

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is March 9, 2010. I am interviewing Mr. Robert C. Shedd, by telephone. His address is 65 Koonz Rd. Voorheesville, New York 12186-5100. His phone number is (518) 765-2295. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Center for Pacific War studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Bob, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country, during World War II. The first thing I'd like to do, is read to you, this agreement with the museum. When I do these in person, I let the man read it and sign it. Since this is by phone, let me read it to you and make sure this is ok with you. (Agreement Read). Is that okay with you?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Shedd.

That's ok with me.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Okay, fine. Now the next thing I'd like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out that sometimes several years down the road, we try to get in contact with a veteran and he's moved or something. So do you have a son, or daughter, someone we can contact if

we needed to, to find you?

Mr. Shedd.

I have a son that lives in Vermont.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What is his name?

Mr. Shedd.

He goes by the name of Jerry.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Do you have his address?

Mr. Shedd.

His mailing address is P.O. Box 178, Ripton, VT 05766. Phone number is (802) 388-1012.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What is your birthdate?

Mr. Shedd.

August 29th, 1921.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Where were you born?

Mr. Shedd.

In Rutland, Vermont.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Mr. Shedd.

Two of each.

Mr. Misenhimer.

I understand that both your brothers were in WWII?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Were either of your sisters involved in war work?

Mr. Shedd.

No, they were too young.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Were your brothers in the marines?

Mr. Shedd.

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer.

And you were in the same outfit?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes. 1-5.

Mr. Misenhimer.

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

Mr. Shedd.

We were brought up on farms, we always had plenty to eat. It was pretty plain sometimes, but we always had meat, chickens and eggs.

Mr. Misenhimer.

You had a garden?

Mr. Shedd.

Oh yes. My father used to run a dairy and then sell the milk to his brother who ran a milk route. That was early on. Later on, he had his own farm and his own milk route.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you have to help milk those cows?

Mr. Shedd.

Oh yeah! We always had chores to do before we went to school.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you milk those cows by hand?

Mr. Shedd.

Sometimes. But most of the time we had a machine. Always got a lower bacteria count when it was milked by hand. I don't know why.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Shedd.

I went Rutland high school first. Two and a half years. Then when I was sixteen, my father says 'Well, if you want to quit school, it's up to you.' So I quit! I went up on a hill, the farm where I was born and worked for my grandfather. Seven days a week, started about 4 in the morning and I got friendly with a girl who lived down at the bottom of the hill and she talked me into going back to high school. So I went to a different high school because where we lived in a small town, we didn't have a high school and I went

to two of them. Rutland, West Rutland and Rutemp and that's where I graduated from West Rutland.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What year did you graduate?

Mr. Shedd.

1941.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What did you do when you graduated from high school?

Mr. Shedd.

For awhile, I had a drivers license, with one of my brother's, we could run the milk route. We did that for awhile till one day we came home with some recruiting brochures from the Navy and my father said, "If you don't want to farm it, we'll sell it." And at a great loss, he sold the farm. We moved to Connecticut and it was the biggest mistake he ever made. I worked at Pratt and Whitney Aircraft for about six months until the war broke out. Then we were hearing the stories about Wake Island and how great the Marines were. We decided that was the outfit we wanted to be in so we went into Hartford, Connecticut and signed up there and then they shipped us to Springfield, Massachusetts where we spent the night and we were sworn in, in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What date was that?

Mr. Shedd.

I don't know exactly, but it was about the first of February. The one date I do know, is February 3rd. We got to Parris, Island.

Mr. Misenhimer.

And you three brothers all signed up at the same time?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. My father drove us in to Hartford and he and then he and my mother stood on the curb while we three boys walked away.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How did it affect them, do you know?

Mr. Shedd.

Oh, it was awful on them.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Yes, I can imagine.

Mr. Shedd.

Especially my father. They would get to know that we were in action and of course we couldn't tell them, cause our letters were censored, but they would know.

Mr. Misenhimer.

You took your boot camp at Parris Island?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer.

And that's in North, or South Carolina?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes. South Carolina.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Tell me about boot camp, what was that like?

Mr. Shedd.

Well, my two brothers and I were in very good physical shape, because we'd worked hard on the farm, so boot camp wasn't as hard for us as it was for some of the men who weren't in as good a physical shape as we were. We seemed to be able to keep in step when we were marching, so the way they lined them up, were the tallest men in the front and the shortest ones in the back. The drill instructor took the three of us and put us across the back, so that when we did a rear march, we were in the front. That worked for awhile until he picked me to take the place of one of the big tall guys who was a squad leader. That was quite a thing in boot camp, to get a promotion like that. So we got along real good, I was able to fire sharp shooter on the rifle range. Never in all the time I was in the Marines, was able to fire expert, except when I came back from overseas, I was sent back to Parris, Island and got there on February 3rd, exactly three years after I got there the first time and eventually I was posted to the rifle range and became a rifle coach. So I was able to fire once in awhile the whole course. I could fire expert. For fun. But when it came to record, I never could quite make it.

Mr. Misenhimer.

In boot camp, what rifle did you have?

Mr. Shedd.

When we were in boot camp, it was a 1903 Springfield. That was the rifle we used down in Guadalcanal.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What other weapons training did you have in boot camp?

Mr. Shedd.

We also had training with a Browning automatic rifle the bar. And with a pistol and a bayonet.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Any machine gun training?

Mr. Shedd.

No.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How long was your boot camp.

Mr. Shedd.

It was about five weeks. Now it's more like three months. But they were in a hurry to get us through.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How rough were your drill instructors on you?

Mr. Shedd.

They were real strict, but the one thing they would do if they wanted to discipline, get us out behind the barracks and learn how to hold our rifles out in front of us at arms' length and just stand there and that ten pound rifle would get to feel like a hundred pounds.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Was that punishment, or what was that?

Mr. Shedd.

Well, not really I don't think. It could be. One time on a Sunday from the rifle range, they allowed us to go to church and a few of us went and we came back like a bunch of civilians and the DI's climbed all over us. March when in groups. We had to sit down in a sitting position, which is not so comfortable and scratch in the dirt. March when in groups. Over and over and over again. Finally they let us up. That was the only punishment I guess I ever got.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you have a lot of inspections in boot camp?

Mr. Shedd.

Oh yeah! We'd have to lay out our gear on the bunk and they would inspect the bunk and the blankets had to be real tight. We had double decker bunks. The old wooden barracks, I guess they're all gone now. Brick buildings now and all.

Mr. Misenhimer.

And how was the food in boot camp?

Mr. Shedd.

It was very good I thought. When we were in boot camp, you didn't go through the mess line, you had to line up at a table and the mess crew would bring the food, put it there on plates. So when they told you to sit, you had to watch out, you didn't get stabbed by somebody's fork, cause everybody's reaching for the meat, or the pancakes, whatever!

Mr. Misenhimer.

So it was served family style then?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes. That was the old fashioned way. Course now they don't even have cooks and bakers. Civilians cook and serve.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Anything else you recall from boot camp?

Mr. Shedd.

I remember when we would be getting shots. They would tell you you were going to get a square needle! Lot of times you'd go through the line and there'd be a corpsman on each side and you'd get a shot in each arm. Shots never seemed to bother us. Might have a sore arm for awhile.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did some people pass out?

Mr. Shedd.

I don't remember if anybody ever did. Another thing I remember from boot camp was when they measured us for shoes. They had you stand on this thing that measured both feet at one time. You had to lean down and pick up two heavy weights. The man said, when he was measuring mine, "Seven and a half F." I said, "Yeah, but I wear eight and a half, or nine." "Seven and a half F." I never had blisters or any kind of foot trouble. So those were the shoes that really fit me. Now I have to find my shoes in a special place outside of Boston where they have wide shoes and I wear four or five E.

Mr. Misenhimer.

You have small feet then.

Mr. Shedd.

Depending on the shoe.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When you first went into the service, how tall were you?

Mr. Shedd.

I was five feet eight.

Mr. Misenhimer.

About what did you weigh then?

Mr. Shedd.

I would take a guess at one fifty five, or something in that area.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When you finished boot camp, then what did you do?

Mr. Shedd.

They took us on a train ride at night up to, we used to call it New River and now it's called Camp LeJeune. We got some part of advanced training out in the boondocks, training and being able to sneak up on the enemy. I guess there we got some kind of machine gun instructions. I never fired a machine gun. Course we were forever getting rifle training.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How long did that last there?

Mr. Shedd.

I think we got to boot camp sometime in March. I don't remember the exact date, we left there about May 20th. Another night time train trip to Norfolk, Virginia where we aboard ship to go overseas.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What ship did you go on, do you recall?

Mr. Shedd.

It was called the Wakefield. It was the old USS Manhattan. It was converted to a troop ship, a stateroom that would hold two people had twelve bunks. When we first started out, I was on mess duty. I didn't sleep with the company, I had a special bunk. I worked in the scullery. We got down into the Caribbean and I remember one day, I went out on deck to get a breath of fresh air because in the scullery, with the steam tables and it was awful hot in there. And I went out on deck and somebody was complaining about the heat out there. I said, "Heat? I came out here to cool off!"

Mr. Misenhimer.

Where did you go on that ship?

Mr. Shedd.

From the Caribbean, we went through the Panama Canal and then down along off the coast of South America. Then we headed west, towards New Zealand. We ran into a terrible storm and the ship was overloaded and the captain said he'd never go with a ship overloaded like that again. I managed to eat something at every meal, so I didn't get seasick. But my younger brother Paul, I thought he was going to starve to death before we got out of that storm. He just wouldn't eat. He was sick, but we all managed to make it to New Zealand. Wellington, New Zealand.

Mr. Misenhimer.

About when did you land there, do you know?

Mr. Shedd.

It was in June, sometime. I don't know the date.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What 'd it take to get down there, three weeks, four?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah, something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Let me go back. When you were going through the Caribbean, was there any submarine threats?

Mr. Shedd.

I'm sure there were submarines there, but we didn't have any alert. Nothing happened to us, although we did have an escort with us.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What did you have? What was your escort?

Mr. Shedd.

I suppose it was a destroyer.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Just one?

Mr. Shedd.

I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Was that a pretty fast ship? Did it go pretty fast?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah, the ship that we were on was a real fast one. After we went through the Canal, we had an escort for a day or so and then we were on our own the rest of the time, because we were so fast.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What was it like going through the Panama Canal?

Mr. Shedd.

That was quite an experience. We were able to be on deck and look at the scenery.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How long did it take to go through the Canal?

Mr. Shedd.

Part of a day. We went through it in broad daylight. I don't know exactly how long it took.

Mr. Misenhimer.

I think it's somewhere around eight hours they say. Something like that.

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. That sounds good!

Mr. Misenhimer.

About how many people were on your ship?

Mr. Shedd.

I don't know. As far as I know it was all of the Fifth Marines. Other units were on.

Mr. Misenhimer.

About how many people in the Fifth Marines?

Mr. Shedd.

Five thousand of us. I really don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When you got to Wellington, New Zealand, what happened then?

Mr. Shedd.

We were unloaded and put on a train and sent to a Camp at Pikokariki. I don't know, maybe forty miles outside of Wellington. We were supposed to train for a year before we would be ready for action. So it was a pretty rough camp. It was built by women. New Zealand women, out of green lumber. It was ok for us, but we didn't do much training, because about six days after we were there, we found out we had to leave and go capture Guadalcanal. So then we were back in Wellington, unloading the ships because the stevedores wouldn't work in bad weather. They wouldn't work on Sundays. So the marines had to put the stevedores off the docks and the marines took over and we worked around the clock, seven days a week. Unloading the commercially loaded ships and combat loading. It rained and the boxes, the cardboard boxes came apart and there were corn flakes and all kinds of stuff all over the dock!

Mr. Misenhimer.

Quite a mess huh?

Mr. Shedd.

It was a mess. Then our group together, the Fifth Marines, the First Marines were on their way from California and they would meet us on the way. The Seventh Marines were in Samoa, protecting those islands, so we had a regiment from the Second Marine Division. The Second Marines became part of the First Marines Division. We all met on they way and went to the Fiji's for practice landings. Which was a fiasco because rocks

along the shore that bent the propeller shafts. Some books will say that nobody landed, but we did. We spent the night there under some palm trees. So we were able to land regardless of what the books say.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Then what happened?

Mr. Shedd.

Then we left there and traveled westerly to The Solomon Islands and luckily it was a bad storm, which we went through and it looked like the destroyers should be getting submarine pay. Plowing under. But it kept the submarines down and it kept the airplanes from flying. So we got to Guadalcanal without any problems from the Japanese.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What ship were you on, going there?

Mr. Shedd.

I was on the American Legion.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When did you land on Guadalcanal?

Mr. Shedd.

August 7th. Actually our Company was the first wave along with some Companies from the third battalion. Two platoons from A Company were in the first wave. My two brothers and I happened to be in the platoon that was in the first wave. Oh, they had told us these horror stories. If you live to get ashore, you'll be living on borrowed time.

Well, we didn't see any Japanese for a couple of days. However the first night, a lot of the people on guard duty were trigger happy and there was quite a lot of shooting, but

there were no Japanese around. I was proud that I didn't join that group that was trigger happy. I stood my post, was quiet about it.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Then what happened?

Mr. Shedd.

Then the next day, we started going west along the coast. First Marines were supposed to go up and capture a mountain. They found it was not feasible. But the Fifth Marines went along the coast and A Company was in the front and I had trained as a scout, so I was in front of those people and the big shots in Division wanted us to hurry and hurry and hurry. Well, we weren't going to hurry and bring anybody into an ambush. So we took our time, but we still captured all that they wanted, in the time that they wanted. So I don't know what the complaining was about.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Was the jungle pretty thick there?

Mr. Shedd.

No. That jungle word is over used a lot. There was what you call jungle if you went into the valley and all it would have the Liana vines with the terrible thorns on them. But luckily, we were just in a coconut grove. Not the jungle.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you help capture Henderson Field?

Mr. Shedd.

Not really. The first regiment was the one that actually captured it, but we went by it so we could see the airport and the pagoda that they used for a headquarters building I

guess. Then of course, we went through where they lived and there was an ice plant there. A little sort of a building they called a hospital and I saw a place where there were all kinds of architectural instruments for drawing the plans up for the airport building they said they were going to put up there. Also, on the second day, we captured a food warehouse. Which was a bonanza for us because, as you know Navy ships eventually had to leave, because all the war ships, cruisers and destroyers left and all that was left was the cargo ships and the passenger ships. So they couldn't stay there without protection, so they left too. We thought we were in another Wake Island, that we were going to be abandoned. But we were able to get enough food, we were put on half rations. In other words, about ten o'clock we got breakfast, which was usually barley with weevils in it. Some Japanese crackers. Then in the middle of the afternoon, we got the evening meal and that could be anything. There was Alaskan salmon. The Japanese had a delicious canned beef with some kind of sauce on it. We made out until one day I looked, up until this time whenever there was an airplane or a ship, it was Japanese. One day I saw two destroyers coming up along the coast and I thought it was a couple more Japanese destroyers, coming into shell us again, but then as they got a little bit closer, you could see Old Glory waving up there on the masthead. Then we knew that we weren't abandoned. The Navy was going to come back. They didn't bring us anything to eat. They brought bombs and gasoline for the airport. But eventually ships began coming in with food. They brought an awful lot of New Zealand bully beef. We call it corned beef. The cooks did their best, did what they could with the corned beef. There's only about so many ways you can prepare it. They would fry it, dice it up and fry it. Put batter on it and fry it that way. They would have it cold with pickles on it. Just any way that they

could camouflage that! And of course there was rice the whole time from the Japanese warehouse.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When you landed, did you have to crawl over the side of the landing craft?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah, we had the old fashioned Higgins boats. They didn't have a ramp on them. You had to jump over the sides. It was a good chance to get hurt, but I don't know that anybody did. After the landing, I don't remember seeing that type of boat again.

Everything else had ramps on them.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When you landed, you started moving inland, is that right?

Mr. Shedd.

Yes. After we landed, we were supposed to. They told us to take cover, so I did and I kind of lost the Company for awhile, but yes we went inland. There was a river we had to cross and they brought lumber from one of the ships and an alligator tank which they put down in the river and built a bridge across the tank, to the other side.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Was that what was called Alligator Creek?

Mr. Shedd.

No, that was farther east.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Then what happened? When did you have your first contact with the Japanese?

Mr. Shedd.

We had set up on the western end of the perimeter from the coast, back a ways. That was A Company. Since we were right there, they picked us to go farther west and do some reconnoitering and see what was there. So we went down to the Matanikau River.

Another guy and I were scouting out in front and we saw two Japanese and as soon as they saw us, they just ran and got back across the river. When we got to the river, they opened up on us from the other side. I think a couple of guys were wounded, but I don't think anybody was killed that first time. We weren't there too long when the Captain pulled us back. We had found out where they were and I guess that's all they wanted to know. Come to think of it, that wasn't the first time we saw the Japanese because our platoon went on a short scouting expedition out from our line and we could see a Japanese on a horse, coming towards us. And he got quite close and we all opened up on him and some of the worst shooting in the Marine Corps! Eventually the horse was killed and the Japanese that was riding him, ran down a ways, but when we finally caught up to him, he had eight bullet holes in him. So he did get shot, but sometimes it took a lot of bullets to kill a Japanese. Then there was another Japanese on foot who got mortally wounded and when we used to go on long patrols, we'd see his body sitting against a coconut tree. It kind of scared people at first.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Then what happened?

Mr. Shedd.

Well we went down to the Matanikau, I wish I knew how many times, but we went back there another time and the Japanese hit us the same way. They were on the other side of the river and this time they did kill one of our men and then there was, not long after that,

somebody had been firing a Japanese gun and they said they thought they saw a white flag waving, down where the Japanese were, so some of the people from the Division Intelligence decided they wanted to take a patrol down there and capture these guys. Well they went at night for some reason and when they landed of course, they all got ashore and then they went down in boats. When they got ashore, the Japanese came at them and started killing all of them. Two of them I think it was two, were able to get into the water and swim back to the main base. Reported what had happened. So the next day they sent A Company again down to find this place and I don't remember if we actually found it, but one of the other men in the Company claims that we did see it. Found the spot where all these men were killed. Then later on we were supposed to land behind the Japanese lines and come back through it. I think it was the boat that I was on, ran out of gas, because it was done in a hurry and they hadn't had time to check their fuel. A lot of the guys were seasick from bouncing around. Eventually we did land with the rest of them. We were supposed to go through the Japanese lines, back to our own line, but the Japanese sort of took off. Well, there was quite a hullabaloo with the Battalion Commander. He was relieved and they told him they didn't ever want to see him again! So he left Guadalcanal under pretty bad circumstances.

Mr. Misenhimer.

That was your Battalion Commander?

Mr. Shedd.

His name was Maxwell.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Lieutenant Colonel William E. Maxwell.

Mr. Shedd.

Yes. I didn't remember his first name. So I can't remember how we got out of there. I know the regimental commander came and took over. Whether we walked the rest of the way back to Head Quarters, or went by boat, I don't remember. Nothing great seemed to happen. A Company was sort of the rear guard then. Everybody else was in front of us, so we had to watch what was behind us. As they say, 'Watch your six'. Watch what's behind you. Somehow A Company had never gotten involved in any of the big battles, Bloody Ridge, or the Battle of the Tenaru. Come to find out, they had the wrong name. It actually was the Ilu River I think. Course they didn't have proper maps. It was easy to get rivers and places mixed up. A Company did their share and perhaps more of patrols, outside of our line. Like I said, we made many trips to the Matanikau River, then one night we were supposed to, some of us were sent to the eastern end of our line and there were three of us. We were supposed to guard the shore and two men would walk out east a certain distance and one would turn around and come back and relieve the man that had been standing in the first place and then he would go out and relieve the man that was way out in the front. We kept patrolling that way, for I don't know how many hours. That was not a fun thing to be on the beach, way out away from anybody else.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Then what happened?

Mr. Shedd.

One battle we did get involved in was in November. We would go west, past the Mantanikau River and so A Company, I believe, was along the beach and we did make quite an advance. Then the next day, we had to go up on one of the hills inland from

where we were because B Company had been up there and lost a lot of men. We took over their spot. I remember that Mc Ilhenyhis first name escapes me right now. He was in B Company and he wanted to take part of A Company and a bayonet charge, over the hill in front of us and luckily somebody rescinded that order, because he had no business taking over A Company men. We stayed on that spot and the Japanese could see us there. We were much farther inland and they kept throwing mortars and I don't know what all at us. We tried to stay in the fox holes. During the day, they wanted the A Company to fix bayonets and they were going to go back down on the coast and attack Point Cruz. But just as we started out, a piece of shrapnel hit my left shoulder and put a big scratch on it. Like a stupe, I had a corpsman fix it. I should have forgotten about it and gone on with men. I never lived that down. In my mind, I just didn't think I did the right thing, because I missed out on that bayonet charge. As it turned out, there were no Japanese there. I don't think they used their bayonet rifles at all. And then when they came back, we got a little sick and tired of being in plain sight of the Japanese, so we were watching our Lieutenant and thought, if he makes a move, we're going to get out of here. So sure enough, he put his pack on and the rest of us put ours on and we went back a little ways, not too far, but out of sight of the Japanese. And oh my goodness, the Captain, he got after us for being cowards. Before he could send us back where we were, we saw this line of men coming in, it was the Army! They came in to relieve us. Then when we got back into the main base, the doctors said that the first marine division was not fit to do anymore offensive work. So did some light patrolling and just kind of took it easy. By that time, food was pretty good. We just took it easy until December ninth, when we went down to board the ships to get out of there. I was able to climb the cargo

net. I was strong enough to do it, but there were guys that couldn't do it and they had to have the sailors help them up the cargo net. They just were so weak. We sailed from there, to Brisbane, Australia. That was kind of a hot and swampy area. It wasn't a good place for us to be. The guys that didn't get malaria on Guadalcanal, got it down there. So MacArthur said he didn't have any ships to take us anyplace else. They had found a place in Melbourne. Admiral Nimitz came up with a ship and took us down there to Melbourne, Australia where we spent about seven more months I guess. We got fat and lazy. I got fat cause I was on mess for weeks and ate too many sticky buns! I'd go into town, into Melbourne and buy more food and I weighed 177 I remember and that was the most I ever weighed in my life! I weigh 145 pounds.

Mr. Misenhimer.

There in Melbourne, what did you live in there? Was it some sports place, some sports arena?

Mr. Shedd.

We weren't actually in Melbourne. We were about forty miles out of town, near Frankston. In a camp that was built for a rest area. It wasn't supposed to be used for training, but we did. It was called Camp Balcomb. They were long buildings and around the top of them, they had screens. In the cold weather, you couldn't keep the cold out. But it didn't get that cold there.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Let me go back to Guadalcanal. In the Battle of Bloody Ridge, where were you then?

Mr. Shedd.

We were on beach defense, I think. So we never got involved in any way with that. The Battle of The Tenaru, they did get us up early and we went down near where the battle was going on. They had us wait there, but they didn't need us, so we eventually went back down to the place where we were on the defense. Bloody Ridge, we had no part in it. That was a real close call. The Japanese almost made it.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When Colonel Ichiki came in. Was that when you were talking about The Tenaru.

Mr. Shedd.

Yes, I couldn't remember his name. He was going to capture the whole thing with eight hundred men. In fact, he lost almost all of them.

Mr. Misenhimer.

On Guadalcanal, about how many people did your company lose?

Mr. Shedd.

I used to have that, I think it was nineteen. Not like some of the others. Like I said, we didn't get involved in any of the big battles. We didn't really lose too many. Quite a few were wounded.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Course a lot of them got sick with malaria and everything.

Mr. Shedd.

Over time, I had nine different attacks of malaria. I had one in Melbourne and after I got back to the states, South Carolina, I had another one. That was in 1945. I've never had one since. And then there was dysentery. I had some of that. Run out and think you

gotta go and not much would happen, except the blow flies would come around and bother you.

Mr. Misenhimer.

In Guadalcanal, where were your two brothers?

Mr. Shedd.

Pretty much Don was always with me, all the way through. A Company was sent out on a search party one time to build a new command post, I think for the regiment in the hills and I had just been in the hospital with malaria, so I had light duty and couldn't go out there. But Don and Paul went out and the Japanese came over with their bombers and not only anti aircraft from below would get them, but also the fighter planes and they'd jettison their bombs out in the jungle, right on top of A Company. They had no fox holes, no kind of protection, just out on the ground. I think five men were killed and I was real anxious to hear word, after I knew what happened, about my two brothers that were out there. It turned out that Paul had a shrapnel wound and he was evacuated to New Zealand. He never saw action again after that. Don was hurt in the knee. He was wrapped up and sent back to duty. So there's no record that he was wounded at all. Never got a Purple Heart for it or anything. Don and I were together then for the rest of Guadalcanal, New Britain, most of Peleliu where Don was wounded again and evacuated to New Caledonia. So I was the last one of the Shedd brothers in action.

Mr. Misenhimer.

So all three of you were in A Company.

Mr. Shedd.

Most of the time in the same platoon. Except when we were at Peleliu Don

became a squad leader and I was transferred to company headquarters.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What did you do at headquarters?

Mr. Shedd.

I don't remember that I had any special name, although I did repair rifles and BARs and pistols. My discharge says I was a small arms mechanic. I wasn't very well trained, but was able to take BARs apart faster than the average guy was supposed to.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When were you transferred to headquarters company.

Mr. Shedd.

While we were on Pavuvu After we were at New Britain. On New Britain I was an assistant squad leader. Don't remember what Don was doing on New Britain.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Now let's go back to Australia. Anything particular happen there?

Mr. Shedd.

Course we did lots of training. That's when I found out I was so fat, I couldn't even chin myself! I got over that when we got up to Pavuvu. We put a bar, we fastened one into a coconut tree and the other side, a couple of sticks x ways. Then we could chin ourselves and go up and over the bar and I got myself in shape. That was after New Britain.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Tell me about New Britain. What happened there? Was that Cape Gloucester

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. We went ashore December thirtieth, something like that. Our Company went up along the coast for a ways, then we went out through the kunai grass. I had no memory at all of the first night we were there. Exactly where we were, but we were out in the kunai grass. The next day as we were advancing, we went up this little slope. Second Platoon was in the front, I believe and which was my patrol. The Japanese came over from the other side and started throwing satchel charges at us and grenades and firing. At first I kind of stayed hidden down in the grass, but I said, I can't do this, so I got up and started firing at a Japanese I saw up above. I fired three times at him and each time he went down. At some point he hit me and it went through my shoulder. Took out part of my shoulder blade. So they sent me to New Guinea for about six weeks to get better, and then I said to the doctor, "I gotta get back with my buddies. Can I get out of here?" "Well," he said, "You're not quite ready, but I'll let you go." So as soon as the Japanese started firing at me again, I wondered why I said that. I was glad to be back with the Company.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What rifle did you have in New Brittan?

Mr. Shedd.

At that time we had the M-1 rifle in New Britain. No more bolt action. In fact when the Army came to Guadalcanal, they had the M-1. Quite a few of them ended up missing their M-1's, cause the Marines would put their sticky fingers on them. So much more fire power than bolt action!

Mr. Misenhimer.

What are some other things that happened there at Cape Gloucester.

Mr. Shedd.

Then when I came back from the hospital in New Guinea, I had to go up the coast quite a long ways to catch up with the Company. Then a couple days after I caught up with them, we went up to Talasea and did a landing there. They didn't have any preparation. Firing from battle ships or anything like that. They couldn't get in there. So they had rigged up tanks in bigger landing boats and by lowering the ramp a little bit, tanks could fire out of the boat and when we did get ashore, the Japanese were dropping ninety millimeter mortars on them. On the coast. But it was Second Platoon's job to go up the hill on the right and patrol it. If the Japanese had ever been in their fox holes, we'd have had a great time getting up that hill. But they weren't there. Then once we got up to the top of the hill, we turned left and went down towards where the mortars were firing and we ran into about thirty Japanese. I think there were about eighteen of us in the Second Platoon. So there was quite a firefight there. We cut them down to about our size. We lost one man and we shot quite a number of them. The rest of them just disappeared, so then we were ready to start back. On the way back, we looked into an old shed that was there. In there was a machine gun and one of those ninety millimeter mortars there and I said, "They're not going to fire this thing at me!" And I took that huge tube over my shoulder and the corpsman carried the machine gun and we got those out of there, so the Japs couldn't use them. Then we got back to the beach and they were still firing down there. Artillery was down there. They took quite a few casualties. I also remember at that point that they pulled A Company out. Put A Company on defense They put me way out in front of them and I dug a real good fox hole with my feet, digging in the sand.

Somebody was supposed to wake me up at some point, but I slept right through the night. I had a real good sleep, out by myself. No land crabs or anything bothering me. Then the next day, the Japanese had stopped firing their mortars and had taken off. So we started out, up that road and then with a little fire fighting, then come to find out, A and B Company, were firing at each other! But the only one that got hurt was a native! He had on a Japanese uniform. It's no wonder he got wounded. I think he just got wounded, I hope. So then A Company had to swing way down south, through a big long run and come in to Talasea from the south. I'm not just sure how far south we went. Swung around and came back. That night they put our squad out in the bushes and they had some leaves that made a horrible noise whenever you moved. We didn't bother to put a guard out because we thought if a Jap tries to come through there, he's going to wake us up with the rustling! I don't think the Lieutenant would have liked that. We did several things the Lieutenant wouldn't like! Then eventually A Company ended up on the top of the hill, above the town of Talasea. So they picked my squad to reconnoiter out in one area. We found a Japanese building that was full of maps and flags and all kinds of souvenirs. So we took a couple of them and came back. Then the officers had me take them back to that building. They wanted some souvenirs also and officially looking for maps to give them some Intelligence. I didn't like that assignment too much. I was able to find it again. There was no water available up on top of the hill, so we had to walk way down, probably a mile or so, down onto the shore. And we got nice, fresh spring water down there. Not too far away, another spring that was volcanic. It was warm water and there was a pool. Guys would strip off their clothes and get in it. Just about the temperature that you would like to take a bath. It was real nice to take a bath. I

wouldn't have to walk down too often to get water. I got a chunk of bamboo, about two and half inches in diameter. I punched holes down through the little partitions and then I had a cork of some kind for the top and I'd fill that stick of bamboo up and I had a string on it so I could throw it over my shoulder and carry it. Like I said, I was assistant squad leader then. So our squad was the first to go out on the overnight patrols, out in no mans' land. It seemed like every time the squad leader didn't feel good. I don't know how many times I took them. It must have been ten or fifteen miles out to no mans' land and we'd stay there overnight. One time, some of the natives came along. They wanted to carry our packs and then they wanted to carry our rifles! We let them carry the packs, but we wanted the rifles. One time we got down there and the natives came back into the village where we used to stop. They were having a great time, celebrating that they were back in their village. They had some baked taro. They gave us a taste of it. It was real good. It tasted like sort of a mixture between bread and potato. They had baked it in the fire somehow. Real good. Then the last time we went down there, must have been in May. We slept under one of the huts, because it was raining. Apparently, there were little bugs that came down and bit us and left little red spots all over! We were put on light duty. We were just quarantined because we had a fever and then shortly were put on ships and taken down to Pavuvu in the Russell Islands, which is about fifty miles north of Guadalcanal for rest and training. It was a poor place for either one. They didn't ask the First Division to go to Guadalcanal like the other outfits have, because every day they wanted a thousand men for a work party. The Division wanted no part of that. That's the main reason we ended up at Pavuvu. There we got ready to go Peleliu.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Tell me about that.

Mr. Shedd.

Peleliu was the only time that I know of that the Division landed against opposition.

Some how or other our Amtrac was able to get ashore. At that point, they had a new kind of Amtrac with the ramp on the back so that you couldn't come out, facing the enemy.

You came around. But A Company was able to get ashore and get out towards the airport. That first day the Japanese sent bombing down a bunch of tanks. It seemed like in the A Company area. They didn't know that we had big tanks. They had little, very light tanks. We had medium tanks. They got opened up on and they would blow those Japanese tanks apart. As far as I know, none of the tanks ever went back. They did kill some of our men. One guy, in fact, my brother's squad leader, one of the tanks ran over his leg. So he lived to tell about it. I got to know him after the war. He had a hard time walking, but you don't very often get run over by a tank and live.

Mr. Misenhimer.

An American tank, or a Japanese tank?

Mr. Shedd.

Japanese tank. They're little. At that time, Don became squad leader. Then the next day, A Company's job was to cross the airport. We had landed with some two hundred and twenty five men. By the time we got across the airport, all we could account for was ninety men. The rest had been killed or wounded crossing that airport, because we were right out in full sight of the Japanese up in the hills. After we got over there, I think there were two Lieutenants, killed and one Bench Williams known as Whiskey Willie because he was a teetotaler. He became Company commander. He gave me a list of men he

could account for. Asked me, or told me to take it back to the beach. So I had to cross that airport again. I got across okay and delivered it and I was glad to get away from the beach, because the Japanese were shelling it and they hit an ammunition dump, stuff flying all over the place.

I almost got back to the Company when I found one of our men on the airport, had been wounded and couldn't get up on his feet. So I helped him up and crossed the airport again with him. I delivered him to the hospital on the beach and crossed the airport again back to the Company. Then I don't know just what A Company did after that. At one point, we were sent up along the east coast and up on to a ridge. It was called Walt's Ridge. It was pretty steep. It had a place that was sort of level. I took sticks and made a little platform on the ground there. Then I could lay out on that. We didn't have any Japanese shooting at us. But big guns were shooting on the other side of that ridge, what they called a horse shoe. Piece of shrapnel came up and pulled my hair. For some reason, I didn't have my hat on and it pulled my hair, but it didn't hurt me other than that. That was a true story. Then the whole Fifth Regiment just moved over onto the west coast. Up along the road it was on. Eventually we got way up to the north end of the island and pulled in our lines, so that we weren't connected with the rest of the Division at all. We were off by ourselves. But we had a great Regimental Commander that knew how to use all the weapons that were available. The Fifth Regiment was eventually able to capture the whole north end of the island and then one day, they took the Third Battalion of the Fifth Marines to go across this small body of water to the island of Ngesebus. In two days, they captured that. Regimental Commander air support, everything you could think of. 155 millimeter guns, everything to prepare the road for

the guys when they came in. With the least amount of casualties he was able to take that north end.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Who was your Regimental Commander?

Mr. Shedd.

I can't think of it right now. Then they brought us back down to the airport area and we stayed on beach defense. Went on board the Sea Runner. Go back to Pavuvu. The captain of the ship had printed out so everybody could have a copy of a Japanese report that the Sea Runner had been sunk with all hands. So we got a laugh out of that. They had some kind of a point system. After you got so many points, you could come home to the States. Well Don and I had more than enough points to come home, before we went to Peleliu. They just couldn't send everybody home. So a bunch of us old timers had to go to Peleliu. But then after Peleliu, all the people that went over originally in '42, were able to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer.

So when did you come home?

Mr. Shedd.

I got back to the States just before Christmas, 1944. Went to the depot base and they couldn't process to send us home for awhile, because all the permanent personnel went away for two weeks. So we were confined to Base supposedly. Couldn't leave the Base. Couldn't go home because they couldn't process us. Nobody was there to process. After they got back from New Year's, we boarded a train. A regular troop train and it would stop at Harveys for all meals. Those Harvey places, they would have meals ready for us.

It was a great train ride. It had the bunks, were crosswise of the train and were three high. So in the daytime, we would put the bottom two bunks, kind of like a sofa. But the top one we left flat out, so if someone wanted to sack out for awhile, they could go up in the top one. Or all three guys could sit on the bottom one. It was real nice. I felt real bad. One guy, we let him out so he could see his family for the first time in three years. So drunk, that he had to be helped off the train. I thought it was a real sad thing. They had in key cities, which was supposed to be the big city, nearest where your home was. Well at that time, my home was in Manchester, Connecticut. So I would have known that New York. That was a key city. But they decided that my key city was, I think Cincinnati, Ohio. So I had to pay my train fare from there, to home. My folks had moved from Manchester and my father was back on the farm where he was happy. So they had been going down every day to meet the train and I wasn't there. So this one day that I did come in, nobody was there. So I walked up to the main street in Wallingford. And somebody asked me if I wanted a ride someplace and he took me up to my where my folks' farm was. That was all strange to me, because I had been to Wallingford before, but I didn't know much about it. So I had thirty days' delay en route. The nearest thing I ever got to a furlough. After the thirty days, they shipped me on the train, down to Parris Island again. When I first got there, I didn't have any special duties and I was put in the NCO Club. I guess that's what it was. I waited on tables. I didn't care a whole lot about that, because, they'd order these big steaks and then one day somebody spilled something and I was behind him and I was waiting on the people. So I didn't bother with it right away. Boy the guy that was in charge there climbed all over me! "You clean that up!" So I had to stop and clean that up. But then I got assigned to the rifle range. So I

finished my Marine Corps career as a rifle coach. For a long time I qualified everybody that came to me. Then after awhile, as we used to say, I dropped one. In other words he didn't qualify as a marksman. And then another one, until finally they transferred me to the ~~BAR~~ range I was a coach there till about September 25^h, when I got my discharge and train fare to take me home.

Mr. Misenhimer.

So you got the discharge when?

Mr. Shedd.

I think it was September 25th, 1945. I do remember that I wanted to catch the train at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon or something. And this Colonel that was supposed to sign some of it, was found fooling around with a shot gun on the rifle range! I think it was a couple hours I had to wait until he signed it and that was the longest two hours I spent in the Marine Corps! I wanted out of there!

Mr. Misenhimer.

What was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Shedd.

Corporal. I had passed the test for Sergeant, but I never got the stripes, or the money.

Although, they didn't mind that I did the work.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Shedd.

I think November 13th, on Guadalcanal. They brought the battle ships in. I was in the hospital, near the airport and they took all of us and they had these big bunkers in the

ground. I was in, and this was in the middle of the night and those big shells, I think they weighed a ton a piece or more, would come in like a freight train and oh boy, that was an awful noise. I thought my hair would turn white that night! It never did.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you see the medics working very much when you were in the field, in battle?

Mr. Shedd.

They were the bravest of the brave. Because they would go out to take care of the patient and expose themselves to enemy fire. When the Marines were trying to take cover. They were great. They knew their business and they went way beyond what a corpsman was supposed to do. They were just great.

Mr. Misenhimer.

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

Mr. Shedd.

They were also good. Except one. We had one from down south. He said to somebody one time, "How do you spell rat?" And somebody said, "R-A-T." He said, "No, I mean like 'right now'?" He one time set up machine guns so that they were facing each other. He didn't last long. Aside from that, they were just great.

Mr. Misenhimer.

May 8th, 1945, Germany surrendered. Where were you when that happened?

Mr. Shedd.

I was at the movie! That was the one time I had an attack of malaria on Parris Island. I was well enough then, so that I could go to the movies. So I was in the movies when they

stopped the film and told us about it.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you have any celebration?

Mr. Shedd.

I don't remember any great celebration. I'm sure we felt good. Because most of us thought we would be going back over again. Three times we'd been in combat and the fourth time didn't work too good. So we were awful glad that Truman decided to drop that bomb.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you come home with any souvenirs from World War II?

Mr. Shedd.

No. I did have a Japanese flag, but I sent it down, I think I think to your museum. Not sure. I'm pretty sure they have it down there at Fredericksburg. Along with a couple of jungle hammocks.

Mr. Misenhimer.

You didn't get any swords, or anything like that?

Mr. Shedd.

No. I didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. Shedd.

Oh yeah! Especially when we were on New Guinea, before we went to Cape Gloucester.

We saw several of them. Gary Cooper at one time, Una Merkle. The Australians did so

well. They were all men, but they would play womens' parts and that was good.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Where were you at on New Guinea?

Mr. Shedd.

At Milne Bay. Which is way down at the southeastern tip of New Guinea.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How long were you there?

Mr. Shedd.

We went there from Australia at the staging area before we went to Cape Gloucester. A few months. I don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Shedd.

Not very much. Let's see. We went to, the Red Cross did have a thing at Pavuvu one time, but the guys didn't patronize it very much. As far as I know, they didn't stay there too long. We went to Guadalcanal from Peleliu for a landing and we got to see some American women for the first time. The first time we'd seen any for a long time. So we had to go and have some of their coffee and doughnuts. I think when we were on Pavuvu, they also supplied us with cigarettes, but we had to pay fifty cents a carton for them. Now it costs that much for a cigarette.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When you all crossed the Equator, did you all have any kind of a ceremony then?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. There were too many of us for everybody to take part in it, but we all got a certificate. I don't know what happened to mine. I have one that belongs to one of my buddies. He sent it to me. But yeah, they had kind of a ceremony. Sailors put on I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. The last part of the time we were on Guadalcanal, like I said, we didn't have much in the line of duties, because we were so weak, at night we used to go up near the General's tent and he would have that on and we would listen to it. There had to be somebody from the Outfit that was telling the information, because she would have names and all kinds of details about what was going to happen. So yeah, I did hear her a few times.

Mr. Misenhimer.

How was the morale in your Outfit?

Mr. Shedd.

I think it was always real good. High.

Mr. Misenhimer.

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

Mr. Shedd.

No. I think I was home about three days when I started working. I got a job as an apprentice carpenter with a construction outfit in Wallingsford. I went to Wallingsford, lived with my folks for awhile. I had no problem adjusting. I had to watch my language

for awhile. I couldn't bring the Marine Corps language in the house.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Shedd.

The First Marine Division has one every year. I started going in 1986. I didn't go to all of them. Most of them since 1986. I won't be going to any more. I don't think I told you that I have cancer. My doctor told me that the treatments aren't doing any good. So they stopped the treatments. Now I'm under the care of Hospice. They come to the house once a week. That's the route I'm taking now. At the moment, I feel good. I can do quite a lot of physical work. They told me I would feel good for awhile, because I wasn't taking the treatments anymore. The type of cancer I had was prostate over twenty years. I've been fighting it, but now the fight is over. What it is, is what they call the reoccurrence of colon cancer. It's in the lymph nodes and the pancreas and now it's got spots on the liver and there's just no stopping it now.

Mr. Misenhimer.

I'm sorry to hear that. Did you use your GI Bill for anything when you got out?

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. I guess we got a mortgage to build our house. I guess that was on the GI Bill. Since I was a carpenter, I built the house when I wasn't working on a job. It was a hard way to do it. Working nights and weekends. We've got a real nice house. I do get 10% disability because of the wound in my shoulder. It doesn't bother me anymore, but I used to say they didn't do anything for my ears. I lost my ears on the rifle range. So I get

money for that. But now I find out that they give me hearing aids and they furnish the batteries and no charge to me. They are taking care of my ears.

Mr. Misenhimer.

What medals and ribbons did you get?

Mr. Shedd.

I have six ribbons. The Purple Heart. Navy/Marine combat ribbon. Ribbon for PUC. I have that with a Bronze Star in it. We got one at Guadalcanal and one at Peleliu. American Defense Ribbon. Asiatic Pacific. My goodness, I don't know what the other one is.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Is there anything else you recall from your time in World War II?

Mr. Shedd.

It seems like we pretty well covered it. I've heard people say they wouldn't take a million dollars for the experience, but they wouldn't do it again for a million dollars.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Is that kind of your feeling?

Mr. Shedd.

I think so. But if they called me, I'd go I suppose.

Mr. Misenhimer.

Bob, thank you again for your time today and especially thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Shedd.

Yeah. Nice talking with you.

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