

*National Museum of the Pacific War*

*Nimitz Education and Research Center*

*Fredericksburg, Texas*

Interview with

**Mr. W. Earl Morrison**

Date of Interview: March 29, 2010

## **National Museum of the Pacific War**

### **Fredericksburg, Texas**

#### **Interview with Mr. W. Earl Morrison**

Interview in progress.

Mark Cunningham: ...(unintelligible) for the Museum of the Pacific in Fredericksburg. Today is March 29<sup>th</sup>, [2010] and I'm at the home of Mr. W. Earl Morrison. He is a veteran of the U.S. Navy in World War II. Okay, let's start right at the beginning; where when you born?

Mr. Morrison: September 24, 1924.

Mark Cunningham: 1924, so that would make you...uh...

Mr. Morrison: Eighty-five.

Mark Cunningham: Eighty-five; a very young eighty-five years old. Alright, and where...where did you grow up?

Mr. Morrison: In...(unintelligible), Tennessee.

Mark Cunningham: And where...what town was that?

Mr. Morrison: Trenton, Tennessee.

Mark Cunningham: Trenton, Tennessee. Okay.

Mr. Morrison: About ninety-eight miles northeast of Memphis.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now how about...what were your parents' names?

Mr. Morrison: Father's name was (cough) James Alvin Morrison; my mother's name was Cora. I don't remem...they were divorced when I was little so I don't know...much about her.

Mark Cunningham: And where were you when...on Pearl Harbor Day?

Mr. Morrison: Uh, (cough), excuse me, in high school in Trenton.

Mark Cunningham: And what are your memories of that day?

Mr. Morrison: Well, it was a shocking day, but don't really remember anything.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. What, okay you were in...what...what year of high school would you have been in?

Mr. Morrison: (Cough), let's see, I guess I was...December of '41? I guess I was a sophomore.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, and when did you join the Navy?

Mr. Morrison: Well, when I turned eighteen, the Army refused me because a...my bones were not fully developed...'cause they gave me a year...furlough, I guess you'd call it, in which to...finish growing. In the meantime, I went and joined the Navy, and they put me in what they classified as SA, Special Assignment, which meant I couldn't serve on a man of war.

Mark Cunningham: And that was because of what; because of the bone situation?

Mr. Morrison: Because I wasn't...fully developed.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: I was still a kid.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Morrison: So...

Mark Cunningham: But you eighteen years old?

Mr. Morrison: Eighteen. Well, actually I was nineteen. I...I'd been nineteen for a couple of months when I joined the Navy.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. And where did you enl...where did you go in at; where did you take your basic?

Mr. Morrison: Uh, Sampson, New York.

Mark Cunningham: I didn't even know there was a Navy base in Sampson, New York.

Mr. Morrison: Oh, oh a half a million...sailors went through there.

Mark Cunningham: Really?

Mr. Morrison: It's on one of the finger lakes out in Syracuse.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: And I was there in the winter time, and...

Mark Cunningham: And it was cold (unintelligible).

Mr. Morrison: ...snow was on the ground all the...

Mark Cunningham: Oh boy, I bet it was!

Mr. Morrison: But it was *dry*, and it was blowing like sand.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: You know that's what they always did (unintelligible words).

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: (Unintelligible)...and send them to San Diego.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, so when you...boot camp lasted what...six or eight weeks, something like that?

Mr. Morrison: Uh, (pause)...no, something like three weeks.

Mark Cunningham: Three weeks?!

Mr. Morrison: Just enough to get my shots.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, and then from there where did you go?

Mr. Morrison: I went into...uh, well it was called at that time...Radio Technician (cough), excuse me...School.

Mark Cunningham: Radio Technician?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, it was later changed to...the name was changed to Electronic Technician.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: And that was eleven months.

Mark Cunningham: Where'd you take that training?

Mr. Morrison: Well (unintelligible) Chicago.

Mark Cunningham: More cold weather.

Mr. Morrison: Yeah (chuckle), three...three months in Houston.

Mark Cunningham: That's not too bad.

Mr. Morrison: In the summertime.

Mark Cunningham: Right, right, that's not too good either (chuckles).

Mr. Morrison: And seven months in the suburb of Washington D.C....(unintelligible words) at the Naval Research Center which... was at that time; I don't know what it is now. It's on the bank of the Potomac.

Mark Cunningham: And...what were your early impressions of the Navy?

Mr. Morrison: Well, I didn't like the monkey suit; that was my only objection.

Mark Cunningham: Really? How about the food and all that stuff?

Mr. Morrison: Well, I think I'm the only guy in the Navy who enjoyed the food.

Mark Cunningham: Really?

Mr. Morrison: I had served...when I was in high school, in the Tennessee State Guard and had gone on, you know, summer...uh, campout stuff, I guess, and that kind of made me not...want to be in the Army.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: Didn't want to live outdoors all the time.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: So that's why...I really joined the Navy was to stay out of the Army.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now...so you went in in '42, is that right?

Mr. Morrison: No, '44.

Mark Cunningham: Oh, you went in in '44?!

Mr. Morrison: Yeah, I was only in eighteen years.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, and you were in...eleven months...(bird noise in the background); you had three weeks basic training and eleven months...uh, Radio training...specialist training, and then where did you go? When did you get assigned to a...a ship?

Mr. Morrison: Uh, about...today...around March 28<sup>th</sup>...

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: ...27<sup>th</sup>...somewhere in there. The ship I was assigned to...uh, was an AK, Auxillary Cargo, but the dispatcher that did the assigning didn't realize that...the ship had been used as an attack cargo (woman's voice in background) and had...four or five battle stars before I joined it. See, I wasn't supposed to be on the...a ship that was, you know, involved in combat.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: But that's how it came down.

Mark Cunningham: What was the name of the ship?

Mr. Morrison: USS Auriga.

Mark Cunningham: Aur...Aur...?

Mr. Morrison: A-u-r-i-g-a.

Mark Cunningham: A-u-r-i-g-a.

Mr. Morrison: AK-98

Mark Cunningham: AK-98, and what are...I'm...I'm a little bit confused...is it a cargo...combat ship...is that...

Mr. Morrison: Well, an attack cargo is an AKA; an attack cargo is one that participates in...invasions.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: And a regular cargo just goes from...well, from the States to an island carrying cargo and then the attack cargo would pick it up from that island and take it into the invasion.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, and you were assigned to that after you got out of Radio School?

Mr. Morrison: Right.

Mark Cunningham: And...and...

Mr. Morrison: It's Technician, not Radio.

Mark Cunningham: Technician...

Mr. Morrison: There's a difference between...

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: Radio is operators and technicians goes in and repairs it.

Mark Cunningham: And you were a technician?

Mr. Morrison: Right.

Mark Cunningham: Right. And where did you pick that ship up?

Mr. Morrison: In Leyte Gulf...or Gulf Leyte or...I guess its Leyte Gulf. And from there we went to...

Mark Cunningham: Wait a minute, now how did you get out of the U.S.? Like...when did you...where did you deploy from the U.S.?

Mr. Morrison: On...(unintelligible) cargo ship, I mean, a troop carrier.

Mark Cunningham: Okay and went to Leyte?

Mr. Morrison: Went to Leyte; picked up that ship, and almost immediately we went to Laguna...Laguna?

Mark Cunningham: Alright, tell me a little bit about life on board that ship.

Mr. Morrison: Well, I had it easy. The ship had a complement of three technicians, but due to the (unintelligible), I was the only one, so I had no extra duties. I was on call twenty-four hours a day...but, on all hands, I didn't have to load food or didn't have to load ammunition, uh, didn't really have a boss. Communications Officer who was...(unintelligible) the civilian life as an architect, so he didn't know anything about electronics.

Mark Cunningham: (Chuckles).

Mr. Morrison: But I had a...a log that I had to keep, a preventative maintenance log, and...things I had to do every day – the things that I had to do daily; things



I had to do weekly and things monthly and so on; it was a...it's a big log book that...

Mark Cunningham: Alright, so here you are barely twenty years old, right,...just about?

Mr. Morrison: At about twenty.

Mark Cunningham: About twenty years old...onboard a...a ship; did you know it was headed for Okinawa?

Mr. Morrison: Not till it got there. No, when I...when I discovered it, I had about...a two-second wave of fear went through me, but that was the only time that...

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: ...I was ever afraid.

Mark Cunningham: Now what were you guys doing in and around Okinawa?

Mr. Morrison: Well, we had...fifty, in addition to the cargo, we had fifty Marines and their heavy equipment that was stashed on the deck, and we disembarked the Marines and...and unloaded the cargo.

Mark Cunningham: Onto the beaches?

Mr. Morrison: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: So you all went in close enough to...to the...you went right...did you right on...onto the beaches or did you lay off the...?

Mr. Morrison: No, we were unloading in small boats.

Mark Cunningham: Small boats?

Mr. Morrison: Uh hum.

Mark Cunningham: Off...offshore?

Mr. Morrison: Offshore.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Morrison: And these boats had...field-type radio (shrill noise) (unintelligible) which required batteries so they could communicate with the...

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: ...the people on the beach. And during (cough)...it took us...almost three times...as long to unload as it normally would because of the air attacks.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: So we ran out of batteries...on these...of these field radios. So, after the...we stayed there, I guess, a couple of weeks, and then we went back to the States for overhaul and repair. So I didn't want to run out of batteries again, and we didn't study...non-Navy equipment in school, so I had no idea...there were (unintelligible)...instruction books...(unintelligible words) on these battery-operated transceivers, so I had no idea how long the battery was supposed to last with that. So I just...checked out a truck and went down to the...depot and filled it with batteries.

Mark Cunningham: Now this was after you got back to the States?

Mr. Morrison: It was after we got back to the States.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, let's back up now. About when did you...did you go in with...when you went to Okinawa, was the battle well under way or it had just begun or...?

Mr. Morrison: It had been underway for...six days.

Mark Cunningham: (Cough), okay, did you see...

Mr. Morrison: No, seven days.

Mark Cunningham: Did...were...were you guys...attacked or...or harassed...

Mr. Morrison: Yes, there were seven (or several?) major kamikaze attacks while we were there.

Mark Cunningham: Anything hit your ship?

Mr. Morrison: No. The ship had been previously hit. In fact, the Commanding Officer was wounded at Luzon, and four or five people had been injured.

Mark Cunningham: What could you observe from the ship that was going on on the island; could you see any of the battle or have any perception of...?

Mr. Morrison: Well, my GQ position was in the wheel house.

Mark Cunningham: What's GQ?

Mr. Morrison: General Quarters.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: I was on standby in case some equipment broke down. All of the equipment – the radar and the transmitters and everything, had...called battle switches...which bypassed a lot of the safety switches on the equipment. So during combat you turn these on so we didn't have any breakdowns. So I just had to sit up there on standby. There was a...a bridge over the wheel house, and I liked to go out...I would...leave my post and step outside the door to watch the aerial combat. And there was a...I don't know if you know what a Bofors gun is?

Mark Cunningham: No.

Mr. Morrison: It was the Swedish automatic forty millimeter cannon.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: And came in single mounts and twins and quads, and I enjoyed watching...(unintelligible) go...boom, boom, boom, boom, and have a loader on each one of those.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Morrison: (Unintelligible)...and each would fit in by clips, and had...one guy would elevate the...the gun; the other guy would (unintelligible) it...to the...(unintelligible) of the target, so I enjoyed watching those things...fire. And there was one right outside my station there.

Mark Cunningham: And these were onboard ship?

Mr. Morrison: Onboard ship.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Morrison: So I would step outside the door, and every time the Communication Officer would see...I was missing, he'd come out and grab me and pull me back in. I felt I...was kind of dumb, but I felt I was safe because of the deck above me. Of course, it was only...ten or twelve feet wide...

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: ...and I was underneath. I thought everything that came down would have to hit that deck first, so...and...we also had...twenty millimeters...(unintelligible) gun onboard. So one day I was out watching...the aerial display and...this kamikaze came across...well, there was a cruiser between us and beach...going down and bombarding the...the area. Well, this kamikaze went between...the beach and the cruiser, and he put...the cruiser between us and the...airplane. So this guy on the twenty

millimeter cannon just kept firing at the plane and you could see him...the shells exploding...on the...plane along the exhaust stack of this cruiser.

Plane came out of...another fighter who kept fighting, so there's a lot of...

Mark Cunningham: So you *did* see a lot of activity?

Mr. Morrison: Oh yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Now long were you...how...are you in...did I hear you...you were there about two weeks?

Mr. Morrison: About two weeks.

Mark Cunningham: About two weeks.

Mr. Morrison: Uh hum...which...

Mark Cunningham: Now were...were you guys...laying at anchor or were...were you moving all the time?

Mr. Morrison: We...we were at anchor unloading.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, now that's...kind of like a sitting duck, isn't it?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, uh hum. Well, the real targets were the carriers and the big...

Mark Cunningham: Right, yes.

Mr. Morrison: ...but I did get a good look at the bottom of a Japanese airplane as it came over our ship and hit the one next to us.

Mark Cunningham: Kamikaze?

Mr. Morrison: Beg your pardon?

Mark Cunningham: Kamikaze?

Mr. Morrison: Yeah, uh hum. I was doing the (unintelligible)...I was aerial combat.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, now when you...when you left...now was this a...give me some...understanding of the size of this ship that you're on.

Mr. Morrison: Uh, the ship I was on?

Mark Cunningham: Uh huh.

Mr. Morrison: About four hundred feet long.

Mark Cunningham: So it wasn't small?

Mr. Morrison: Right, a little longer than a football field.

Mark Cunningham: Right. And then you guys sailed back to the west coast?

Mr. Morrison: Went back to San Francisco.

Mark Cunningham: Now did you go back out?

Mr. Morrison: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: Where did you go? Well, first off, what did you do when you got to San Francisco? You got the batteries...that's one...

Mr. Morrison: Well, we had to overhaul the ship; put on new radar, a later version, of the radar, and communications equipment. And I was...and I don't know what else they did. They did...a lot of maintenance; a lot of welding going on...

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: ...modifying the ship. But my interest was just in the...electronic part. So they got new radar; new communications equipment, and I think we were there about a month...and just...went back out.

Mark Cunningham: And where did you go?

Mr. Morrison: Back to the South Pacific; we went to...Kwajalein, uh.

Mark Cunningham: Never heard of that one.

Mr. Morrison: Beg your pardon?

Mark Cunningham: Never heard of that one.

Mr. Morrison: Never heard of Kwajalein. Uh, Guam, we went to Guam; we went to Espiritu Santo. That's where we were when Roosevelt died. No, that's where we were when the war ended.

Mark Cunningham: Now what it...what...what was it...what was it like when you heard about the war ending?

Mr. Morrison: I don't know; I...I was enjoying myself. I...

Mark Cunningham: Okay, but was it a lot of jubilation?

Mr. Morrison: Yeah, a guy straight off the farm, you know, off the farm...uh, I certainly enjoyed my entire time in the service.

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Morrison: Except boot camp; I didn't like boot camp...'cause it was winter time, and...

Mark Cunningham: And when did you get out?

Mr. Morrison: In...'46.

Mark Cunningham: Let's see, of '40...so you were in two years?

Mr. Morrison: Two years and a few months.

Mark Cunningham: And where did you...where did you get out?

Mr. Morrison: In Memphis, Tennessee. Well, after...after the war was over, they ship went to Bayonne, New Jersey, and was decommissioned there. And I was sent to Galveston and came down here in Texas and the weather was nice and warm and flowers were blooming. I sent my winter clothes back

home not realizing this was just a way stop; then they sent me back to Seattle...well, Bremerton, Washington...'cause I didn't have enough points to get out.

Mark Cunningham: Okay. And what...what did you do there?

Mr. Morrison: So there I was on the ship, AK ship, [USS] Alamosa, which we were putting in mothballs. So we were there...Bremerton...and I don't remember...which is not fair...I acquired enough points to get out so they shipped me to Memphis and discharged me there. And that would be...well, I did join the Navy reserve.

Mark Cunningham: When you got out?

Mr. Morrison: Beg your pardon?

Mark Cunningham: When you got out?

Mr. Morrison: Yes.

Mark Cunningham: And where did you get out again?

Mr. Morrison: I don't remember the exact date.

Mark Cunningham: No, where?

Mr. Morrison: Where?

Mark Cunningham: Where were you?

Mr. Morrison: Memphis, Tennessee.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, Memphis, yeah. Okay, what else do you want to tell me about your experiences during World War II?

Mr. Morrison: Well, the battery story. I had all these batteries and ran out of my own storage space, so I asked other people that had stores in them



and...(unintelligible) locker took a bunch. And when we got back out to sea, well, they would use them for barter; they'd change...trade the batteries for paint.

Mark Cunningham: Oh wow!

Mr. Morrison: And...apparently there was a shortage of...maybe the hot weather or something was bad on the batteries; they didn't last as long as they should. Anyway, I got...I got rid of a lot of the batteries; traded them to other ships for things. But we never needed them because...nobody knew it, but the war was essentially over.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: That's...about my only experience was that...Leyte Invasion.

Mark Cunningham: Now...you were on that ship; you were on the first one for what...several months at least, right?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, from...I guess from...March to February.

Mark Cunningham: Did you make...you...you probably made some pretty good friends onboard that thing, right?

Mr. Morrison: Well, I had a number of friends, but I only remember one name.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mr. Morrison: And he was the Radar Operator.

Mark Cunningham: Did you keep up with anybody after the war?

Mr. Morrison: No...wished I'd kept up with him, but I...I didn't.

Mark Cunningham: Are there any...are there any veteran's organizations around what you were doing, do you know?

Mr. Morrison: Well, yeah, I joined the VFW and the American Legion.

Mark Cunningham: Right. Now what was it your wife wanted me to ask you about; I've forgotten.

Mr. Morrison: (Unintelligible)?

Mrs. Morrison: Yes?

Mr. Morrison: What did you want?

Mark Cunningham: You told me to ask him about something.

Mrs. Morrison: I'm sorry?

Mark Cunningham: You told me to ask him about something.

Mrs. Morrison: Oh, did he tell him about his batteries?

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mrs. Morrison: And your bones?

Mr. Morrison: And what?

Mrs. Morrison: Your batteries and your bones?

Mr. Morrison: Oh yeah.

Mark Cunningham: Yeah.

Mrs. Morrison: And about James? (recording momentarily stopped.)

Mr. Morrison: ...he was in the Marines and he was on the...on the beach while I was on the...

Mark Cunningham: Oh really?!

Mr. Morrison: ...and of course, we never...

Mark Cunningham: Did...did you know that?

Mr. Morrison: ...we never knew the other one was there...so...'cause that was a common occurrence, you know.

Mark Cunningham: But...did he make it off okay?

Mr. Morrison: Yeah, he made it off (unintelligible).

Mark Cunningham: Did he fight through the whole battle?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, he was in...he went in the Marines...he wasn't in any battle.

Mark Cunningham: But...but you...you did not know he was on...

Mr. Morrison: Didn't know he was on there.

Mark Cunningham: I've had other people tell me that...that happened.

Mr. Morrison: Yeah, it's common. (recording temporarily stopped)

Mark Cunningham: Okay now this...wait a minute, this is a story about your brother?

Mr. Morrison: Right.

Mark Cunningham: Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Morrison: One of his assignments was...to carry the wounded from the line of battle back a hundred yards or so to the...where they could do pick up and take them in, and this one guy...was shot in the forehead and the whole back of his head...was gone, and he was complaining of a headache. And the Medic told him it would soon go away; it...it'd be okay. And of course, he died.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: The headaches ceased, so...

Mark Cunningham: Uhm, wow!

Mr. Morrison: I have another story about my brother. They had dug in one night and were told that there were no animals around. In the middle of the night he heard this noise, and he opened fire and the next morning it turned out that he'd killed a horse.

Mark Cunningham: (Chuckle).

Mr. Morrison: And...guy told him, "You killed it; you bury it," so he had to bury the horse all by himself.

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter), oh boy!

Mr. Morrison: It was a...funny story.

Mark Cunningham: So you...you mustered out in Memphis, Tennessee in 1945...

Mr. Morrison: '46.

Mark Cunningham: ...'46, after...after the war was over.

Mr. Morrison: Correct.

Mark Cunningham: And where did you settle?

Mr. Morrison: Where did I...?

Mark Cunningham: Where did you settle; what...what did you do after the war?

Mr. Morrison: Oh, I went to college.

Mark Cunningham: Where'd you go to college?

Mr. Morrison: University of Tennessee and University of Houston.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: (Unintelligible words), I was in Houston where...for three months, and I liked the town so I just came back.

Mark Cunningham: What did you do for a living?

Mr. Morrison: I was a...a professor at the University of Texas Dental School...

Mark Cunningham: Alright.

Mr. Morrison: ...for thirty-five years.

Mark Cunningham: Alright. Well, that's great!

Mr. Morrison: And I retired in...'83.

Mark Cunningham: Well, Mr. Morrison, that sounds like we...put...got a pretty good picture of your war years.

Mr. Morrison: Wasn't much to it; it was just...

Mark Cunningham: But...you served your country! And that's the important thing. And...on behalf of the Museum, let me just say thank you for taking the time to do this with us.

Mr. Morrison: Well, maybe somebody can...read it will (unintelligible); who knows?

Mark Cunningham: Who knows? You never know! (recording temporarily stopped.) Okay, Mr. Morrison has one more story he wants to tell me.

Mr. Morrison: After..the war was over, we went to a...Yokosuka, Japan, and...and (unintelligible words)...and there was a bunch of these...sea-man submarines out on the...just out on the land, so...one night I went out and...they had marines guarding the thing, but they didn't care...(unintelligible) souvenir, so I went into one of these submarines and took out the gyroscope. But before I got home, I had dismantled it and wound up with...no souvenir!

Mark Cunningham: (Chuckle).

Mr. Morrison: I had a Japanese rifle that they took away from me at the...in New Jersey and...

Mark Cunningham: Why'd you dismantle the...gyroscope; to bring it in or what?

Mr. Morrison: Well, didn't have much to do.

Mark Cunningham: Oh, so you just...(unintelligible) seeing what...what made it tick, huh?

Mr. Morrison: And so that's one of the reasons I went to the...Museum...for us to see...see the...two-man submarine that they had.

Mark Cunningham: Right. Were they similar?

Mr. Morrison: Beg your pardon?

Mark Cunningham: Were they sim...?

Mr. Morrison: Same thing.

Mark Cunningham: Same thing. I don't know where the one they've got up there came from; I...I...can't remember. I don't think...

Mr. Morrison: Oh, it came from...it ran aground in the...

Mark Cunningham: It...was that the one that was run aground in Hawaii?

Mr. Morrison: Yes, uh hum.

Mark Cunningham: Hmm.

Mr. Morrison: And why do you think it ran aground?

Mark Cunningham: I don't...didn't have the...

Mr. Morrison: The gyroscope failed, but it wasn't my fault.

Mark Cunningham: (Laughter).

Mr. Morrison: Actually the war (unintelligible).

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: Just a gyroscope. Okay, but that was...the main reason I went to...

Mark Cunningham: The Museum up in...

Mr. Morrison: ...the Museum up there, yes.

Mark Cunningham: Alright, and that...and that's how you guys saw the Oral History Program?

Mr. Morrison: Yes.

Mrs. Morrison: Right.

Mr. Morrison: Well, she bought a plaque for me...

Mark Cunningham: Oh okay. Well, that's nice!

Mr. Morrison: ...while we were there, so...

Mrs. Morrison: (Unintelligible words).

Mark Cunningham: Alright. (recording stopped momentarily). Okay, let's back up. We're going to pick up another story here. I want Mr. Morrison to talk a little bit about his memory of when they...when you arrived at Okinawa and the number of ships that were in the...

Mr. Morrison: No, no this is...we...before...the ships rendezvoused to go to Okinawa.

Mark Cunningham: Oh, okay...to where?

Mr. Morrison: To go to Okinawa. They rendezvoused in...in...Ulithi Lagoon which is out from Yak (sp?) Island; there were six hundred and nineteen ships that were there to take place in the invasion. And I just found it amazing, when I woke up one morning, to see all of those ships as far as you could see...there's nothing but ships! All kinds of ships!

Mark Cunningham: Getting ready to make your way to Okinawa?

Mr. Morrison: Right.

Mark Cunningham: Now how far away from Okinawa were you at this point?

Mr. Morrison: Well, for us...

Mark Cunningham: Days?

Mr. Morrison: ...for us it was about a four day trip, but for the faster ships...it was less than that.

Mark Cunningham: Hmm!

Mr. Morrison: So...

Mark Cunningham: Now did you get that same feeling when you got to Okinawa? Were there...?

Mr. Morrison: No because (cough)...see, the ships kind of went in...shifts; all the, obviously, bombarding ships went in first and then the troop ships and then...uh, the attack cargo; they weren't all there at one time because it wasn't room for that many...ships, and you wouldn't need them anyway.

Mark Cunningham: Right.

Mr. Morrison: And no problem having the cargo there until you had a place to unload.

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

Mr. Morrison: So virtually...there was...best I remember, there wasn't any opposition on the beach. The main...as soon as we got there, we were under air raid attack by the kamikazes and aerial bombardment, and that...lasted for a long time. It...it was a sight to see all these ships in one spot before they disbursed and...and went into the invasion. See, they all had...I imagine they were loaded from various islands.

Mark Cunningham: Right.



Mr. Morrison: I mean, they went to...(recording momentarily stopped).

Mark Cunningham: Okay.

(end of interview)

**FINAL** copy

CD – #OH02859 – Mr. W. Earl Morrison

Transcribed by: K. Matras

Houston, TX

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