

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Telephone Interview with

Mr. Edward John “Ed” Kozak

Date of Interview: July 23, 2007

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Telephone Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: Today is the 23rd of July, 2007. I am interviewing Mr. Ed Kozak by telephone; he is located in Shreveport, Louisiana. I am located at...in Fredericksburg, Texas at the Nimitz Museum. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this historical site. Let me start, Ed, by thanking you for spending the time on the phone today to share your experiences with us and let me get you started by having you introduce yourself and tell us when and where you were born, and we'll take it from there.

Mr. Kozak: I'm Ed Kozak; my official legal name is Edward John Kozak. I was born in Chicago, Illinois, Cook County. I resided in Illinois in Chicago...

Ed Metzler: And what is your birth date?

Mr. Kozak: November the 17th, 1925.

Ed Metzler: Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Kozak: I resided in Chicago, more or less; I...I was in show business and I traveled all over the country in show business.

Ed Metzler: Now...now what...what did your parents do?

Mr. Kozak: My parents; well, my mother was my mother and proctor in studying; my father was a professional musician.

Ed Metzler: Ah ha!

Mr. Kozak: When he was a young man, he was sole accordionist with John Philip Sousa.

Ed Metzler: Huh!

Mr. Kozak: My grandfather was a celebrated coronet soloist; reputed to be one of the ten best coronetists in the country.

Ed Metzler: So this ran in the family?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes, even my great-grandfather came over here from Europe as a flugelhorn player.

Ed Metzler: My gosh! So in your childhood then you moved around the country as your father played and did his thing in different spots, is that correct?

Mr. Kozak: Well, he was in the vaudeville circuit, see?

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Well, years earlier when he was a young man, he was in what was known as Chautauqua; did you ever hear of that?

Ed Metzler: I have.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, well he was in Chautauqua, and the man that gave the speeches in Chautauqua when he was on that one was William Jennings Bryant.

Ed Metzler: I've heard of him, too!

Mr. Kozak: Yes, sir! Matter of fact, the man that he was in court with from Kentucky, the one that started this whole thing about...uh, let's see, the...the Biblical thing, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: The...the trial?

Ed Metzler: Oh, oh the Scopes Trial?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Scopes resided in Shreveport after the trial and died here about three years ago.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So what...what did you do for schooling; were you home schooled or what?

Mr. Kozak: No, not exactly. I...I would go to school while I was in town, and then when I was booked out of town they would give me assignments and my mother would help me with those. When I came back, I would take tests and that would be all there was to it.

Ed Metzler: I see, and you...and you managed to work your way through the whole of high school and everything that way?

Mr. Kozak: Well, not only did I work my way through basic schooling, but the state teachers in grade school went to my father and said, "We want him to skip a grade."

Ed Metzler: Hoo!

Mr. Kozak: And he said, “Why?” Said, “Well, his traveling has given him so much education we don’t think it would be worth his while to stay here; he already knows this, so let’s skip him to the next grade.” (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Isn’t that great?!

Ed Metzler: That is.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. So I went through grade school and then high school, and when I was in junior college that’s when I was getting into orchestra. See, my dad wanted to make sure that I had plenty of experience in all different facets of the music business.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: The music business made great, great changes; tremendous changes. When I got into it as a boy, I was six years old.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And back then a name in vaudeville would make as much as two thousand dollars a week.

Ed Metzler: And that’s big bucks back then!

Mr. Kozak: Oh, my gracious! That would probably be worth fifty thousand today.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: I made a good salary in that, and we had perks. The railroad companies would come and pick up our luggage including my instrument which was in a big trunk; no charge.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: Take it to the railroad depot; no charge for excess baggage; that was in *those* days.

Ed Metzler: Man!

Mr. Kozak: You go into a town and restaurants, if you allow the restaurant to put your picture in the window, they would give you a discount on food. And you always got a discount at the hotel for the room, so those were the...the golden days! (chuckles)

Ed Metzler: Yeah! (chuckles)

Mr. Kozak: And...

Ed Metzler: Well now when did you complete your high school studies then?

Mr. Kozak: I finished high school, let me see, in '43...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: ...and I got into junior college...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: ...as an engineering student.

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

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: What do you remember about Pearl Harbor Day and when that happened?

Mr. Kozak: Oh gracious, I can visualize where I was on that Sunday.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about that.

Mr. Kozak: Yes. That was December 7th, and we lived...I can't...I don't know why I have the memory that I have at the age of eighty-one, but I do, god willing...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: ...but we lived at 2701 Kennelworth in Berwyn, Illinois; that's a suburb of Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And I remember in the living room...listening to this radio, and we heard about the disastrous attack on Pearl Harbor, and we were frightened that my dad was going to have to go in the service, see.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: As it turned out, he was a little bit too old, and I was a little too young, but I made it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Right (cough).

Mr. Kozak: And I went to work in...La Salle Hotel and the Bismarck Hotel downtown getting experience playing in orchestras.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: My dad had me play in Armond Hand's (sp?) Military Bank and then in the orchestras and reading music and sight reading and playing in shows and playing vaudeville; I was a vaudeville drummer at the age of sixteen.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I was going to ask you what, you know, what instruments you play.

Mr. Kozak: Well, I play piano; I play Marimba (unintelligible) harp and drums.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: It...when I first came to Shreveport, I...soon after that I became the head of the percussion department in the Shreveport Symphony. And I taught at Centenary College while I was going to school...I taught. And then I taught at

Northwestern University (unintelligible) giving clinics in various places including Juilliard School of Music in New York.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, now when you started, Ed, you...you mentioned engineering school I think.

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about *that*. Now this all happened before the war started, right?

Mr. Kozak: No, that started...

Ed Metzler: Oh that's right; that was after the war started.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. We...I was playing at the La Salle Hotel, I'll never forget, in Chicago with an orchestra by...whose leader was named Jose Manzanares; that's where I got a lot of experience playing the Latin music...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...which came into great use later on when I went with Xavier Cugat after the war.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: But there was a man by the name of Wilkie (sp?) who was the Vice President of the DoALL Corporation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Perhaps you've seen the machines that they produce. It looks like...it's a...well, if it's standing up, it looks like a...a band saw.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: But then you can lay it down and make it into a...a drill and you can do this and you can make it (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, now what...what was the name again?

Mr. Kozak: The DoALL.

Ed Metzler: DoALL, yeah okay.

Mr. Kozak: The man had a marimba, and he *loved* the marimba. Well, he and his wife would come into the...the room that I was playing in at the hotel, and he asked me if I would consider going to Minneapolis. He would pay me, now this is the truth...it sounds fantastic, but he said he would pay me the regular salary of a normal engineer. Yeah, I could go to college up there and become an engineer if I would just teach him how to play marimba.

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kozak: What an offer!

Ed Metzler: No kidding, I guess you couldn't refuse that one!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, but I saw a motion picture with Robert Taylor in it, and he was standing on the bridge of a destroyer smoking a pipe in his trench coat, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: And I thought, "Oh, that's for me! I mean, you know, why should these married men have to go into service; I'm single, I'll go!"

Ed Metzler: So you...

Mr. Kozak: So I enlisted at the age of seventeen.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Kozak: And...

Ed Metzler: So you turned down the offer to go be an engineer?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Uh, I love mathematics, but you know, that...well, whatever...I wasn't intrigued by it. So I...took tests.

Ed Metzler: So where...where did you go to enlist?

Mr. Kozak: In Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: I took tests, and my background and mathematics and being in junior college and all that, they offered me a commission, but I had to lose twenty pounds in order to qualify as an Ensign.

Ed Metzler: Well, let me go back; where did you go to junior college?

Mr. Kozak: That was in Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Okay alright, I just wanted to get that...

Mr. Kozak: That was Morton...Morton High School, Morton Junior College.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: That's a funny thing about that school. J. Sterling Morton was named after the salt magnate...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh!

Mr. Kozak: ...and he never gave them a dime! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter) Now why did you need to lose twenty pounds; were you a little chubby or what?

Mr. Kozak: I don't...yeah, I was kind of overweight.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: In fact, my mother was a very good cook.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: So I tried to lose the weight, but before I lost the twenty pounds I turned eighteen, and the Navy said, "We'll take you anyway!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), oh no, so you lost it for no...for nothing!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, so I got into the Navy and went through boot camp. And while I was in boot camp, Eddie Peabody...do you remember him?

Ed Metzler: No, I don't.

Mr. Kozak: Well, Eddie Peabody was a...very fine banjo player in vaudeville; I worked with Eddie back in, oh, '35, '36 on the WLS Barn Dance in Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Hmm! WLS being the local radio station, right?

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible words), yes.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: He was very, very popular with the farmers in the Middle West.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: They had a theater, Eighth Street Theater, which was right next to the great big hotel in Chicago on...on Michigan Avenue.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: It was called the Eighth Street Theater, and it was owned by WLS Radio Station which incidentally stood for the...the owner of the station was "World's Largest Store," Sears and Roebuck.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: Interesting uh?

Ed Metzler: It is, it is.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, so...let me think about...

Ed Metzler: So let's see, you were...you...you took the...the test for entrance?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: And...and they offered you a commission?

Mr. Kozak: At first, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Right, so what...what happened then?

Mr. Kozak: Well, I was too heavy.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you lost the weight?

Mr. Kozak: I lost some, but I didn't lose enough.

Ed Metzler: And then you turned eighteen and then you didn't need to lose the weight and...

Mr. Kozak: Right, so I went in.

Ed Metzler: ...so you...so what...so you went...where did you do your training?

Mr. Kozak: Great Lakes.

Ed Metzler: Great Lakes, right there on the lake, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And...and Eddie Peabody a the Commander there.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: And I knew Eddie from show business because I'd worked with him as a banjo player, see? We were on Barn Dance together with Red Foley and LuLu Belle and Scot and Scotty and..., uh, let's see, I can't think of his name right off hand, but he was the comic and he later on was on Green Acres.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, you remember the comic on Green Acres?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it's Eddie Arnold, wasn't it?

Mr. Kozak: No, no, no; the guy...that was the...lead man. This was the guy that had the...the voice that fluctuated so much; it was way up in the high registers.

Ed Metzler: Oh, I...I don't know.

Mr. Kozak: You don't know?

Ed Metzler: No, no.

Mr. Kozak: Well, I may think of it later on. But he was...he was a big name in Hollywood...in...in that show, yeah, and he was the comic on WLS. So George Gobel was on the show with me...and George...George played ukulele at that time; he was four years my senior. George played ukulele and sang.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: He was too small to use a guitar, and I played xylophone...marimba, whatever.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And I was on that show every once in awhile; they wanted me to be on permanently. My dad...my dad wouldn't allow it; he says, "No, you got to go to school."

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: So I did go to vaudeville and played all over the country; I played...oh, I remember...playing in California in San Francisco; I played the Golden Gate Theater.

Ed Metzler: Now this was after the war, right?

Mr. Kozak: No, no, no!

Ed Metzler: So this was all...after you've gone in?

Mr. Kozak: No, this was before I went (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Ah, this was when you were still a child...

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...practically; yeah, yeah, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Am I confusing?

Ed Metzler: No, no, no; I'm just...it...there's just a lot here to get my mind around.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. And I played the Golden Gate in San Francisco; I played the...oh gosh what was it...in Los Angeles I played the...the Orpheum. And while I was at the Orpheum...uh, one of the names on the show was this fellow that always played butlers in motion pictures...

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Kozak: ...tall, thin, gaunt-looking fellow?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: You know who I mean?

Ed Metzler: I *think* I do.

Mr. Kozak: Later on he had...a...a series of restaurant things all over the country selling fish.

Ed Metzler: My gosh; now that doesn't ring a bell.

Mr. Kozak: But anyway, I was on the bill and a scout from MGM saw me and had me go out to the studio, and they liked what I did, so they signed me to a contract to do a stint with Judy Garland in a movie in 1939 called *The Junior Broadway Melodies of 1939*.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: But it was never made because they couldn't get Shirley Temple's release from her studio to be Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh.

Mr. Kozak: So they put Judy in and had to dress her down a little bit because she was already maturing.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So that was the story there. But I had...I had fun, and I'd rather see Judy on screen than myself (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). So is...

Mr. Kozak: I got your (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Let's go back...let's go back to...your basic training.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Take me through that and then your...how get, you know, where you went from there.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. The name of that announcer was Kirby.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: I can't think of his first name, but it was Kirby, and *tall, gaunt* fellow; he must have been six foot seven, six foot eight, something like that...probably played basketball.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: But he was the announcer, and I did two shows for Eddie Peabody – On Target and Meet your Navy. Now I may have a copy of that broad...of those

broadcasts here in the paraphernalia that I still have. I don't know, I'll have to search through all these records.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, now you did this after you were in the military?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes.

Ed Metzler: So I want to go...go back to...when you were in basic training. Now, you told me...

Mr. Kozak: Yes, because I was in basic training when I did this.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay.

Mr. Kozak: Eddie had me get the instrument up there, the marimba...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and my folks shipped it up to me, and I did those broadcasts. And then Eddie wanted me to go into the morale building business; he was going to put me into shows.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Go all around the country, but somehow I got into Wright Junior College which was radio tech. See, I had signed another...I had taken another test which made me an electrician; I wasn't an electrician. I had a lot of math and that's what put me over in that.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So I got into that school, and I just liked it. I didn't like looking at those little resistors with the little colors of bands around them, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), right.

Mr. Kozak: And Eddie was trying to get me out of there, he says, “Come on, *fail* that course so that you can be reclassified; we can get you back here to Great Lakes and put you in the shows.” So I took the tests, and I looked down...and I couldn’t just put a wrong answer down; I had to make a logical answer, you know? So I’d go...I’d do the thing right and then I’d go back and figure out what I could put...in a negative sign instead of a positive or something like that...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: ...and make a logical mistake. So the Captain called me in, the Commander, he said, “Kozak, what’s wrong? At first you were a hundred...student; you made a hundred on all tests; now you’re making sixties and seventies; what’s wrong?” I said, “Well, I don’t really like doing this anymore.” So he said, “Alright; until you’re reclassified I’m going to have you take care of the morale here.”

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: So, I had two...groups – one at 08:00 and one at 13:00...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and they had to do a certain amount of cleaning up, about four or five guys. So this is the kind of Petty Officer I was; I was very petty.

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter).

Mr. Kozak: I...I had a list, and I wrote their names down; I said, “Alright, Jones, you do this; Smith, you do that,” and so on and so on and so on. I said, “When you

finish, come get me and I'll inspect it. If it's okay, get lost," but I mean don't get found.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: You're through for the day, see? (chuckles)

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Well, about an hour and a half after we started work, the Chief Petty Officer would go around with white gloves and he couldn't find anything wrong with my assignment, but he couldn't find anybody working; it used to drive him crazy! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned!

Mr. Kozak: So I...put on shows. Now, we had some people from show business in there. Alvino Rey who had an orchestra, he was married to a...a woman who sang in a group of four sisters; I've forgotten their name.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh. Now all of this is going on at Great Lakes?

Mr. Kozak: No, this is at Wright Junior College in Chicago...

Ed Metzler: Gottcha!

Mr. Kozak: ...where I went aft...after Great Lakes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: And I put on shows. We found...that there was a magician in a...in a group every once in awhile or singers or this or that...dancers, and we put on a little vaudeville show. And I...I rented a movie and each month we got a new crew of people in to the school; we put on a...a vaudeville show with the movie, and they had a ball.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: But finally the Exec didn't like the posh thing that I had going, and he put me in for reclassification. Now at that time, Boomers (sp?) which was the...the Navy terminology for laws coming out...rules...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...determined that anybody who was talented in music had to go to the west coast.

Ed Metzler: I see.

Mr. Kozak: So I went to San Diego, and I was assigned to be the Coxswain on a Higgins boat.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Kozak: Well, I was six, four at the time; I'm a little shorter now, but I was six, four then and I couldn't imagine all that the Marines huddled down under the gunnel and I would be standing up and on a platform beside.

Ed Metzler: You'd be sticking up. (laughter)

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. And I had a problem 'cause I couldn't type fast enough to be a Chaplain's assistant, you see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: (Laughter), so what happened...I caught pneumonia, and I went into the hospital. While I was in the hospital, new orders...came.

Ed Metzler: Now you...now you...you were on the west coast when you caught pneumonia?

Mr. Kozak: Yes, California, sunny California!

Ed Metzler: Okay, so is this San Francisco, San Diego?

Mr. Kozak: San Diego.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. The naval...naval department there.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Uh, they sent me to Washington D.C. The...the rules came out from Boomers that anybody talented in music had to go to Washing D.C. School of Music.

Ed Metzler: Okay, now you're recovered from your pneumonia, right?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay. So were you in the hospital?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Euh!

Mr. Kozak: Uh hum, absolutely.

Ed Metzler: So it took you awhile then because they didn't have the miracle drugs they do...you know.

Mr. Kozak: That's right, that's right.

Ed Metzler: Uhm, okay, so back to Washington D.C.

Mr. Kozak: Right, and then went to the school of music. And when I got there the Chief Petty Officer looked at me said, "Kozak, let's see, what did you ever do in music?" So I told him about my background in vaudeville and being on coast-to-coast radio and so forth and so on, you know.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And he said, “Hey! Great!” He says, “You know, Admiral Nimitz has never had a band before; this is going to be his first band...in his whole career and *you* are his soloist!”

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Kozak: So that’s how that happened, see?

Ed Metzler: I mean...just kind of out of the blue.

Mr. Kozak: Yes. So, wait till you hear this...I took three days; I took all of the final exams ‘cause I’d had music since I was a kid. I studied theory and composition and everything, see? I studied percussion; I studied drums; studied marimba; studied piano, and I took the tests; no problems. I graduated and walked across the stage and shook hands with an Admiral up on the stage, and you know that the Navy lost all of those records?!

Ed Metzler: They lost them?!

Mr. Kozak: I nev...in combat area; I never got credit for going to that school!

Ed Metzler: Durn!

Mr. Kozak: When I got out and went back to college, they said, “Well, we’ve got to give you credit for physical education; you had to have that.” (laughter)

Ed Metzler: They knew you had that, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. But I went out with the band and we got to Pearl Harbor. I...I had a fetish about practicing; I was trained to practice every day.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So I practiced. We got aboard ship...

Ed Metzler: So describe the band to me now; how many and what kind of backgrounds in general.

Mr. Kozak: A usual military band.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: It did have some people of note; I know Bill Clifford was a first-trombone player in there and I saw...I saw Bill again after the war...down at New Orleans. He was the musical director of the show in the Blue Room.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And...he died shortly after that though.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Kozak: But he was a good musician. There was some...I...good men in there for sure!

Ed Metzler: Now had they just recently been formed...this band or this thing go way back or what?

Mr. Kozak: This went back to 1943, '42, '43 something like that.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so they had formed it after the war started?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: That was his first band.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: So how many members?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, I think it was about twenty-two, twenty-three.

Ed Metzler: Alright!

Mr. Kozak: I was one of the percussionist; there were two of us.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And the other one was an Italian boy from New York.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: So, I would go practice every day; set up my marimba...and we had work to do; we had...oh, some...some of us were employed in working on roads, on the surface of roads, or on crating furniture. And I remember I was in the...the area where we were uncrating and the lid came down on my hand...

Ed Metzler: Ow!

Mr. Kozak: ...put a nail right through my right hand.

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, but...that healed. And I would go practice. Well, finally the Admiral came aboard.

Ed Metzler: Okay, now...you're saying coming aboard now?

Mr. Kozak: He came to Guam.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you went to Guam for...you went to Pearl...correct?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, we were shipped out to...to Guam.

Ed Metzler: Okay, you went directly to Guam.

Mr. Kozak: Uh, we were aboard and LSD...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: ...and had two...little escort ships...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...and we had all the secret papers of CINCPAC aboard that boat.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Kozak: Yep. And I...played for the Sunday service. And I remember I...I was in the Captain's cabin discussing with him the kind of music that we were going to do for the next day's service...Saturday evening...when the Radioman came in and told the Captain that we were being followed by a submarine.

Ed Metzler: Oh boy.

Mr. Kozak: So he said, "Well, you go back to your compartment and don't say anything." So I went back to the compartment and GQ hit, you know, general quarters? And all the hatches were secured.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And I looked over at a stanchion and there was an X across (unintelligible) around that thing, and that meant waterline in midships. And I looked at that sucker (laughter) and that spot I saw, you know, for some time!

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Kozak: So, we were followed for three days...as I recall.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Kozak: Uh, on a Sunday now, I was playing the service and marimba has wheels, so as the ship rolled, the marimba would go to starboard or to port and I'd put my foot out and bring it back.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: Now are you on deck or are you inside?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes, yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: On the fore deck.

Ed Metzler: On the fore deck (chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: Yes, you betcha!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), but you managed to keep it under control?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes, yes. So, you know, in...in show business there are many (unintelligible) that you have compete with, you know; have to really get in there and...and make do with what you have.

Ed Metzler: Right. So how happy were you with the performance of the band then; were...did you...?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, the band was good!

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: The band was good, sure, yeah. But my performance gave me some perks...because when the Admiral called down for some music, he couldn't get the whole band in his house, you know?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And they couldn't play requests without music.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And they didn't have that much of a library, but I had a memory of songs that goes way back.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And...I went up with my marimba. He used to call and he'd say..., "Send Kozak up with his zither."

Ed Metzler: Well, I...I think we're leaping ahead. Let me...let me make sure my feeble brain can follow the train here. So, you're on the ship and you go to Guam, so you arrive in Guam...

Mr. Kozak: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: ...and describe to me how you met the...the Admiral.

Mr. Kozak: Well, I didn't meet him for several weeks (unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: Oh, is that right, uh huh; right.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, and...

Ed Metzler: Can you roughly date the arrival in Guam? About when did you arrive...date-wise...uh, year and...?

Mr. Kozak: I went in in March...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...in service.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And I guess this would have been something like...maybe July.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so this is '43?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so mid '43.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Alright. So you were there for...for weeks before you actually... 'cause he was gone, is that correct?

Mr. Kozak: Yes, he hadn't come back from...he hadn't come from Pearl Harbor yet.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: And...

Ed Metzler: So what did you do during those week; you guys practiced or what?

Mr. Kozak: Well, *I* practiced; the band didn't rehearse...not that I remember, but...they played poker. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), drank?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, and exercised and so forth and so on.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: I lost that weight while I was there, you know.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), the weight you *didn't need* to lose?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, right.

Mr. Kozak: And...I practiced. So when the Admiral called for some entertainment, I went up, and he...(unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So he...so he finally arrived in Guam and you...

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Kozak: And he had a house and he had...you can call it a servant, I don't know, you know? It was a...a man in the Navy; a...a black man that was a cook...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...and...at that time, that's where the African Americans...served in the service, as cooks.

Ed Metzler: Right, yep.

Mr. Kozak: And they served the...the officers and they...they served everything in food...thing.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Uhm, I played for the Admiral. He used to call down and say, "Send Kozak down with his zither."

Ed Metzler: His zither!

Mr. Kozak: (Chuckles), yeah, he...he didn't...I don't think that he misnamed it; he's just cheese, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: But anyway, I played and he was very happy that I could play all these requests for people, dignitaries that came to see him.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And when I finished playing, he would take into the galley and tell the Cook, "Give him whatever he wants." Well, what a bonanza! I mean...in the galley, well, at...I mean, where went to eat...that was powdered milk; that was south Pacific butter, you know?

Ed Metzler: Right, right!

Mr. Kozak: It was (unintelligible words), see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And we used to hold up bread to the light and pick out the weevils.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my god!

Mr. Kozak: Cake or cornbread you couldn't do that because it would crumble, so we'd just have a...have a little more nutrition, see?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And...I had fresh milk; (whispering now) the Admiral had a cow! And I'd have fresh milk and ice cream and vegetables that were grown in his garden; anything I wanted, I had. And then after I finished, he would have me sent back to the barracks to the Quonset hut in a jeep with five stars on it!

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kozak: Oh man! That was something else!

Ed Metzler: Now describe to me the...quarters of...of Admiral Nimitz; I mean where...the...the house where he lived.

Mr. Kozak: Uh, (pause) I can't remember the outside.

Ed Metzler: Okay, but it was up high, wasn't it, up on the hill?

Mr. Kozak: Yes, up on a hill, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And...

Ed Metzler: And you guys were...were quartered where...further down by the waterfront or what?

Mr. Kozak: Uh, more or less.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: We passed, again, with the...the place that is now the center of Agana was the...the cesspool area; the...the Japanese used that as a latrine.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. There were still an estimated...we were the first echelon in the group that I came in...before the Admiral came, we were the first echelon of the Navy to hit the island *after* the Marines secured it.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: And...there was estimated at five thousand Japanese in the jungle.

Ed Metzler: Still there?

Mr. Kozak: Yep.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Kozak: And...bone-head Kozak didn't know all...all...you know, I didn't realize all this stuff, so we got a hold of a jeep, a buddy of mine and I, and we rode down to take a little joy ride...down the beach!

Ed Metzler: Uh hum!

Mr. Kozak: We...used to collect little shells and make jewelry out of it for our friends and loved ones, you know?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Uh, all of a sudden, we saw an orange flag stuck in the sand; I said, "What's that for?" He said, "I don't know." Well, we went a little bit farther and heard *bing!* and a shell came right by us, see, we were being shot at!

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kozak: So we turned around and went out of there...as fast as we could!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you didn't tell me about your combat experience (laughter)!

Mr. Kozak: (Laughter), well, I was told later on that when we played for troops, we would move the band out to a certain that they were bivouacked in, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And I played marimba on the truck; they just kept it on the truck and I played. I was told the...probably the Jap...some Japanese were up in...up in the palm trees as snipers...

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh.

Mr. Kozak: And I'm glad that they enjoyed the music!

Ed Metzler: Well, it's good they did, otherwise they might have picked you off!

Mr. Kozak: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: That is something! So anyhow, you turned tail and...went back with...

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Now another time...I was almost shot by one of our own men.

Ed Metzler: Oh, tell me about that.

Mr. Kozak: Because it was about midnight; I came back from a work detail and we were supposed to have...the uniform of the day was a pith helmet; well, it was night time and it was warm and I didn't, you know, who needs a pith helmet on when it's dark?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So I took the thing off, and all of a sudden, I heard *click*, and that was the sound of the bullet going in an M-1.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And I stopped with one leg up in the air...(chuckle)

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Kozak: ... and the guard told me later on that if I had taken another step, he had me in his sights; he was going to shoot me.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh! Now this was when you were coming in?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Oh gosh.

Mr. Kozak: From a work detail. Now we stayed in Quonset huts.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And every once in awhile, it wasn't every week or anything like that, but every once in awhile, we would wake up and find that there were twenty guys in a Quonset hut that were murdered. The Japanese could come in and how they did it, we don't know, but they were able to cut that screening and get in and murder everybody in that Quonset hut!

Ed Metzler: How many times did that happen?!

Mr. Kozak: I don't recall. But what we did, to compete with that...we tied ropes around the bottom of the cots at the aisle...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and we all slept...with our hand around a hunting knife. Ah, we figured that if a Jap came in and not see anything, he might trip on that rope and wake one of us up.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: That was it. At that time, we were able to use...our hunting knives. Now shortly after that Eleanor Roosevelt came to the islands and...and there was an air raid, and she got...into an air raid shelter as I...as I was told. And somebody smelled her perfume, and made a...a course remark about, "Smells like so and so in here," you know?

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: And...and she became very upset, and so she made a ruling that black servicemen could not be segregated.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: So from that time on, aboard ship, we had black and whites together.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Well...

Ed Metzler: And you think she did that kind of out of retaliation for the way she was treated or...?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, I would think so.

Ed Metzler: Is that right?!

Mr. Kozak: I...I don't know about this mixed statement being recorded; I'll tell you...you use your judgment.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Aboard ship coming back...from Guam, after the war was over, we came back (pause) let me see, that was...that was after I came back from the...with the [USS] Missouri to Pearl...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...and after that, we went aboard ship to go back to the States. And there was a black man that was...right on...on my level in the...in the bunks...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...on the opposite of the aisle, and he hadn't taken a shower in quite awhile.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: And so I ended up taking my mattress up on deck and I slept on deck.

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. While I was on deck, though, I went back one night...I went back to see my buddy...back in the fantail, and he was going to have a party. He had brought some liquid refreshment aboard (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), right.

Mr. Kozak: And I went back and...had a little tête-à-tête with him. There was a storm brewing, and as I got on deck...the waves were lashing across the deck.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And...I hit an oily spot and slipped and was...very bad...because in that one spot there was no railing; it had been taken down or disappeared or whatever...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...but there was a chain, I mean a rope, from one stanchion...that was on the deck and I grabbed hold of that and that kept me from going overboard.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Kozak: So back to Pearl.

Ed Metzler: Well, back to Guam.

Mr. Kozak: Oh, back to Guam, sorry.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And where did I leave off?

Ed Metzler: Well, uh, let's see, you...you said that Admiral Nimitz called you up, and you...you described, you know, after you had played for him how you could go into the...

Mr. Kozak: The galley.

Ed Metzler: ...kitchen and get anything you wanted to eat...

Mr. Kozak: Right, yes.

Ed Metzler: ...and then...the bit...the bit down where you got shot at.

Mr. Kozak: Right.

Ed Metzler: Tell me what kind of man Admiral Nimitz was; what was your relationship with him and your experience?

Mr. Kozak: Well, when we first got Guam, there was...the Commanding Officer was a four stripper who took an apparent dislike to musicians.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: He said, "You guys have long hair!"

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: "Cut it off!"

Ed Metzler: Did you have long hair?

Mr. Kozak: Well, not *long*; I mean just like you normally wear today.

Ed Metzler: Right, okay.

Mr. Kozak: I never really had long hair, you know, but I mean...it wasn't a crew cut...until he got a hold of it!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: And he made all of us go in and get a GI cut...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: ...which we didn't like.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So, when the Admiral came aboard, our Chief Petty Officer told him about this, and he said, "He did *what*?! Well, we'll fix..." The next thing we knew, this Captain was on a slow boat to China.

Ed Metzler: No kidding?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, he got rid of him. That's the kind of guy Admiral Nimitz was; he took care of his men.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: He was loved by his men, yes sir!

Ed Metzler: Hmm! So do you remember the first time you met him?

Mr. Kozak: No, no, I was just...up at the Admiral's office, you know? And I played for the funeral of Roosevelt with the band.

Ed Metzler: Real...?

Mr. Kozak: I have a photograph of that.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Now where were you at that time?

Mr. Kozak: I (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: Yes sir.

Ed Metzler: So how did Admiral Nimitz use the band? That is to say, was it just for his personal entertainment...uh,...

Mr. Kozak: Oh, no, no, no.

Ed Metzler: ...was it just...

Mr. Kozak: Just played various affairs. A dignitary would come along and, you know, we'd play *Ruffles and Flourishes*, and play...some marches and what have you.

Ed Metzler: So he would have dignitaries and visitors there?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, I'm sure.

Ed Metzler: Like...what kind? I mean...?

Mr. Kozak: Oh gosh, I don't know; I wasn't interested in anything like that.

Ed Metzler: Right. And so, what...would have a seated dinner or something like that and then...?

Mr. Kozak: No, we played the formal things out in the open.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: I...I recall...there was a hospital ship that was struck by a kamikaze and a bunch of people died.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And we played the funeral service for that.

Ed Metzler: And you did that...that was at Guam still?

Mr. Kozak: Yes, that was in Guam.

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Kozak: So, we had...a Methodist minister; a Presbyterian or something like that, and a Catholic priest...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and a Jewish rabbi and they all spoke, and they were vociferous. You know, I mean they just talked and talked and talked. Well, here we were on Guam where the average temperature was like a hundred and ten degrees in the shade.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Kozak: And we had our white uniforms on, and the little white hats instead of the pith helmets.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Kozak: And we standing there ready to play...in formation.

Ed Metzler: For how long would you guess?

Mr. Kozak: Quite a long time when you...you don't realize that now because when we got the Commander...(unintelligible) and play, I reached down and picked up the bass drum and hooked it on and proceeded to fall over the bass drum; I fainted.

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kozak: So they carried me into the bus.

Ed Metzler: So you kind of passed out, huh?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes, for sure!

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Kozak: From the heat. And...

Ed Metzler: They carried you into the bus and then what?

Mr. Kozak: That was end...the end of my playing session (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), you did...you...no more music notes from you that day!

Mr. Kozak: No, no, no!

Ed Metzler: But...but you bounced back from that?

Mr. Kozak: Oh sure. Speaking of bouncing, we had...a peg (sp?)horn looks like a French horn but it's not; it's called a flugelhorn.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: I think it's...mela...no, it's mellophone, and it has piston valves instead of the rotary valves; that's the only difference in the thing.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Well we had a guy, a little short fellow, that played peghorn, and in marching parade, he was right in front of me; remember six, four...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: ...and I carried a bass drum.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: On a right turn, I was very dangerous; this poor guy finally learned to take the...the ...take the valve, I mean the horn out of his...out of his possession or out of his face...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...because my bass drum would hit the bell. You know the bell of a French horn is put underneath the...the elbow.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: And it would hit that bell and knock the mouthpiece into his cheek (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Ooh!

Mr. Kozak: So he learned; I couldn't see him; he was short and on a right turn...I get to the turn and he's marching time; turning around with the rest of the line, you know, and *bam*...would hit his horn, see?

Ed Metzler: Uhm, so that would imply then that you were doing some marching-type things.

Mr. Kozak: Yes, we did some, yes.

Ed Metzler: So it was more than just stationary playing?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

Ed Metzler: So it was...literally a marching band as well as...

Mr. Kozak: Yes. I remember playing out in the open the day that the bomb hit in Japan.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?! Tell me about that.

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes. And even before that, I got one of the original pictures of putting the flag on Iwo Jima...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...from the photographer, see? We met that famous columnist that was killed later on in the war; he...he came to Guam.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, is that Ernie Pyle?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, we met him.

Ed Metzler: Sot tell...tell me about that meeting?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, we were all privy to talk with him, you know, but we knew he was there and saw him.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: So if you had to...I mean how often during a typical week would you perform for Nimitz? I mean was it daily or just...only occasionally whenever there were dignitaries and...?

Mr. Kozak: Whenever he wanted something, I would go up and play.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: I was available as a single person, see, where the whole band would be pretty cumbersome, see?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: There wasn't *room* enough in his house to have the whole band and they didn't have the library, see?

Ed Metzler: Right. So you alone or you and just a smaller group?

Mr. Kozak: Just me.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Just me.

Ed Metzler: So and he was partial to the marimba?

Mr. Kozak: Well, that's what I played. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Okay, well, you played several other things though.

Mr. Kozak: Oh sure, but you can't do...you can't do requests on a snare drum.

Ed Metzler: Ah, that's a point! (laughter) So the marimba...you would roll it in; take it up there and roll it in or...?

Mr. Kozak: Have to take it in parts.

Ed Metzler: Pardon?

Mr. Kozak: Have to take it apart. The whole thing weighed three hundred and twenty pounds.

Ed Metzler: Holy mackerel!

Mr. Kozak: Oh no, two hundred and forty pounds; beg your pardon.

Ed Metzler: That's a lot!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: And pretty complicated, I guess, huh?

Mr. Kozak: Yes, and it's the same thing that I traveled all through South America and the Caribbean playing when I was with Cugat.

Ed Metzler: My gosh! So when he decided that he would like a little bit of soothing music after a hard day, the phone would ring and you would take that thing apart; go up there...

Mr. Kozak: Right.

Ed Metzler: ...put it together...

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...and play whatever he requested?

Mr. Kozak: That's right.

Ed Metzler: What kind of things did he request?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, well back then we had music that made sense.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And lyrics that told a story.

Ed Metzler: Correct.

Mr. Kozak: So it was music from the, I'm sure, from the...the '20s and '30s.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Show music – things by George Gershwin and stuff like that, see?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Show tunes from Broadway musicals.

Ed Metzler: Hmm. So he kind of liked Broadway musicals and...

Mr. Kozak: I'm sure he did.

Ed Metzler: How interesting. So he would just sit there and listen or...?

Mr. Kozak: Uh, or have his guests there with him and having cocktails, you know, and I'd play. And he'd come over and say, "Well so and so wants this and that," and so I played that, see?

Ed Metzler: Okay. So it was seldom...he was...he was almost always with somebody!

Mr. Kozak: Oh I think so.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: I...I don't remember...really, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, I'll be darned. So you...how many times would you guess you were up there with him?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, as long as he was on the island...whenever he wanted it; I can't really recall.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, but I mean...this was a couple of years, huh?

Mr. Kozak: Uhm, no, he left there in...as I recall in '44 aboard the Missouri.

Ed Metzler: Okay! So from say mid '43 to mid '44?

Mr. Kozak: Somewhere in there.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Now you mentioned you remembered when the bomb was dropped.

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so Nimitz wasn't there; he was aboard the Missouri somewhere in...combat area, huh?

Mr. Kozak: I don't think so.

Ed Metzler: Okay, was he back at Guam then?

Mr. Kozak: I think so.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well, describe to me what the reaction was when everybody heard the news?

Mr. Kozak: We were all agape. We didn't know anything about the...the seriousness of it, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Just that it was a super bomb that had been dropped, and that it could end the war.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So we...see, we had a...an Air Force B-29 group on Guam...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...and they flew from there with a B-29.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Uh, the Enola Gay I think did not come from Guam; I think...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I think she came from Tinian.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. But...it was quite auspicious.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Kozak: I lived through history.

Ed Metzler: You sure did; you were a piece of it.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you interacted with a historical figure, too!

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Well, he was a wonderful man.

Ed Metzler: So you...you feel very much like he was the...the, I'll use the...the term, the "sailor's leader," then, huh?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Oriented to the common guy.

Mr. Kozak: You see, the unusual part, Roosevelt picked him to come over and take over after the bomb...after the bombing of Pearl Harbor...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...which was a *real* disaster! I mean...those men should never have been taken up and smeared by politics.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: There was nothing wrong with what they...well, I'll go into that later on...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Kozak: ...when I was in Pearl. But anyway, he was selected above several other animals, uh Admirals who had more rating than he did...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...see, or time in office.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: But it the god...it was God's work that he got in because he *really* was a brilliant man.

(end of tape 1, side A)

Ed Metzler: Okay, let's...I got it going again. Let's...let's back up. So you went...you went to the officers club and...and now...

Mr. Kozak: Uh hum, we were playing at the officers club, the whole band, and my marimba was set up right near the bar...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...and I, you know, made friends with the bartender and...whatever he was making, he would give me the result, the remnant.

Ed Metzler: Right (chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: If he was making martinis, I had a little martini.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you got a little of this and a little of that.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, yeah, and whiskey sours and scotch and sodas or whatever. Well, I didn't know what liquors did...period!...especially if you *mixed* drinks.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: So at the end of the evening, I didn't even have the ability to take the instrument apart; they had to do that for me.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). Well, could you still play?

Mr. Kozak: Well, I played until the end of the evening.

Ed Metzler: That's good! (laughter)

Mr. Kozak: But...they put me in the truck and I...I laid down and that was it.

Ed Metzler: That's a mistake (laughter).

Mr. Kozak: We got back to the base and they carried me to the bunk...to my quarters, see?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And when they carried me, I kind of...sagged in the middle.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And let me tell you, that...that coral is *hard*.

Ed Metzler: Ooh!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So you were dragging a little bit?

Mr. Kozak: Right. When we got to...to the barracks, they put me in the bunk...and the wrong way, and being inebriated it drove me crazy...I couldn't imagine...the guy that I heard from the right should have been on the left!

Ed Metzler: Oh, I see, so your head was at your foot and vice versa.

Mr. Kozak: Right, yes. Well, the next morning I awoke...sober...until I went to the head and had a drink from the scuttlebutt, *and then* I was inebriated all over again.

Ed Metzler: Right, you revisited (laughter).

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, well that was the end of my drinking!

Ed Metzler: Is that right?

Mr. Kozak: I found out what it was like (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, well, that's...that's the hard way to find out...

Mr. Kozak: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...but...my goodness. Well, okay, let's...let me ask you this. When you there on Guam, did you have regular contact back home with family, you know, your parents and this kind...

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible) mail, and it would be checked over. They would...

Ed Metzler: Censor it, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, they would censor the mail, and some parts would be cut out, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah. And you...and you got letter from home and...

Mr. Kozak: Oh sure.

Ed Metzler: ...care packages and that kind of thing?

Mr. Kozak: Uh, care packages, no (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Well, you didn't really need one; you had a pretty good deal going there.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you guys...and you were eating right, too, at least when you were up with the Admiral.

Mr. Kozak: Right.

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Kozak: Now we were going to do a broadcast from there.

Ed Metzler: Okay, tell me about that.

Mr. Kozak: And all we had was the usual material for a military band, in other words, a big bass drum that you marched with...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...and snare drum...and two symbols that clanged together.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Okay...so I wanted to fix a tom-tom, but there was no tom-tom. So I went to the galley, and I got a container from soap chips which was made of thin plywood about an eighth of an inch thick...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and it was tubular. So then I went to the...the carpenter's shop and I cut it down to about fourteen inches in length; then I went to the...Seabees place and had them make me some iron hoops...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: ...and little clips. Then I went back to the band room and we had a bass drum head that had been broken...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: ...but it was big enough to make a tom-tom head of it. So I wet it down, cut it and wet it down and hooped it over the rim and made a tom-tom that was (unintelligible); had to use priers and screwdriver to tune it...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: ...but we had it work!

Ed Metzler: My golly!

Mr. Kozak: And...I thought I had it here with me...I know I brought it back to Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Oh, you made it back...stateside with it?!

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes, but I...I don't remember whatever happened to it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: But that was something; that was really something; I enjoyed doing that.

Ed Metzler: So...so tell me about the broadcast; how did that work?

Mr. Kozak: Well fine; I didn't do much playing on that because the other guy that outranked me...in stripes, got out of the hospital in time.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: He was...for sure he was going to play that broadcast (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Right. So what did he play?

Mr. Kozak: He was the drummer; he was the first drummer.

Ed Metzler: Okay, he was first drummer.

Mr. Kozak: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: So...I mean...they bring in all of this radio paraphernalia and stuff and recording and transmitters and...

Mr. Kozak: I...guess so.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: You know, we had the...the radio system that went all over the service areas.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And...

Ed Metzler: Oh, I guess Tokyo Rose needed some competition!

Mr. Kozak: I guess so!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: I guess so.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned.

Mr. Kozak: But from there we got on the Missouri.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, okay, tell me about that!

Mr. Kozak: We got on the Missouri and...

Ed Metzler: So...so the Missouri came into port and then...and that was Admiral...the Admiral's flag ship.

Mr. Kozak: Right. That was right after the signing.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so now we...now we're fast forwarding to '45?

Mr. Kozak: Now we...yeah...now we...now we go from there to Pearl Harbor.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: And we had work details. I'll never forget...the Captain of the ship decided he wanted to clean the deck, and so he had us holy stone the deck; you know what that is?

Ed Metzler: No, tell me.

Mr. Kozak: Holy stoning is where you take bricks that have holes in the center...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and you put a stick in it, and you scrub the deck with the brick until it shines...

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Kozak: ...like sandpaper.

Ed Metzler: So this is like a wooden deck as I remember.

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes! Teakwood, absolutely!

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So you're down on your hands and knees quite a bit.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, we holy stoned this thing and we didn't quite finish it when he said, "Ah, forget it; repaint it!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), is that right?!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, so they painted it gray again, see?

Ed Metzler: After all of that work?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well they say surface prep is the most important part of painting, so...

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. So we got to Pearl, and...there was a...celebration of some sort, you know, and....and there was Admiral Bull Halsey that was on...aboard, too.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Well, Bull Halsey was standing where the band is, see?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And I had the marimba, naturally. Well the...the band leader, Roy Pickett (sp?)...let's see, he says, *LaCumparsita* which started with a big glissando (*brrrrrrrrr....rum* sound).

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Well, when I hit that bottom "C", Halsey jumped about four inches.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: And he turned around and gave me a dirty look.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So you were *that* close to Bull, huh?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yesssss, sure.

Ed Metzler: But you didn't officially meet him, did you?

Mr. Kozak: No, no, no.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), well the good news is that they didn't ask...for your name (chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: Right. So, after that we were disappointed; we were supposed to stay on the Missouri and go through the locks, you know, and come out on the...the Atlantic and go up to New York.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: But we didn't do that; they took us off there because there were other people that had more points to...to discharge.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Well, that's when I had a *real* relaxed time in the Navy.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: The Chief Petty Officer that was in charge of our group found out that I played the piano, and...

Ed Metzler: Now are you still at Pearl right now?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah. So he would take me...to...go over the bali (sp?) into some rich people's home over in Kailua.

Ed Metzler: Over in where?

Mr. Kozak: Kailua.

Ed Metzler: Okay, Kailua, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah on the other side of Pea...of the other side of the...

Ed Metzler: Right, kind of the north coast, huh?

Mr. Kozak: ...of the...when you pass the pass, you know?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And he would have his enjoyment; he would have a high ball and I would play piano...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...that was entertaining the people that owned the place.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And it...I felt great because I could play some piano there and enjoy myself, see? And because I did this service, all I had to do at seven o'clock in the morning was to say, "Yo!" ...and that was it; I didn't have any work details (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: For six months that went on, see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that sound like a chance to rest and recuperate a little bit.

Mr. Kozak: Oh, yes indeedy! We would go...my buddy and I...would walk down Waikiki Beach. At that time there were two hotels – the Royal Hawaiian and the [s/b Ala ?] Moana.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: The Royal Hawaiian was taken over by the Naval brass and the Moana was still for the public.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: So we would walk...there were only two hotels then!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it's hard to believe, but...

Mr. Kozak: Right, now there must be...a hundred.

Ed Metzler: Yeah...how it's changed!

Mr. Kozak: Uh, we walked...got to the Moana Hotel. The hotel had a *long* lobby, an L-shaped lobby, and in the tail was a grand piano.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: So, I went over to the piano and it was locked. So I went to the manager and I said, "Could you open the piano up; I'm a musician." And he said, "Sure!" So he opened the piano up and I sat down and I start playing for my own entertainment. Well, two or three people would come in and say, "Can you play so and so?" I said, "Sure, I play so and so." Then four or five more came...then eight or ten, and finally the room got pretty well filled up.

Ed Metzler: Now this is the first time you sat down there?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: So, then my buddy went to work; he was very (laughter), very cooperative. He went around...looking for nice-looking girls.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: He would get one girl to sit on one side and one girl to sit on the other side on the piano bench, and I would say, "What do you girls want to play?"...you know? So then I would play only for them.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And it worked *so* well that we could go out and have our dinner first; didn't have to buy dinner for the girls, see.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: And we had a good time later on. We'd take them out and have a drink or two, you know, just enjoy ourselves.

Ed Metzler: Yep, so you could have your own dinner and then you could have an after-dinner date.

Mr. Kozak: Yes! How about that?

Ed Metzler: And this is the way you connected with them?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, isn't that great?!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, who was your buddy?

Mr. Kozak: Uh, Bill Williams was his name.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh, where was he from?

Mr. Kozak: You caught me in a moment there where I could remember his name, Bill Williams. Both of us were over six feet tall; we were known as the Terrible Two on Waikiki Beach because as we walked along, we were so big that the Orientals...that...that...was a big population in Hawaii...in Honolulu...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...used to move *way* out of our way...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...just scatter as we came along, see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, because I mean...six, four back then was really...

Mr. Kozak: Oh big!

Ed Metzler: ...quite above the average.

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Now I...I think I...maybe it was when you and I were talking earlier...I understand there was a way you got the phone numbers of some of the...good-looking girls.

Mr. Kozak: Well, we tried to get into the...the WAVES barracks tents.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And that didn't work.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: You had to have an invitation; that was kind of a...a catch twenty-two.

Ed Metzler: I see.

Mr. Kozak: Because the only way you could get an invitation was if you one of them.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: And the only way you got to know one is if you at...at the (unintelligible) dance, see?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: Well, I mean (sigh), even girls that we used to call Ditty Bag Girls...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...you know what that meant?

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah, I'm not...yeah.

Mr. Kozak: (Laughter), even they had...terrific amount of dates, you know?

Ed Metzler: Even the uglies had good dates.

Mr. Kozak: Oh man! Yeah. We used to stand on the street corner in Honolulu and just *watch* the white women...walk by; it just...it was a pleasure to see that, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Just so unusual because all we saw on the islands were...were what we called “Tanaks (sp?),” see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Tell me about your interact with the native population when you were on Guam; what were they like and did you have much interaction with them?

Mr. Kozak: No, we...basically we would just...practice, once in awhile rehearse...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and do exercises, you know, the weight lifting and this and that...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...writing music and so forth and so on...being prepared to play; that was about it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: At the beginning before the Admiral came, we had duties to do like I told you about...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...uncrating things and building roads and so forth.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, real work!

Mr. Kozak: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well now this six months that you were on Oahu after the war was over...

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...so...that was a pretty restful and sounds like a good time for you.

Mr. Kozak: Well, for me, yeah. I don't know how...about the rest of the guys, but...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: ...for me it was fine.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well now were you still together with the military band or had they kind of been disbanded?

Mr. Kozak: No, no, no, that disbanded.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: Now I did find out some interesting things though. While I was there in those (unintelligible), the Congressional Committee from Washington D.C. came in to investigate the Pearl Harbor disaster.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And they found...which has not really been reported...I understand that there is a book written about Roosevelt that puts all this together.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: But, you know, like this morning...I was watching television and they were talking about rum running...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...bootlegging, and they did show a picture of Joseph P. Kennedy...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Kozak: ...as a rum runner from Canada.

Ed Metzler: Right, right (chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: They said that's how he made a lot of his money.

Ed Metzler: Ah ha!

Mr. Kozak: And they're *still* making their money; you know that?

Ed Metzler: I didn't know *that*, but...

Mr. Kozak: I have a student that...that is in...in the family that owns a bunch of liquor stores and he told me that the Kennedys took in something like fifty cents or a dollar a bottle of scotch.

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kozak: And that's the only memories that I like to have, if it's alcoholic, you know, is...is scotch.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible words)...

Ed Metzler: That is...that is...

Mr. Kozak: ...once in awhile.

Ed Metzler: That is...so that's...

Mr. Kozak: I don't...I don't drink very much, but if I do...I'll have one drink with dinner...something like that.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: But, I like scotch, and my scotch is...malt scotch, single malt, which...

Ed Metzler: Single malts, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: ...yeah, but...

Ed Metzler: So anyhow, they came in to do an investigation?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: So how were you involved in that or were you just an observer or what?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, (unintelligible) I just... 'cause I had been in the command of Admiral Nimitz, you know?

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: I had friends and this and that and we found out some things that were very interesting. Kimmel and Short were maligned and they didn't deserve it.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: They had sent...because they couldn't have permission to move all the ships out without Presidential permission.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: Very expensive to get all the ships...oiled, you know, fired up and out the harbor.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: They knew...because they had broken the Japanese code, to a certain extent,...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...couldn't read every word, but they knew that we were going to be bombed somewhere – either Pearl Harbor or California; they didn't know which.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So they wanted permission to move the ships out, and no permission was given. Now, the Congressional Commission went through the files; they went to Washignton D.C. and General, oh, what was his name...the guy that started Lindy's (sp?)...George Marshall...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: ...he was the Chief of Staff...at the time of Pearl.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: He couldn't remember if a cablegram like that had come over his desk; just couldn't remember.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: So they went into the archives, and in the drawer that was marked "Secret," there was a spontaneous combustion and all the papers burned.

Ed Metzler: Amazing.

Mr. Kozak: Isn't it though?

Ed Metzler: Well, those spontaneous combustions are amazing.

Mr. Kozak: Yes, yes.

Ed Metzler: So we don't really know exactly who knew what...when.

Mr. Kozak: No, but we know that these men were maligned.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: They didn't deserve what they got. Their careers were ruined.

Ed Metzler: Sure.

Mr. Kozak: And there were two thousand...what we figured was this...that Roosevelt wanted to get us in the war but knew that American people need to be pushed to do something.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And he was going to see to it that we got pushed enough to go into the war.

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

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, there's a book written about this. So at any rate, we got into the war and two thousand men were killed.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Kozak: That's terrible.

Ed Metzler: Now did...did they actually...the commission that came out, I mean...did they actually interview you at all?

Mr. Kozak: No, no.

Ed Metzler: Do you think they did a thorough job or not from what you can tell?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, I think that they did a pretty good job, but you know, it depends upon whether they were Democrats or Republicans.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: It's unfortunate, but we don't have statesmen anymore.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, we got politicians.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And their first job is to get re-elected.

Ed Metzler: Right, and...and to...support the party.

Mr. Kozak: Right.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: I mean, the thing that's going on right now, Ed, with (chuckles), oh mercy, mercy, mercy!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: The way they are maligning our President is terrible.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Just terrible! You know, I have...when I was put into the archives of LSU, I don't know if I told you about this...?

Ed Metzler: No, I tell you what I want to do...let...let's get that story, but I want to finish your time in the Pacific. So you had your six months there at Pearl?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Then what happened to you?

Mr. Kozak: Then we came up...on...on that ship that I almost went over the side on...

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah!

Mr. Kozak: ...and got to back to San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: Now was this just a troop ship or what?

Mr. Kozak: Uh, yeah, I think it was an LST.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Kozak: And when we got to Pearl, uh, got to San Francisco, we were free as a bird! We had the weekend, you know, and we went to...I think it was...the Mark Hopkins Hotel I think we went to.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And there were three of us.

Ed Metzler: Top of the Mark!

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: So we got in and...and got a room, a big enough room that had a couple of beds in there...they were going to put another one in there or a roll-away...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...and we went up to the room, and the bellboy took up there, and he had his hand out for a tip, of course...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...and he said, "Is there anything I can do...anything that I can get for you guys?" I said, "No, no, no; we're just happy as a bird to be here in America now, see, back in the States." And he says, "Well, I can't get anything for you; something to drink or...or maybe some girls?" And I said, "Girls?" No, no. I mean, we were just...overjoyed to stand on the...the corner and look at American women walk by.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: That was it! Boy, that was...that was relished, you know?!

Ed Metzler: That really felt good after...after that long period.

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes, oh absolutely indeed! I hope this interview is being what you wanted.

Ed Metzler: Oh absolutely!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: I mean I...this is...this is great! So how long were you in San Francisco?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, about two or three days I guess.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, and...and...

Mr. Kozak: And we got onboard a train and went back to our homes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you were...you were released?

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: And...

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible) go to Great Lakes and get...decommissioned or whatever (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And then I met my mother...downtown in Chicago...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...and took me home.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, how was it to see Mom after all...?

Mr. Kozak: Oh boy, when I got...she was a great cook!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: When I got home she said, "What do you...what do you want to have to eat?" I said, "What I really want...is two eggs fried in butter and some buttered toast and a glass of *real* milk!"

Ed Metzler: Right!

Mr. Kozak: And that was my first meal.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Man, so...then what happened?

Mr. Kozak: After that? After I got back to Chicago?

Ed Metzler: Yes sir.

Mr. Kozak: Well, I...was told that I could get the fifty-two, twenty. You know get paid a week for fifty-two weeks?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And I said, "Nah, that's not for me; if I want money I'll go out and make it."

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And I said...but I'm not going to go to work in show business for at least six weeks or two months, you know, I was just going to relax because...although I was not in a battle, uh, I heard plenty of guns going off aboard the Missouri, and the...the bulkheads would rattle and *boom, boom, boom, boom* when we would shoot off these forties; getting rid of ammunition, see?

Ed Metzler: Oh, just getting rid of the ammo?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, we had too much aboard.

Ed Metzler: Man!

Mr. Kozak: And...when I got to Chicago, anybody say anything loud or a big motion (*sound*), I would turn around with a fist ready to hit them, see?

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Kozak: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: So you were a bit jumpy?

Mr. Kozak: Shocked a little bit, you know...

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Kozak: ...oh, yes.

Ed Metzler: So how long did it take you to get over that?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, several months.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: And then finally I got back into show business.

Ed Metzler: And it sound like you had one heck of a career because of...you and I were talking earlier; so you went with Xavier Cugat, right?

Mr. Kozak: Well, not right then, no.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: I went to work...in shows, and I worked with fine people. I mean George Gobel did his act and he played guitar by that time and told stories, see?

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: And I worked with Eddie Peabody, you know? He was, you know, not a Commander now was a...a civilian, you know, playing banjo.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: And...who else? Oh, great...I had played with...I played shows with different orchestras like Wayne King...Waltz King, and uh, oh I can't remember all these people...great day!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: I had an agent; I had a personal representative, Gray Gordon was his name. He had had the Tic-Toc Band. Well, Gray was going to have different performers, and he had three unusual acts. He had a harpist that played jazz harp and he had me on marimba...

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: ...and he had...uh, the guy that started the multiple recordings on guitar, uh, Les Paul.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, Les Paul and Mary Ford!

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible) Les Paul had been in an accident and the doctor asked him, he said, "How do you want your arm – straight or bent? That's the way it's going to be permanently."

Ed Metzler: My god!

Mr. Kozak: So Les had his arm bent and so he could play guitar.

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Kozak: And there were the three of us, see? The three acts.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned.

Mr. Kozak: Bobby Maxwell was the harpist, jazz harpist; Bobby Maxwell, Les Paul and me.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned.

Mr. Kozak: And we were managed by Gray Gordon.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: Until I finally decided I was just going to get out of show business because it was changing; you had to go farther and farther and farther...from your central point to make...

Ed Metzler: Now were you still living in the Chicago area during this time?

Mr. Kozak: Yes, yes, uh huh. Uh, now my agent called me and wanted to know if I wanted to play a two-week engagement in Shreveport, Louisiana, and I said, "Where's that?"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: He said, "Louisiana." I said, "New Orleans I know, but where's Shreveport?" He said, "That's in the northwest corner." So I said, "Sure." So I came down here and there was a hotel here that's not here anymore; it's called the Washington-Erie (sp?) Hotel. It had a zephyr room, and that was the nightclub area...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...where you could get dinners and drinks and dance, and you could even have children come in and sit down and have dinner. Even though they had a bar, it was legal.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Kozak: They had a star performer every once in awhile, you know? It was a name or a semi-name that was on the bill...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and let me think...uh, Claude Thornhill's played there, see, and Claude has heard me in the Navy, and he wanted me to go back into show business and be in his band, and I said, "No thanks." (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Kozak: But...uh, (pause) this hotel...was a nice place to play at, and I had the marimba and I did my act. The first night I met a paint contractor and his wife, they invited me their table; we sat and talked. The next night they came back again, and while they were there...you've these ads in newspapers and magazines, "Girls use Ponds; they get engaged."

Ed Metzler: Yeah (chuckle)

Mr. Kozak: Well back then they used to have one for razor blades, "Use a Gillette blade," you know, "and blah, blah, blah, blah." So I told the lady, I said, "Well, I'm bound to meet a pretty girl tonight." She said, "Why?" I said, "I shave with a Gillette blade!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: She excused herself, and when she came back she had my wife with her...

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned.

Mr. Kozak: ...who was there with a date. Well, Marge danced with the man and I danced with his wife, but I found out she...looked very nice to me, and I was very intrigued, so I found out where she worked; her name. The next day I called; she worked at the First National Bank, and I called but she said she was busy that night, so I let it go; didn't want to push. I went to a floral shop and I had flowers sent to her, but the Lord worked on me and I didn't sign the card. That must have intrigued her, so she called the floral shop to get...an...an indication of what I looked like. And the next day I called her again, and she was free.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned.

Mr. Kozak: So we went out that night...

Ed Metzler: And the rest is history, huh?

Mr. Kozak: We went out that night...well, listen to this. Now this is a *Southern Belle* and a *Damned Yankee* who's in show business, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: We went out that night and the next and the next and the next; by the third night I knew what I was going to do and she did, too, she told me later on. At the end of the week, I proposed to her and she accepted.

Ed Metzler: Wow, that was quick!

Mr. Kozak: Very! Because when I came back from the Navy, I decided that...that's what I needed...to get married.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And I went out with girl after girl after girl after girl in Chicago and up as far as Evanston – Northwestern; couldn't find anybody that...I was...really wanted to...to marry!

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So I quick...

Ed Metzler: (Cough).

Mr. Kozak: ...(unintelligible) for two months...when I met Marge.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, well it's...

Mr. Kozak: ...(unintelligible) so fast.

Ed Metzler: Man.

Mr. Kozak: In a week I met her, she propo...I proposed; she accepted. Six weeks later we were married.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: And our marriage lasted for...nine weeks shy of fifty years...

Ed Metzler: Man.

Mr. Kozak: ...and she died.

Ed Metzler: Yeah,...sorry.

Mr. Kozak: So I'm still married; I look at her photograph...

Ed Metzler: Absolutely.

Mr. Kozak: ...(unintelligible)...still married.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah, it's a state of mind.

Mr. Kozak: (Unintelligible), she would...whenever she walked into a room, it was like a queen walked in; she...*immediately* people looked around and they...they recognized her stature, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: The dignity. She was loved by everybody.

Ed Metzler: Well, let me ask you a question.

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Thinking back to the war years now, do you stay...or were...were you able to stay in contact with many of the guys that you knew during...during the war?

Mr. Kozak: When I went to work...for the Crosley Company...see, I was already married...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...and I was going to play...George Gobel was the...the comic and MC and Joe...uh, (unintelligible) was the uh...Joe Termini (sp?), Joe Termini was the com...uh, the mime comic; you know what a mime is?

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Kozak: And I was the musical act, so the three of us did shows all over the country for the Crosley Company. They made a little Crosley car and refrigerators and so forth...

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, the Cros...yeah, that Crosley, okay!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, they had a display in each city with armed guards around it. They put a million dollars in bills in a refrigerator on display.

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Kozak: Uh, I couldn't afford to have my wife with me. The first couple of shows we...we did two shows a week. Because I was flying so much; it cost so much to get her to go there, but when we got back into the middle west I said, "This is ridiculous," and I called her and I said, "You meet me in Des Moines, Iowa." So she took a train to Des Moines; I was going to meet her at the depot. Well, in the meantime, the agent had booked another job outside of this for George and me to do.

Ed Metzler: Uh oh.

Mr. Kozak: So we rented a car and George and I went up and played the club (unintelligible), and when we got back it was two o'clock in the morning. Her train was already in.

Ed Metzler: Oop!

Mr. Kozak: I had put a dozen roses in the room, and you know, left a message of course, but it didn't set too well with her.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Kozak: And...that's our wedding night, and I got into the room and started to get ready for bed...there's a knock at the door. I said, "Who is it?" Says, "George! George Gobel." I said, "George, I'm going to bed, I'm undressed already." "Oh, come on, open the door; I want to show you something." I said, "George, this is my wedding night; you know, my wife is here..."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: ...and, "Ah, come on! I just want to show you something." I said, "George, if you don't go away, you're going to be sorry." Well, he didn't go away. So I

went into the bathroom and I got a glass of water; I put a chair next to the door...there was a transom that...and I leaned over the transom and poured the water on him (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Kozak: (Laughter), he left. He told me next day he said, “You know what? I’m going to show you?” I says, “What?” He says, “I’m going to stand there with my hat on and my coat...and no pants, and I’m going to say, ‘Doctor Livingston, I presume?!’”

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: That was his comic idea, see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: We used to tease each other all the time. We would different things to different performers. There was a comic that was there in Des Moines that we knew that was on a different show, and I think George poured salt in his pocket (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh.

Mr. Kozak: So, we went to a restaurant, and...I was going to do something to...to George. So he ordered...we all sat together...he ordered fried shrimp so I excused myself and went to the waitress and said, “Look, I’m going to pay you extra; you get him an order of fried shrimp, but don’t bring that out right away. We got an order of fried shrimp that’s blackened.” It’s already so overdone it’s *not even* funny. So she brought that out and gave it to him, and you know, he started eating it?

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh! He didn't even complain, huh?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned.

Mr. Kozak: But that's the way we used to be in show biz, see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: I remember when I was playing in Manzanares' orchestra in Chicago at that hotel where Mr. Wilkie wanted to be an engineer, you know...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Kozak: ...we did a broadcast every night and somebody...put napkins in the resonator of my marimba.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: Well, when you played in the bars, it was just a little thud...(unintelligible); you didn't have the tone. We were going to do a broadcast, and just a few minutes before the broadcast time, I found out that the resonator had these napkins. So I...I don't know why that night, I just struck a bar with a mallet, you know, and...and I heard it; normally I wouldn't do that; I wouldn't even touch the instrument until we broadcast.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: So, I pulled the bars off and pulled all the napkins out; I had a pile of them; put them back and I thought, "Well, now some sucker in the band did this! I'm going to find out who and get even." Well, we had a piano; we had a bass and a drum and trumpet...that the leader played. See, the leader sang over the...so he was usually out on the floor romancing ladies and trying to be

the...the ambassador of good will. So I couldn't get to the piano, somebody else did it in...in advance. They spilled valve oil on the piano keyboard.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: You can imagine what happened then!

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Kozak: The bass player...he didn't make it; he had a tin ear. I turned down the...the string, but he...he didn't know; he didn't play, so...didn't make any difference to him. The drummer...I had loosened the (unintelligible) knob on the bass drum peddle, and after about a course or something, the base drum peddle would collapse and he couldn't play the bass drum.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Kozak: It...it backfired, though, because his brother came in from the Army who is also a drummer, and when he sat down, that's when the thing happened!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: Now, the trumpet player, played violin as well as trumpet, I got even with him. His name was Sid Sherman; he had a music store in Chicago. He didn't like Limburger cheese, so I went back into the kitchen and I got a wrapper from some...Limburger cheese, you know, and I smeared a little bit of it around the mouthpiece...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Kozak: ...of the trumpet. And then, to make sure, whichever instrument he got, I wrapped some of it in...in a piece of paper, newspaper, and stuck it under the chin rest. Well Sid was what my grandfather used call a "preluder"...he would

come up and play (musical sounds)...kind of show the people that he was a good musician, you know,...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...instead of waiting till everybody played. Well, he got up and played his violin and went (sniffing sounds), and he smelled and he smelled something he didn't like so he put the violin down. Well, he picked up the trumpet and he took his first breathe...and disappeared.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Kozak: We didn't see him for about twenty minutes!

Ed Metzler: He got quite sick, I guess (chuckles)!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah...(laugher), oh yes!

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh.

Mr. Kozak: Got him good!

Ed Metzler: Well, I tell you what...let's look...let me kind of summarize then...

Mr. Kozak: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ...from your time in the Pacific. One of the questions I usually ask...compare and contrast yourself when you came out of the war...compared to when you went in; were you a different person; did you feel like you'd learned a lot; matured or just what?

Mr. Kozak: Oh, I feel that I learned a lot; the Navy made me a better man to be sure!

Ed Metzler: How's that?

Mr. Kozak: Well, I was more disciplined.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And...gracious, my mother and father couldn't understand when I first home and...and slept that first night. When they looked at the bed the next morning, about two feet of the bed had been slept in.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: I was used to being in a cot, you see, on...aboard ship.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Kozak: But I was much mature; I told my folks immediately, I said, "Now I want to pay board."

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: See, before that the money that I made...went my...went to my folks, and actually when I came home I was surprised; I only had five hundred dollars in the bank. Well, they had used the money...well, they paid for my education and everything, you know?

Ed Metzler: Sure.

Mr. Kozak: The lessons or the instruments and everything; I don't begrudge that by any means. But I said, "I want to pay board; I want to be independent." I borrowed two thousand from my dad; bought a...a Buick Roadmaster and paid him back in six months time.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: And...I was on my own; I had a bank account, checks...so forth and so on, and this I learned...you know, I learned a lot in the Navy...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Kozak: ...became independent; I was very grateful for my experience in the Navy.

Ed Metzler: Yeah and it certainly...a...an unusual experience.

Mr. Kozak: Oh yes.

Ed Metzler: Well, that's...that's one reason why I'm glad we got the opportunity to...interview you here because obviously since the whole Museum here is built around Admiral Nimitz and his accomplishments...having this recording in here will really...really be useful for us. So, I appreciate your taking the time to...

Mr. Kozak: Well, you know, Ed, when we got to Pearl and we played...did I tell you the...the Captain of the the...the band leader told me, he says, "We're going to play *LaCumparsita*?"

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Kozak: I told you that?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, with...with Bull Halsey?

Mr. Kozak: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, well you woke him up!

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, well I made a recording of the marimba playing that much, and I'm going to send that to you.

Ed Metzler: Oh great!

Mr. Kozak: And...I just played the first phrase of it, but it has a glissando in the beginning of it, and here...you'll hear my marimba playing.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, and this way we'll...we'll know what...what caused Bull to jump.

Mr. Kozak: Yeah, of course it was with soft balance that I played this. We played harder mallets and it was louder because...the band playing it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, okay. That's great!

Mr. Kozak: Also, if you'd like, I made a...a pair of discs for my grandchildren...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...with my *whole* family history...starting when I was three years old...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum (cough).

Mr. Kozak: ...up through the Navy experience and show business and so forth and so on.
And what I'm doing now...teaching music. See, I've written a book for piano...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Kozak: ...that's been endorsed by Henry Mancini; Dave Brubeck and Andre Crouch.

Ed Metzler: My goodness.

Mr. Kozak: And I'm writing a second one now to teach people how to play jazz without having to read music, and that's going to go in print by next month.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well that would great. I tell you what, I'm going to turn the recorder off and then let's keep talking, okay?

Mr. Kozak: Alright.

Ed Metzler: Hold the line.

Mr. Kozak:

(end of interview)

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