When I...but when I was born, my mother passed away, and he accused me of killing my mother. I was...how dumb can that be?

Ed Metzler: That doesn't have any logic.

Mr. Gobbi: It don't, but he...he had it in his head; he hadn't had somebody to blame, I guess. I don't know, but he didn't care. Let me tell you the time when my ship went down. I went...I said, "Well, I'm going to go home." From San Francisco I got on...aboard a...a train and came to Oceanside. From Oceanside to where I lived was three miles long and three miles away; I walked and I seen a lot of the guys. They just waved...and like there was nothing to it, and it took me quite awhile to get to my house by walking. And

I said, "What the heck," but I...I didn't even stay there for my whole leave, you know, I just came back to San... San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: So you had a sister there, didn't you...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I had a sister, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...in...in Berkeley, I think you said.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, Berkeley.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. But...well then...

Ed Metzler: So did you stay in the war...in the military...in the Navy after the war was over or did you...?

Mr. Gobbi: For awhile, yeah, I stayed.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause you had six years when you signed up (laughter).

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah. Well, I...I was pretty right, I said, "Give me all six." I figured it was going to take about that long to beat them Japs, but...

Ed Metzler: So you continued in your Shore Patrol...

Mr. Gobbi: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ...position?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And did you...after your six years were up, did you leave the Navy?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I left the Navy; I wished I'd of stayed.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I was getting along good with everybody, and everybody liked me and I...I should of stayed 'cause my dad could care less.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: He...he could care less whether I came home or not.

Ed Metzler: Hmm. How do you feel about the Japanese after all these years?

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I think they learned their lesson...from us.

Ed Metzler: They sure did.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah. I think...(unintelligible) drop their bomb because they were going to...they were going to do the same thing. See, they would have had a hold of it.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Gobbi: And they came pretty close to getting it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, plus it saved a lot of the guys who...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...would have had to invade.

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, oh yeah; it would have killed a lot of our men, so I'm glad it's over with.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Do you ever think...

Mr. Gobbi: But...

Ed Metzler: ...sorry, go ahead.

Mr. Gobbi: I'm sorry about those guys in Ku...where they're fighting now and...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, in Iraq and...

Mr. Gobbi: ...yeah, Iraq and getting hurt...

Ed Metzler: ...Afghanistan.

Mr. Gobbi: ...getting killed and everything...for what? They're not even making any gain; same way with...you got Vietnam; same way with Korea.

Ed Metzler: (Sigh), yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: There's no...we didn't make...no gains at all.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Do you ever have any nightmares or think about...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, yeah, fact, almost every night. I'm going to tell you the one about the...I'm going to tell you something about a...a nightmare. I had a dream when my ship went...had...had gone down that I was in the water swimming; I had...a Mae West jacket. A ship came alongside of me and I looked in the fantail...see what kind of flag that was; it was a Japanese flag.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: But aboard ship, I could hear two guys, two Japanese speaking good English, and I think, "Well, they got me aboard." I said, "I know you!" I said, "You're...you're Benny Nakano (sp?)! You...you know we went to school together." It wasn't Nakano; it was another Japanese...could speak English, and I says, "What the heck are you doing on this ship?!" "Well," he says, "we came over from States," he said, "to visit our grandma." It was in December, so the..., "for Christmas, but when the war started they...they grabbed us and told they...they were going to put us aboard ship." Same way with Tokyo Rose; she was from the States.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: And...but she could help and...say...propaganda. What I liked about Tokyo Rose...they used to put on big, pop...popular...music.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, at least you got some music out of the deal!

Mr. Gobbi: So, yeah right!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: I would...we could...all that propaganda, she loves it. We, being Americans, everyday (unintelligible) would be...(unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: She didn't know what the heck, but she had to say something. And...so anyway, this (unintelligible) says...after I got aboard that ship, I says, "Hey, where are we going?" I see we're going back to Japan, I said, "Forget you!" That's when I woke up! (laughter).

Ed Metzler: That's when you woke up! (laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, it was either that jump off the ship!

Mr. Gobbi: Right, yeah!

Ed Metzler: One of the two. (laughter)

Mr. Gobbi: I don't know...go on to something else. Yeah, I get night...nightmares all...most of the time. The wife tells me I'm almost getting used to it, but...ah, she told my doctors that...but...well, "that's to be happening...let them happen," she said. They don't both...I don't even know it sometimes that I'm having a nightmare until she tells me.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah, she tells you you had a bad night and you didn't even know it, huh?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, she tells me, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: I don't have that problem...just to say...that I'm sorry that that happened.

Ed Metzler: Well, you went through a lot though.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, sure did.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: And I don't know how...how in the heck I made it.

Ed Metzler: But you did.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, I came pretty close to not making it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Five minutes! Went out there giving those guys a chance to get out of there. I...I wanted them to come with me; they would...they would have been a lot safer.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: But they wouldn't do it.

Ed Metzler: Well, but you never know.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, boy, and I had some good buddies among...among them, and good...gun crew. Boy, they were automatically passing the ammunition and that (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Working like a real team.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, like a...like a good team.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Hell, Stoner, he was a...what do they call that...he was in the middle...right hand side...a trainer; he was a trainer, and I was a...a gun pointer and trigger man on the forty millimeters.

Ed Metzler: So then you had a loader; I guess an ammunitions guy...

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and...

Mr. Gobbi: First...when we first got those guns, they had...a red light and a green light. When the red lights came, you ceased firing. When the green light came, you...how was it...we commenced firing. Anyway, we would do a lot of shooting and I was in (chuckles)...the Gunnery Officer told me, says, "Hey, Joesey, what the heck is the idea you...not stopping from shooting?!" He says, "You're supposed to stop when the light goes on."

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: "Well," I says "I couldn't see the light because on account of...so much smoke from the bullets...shells," that I couldn't...as I...

Ed Metzler: You couldn't see, yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...couldn't see the light. So that's the reason they gave me those phones.

Ed Metzler: So they could talk to you.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, yeah. They could...have bigger helmets.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: Kind of bigger helmet. Good thing I had it because...one piece of shrapnel got struck...stuck in my...into my helmet...about...pretty good size, so when the general quarters was over with, I kept that piece of shrapnel and the chain to my dog tag came loose, so I took and...and put it in my locker. So the day (unintelligible) well, I had the twelve to four gun watch and you...you can't go and leave your watch because...especially when you're under combat, so there...when the ship went down...there goes my...

Ed Metzler: It went right along with it!

Mr. Gobbi: ...yeah.

Ed Metzler: Oh my goodness.

Mr. Gobbi: And then if they would have killed me, they wouldn't have even known who in the heck I was (laughter).

Ed Metzler: My gosh! You didn't even have your dog tags on!

Mr. Gobbi: No, I didn't have my dog tags.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Gobbi: And...and my piece of shrapnel, I wanted to keep it for a souvenir...and that went down.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Gobbi: Crazy things like that, but I'm glad it's over with and I'm glad we won. And...and I'm not sad. I...I gave my Harley to a friend of mine; I said, "When you see me next time, give me a hundred dollars and you...and that motorcycle's yours." Same way with...I had a Model A, Coup, with a rumble seat, and real small red...red wheels; it was a cute little thing. I...I give that away. When I...that's what happens to me when I get mad, I give everything away.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Gobbi: And the wife says, she says, "You don't stop to think." But I...I did think...I wanted to get going.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well what other things can we talk about while we've got you on a roll here, Joe?

Mr. Gobbi: Well...

Ed Metzler: Have we pretty well covered it or are there other things that...

Mr. Gobbi: ...pretty well covers it. Oh! I told you about...we knocked...or we sank four Japanese carriers.

Ed Metzler: What...

Mr. Gobbi: Remember when...

Ed Metzler: Not at the Midway?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: You talking about Midway?

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, right. They were going to Midway. Admiral Halsey, not Admiral Halsey, but Admiral Nimitz got all the carriers out in the Pacific, little ones and big ones, to stand by...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: ...and knock them Japanese...we sent four of them, but you know, we lost quite a few of ours because the poor guys ran out of ammunition, uh out of gas...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: ...coming back.

Ed Metzler: Now let's go back to the battle where your ship was sunk. What's your feeling about the fact that Halsey had taken his...

Mr. Gobbi: Oh, his...

Ed Metzler: ...his fleet and had gone up north...

Mr. Gobbi: That's right!

Ed Metzler: ...and left you guys pretty much...

Mr. Gobbi: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: ...holding the bag?

Mr. Gobbi: That's right. Well, what happened was...Admiral...the General...Admiral of the Japanese put a decoy on...on Admiral Halsey, and sent them chasing a bunch of Japanese, no good...somewheres, and they didn't even do any good; they...they didn't even catch up and left the area. By the time we got there, it was vacant; nobody there but us, yeah.

Ed Metzler: And a couple of destroyers got sunk, too.

Mr. Gobbi: Yes, they did, yeah. Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: I think the...the [USS] Johnston and, you know, there was a couple more.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, you've got to give those poor guys credit because they went head on with the Japanese...big ships.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Gobbi: A little ole destroyer against a big old battleship; that's something!

Ed Metzler: That's not a fair fight.

Mr. Gobbi: Heck no!

Ed Metzler: That's a feather weight against a heavy weight.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, that's right! That's...so they were loaded, and those god-darned Japanese had the heavy guns; eighteen inch shells on that big Yamoto!

Ed Metzler: Yeah! That's a big shell!

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah, it...you ain't kidding; the...the biggest ship of the...of all the countries.

Ed Metzler: I heard that some of those shells were...that...actually...that hit one of the destroyers went right through the destroyer; they were armor piercing.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And they went right *through* and never exploded; just came out the other side.

Mr. Gobbi: I wouldn't doubt it; yeah, I wouldn't doubt it! Yeah, we had a lot of shells come right through our ship. Of course the...the metal on that ship of ours wasn't very thick; it wasn't very thick.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), yeah, yeah. Well, okay, I think I've pretty well worn you out here.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I'm glad that I got it out of my system.

Ed Metzler: Well, I want to...thank you for coming today to share your experiences.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, I appreciate it...and...

Ed Metzler: I want to...

Mr. Gobbi: I know you understand a lot of this.

Ed Metzler: Well, I always understand it better after I talk to you guys, so... 'cause you were there.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And I want to thank you for what you did for our country.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, that's...that's when you know that you love your country.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Gobbi: I...when I heard about that Japanese trying to...Pearl Harbor, boy, that made me mad!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Sure did!

Ed Metzler: That was sure a...that was sure a good sign when the day after Pearl Harbor day...the places where you register for the...to join the Army and the Navy was flooded with people.

Mr. Gobbi: Yes, oh it was; it was.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, so that's how everybody felt.

Mr. Gobbi: I'm the one that volunteered...so...like I did, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Gobbi: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well I'm going to shut it down, but thanks again, Joe, for spending the time with us today.

Mr. Gobbi: Well, sure glad to be able to talk to you; you understand...how that is.

Ed Metzler: I...yeah, I do, and I want to thank you again.

(end of interview)

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