

## Manuel Machado Oral History Interview

CHARLIE SIMMONS: This is Charlie Simmons. Today is the 28<sup>th</sup> of July, 2011. I am interviewing Mr. Manuel Machado. This interview is taking place in Austin, Texas. This interview's in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies Archives for that National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the Preservation of Historical Informational related to this site. Now first of all, thank you very much, Manuel, for spending some time with us today. And what we'd like to do is start off by talking a little bit about your personal history. So could you please state your name, where you were, and what date you were born, and we will talk about you a little bit from there?

MANUEL MACHADO: My name is Manuel G. Machado. I was born in Escalon, California on April 12<sup>th</sup>, 1926.

CS: OK. And were you in a farming community?

MM: Yes, dairy.

CS: What occupations were your parents?

MM: Farming and dairies.

CS: And did you grow up there with them?

MM: Yes, I grew up there and on December seventh, I was listening to a radio while I was milking cows and I heard that Pearl Harbor was bombed and I didn't have any idea. I know who Pearl Bailey was, but I didn't (laughs) -- never heard of Pearl Harbor, you know, [atoms off ox?], but we found out afterwards.

CS: Did you have any brothers or sisters?

MM: There were seven of us and there's only two of us left. And I was the only one that went in the service.

CS: Now the others were not old enough to go in the service?

MM: No, they were older except for one. One brother was younger and he died here about five years ago. All the rest of them are all gone. And my mom died in 1934 and my dad died Christmas Eve of '41. And so we all went to different relatives and I ended up with an uncle that owned a store in Modesto.

CS: How old were you at that time?

MM: About 14, 15, something like that, yeah.

CS: So you were, what was it like, a junior in high school when the war was declared?

MM: Oh no, I was, you see, just started high school.

CS: Oh, just started high school. OK. So what happened to you after the first years of the war? You stayed in high school?

MM: Well I stayed until I started my junior, '42, and I run off and joined the service.

CS: And how old were you when you did that?

MM: Sixteen.

CS: Did you fake an ID? How'd you get in at 16?

MM: Well, being that my parents were dead, I just signed the papers myself. So and they caught up with me -- see, that was in August sixth of '42 and they caught up with me on February 16<sup>th</sup> of '43 and sent me home to be discharged, to go home. And I went to court. My aunt had delivered me. I was born at home. And my aunt had delivered me and I got a hold of her and we went to the judge that was handling the estate and filled out the paperwork and she swore that I was old enough to go back in and --

CS: Well, you said they caught you. How did they catch you?

MM: Well, I don't know. They started checking paperwork. It was because of the National Guard they had federalized the '40s division of the National Guard, California National Guard to [cut yarn?] and they started checking everybody's

papers for some reason. And they caught up and sent me home, so.

CS: What had you done after you gone into the service? Had you gone through boot camp and you were there in August of '42?

MM: Yeah, it was a special deal at that time, Stanford. We had a -- it was like one of their buildings there and we were guarding the two -- there were two six-foot diameter tubes coming down from [Heihachi?] to -- water supply for San Francisco. And they had us out there guarding it with double barrel shotguns with double odd buck in them. And we did -- I did that for a while and then they put me on the boat. They had commandeered a Chris Craft Cabin Cruiser, a 32-foot that slept six, and two of us were running, [Tony Bensandy?] was in charge and we'd take the different guard groups out on different stations because the tubes came down and went to the bay and they went under for five stories down and come up the other side, so they were out there 24 hours at a time guarding those pipelines. Because the theory was that a fire started in San Francisco, the water supply would last about seven or eight hours and that would be it. And so we were guarding that.

CS: So what kind of training did you go through when you went in?

MM: Not much. Just the standard. You know, a lot of calisthenics and stuff like that.

CS: In San Diego?

MM: No, it was near that barracks in Stanford. Then we had a tent city out, oh, it was out there [at the town of Folsom?] -- I can't even think of the name of it now, but it was -- the boat, we were right alongside the Dumbarton Bridge that had a catwalk that went clear across [marshes?] and so I always knew how to get back to the boat. All I had to do was go to the Dumbarton Bridge and get off there.

CS: So in February '43 when they came after you for being too young and you went back and you went to court with your aunt, right?

MM: Yeah.

CS: And then what happened after that?

MM: They sent me to Farragut, Idaho to boot camp up there. And I went through that, got out there in July -- I think it was the 12<sup>th</sup> of July. And they sent me to the Enterprise was in dry dock in Bremerton and the compartment we are assigned to, the elevation was under construction. So they in turn sent me and a couple of other -- I think Dave [Berestral?] was one I think -- and they sent us to Tacoma, Washington to what they called the ACV detail, which was

all auxiliary carrier detail. And we would take them out on their shakedown cruise and when they were OK, everything had checked out, we'd take them to Canada and turn them over to the British Navy up there. And they'd go to the East Coast.

CS: OK, so these were the light carriers?

MM: Yeah, the Jeep carriers.

CS: The Jeep carriers.

MM: Yeah, they sent them to the Atlantic side on sub patrol.

CS: So you were doing this although you were assigned to the Enterprise and but the Enterprise was in dry dock so --

MM: It was in dry dock.

CS: OK. And what division did you say you were in?

MM: L.

CS: The L division. And what was the L division?

MM: L division was primarily lookouts and 20mm antiaircraft guns.

CS: OK, so you had a full complement of 40s at the time?

MM: We had 40s, but I was a loader on a 40 for a while, but in my records it says something about night lookout trainer, because I had good eyes them.

CS: OK, and because I know the Enterprise got refitted with a lot of extra 40mm Bofors, Quad 40s.

MM: Yeah, we had Quad 40s. Five of them --

CS: And they had already been put on the ship by that time?

MM: Yeah, they were plugging them on then.

CS: OK, OK. So that was --

MM: Before that, they had the pom-poms at one point, the ones and .50-caliber machine guns. And after that, after [come out of I remember?] they had the 40s and the 20s.

CS: What'd you think about the 40mm Bofors?

MM: They were pretty good. Yeah, they were -- in fact, they told us we held the record for firing, although I was loader on one then. And the engineers said we were putting more ammunition through them than they could shoot.

(laughter)

CS: Well now, they were rated for about 120 rounds a minute --

MM: We could load them faster than that.

CS: You could load them faster than that.

MM: Yeah. It was strange.

CS: So were you up on the gun? Were you dropping the clips of ammo down into the --

MM: Yeah, yeah.

CS: OK, so the guy -- how many people would be feeding in and -

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MM: One on each side because they were dual [mots?] and Quads and had one on each side. Each one loader their gun, their barrel. Yeah.

CS: OK. Let's just pause.

(break in audio)

MM: -- bringing beer. (laughter)

CS: OK, so you were loading one of the four barrels on a Bofor. So there were four guys that were loading and were being trained, the gun was being aimed by --

MM: Well, by the gun director. They had a gun director for each Quad lineup.

CS: OK, and you personally had about two loaders for [you to?] -- they were handing, or two [systems?] --

MM: Yeah, we had men around on the splinter shield passing ammunition up to you so it would be --

CS: So [they would be, like, about handing?] those for each one? OK.

MM: Never stopped to count them. (laughter)

CS: So, well that sound like you put out quite a bit of lead there.

MM: Yeah. I had good hand-eye coordination then.

CS: Yeah. OK, so I'm sorry. We got off-track here a little bit. Let's go back to Bremerton when you were working on



the Jeep carriers and getting them outfitted to send up to Canada.

MM: Yeah, we took two of them. The first was the Glacier, USS Glacier. And the second one was the Carnegie. They renamed them up there and that's from there on, my mind's blank for a long time. I went on another one, don't even remember the name or the number. But the only thing I'm conscious of was about five of us in a small boat that were rescued by a Russian freighter. And they pulled up alongside, through a Jacob's ladder over and being as I was a lower rated man, they said, you go up first. And as I come up over the [gantals?], there were guys up there sharpening their knives and I thought, uh-oh. This is it.

CS: What were you doing in the small boat --

MM: I don't know.

CS: -- out at sea? You don't remember --

MM: I don't remember. There's something that I'm blank and can't get it. And they took us up to the captain and they gave us some black bread and some cheese that stunk to high heaven and some, what they called coffee, but it was made with bilge water and oil. And he couldn't understand English, so somehow we learned that their chief engineering officer could speak a little English, so they sent for him.

And when he came up there, it was a woman. And this is in 1943. And that was strange, a woman on a ship, but they were Russian. And got the message to them where we were going and they took us back in and let us off. I think they sent a boat out and picked us up off of Tacoma and when I got up there, they -- some of my gear was gone off the rail. And I asked what happened to it and they said check with the MA shack -- that was the master of arms, the one in charge -- and he said your AWOL, I said, no, I just come in on that Russian freighter. And I said, "Where's my equipment?" He said that everything's transferred back to the Enterprise. So they got me back there and then they sent me immediately to Pacific Beach for 20mm gunnery school for three days, then back to the ship and out we went. And then --

CS: And this was what time -- you remember what month it was?

MM: Let's see. I officially signed the board September 22<sup>nd</sup>.

CS: And this was '43?

MM: Forty-three, yeah.

CS: September '43, OK. And then what was next up after that?

MM: Well, next after that I think we went to Alameda and picked up some new planes I guess and then over to Pearl Harbor and re-ammoed [a little?] gunnery practice on the way.

(coughs) Excuse me, I've got a -- and then in November, the Gilbert Islands, and the first attacks there. And from them on, it's just one right after the other. And I ended up with the Asiatic Pacific with 13 stars and they had Philippine Liberation with two for Leyte Gulf and one from Luzon.

CS: So you were -- so, the Enterprise was at the Battle of Leyte Gulf?

MM: Oh yeah. I wish -- if I had my jacket, I've got part of my records there. It has all of them listed and I have all of them on there.

CS: OK, so that's one of the battles that we're especially interested in. But do you remember much about the battle, where you were and what was going on from the ship or were you just told that you were -- you know, that there was a Japanese fleet nearby?

MM: We were busy. We were firing. Let's see. And there was one interesting thing there. The planes were coming back in late. They didn't like to land planes at night because it was kind of dangerous. And that's when the Japanese had started the Kamikazes and we had one -- let's see, it was Billy [Morton?] who was coming back in late and they said ditch the plane. And he said, "No, I can make it. I know

I can make it [by following in the?] wake." Because when you crank it up to go 25, 30 knots, to land the planes and launch planes, the screws turn up, you know, and you can see. So he landed at night and he said, "I can do this every time. I can train people to fly at night." So they sent him back to the United States and he trained a group called Air Group 90 and when they came back on the ship later on, they worked at night so we'd work day and night. But getting back to the Philippines, we were under one battle there and planes were coming in. You know, they were starting to drop in the ocean. And I think it was Mitscher, Admiral Mitscher said, "Turn on all the lights. We can't stand to lose the pilots." So everything lit up and [being here?], we were sitting ducks and we landed all the planes. I think we lost three in the ocean that couldn't make it.

CS: It took a lot of courage on his part.

MM: It did.

CS: If he'd had [a set?] torpedoed there, he would have lost his stars and --

MM: Everything, lost the ship. But we saved them. That was kind of a harrowing experience because those lights were bright, you know, and they had destroyers way out, forward

I was close to, they knew where the planes were coming back from. And they'd turn on their spotlights and back and forth to where the ship was and then they caught on. They [ordered them on?] back. So we saved most of the planes and the pilots.

CS: Now, if you had operations at night, since you were on a 44mm, would you man the 40mm at night too?

MM: No.

CS: Because obviously -- were any Japanese attacks every made at night?

MM: Yeah, but we couldn't fire.

CS: You couldn't fire because you couldn't see them?

MM: Well, because they'd outline us. But the task force around us would fire. But they wouldn't let us -- they had -- and that was nerve-wracking because we couldn't fire until, you know, they start -- they knew exactly where we were, and that happened later on.

CS: Now when you're surrounded by ships that are firing that enemy aircraft, there's a lot of stuff going up in the air. Some of it's going to be coming down. Did that ever occur -- did you ever have any near misses or anything?

MM: Yeah, on March 20<sup>th</sup>, '45, took a five-inch shell and battery seven and another five-inch and battery five and the set us on fire and blew things up. And it was --

CS: Were these just defective shells that should have exploded on a timing fuse?

MM: Well, either that or it might have been inexperienced gun crews because there was new ships out there.

CS: Didn't set the timer.

MM: And they fired when the ships is [roll?] over the port. And but it might have been defective. They never did say, just there was friendly fire. Well, I thought it was a little unfriendly myself.

CS: Yeah. So OK, so how often would you make it -- would the Enterprise make it in the port at this period in time?

MM: Well, as far as port, we'd come into Ulithi and replenish and go right back out.

CS: OK, but there's no place to go to shore. You just --

MM: Well, they had a little Mogmog. They called it Mogmog. Once in a while, you could go in there and they'd issue you a couple of beers or something like that and you had to swim to shore to drink them. (laughs) But as far as anything good -- once in a while, they went back to Pearl and replenished. We got a suicide plane on Starboard Ave

and it followed one of the screws and it was out of balance, so they sent it with just one screw back to Pearl to dry dock real fast. We were there 72 hours and they put on a new prop, screw we called them. And right back out. Because they needed us.

CS: Well, when you're on the ship, did you pretty much work with the same men on the same gun crew pretty much constantly --

MM: Well, same with lookouts. It was the same as, like, what the Army would call a squad. You know, you had the same and then same with the guns.

CS: Where would you position be as a lookout? Would you be up in a superstructure?

MM: Yeah, up on the island. We had [surfers?] and then aircraft, you know, sky lookouts.

CS: So you kind of specialized. When, you know, you'd have a group of guys looking up in the sky and another looking up --

MM: Well and we'd switch, you know, and then we'd work forward the island and after the island too. It's just wherever they sent you. And that's where some of my problems started. Let's see, it was the 17<sup>th</sup> of March, 1945. I was on lookout, on surface lookout at night and we had an

officer there that had what he called -- go around at night and he'd tap the glasses, you know, if they weren't moving. He wanted us scanning all the time. And if you weren't moving, he figured you were asleep, so he'd tap them from the outside because all they had was these portholes in the (inaudible). And there was something in the water and I was trying to identify it and I was really concentrating. I was -- and then he whacked [him?] hard and I cussed him out [until in the favor?], I found out who it was, because I was on the inside, that I'd thrown him over the side and [champ winning the second class boatswain?], there was a [watch?] officer at that time, he said, "What's the matter, Spike?" And I said, "Some idiot just pounded the glass in my eyes and I can't see anything." So I think he put [Thompson?] up my place and I couldn't see. He said, "You'd think he'd make a [balloon?]." I said, "Yeah." He said, "Well take the joe pot" -- that's the coffee pot -- "and fill it up and come back up." And I did that and I came back up and there's two sections of lighters going from the hangar deck up into the [bottom of the?] flight deck. And I figured it was at least 25-feet tall because an F4U Corsair had a 13-foot prop and when the wings were folded, the prop would stick up a little bit above, so



that'd give you an idea that the space we had. And I got up on that second section. As I opened the hatch, and this arm came out with a dog wrench. That was a piece of pipe about a foot long that fit on the hatches if you could dog them down and make them air tight, water tight. And I wore my watch cap a little different than everybody else and I slung sideways and the glass dog hit me in the shoulder. But if he'd have connected with me, I'd have --

CS: Why did he do that?

MM: Well, I think he was mad at me for cussing him out because he knew that I was the one that went below. But I couldn't prove that it was him and there were only two classes on the ship that wore khakis, the officers and Marines. And the Marines, I checked with the buddies of mine in the Marine department and they said no, there's nobody got their stinger out for you. So and there was only one Marine and he was on duty at the bridge, inside the bridge at that time. So I knew it was [Croft?], but I couldn't -- you know, I couldn't prove and so. But then on -- see, that was on the 17<sup>th</sup> and on the 18<sup>th</sup>, we had a plane coming in and I tried to get off lookout duty the next day. They had me on sky lookout and I had two black eyes, you know. And I tried to get off and they said, "No, we insist." And

I said, "OK." So I went. And there was a plane coming, dancing around out in the clouds. And we had a landing group coming in and he said, "Identify that plane." I said, "I can't see it. You know, I can't make it out." And it was a new type, mid-wing of theirs and coming straight in, it looked like a TBF, you know? And torpedo plane. And I said, I can't make it out. And that's where I really screwed up because I was assuming that it was one of ours because none of the other ships around us were firing, you know? And it came in, dropped down too low to get in our landing circle and swooped over and dropped this 500-pound bomb, armor piercing, on our flight deck. But it didn't tip over or nothing. It was so low that it just -- it almost landed flat and it split. And really, yeah, it split open. It didn't go off.

CS: It didn't explode.

MM: No, because it didn't hit on the nose. And I can still see that -- I could see him last night when I was trying to sleep. It hit this one guy that was on the flight deck in the stomach and just burned a hole right straight through him. It was picric acid and magnesium. Just and it killed him. Killed him and I think another guy. I wasn't sure. And they took that pieces of that bomb with a forklift and

run her off to [Ferndale?] and dropped it in the ocean.

But I think Croft got chewed out about the lookouts then, because up to that time, we were getting accolades all the time. And so he was a little upset. And then on the 20<sup>th</sup> -  
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CS: Was he in charge of your group?

MM: He was an officer, a division officer, was in charge. But on the 20<sup>th</sup>, after a lot of things happened on the 20<sup>th</sup>, but at night, when I was on surface lookouts again, and there was -- we were starting to come under attack. It was just getting dusk and I thought, well, I got [to relief?] because we spent an hour on and an hour off to rest our eyes. And I was off, so I looked over on the battle ladder was Croft's binoculars. And I thought, well, he's out there without them somewhere. And he had gone around the day before telling everybody, anyone who leaves their station, I will shoot them. And he was carrying a .45. I said, that guy's kind of weird. He's kidding. So I went out on the outside and I could see him. He was laying time behind the flag lockers shaving, you know? [Bad?], so I took the glasses and I could see a Betty bomber way off, the screaming, everybody was firing up [behind?]. And out of the corner of my eye, I could see a khaki-clad

[alongside him?], reach for him and grab him by the seat of his britches. It was either the skipper or Admiral Mitscher. I'm not sure. But this booming voice said, "You get kind of excited, don't you son?" I said, "Sorry sir, I thought you were Croft." And you don't play grab ass with an admiral. And he says, well, "Who's in charge?" And I said, "Croft." Said, "Where is he?" I said, "He's over in his usual spot, hiding behind the flag lockers." He says, "Show me." I says, "OK, sir." And [then to hell?], we'd better go around this way because if you ever go around front, [he's likely?] to shoot you. So we went around and I went around in front of him and stepped on his hand so he couldn't do anything. And whoever it was -- I think it might have been Admiral Mitscher or the skipper -- kicked him in the ribs and said, "Go below. Put yourself on report." And about two days later, a destroyer come up alongside him, [breeches boy?] send him over and never saw him again.

CS: Whoa.

MM: So I don't know what happened to him. He gone over to --

CS: Section [B?] probably.

MM: Because he'd gone over the edge. In fact, later on, it was about seven, eight years ago -- or maybe a little longer --

at the reunion in San Diego, Lieutenant [Flood?] came and he was in a wheelchair then. And we were talking and he said, "That Croft was a good man." And I told him what happened. And he says, "I didn't know that." And I said, "Well, that's what happened and they got rid of him." So. I was going to [send this?] story -- I had run a tape, an audio tape, because I was trying to get some of my records straightened up and I was going to send it to 60 Minutes. And then I was watching *60 Minutes* one night and there's a Croft on the -- and he's a reporter. And I thought, "Uh-oh, it might be his kid." So I just backed out of it.

CS: Yeah, it's all water under the bridge now.

MM: Yeah, it is. But my records were lost and I tried to find out -- of course, there's no way you could find out from the Russians what ship it was that picked us up and what we were doing out there. I know a Coast Guardsman that says he chased at that same time, [here?] in September '43, they chased a sub up to the Bering Straits but they lost it, so I don't know if it was -- we were torpedoed or what happened. I don't know.

CS: You just don't know. That's kind of strange.

MM: Yeah. And then on the -- well on April 11<sup>th</sup>, [those times?], the plane was coming right straight in at us and

we shot it down -- well, our tracers were going right into the canopy on it and the 40 -- the Quad 40s, there was an officer in charge so they got credit for it. But anyway, it was so close -- they say 50 yards, but I think it was closer to 50 feet because one that exploded, it set a plane on fire on our catapults. And (laughs) what made it stick in my mind, because it was April 11<sup>th</sup>, April 12<sup>th</sup>, I would have been 19 years old. And I stayed on the guns and on the 14<sup>th</sup>, when we got taken out when the suicide plane come right down number one elevator --

CS: This is April the 14<sup>th</sup>?

MM: Yeah, of '45 -- no May, May 14<sup>th</sup>. April 11<sup>th</sup> was the month before.

CS: OK, and that was at Okinawa then.

MM: Yeah, [usually?] Okinawa. Yeah.

CS: OK. That was when the Battle of Okinawa was --

MM: Yeah, it was going on. Well later we got word that there was something going on, [OK you should?], they had had a lot of planes there so they sent us there to take them out and --

CS: Yes, I guess the Japanese were flying a lot of planes over Kyushu because that was the closest main island, Japanese island.

MM: It was right there on the coast, yeah.

CS: So they were -- that's right out there. Did you ever get within sight of the Japanese main islands or --

MM: I didn't, no.

CS: OK, because they used to keep the carriers a couple of hundred miles out to sea, right? So they --

MM: They tried to keep it out as far as they could, yeah. Yeah, they've got a big picture there. First time I've seen that one. It's a bigger one when than the one that hit us. And right in the middle of that big ball of fire is where I was.

CS: Oh really?

MM: Yeah. On the port side -- I think it blew six guys over the side. But I was a little lower; I was on the starboard side, cranking up the [charney?] and then changing the barrel on a 20 and I [hit the splinter's heel?] and I was stunned for a while. I don't know how long I was out, but they've got pictures of --

CS: This is from the kamikaze?

MM: Yeah. And --

CS: So did you have to go to sickbay?

MM: No, I was stunned and I crawled up on the flight deck and all of a sudden, there was a little clear spot in the fire

and smoke and I could see Joe [Froliger?] still strapped in the 20. He was the gunner on the gun and he was cold. I thought he was dead. But I thought, well, I'm not going to let him burn, so I jumped back down on the gun deck. It's about four feet down. And I felt along his neck and he still had a pulse. So I unhooked him because he was strapped in a 20 and drug him back out of fire and then hoisted him up on the flight deck. Got him up there and then I lifted up and got up there myself. And I lifted him back up and then an officer came over from the portside and asked my name, service number and I gave it to him. And I said, "I've got to get this guy back to sickbay," because he had a piece of shrapnel sticking in his neck and didn't know how far -- I was tempted to pull it out and I said, you know, it might be bad. So I took him around behind the island where the medics were and said, OK, you guys take care of him.

CS: Why did [the sudden?] the officer stop you? You were rescuing this guy, trying to save his life, and this officer stops you and asks you what your name is?

MM: Yeah, and service number, yeah. He wanted to know -- I don't know. That's -- strange things go on. And I guess he wanted to put me in for something. I don't know.



CS: Did you ever get a nomination for anything?

MM: Well, nothing and then on the first page of my records, the bottom paragraph says he was commended by the captain for a splendid and brave performance of duty on March 20<sup>th</sup>.

That's -- I never got anything for it, so.

CS: Well, just a letter of commendation I guess is --

MM: I don't know. I didn't receive one. I don't know anything about it, so I think it may have been that he had buddies [of Croft?], officers that pulled it to get even with me for because they figured I was responsible. And I said, hey, I was just obeying orders. He said, "Show me where he is," and I did. So I've been a little bitter about that ever since.

CS: Well yeah, sure.

MM: And another time on the 20<sup>th</sup>, [Roy Hamlin?] got hit on the left side and I caught him and I was coming from the first division -- I think the first division was running the gun director for the 40s -- helped me to lay him down. He had a hole on his side, smoking, and there were shells popping over our head because they were shooting. And so other people didn't remember that stuff comes down. And it hit him and I got the medics up from the bridge. And in the meantime, I was laying across him because that stuff was

popping all around us. And we got him in one of those basket litters and strapped him in. They gave him a shot of morphine or whatever they gave them and slid him down the ladder, down below behind the bridge. And a guy down there named [Phinlo?] pulled around from the bottom of the ladder, about six feet, and put him in the captain's sea cabin and he got the life-saving medal for it, and he was down around and we're up there being popped. (laughter) But that's the way things go.

CS: Well, yeah, well so you saw quite a few guys that were your ship mates that were getting knocked out by -- was that friendly fire that time?

MM: Yeah. And I think there was 16 or 18 of them had [stolen?] the two guns and it was -- after I got Hamlin down, he had been the phone talker, so I picked up his phones of the deck and reported to [Jerry Flynn?] on sky lookouts, way out. He was on the tripod. And he said, "How's it down there?" I says, "Getting hot." He said, "How hot is it?" I said, "I don't know the doggone counterbalances [on the?] gun director was starting to sag a little bit and they were letting it." He says, "Get the hell out of there." And so I said, "OK, all of us?" And they said, "Yeah, get out." So I told the four lookouts, "Let's get out of here." And

I went around and everything was crowded down that ladder because it was officers from the bridge down there and so I went back around past the flag lockers by the searchlight platform and there were rungs in the forward part of the stack there. And I knew they were there because I'd scraped them and painted them enough times and I went down the outside and I went past the CIC office and there was a big porthole there, steel. It was covered. And it opened up and they said, "What's going on?" I said, "I don't know." Battery three with eight 20mm guns was abandoned, you know, because of the shrapnel I guess. So I got down there and Lieutenant Flood asked me, said, "Is that knife of yours sharp?" And I said, "Yeah, it's sharp enough, why?" And another guy, I don't know where he came from. He might have been laying on the deck. He says, "Mine's real sharp." I said, "OK, use yours. I'll use the guns." Because before this happened, we were -- a destroyer had pulled up and we were giving up some fuel. And that's when we come under attack. And so he just started to drop holes and went off. And I credit Lieutenant Flood with saving the ship because there that [fuse was an open?] line right down to the fuel tanks and if a fire started, it would blow the ship on to heck. But the magazine's on the first 20

was glowing red because of a piece of shrapnel so we pitched it over the side and the second one was doing the same thing, so over the side it went. But the rest of them were loaded, so I was firing and I don't know why I was abandoned, but --

CS: And the Japanese were still coming?

MM: Yeah, they were. In fact, it was strange. I went around behind the stack and I could see over on the portside, the Marines, they had the four 20mms, and there was someone, I think it was an officer, firing an M1 at the planes coming down and they were [straying from this?]. And I run and said, "Hey, get the heck down." (laughs) I said, "You've got to lead them suckers, you know?" And I asked them if they needed any help. They said no so I went and run back on Battery Three and started using the guns until somebody comes up and says, "Cease fire. They're out of range." I said well, I made them nervous.

CS: Yeah. So you spent a lot of time up in the 20s then too.

MM: Yeah. And after March 20<sup>th</sup>, they -- maybe a week or so after that, they sent me down on the guns because they figured, well, on the 18<sup>th</sup> I couldn't see that -- couldn't identify that plane anyway. And with the 20s and the 40, you just set up a lot of steel and hope they run into, you

know? Because you couldn't bring one down aiming right at it. So.

CS: Now were those the Twin 20s, or --

MM: No, we only had the singles --

CS: [Might have said your old com?], was it -- do you remember the manufacturer it was?

MM: Oerlikon, I think.

CS: Oerlikon, yeah. OK.

MM: Yeah. I saw one at the Nimitz Museum. Two or three years ago, we visited there and they had Twin 20. I said, "We didn't have any of those." We had singles.

CS: Yeah, there's one there on the TBM Exhibit. There's a Twin 20 in there on the [Sponson?] that was next to that TBM. [Hangared?] it. Yeah, well that's very interesting. The Enterprise, after they rearmed it with all the extra 40mms, they really had a lot of anti-aircrafts.

MM: We had a lot of firepower, yeah.

CS: At least, when they first went out, they only had 1.1s and the .50-calibers.

MM: Fifty calibers, yeah.

CS: And those weren't really putting out enough stuff, so. Well it sounds pretty exciting. And then you had carrier air patrol up at the same time as these Japanese were

coming in so you were landing your own planes, you know, in between Japanese attacks, you would be landing your own planes --

MM: And refueled them and getting them back out, yeah.

CS: Did you every mistakenly shoot at one of your own?

MM: No. Yeah, I guess a couple times because they were shooting at the plane as it was diving on us and they didn't pull up, you know? They were supposed after a certain, get the heck out of there, you know, because when we opened fire, we were dangerous. (laughs) You know? I've got pictures -- the US Navy official war photographs, they gave us a book of them when we left the ship and at night, you could have walked out just on the tracers. And that was one out of five was tracer at night, you know. And it was solid lines because -- (laughs)

CS: Yeah, well I know that at Pearl Harbor, the Enterprise was what had sent an SBD Squad [down?] and they got shot at it. And [it must have gotten?] shot down --

MM: Yeah, they got shot down.

CS: -- by the nervous people that --

MM: Well, that and intelligence (laughs) was actually more -- was the guys that'd never been attacked before. And they said, "What do we do?" And [certain bowl that?], anything

with wheels down, shoot it, because their dive-bombers didn't have retractable landing gear yet. And so they had to let them down to land and they holler at them, "Hey, it's us. We're on your side. Quit shooting." They were nervous.

CS: Well yeah, and they hadn't seen probably any friendly planes in the sky and they were --

MM: Well, the Enterprise was about 80 to 100, some say 120, others say 80, but that's about the frame of reference. So we got in close. They had to send the planes over to land because once we got in port, you couldn't get rid of them. You had to hoist them off one at a time. So they were sending them over there and then they were getting shot down. I think they got nine of them.

CS: Really?

MM: Yeah. That was what we heard. I don't know how true it is.

CS: Yeah, so yeah, you joined the Enterprise, September '43, is that right?

MM: Yeah, that's when they had me officially on board. It was September 22<sup>nd</sup>. Yeah. But July 12<sup>th</sup> was when we were sent over there but we didn't actually go aboard because there's no place to put us.

CS: Yeah, so you were doing the --

MM: The ACV detail in Tacoma, yeah.

CS: Yeah, so, OK, well, you get to the war's coming. We're down to May '45. We're getting pretty close to the end here --

MM: May 14, well, that was our end --

CS: Yeah, you got hit by kamikaze there.

MM: Yeah, we couldn't -- the flight deck was sort of like a pregnant woman. Couldn't pass the island. We couldn't launch planes because of that big hole in the -- where the elevator was. And if we landed them, we couldn't get rid of them. So they sent us out. The skipper wanted to keep going. Said, well, we still had guns. And they said, "No, get back." Because there was still more war going on. So we came back to Pearl and hoisted the plans that we had and some of the ammunition, we weren't going to need anymore because we were coming back to the States. And yeah.

CS: Now did you get [liberty?] in the end? Now, you were getting back to Pearl, this would have been toward the end of May?

MM: Yeah, the end of May and the first part of June.

CS: OK. When was the last time you had been in the States, in the stateside of port?



MM: Forty-three.

CS: Forty-three. So you'd been two years basically -- almost -  
-

MM: Continuous, yeah.

CS: -- outside the US.

MM: I don't remember the actual date we got in there because  
they sent me and I don't know how many others, but they  
sent us to a rest camp at Waipahu, right next to the Marine  
--

CS: Getting into Pearl?

MM: Yeah. We went there for three, four days or a week while  
they were getting rid of everything on the ship. And they  
sent us back and we came home.

CS: Yeah, so you got a little R&R while you --

MM: Well, they called it that. We --

CS: Were you allowed to have beer there at the rest camp?

MM: No.

CS: No, well that wasn't any --

MM: No, it was just something for us -- it was a fiasco  
actually.

CS: Yeah. Well and what kind of accommodations did you have  
there?

MM: Well, just four of us to a tent.

CS: So you were staying in tents. And was the food any better than on the ship?

MM: No, not really. (laughter) Food is food, you know. What they did to it was criminal sometimes. But they tried -- we were sleeping and somebody I guess boys made a sub come over and started making a lot of noise and saying, "Get out of those racks," you know, giving us a bad time. We still had our knives on. And so they got up real close and I had it up to his throat and I said, "[Out of here?]," he says, "Well, you're late. [Child calls it?]." And I says, "We're going to come down to eat and you'd better have food there for us." They'd just come in off the Enterprise. They fed us. But that was one of those things.

CS: So you just spent a few days when you got back from the --

MM: Yeah, because I'd come home on leave in, let's see, June.

CS: Now, where did you come into port?

MM: Bremerton.

CS: Bremerton, OK.

MM: And we got the leave parties worked out and caught the train into Oakland. And then on home. So I lived in Modesto. That was only about 70, 75, 80 miles away.

CS: Well yeah, you were practically home by the time you got to San Francisco.

MM: Yup. But on our records, they -- I was over the side and I think it was New Jersey, Bayonne, New Jersey painting and the yeoman yelled down from the boat and said, "Hey, do you want to go home?" I said, "Yeah." He said, "Get up here." So I come up out of that boat real quick and --

CS: Now, what day was this?

MM: What day?

CS: Yeah.

MM: This was in February of '46.

CS: Forty-six, OK. To back up a little bit, did you get back to the States in -- let's see, the first part of June --

MM: Forty-five.

CS: -- forty-five and then you had, what, a 30-day leave?

MM: Yeah, mm-hmm.

CS: OK, after your 30-day leave was up, you went back to Bremerton or --

MM: Yeah, I went back to Bremerton and after they finished repairing the ship and in the meantime the war had ended, so they sent us around the East Coast to the Panama Canal with the Washington alongside of us in this other channel -

-

CS: Were you belonging to the Enterprise?

MM: Yeah, we went back into New York for Navy Day, a big celebration. And we were there, people coming. They had the open house for the public and whatnot. Had a great time. And then they sent us to -- it was either Bayonne New Jersey, or the Boston Navy Yard. They put bunks five high on the hangar deck and they sent us over to Europe, South Hampton, to bring troops back. We could haul 3,000 on the hangar. And it was strange because I was going off the F gangway and we were going ashore to take the train into London and it looked like something out of the "Pirates of Penzance" or something and the British Navy admirals and whatnot with their phony hats. They came aboard and they presented us with the Admiralty Pendant, which was akin to the Presidential Citation here I guess.

CS: Yeah, I understand that Enterprise is the only non-British ship that's ever received the Admiralty Pendant.

MM: That was because in that time, it's 450 year history of it, we were the only ones to ever receive it. I have a little -- something we did for them in Hong Kong and Singapore, saved the British. But and then I -- Dave [Lister?] was living in Canada and I checked with him. I said, "Is there something you wear because of it?" I think he checked through the Canadian government and at that time, when

Elizabeth became queen and she became the first Lord of the Admiralty and she wanted to take it away because that was strictly a British deal. And they said no, they earned it. So we still have it but we don't have any -- yeah.

CS: Where were you then when the war -- when VJ Day was declared? Do you remember?

MM: Well, I don't --

CS: It would have been August --

MM: Of '45, you mean?

CS: Yeah, '45.

MM: We were going back over -- we were getting reprovision, going back over and getting those bunks five high on the hangar deck. We made two trips to South Hampton, England and brought troops back 3,000 at a time. And we were in for decommissioning in again Bayonne, and I was on the shore. The Jeep was coming down over the bullhorn, all liberties and leaves cancelled and get back to the ship immediately. So we all run back and they sent us over to Sao Miguel, the Azores Islands. Prince [Leonard?] got caught in the storm. He was up on the rocks. And they had 3,212 [WACs?] and so we went and rescued them.

CS: [WACs?]?

MM: Yeah. They had --

CS: Oh, they had (inaudible). Interesting.

MM: Yeah, well, it was. I got to guard their compartment.

CS: Three thousand?

MM: Yeah. Well, it was [straight?] -- I don't know if this should be on the tape or not.

CS: Well, we don't have to put it on the tape. Try to clean it up a little bit.

MM: Yeah, they asked if I could get any [Sheiks?] or Trojans, you know, and I thought, well, I'm home free. And I got them for them and they put their watches [ranges?] and tied them around their belt to keep the [salt water?].

(laughter)

CS: Oh, OK. Three thousand WACs for a bunch of guys who had been out in the Pacific.

MM: No, 312.

CS: Oh, that's right.

MM: Three thousand soldiers.

CS: Oh, 3,000 soldiers.

MM: And assembled what they called the Night Fighters, the Africans at that -- yeah. And we hit a storm coming back, a typhoon. We had sick -- and there's a picture of it somewhere, flight deck's like this and the wave's up here, over 100 feet. Yeah. And all those soldiers were sick, oh

God. (laughs) We had GI cans full of pickles, sliced pickles, dill pickles. Said, "Eat those and that'll settle your stomach."

CS: But it didn't work.

MM: No, not that well.

CS: Well what do you think the worst thing was that happened to you during the war?

MM: Not finding out what happened, you know?

CS: What happened to -- you just sort of blanked out?

MM: Yeah, I still don't know what happened, how I get there, the sequence that they were riding on that Russian ship and had no record.

CS: That's really strange.

MM: And my records are lost because when they transferred from Bayonne, New Jersey through Brooklyn Navy Yard for discharge processing and there was only two come into California on that one draft, and it was an [Airedale?] called [Culiachic?], him and I. And so it was a weird thing. Ordinarily, they gave the train tickets and meal tickets. Well, they gave us train tickets and \$16 in cash. So we'd get on well. Right outside the Brooklyn Navy Yard was a bar and we had to wait two and half hours to get transportation to Grand Central Station so we went in there

and had us all the beer we could drink, bought a pint of liquor and it strapped to our ankles and got on that train. It was a day and a half to Chicago. And no food, you know? And we got to Chicago and was wandering around and our guts were, you know, growling. I asked a cop there. I said, "Is there any place a guy can get something to eat?" And he says, "Yeah, there's a USO down the street a couple of blocks." And I said, "Never been to one of those places. I'm not going now." He said, "It's up to you," you know. So we wandered on down there and they had two doughnuts left. We each had a doughnut. And another day and a half to Oakland and then to Camp Shoemaker and we got there to check in, [junk I'd?] already been over and they asked for the records and [Culiachic?] says, "You've got them?" I said, "No. Remember? You had them." You had one strike; you got to sit in the cab of the truck. I had to stand up on the outside in February in New York, you know. And he said, "I left them in the glove compartment." That's -- we don't know what happened to them, but they got back to the ship and what they had on record there, got copies of that, but that's all. So somebody else got those records and --

CS: Yeah, well, I imagine there was a lot of that. You know, we had, what, 16 million people in uniform during that



period of time and there's got to be an awful lot of people that don't have records.

MM: Yeah. Well, and Jim [Greer?] at the Veteran Service Office said that when they moved everything from New Orleans to Saint Louis, they grabbed armloads of them and if anything fell down, they kicked it off to one side and then went back later and picked it up and threw it in a big bin trying to figure out where it went. I said, "Well --" So we don't know.

CS: So --

MM: But I spent -- see, I was supposed to be discharged on the 15<sup>th</sup> I think and it was the 25<sup>th</sup>, 10 days. We kept going up to --

CS: And this is the 25<sup>th</sup> of?

MM: Of February, '46, kept going up to captain's mast seeing if I could get -- go home. I said, "I only live 45 miles away," you know? He says, "You have to wait." And eventually they got word back from the Enterprise and I was sent home to be discharged and so they let me go on and they mailed me my discharge letter. So.

CS: So you are officially discharged.

MM: Yeah. But the only problem is, no record -- they had -- the yeoman [energy list?] and he was reading my ribbons and

he said, "What's happening?" And on the Asiatic Pacific, they had a little brass thing in the back with a slot, you know, for where you put the stars in. But you couldn't put the 13 on there, the two silvers and three bronze. You could only put 12. And I told him. I said, there's some. I got 13 in there and two on the -- but he got 12 printed up on the records. And I can't get it changed. I've been trying for 65 years to get them changed.

CS: Yeah.

MM: But that's the way it goes.

CS: Well, Manuel, kind of winding down here. Well I can't think of many more questions to ask you. You've done a really thorough job here I think. Is there anything, before we wrap this up, that you've left out that you'd like to put out on record? I know there's an awful lot of stuff here.

MM: A lot of stuff in there, but a lot of things happened. We try to block it out as much as possible, you know?

CS: Yeah. Did you have any really close friends that you kept up with after the war was over?

MM: Yeah. Dave Lister at the reunion in -- it's where the Caterpillar is. Peoria, Illinois. I called him and asked him if he was going to go. He says, "Yeah, [I bet?]." And

I said, "Well, there's some questions I want to ask you," because he was in that group on that Russian freighter.

And I said, "I've got to find out. May we sit down, have a few beers, and start talking about it and it'll bring up little things."

CS: He couldn't remember either?

MM: No, he died a week before the reunion. So that's -- I'll never find out, I guess. I don't know who the other guys were that had been with us.

CS: Do you remember the name of the Russian ship?

MM: No. Well, it was -- it looked like a Polish name. It was just --

CS: Yeah, wrong alphabet.

MM: Yeah, I couldn't figure out what it was.

CS: Yeah, well --

MM: Just that we were on it and that woman, chief engineering officer was a -- she was kind of husky but it was still strange for a woman in '43 on a ship --

CS: Well and even today, you know, I can't imagine women being on a Navy ship either.

MM: I heard, I think it was last week, they've got them on subMarines now. Well.

CS: Anyhow. Well, OK, well I'll thank -- I want to go ahead  
and end the tape here.

MM: OK.

END OF AUDIO FILE