

Carl Crandall Oral History Interview

CLARENECE C. BRYK: This is Clarence C. Bryk, and today is September 15, 2011. I have the privilege of interviewing 3rd Class Watertender Carl R. Crandall. This interview is taking place in the Nimitz Museum and this interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies archives. And, the next voice you'll hear is Mr. Crandall, and he's going to tell us of his experiences on the assault -- Wait a minute. (pause) I had it 10 times. I looked at it.

CARL R. CRANDALL: (laughs)

CCB: *Warrick*.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: The ship *Warrick*, which was an assault --

CRC: It was a cargo.

CCB: Cargo, spelled with a "K" --

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Auxiliary.

CRC: Right.

CCB: I finally got that correct, and the next voice you're going to hear is Mr. Crandall. And, you won't hear any more from me, fortunately, and we have the expert here.

CRC: Yeah, that was attack cargo.

CCB: Attack, not an assault.

CRC: (laughs)

CCB: Well, I had that right.

CRC: Whatever.

CCB: I'm an Air Force guy. What do I know?

CRC: Yeah. They just put the name on there was all.

CCB: Well, tell us about your coming into the Navy and those things that we can pass on for the generations.

CRC: Yeah. Well, I went into the Navy as soon as I could after I was 17. And, I went to Great Lakes Naval Training School for five weeks -- That's all they had for basic training -- Then I went to New Jersey to learn how to run boilers on the ship, and I took firefighting school five times.

(laughs)

CCB: Was it tough?

CRC: Yeah. It was.

CCB: It was as tough course, so they'd just make you do it over?

CRC: They just made you do it over and over and over again.

Then I took a train from there to California. Took five days and five nights. We never got off the car we was on, but we changed trains.

CCB: Did you stop in Nebraska for the free sandwiches?

CRC: No. (laughs)

CCB: You didn't get those?

CRC: (laughs) Well, we had a good trip. Anyway, I got out there and went to Treasure Island. I was there about two or three days, and they put me on the *Warrick*. And, we kept studying everything on the ship until we got out of the dry dock, and then we took it out for a shakedown cruise for -- well, for near a month. And, we done practice shooting and practice everything. The ship done good, so we put it back in the dry dock, they checked it over, and we had a bunch we was going overseas with. And, we backed out of the dry dock, and the guy hit a pontoon -- or not a pontoon -- a --

CCB: Buoy?

CRC: -- a buoy cable and tore the propeller up, so we had to go back in the dry dock, wait for a new propeller. Our convoy went off and left us, and we sit one night out there and loaded the ship. And, they had beer in the place, so there was a few of us snuck in, and we got 53 cases of beer and put down in the shaft alley. We drank that on our way to the Philippines. (laughs)

CCB: How long did it last? The whole trip?

CRC: It lasted 10 days. (laughs)

CCB: You guys weren't working hard enough.

CRC: Yeah. When we got to the Philippines, we were the first ship between the islands out there without somebody with them. We didn't have anybody with us, and nobody seen us,

so we got into the Philippines. And, when we pulled in there, the airplanes was going over us with their wings down through, saying, "We're happy you got here." (laughs)
We had a good time. Yeah.

CCB: Well, with 53 cases of beer, it couldn't have been all bad.

CRC: I know it. That's right. Yeah. We went down through these islands here, and come down through here, and then --

CCB: South of Iwo Jima.

CRC: Yeah, and we never had any -- Nobody was with us. We was the first ship by itself, but they had most of the Japanese submarines were sank already.

CCB: I was just wondering.

CRC: Yeah. They had most of them out of the way.

CCB: Because you were 17 or 18?

CRC: Yeah. Never paid any attention to it. I done down and done my four hours of work and got eight hours off and four hours work and eight hours off. We played a lot of cards.

CCB: Did you win or lose?

CRC: Well, both. We had a pinochle tournament, and me and my buddy got up to the last one. And, we lost. (laughs)

CCB: If you don't have the cards, you don't have the cards.

CRC: That's right.

CCB: I've played a lot of pinochle.

CRC: We had a good time. Had a mighty good time. Yeah. We were all over, over there, then after -- let's see -- after we were in the invasion.

CCB: Of Luzon?

CRC: Yeah. We went in there, then we went back down by New Guinea. (pause) Well, we was in one of them little islands down there for five or six days. First time we got out of the battle zone for a year. (laughs)

CCB: Wow. And you just refitted or whatever?

CRC: We just had a good time down there.

CCB: Oh, you did Luzon. You were there for that attack when MacArthur came in?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Then you came in, went down to the islands, down near Guadalcanal and all that.

CRC: Right. Yeah.

CCB: Then, you were outfitting and what --

CRC: Right. Then, we loaded up later and went to Iwo Jima. We took the Marines in there, and --

CCB: Now, you were taking in equipment and stuff.

CRC: Yeah. We took the guys that had the big guns and drove the trucks. We carried their equipment and the people that run it, and we took them into the beach. And, when they raised the flag out there, we was just sitting out a little ways.

And, [Roy H. Cox?] -- he and I run around together all the time -- he's going -- We were sitting off on top of the smoke stack, watching them raise the flag.

CCB: You're kidding.

CRC: No, we was just a little ways off, and we was watching them in the mirror. And, them guys is up there putting that flag up on top of the hill. (laughs)

CCB: Oh my. How far off beach were you?

CRC: We were probably two and a half miles off the beach or so.

CCB: You could see pretty well?

CRC: Oh yeah, you could see good.

CCB: Now, how close could y'all get and unload that equipment?

CRC: We parked out there, where we were, then the little boats took it right into the beach. But, that beach was bad. They had a hard time getting it off in there. And then, them people is shooting at you. First bunch they took in, they killed pretty near all of them. The guys that went in, they let them get on the bank and get up, and them Japanese come right out of them holes and started -- They got rid of a lot of them. We had boats come out with wounded, and we didn't have any place to put them. And, they was looking for a place to get, and we'd look down and just turn your head. (laughs) Had pieces off here, there, and yonder.

CCB: Could, you know, was the noise -- You could hear all the fire? Just --

CRC: Oh yeah. Well, we was watching them. Them guys go along with the flame throwers, and we was watching them with the glasses. They fought along there and stick them flame throwers down them holes and turn them on and burn them guys out of there. They had everything underground. See, there was twenty some thousand of them.

CCB: Wow.

CRC: And, there wasn't hardly anybody out. They had everything in. They had that thing dug out everywhere.

CCB: Just like a maze.

CRC: You just can't imagine how they done that. Then, at the later part of that our battleships was setting back over the horizon, and they'd shoot -- and we could see their shells going -- and they'd blow them things up. And, we'd sit there and watch them. (laughs)

CCB: Now, our guys were on the island and they were shooting in those big 1,800 pound things?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: They -- Were they that accurate that they could see?

CRC: Yeah. Yes, sir. They put them right where they wanted them. And, a lot of them, they blew up in the air, and

that old white stuff went out and burned everything up it hit.

CCB: So, they people on the ground were directing that fire and setting the coordinates?

CRC: Yeah. They'd tell them --

CCB: They were that good?

CRC: There were that good. They put them things right where they wanted them. You just can't believe how they could do that.

CCB: Well, they said those 17-inch guns shoot something that weighs almost as much as a Volkswagen or it's shells.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: You could actually see the shells?

CRC: Oh yeah, we could see the shells. We was back far enough, we'd hear them shoot and we could see that sucker go through the air.

CCB: You just watched the path of it?

CRC: Yeah. It'd make a circle up and down.

CCB: They're that big?

CRC: Yeah. They're big. Well, they're about that long or maybe a little longer, and about that big around.

CCB: Eighteen hundred, nineteen hundred pounds?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: How many sacks of gunpowder did they have to put in there to shoot them?

CRC: I have no idea, but you could see them. They'd just keep throwing them in there. They put the shell in, then they put all that gunpowder behind it, and they shoot -- When they shoot them, they'd turn that ship sideways, and it'll move the ship back. And it'll come up again.

CCB: Really?

CRC: Yeah. And, they weighed 45,000 ton, or whatever it was.

CCB: And, it'd kick it back?

CRC: It'd kick that ship over.

CCB: That's a hell of a kick then.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Would it kick it back a couple three feet or --

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: -- did it just tip it?

CRC: It'd just tip it, but they'd shoot -- They had nine of them things. And they'd shoot them things, and a lot of shells go. (laughs)

CCB: I imagine all those guys are wearing hearing aids today.

CRC: Well, that's what ruined some of mine.

CCB: From the firing?

CRC: Yeah. We was in Lingayen Gulf. Why we was shooting at the Japanese airplanes, and one of them got through and went

right over the fantail of our ship. He probably missed us 100 foot, but the pilot was dead. I could see he was leaned over this way, and he got right behind us. We had a brand new destroyer back there, just come out with the double five-inch guns. He hit that sucker and blew him up. And, that's what put my ears out. (laughs) It was bad enough loading that gun, but he liked to ruin them.

CCB: Now, were you ever on deck loading the guns and passing the stuff and watching the kamikazes come at you?

CRC: Yeah, that was them.

CCB: That was one of them?

CRC: Yeah. That was one of them. Yeah.

CCB: But you didn't get hit by one, fortunately.

CRC: No. But, there was so many ships in there. They shot so much stuff off in the air, you just can't imagine how an airplane could get through there.

CCB: But they did, didn't they?

CRC: But they did. Yes, sir.

CCB: It's hard to believe.

CRC: There was one ship, about a quarter of a mile inland from us. One of them went down the smokestack, with an airplane, and killed almost everybody on the ship. And, you don't see that stuff in the news.

CCB: Oh, I never seen that one.

CRC: Yeah. That was before MacArthur come in there.

CCB: I read a lot about the number of ships they lost in Okinawa.

CRC: Yeah, and one of our guys that drove the little boats that took stuff in Luzon, he got off the boat and went with the Army and fought with the Army for six weeks. And, one of the other guys drove his boat back. He come back on the ship. They took him down one rank, and that was all. They never done a thing else. (laughs)

CCB: He was glad to be in it.

CRC: And he shot with the Army for six weeks. (laughs) You just can't imagine what people do. They do about anything.

CCB: Well, what were y'all doing that five weeks that the battle was going on? You were out anchored out there, and you were resupplying them. And, these little boats would come and pick up stuff, and --

CRC: Yeah. Our little boats took it in. See, we carried those little boats.

CCB: Oh, you carried the boats around?

CRC: Yeah. We had 10 LCN boats.

CCB: Lighting craft?

CRC: Yeah. That's a little bigger one, and then we had about 20 of the LCVP, they're the littler ones that carry like a truck or something.

CCB: Really? How big was the *Warrick*? I mean, how long was it?

CRC: It was four hundred and -- Well, about 500-footer, I think.

CCB: That's a big --

CRC: Pretty good sized ship.

CCB: Yeah, and so then you had your little boats there.

CRC: We had five holes in it that we put stuff in, and it was about three decks deep. So, you put them down and put a floor in and put them down and put a floor in, and when you fill it up, why it'd set that sucker way down. (laughs)

CCB: Drew a lot of water, then?

CRC: Yeah. Oh, yeah. She was way down in the water.

CCB: So, you had to be out there pretty far (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

CRC: Yeah, and when it was empty, why one -- We had a four blade propeller, but one of the fellers was out of the water when it was empty. There was just three of them in the water.

CCB: It just couldn't -- You just didn't draw enough.

CRC: No, it didn't draw enough. It was --

CCB: Severe.

CRC: Yeah. It was just made to haul stuff.

CCB: How many men were on the ship?

CRC: Oh, three hundred and something, but we want to say we worked three shifts. You worked four and eight off, four and eight off, and everybody's doing the same thing. So --

CCB: Was it pretty hot down in the boiler rooms where you worked?

CRC: It was, most of the time, about a -- close to 110, but you never paid any attention to it. I don't know why, but when I was younger. I looked back, and I thought, "How come I didn't notice that heat?" But, I never noticed it, and the other guys didn't either. And, we never sweat much. We had air from upstairs. They had them big things come down with air, and we had a lot of air rolling. But, never paid any attention to it.

CCB: Where did you get your fresh water?

CRC: Our what?

CCB: Fresh water?

CRC: We made it.

CCB: You made your own? Had to distill it?

CRC: Yeah. We had to --

CCB: Were you distilling salt water?

CRC: Yeah. We had that right in the fireroom, where I worked. We had the distillery in there. Yeah. Worked pretty good, and we had all our frozen stuff. We had a great big place that was froze; kept all the food in there. So, we --

CCB: And, your equipment held up really well?

CRC: Yeah. Everything.

M1: Pretty well designed.

CRC: Everything held up good. We never had any trouble with that ship. We stopped one time, and those boilers would get -- They'd get the black stuff on the tubes -- on the water tubes -- and it gets kind of thick and cuts it down. So, we stopped once and went in. And, we just jerked the front off of them and went in there and held our breath and scraped them tubes. And, we could stay for about two minutes or three minutes, jumped back out, and another guy would jump in behind us. He'd scrape a few of them, (laughs) and we would clean them off, put her back together, and took off again. (laughs)

CCB: (inaudible) the cleaning (inaudible) after that.

CRC: [Lloyd?] didn't know anything about this stuff.

CCB: No. He was up on top of it.

CRC: Yeah, he was up on top all the time.

CCB: Yeah, I imagine that was pretty dirty work.

CRC: Oh yeah. It was, but we enjoyed it. We never had any trouble.

CCB: Guy get along pretty well -- by and large -- for training?

CRC: I never seen any of us have any trouble. You get to living together, you know, and you just got so many things to do. And, you just get along good with it. We never had a speck of trouble. Now, at one time, I got 50 hours extra duty. This was just before we left the United States. We was on

-- went out on -- liberty, and one of my buddies was 36. And, I was 18, and he passed out. So, I had him over my shoulder. I carried him up the steps on the ship on the outside. I said, "Good evening, sir," to the ward officer out there on the deck, and, "You know what you're supposed to do? You're supposed to salute me and the flag." I said, "I know it, sir." I took [McSeventy?] down and laid him down and went back up and I was going to knock him on his butt. And, our -- One of our chiefs was a buddy of mine. He laughed and got me down -- sit on me -- and I had forgot the [chap?]. (laughs) And, I had been drinking for 10 hours probably. (laughs)

CCB: Oh my.

CRC: So, I got 50 hours extra duty, and our captain was laughing when we give it to me. But I only worked 20, and he said, "That's enough." (laughs)

CCB: You done your duty. Well, that Okinawa thing was just -- What sticks out in your mind about that whole experience? Seeing the flag go up had to be really something for you.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: But, seeing those kids coming back --

CRC: Oh, I know it. Yeah. See, we didn't get in to Okinawa. We was -- We loaded for --

CCB: I'm talking about Iwo Jima.

CRC: We loaded for the Japanese invasion, and we were about halfway up there when they dropped those bombs. And, we turned around and went back to the Philippines. And, we had the biggest party you ever seen in your life. (laughs)

CCB: I said Okinawa by mistake, I mean Iwo Jima, the sights and sounds of that. What sticks out in your mind at that Iwo Jima? When you think of that, something must come to mind.

CRC: What I said. I was just sitting there and watching them guys fight. We were close enough where we was watching them shoot each other, so --

CCB: You just had a ringside ---

CRC: Yeah. You just can't imagine it. Yeah.

CCB: To see our guys get hit and all that.

CRC: Yeah. That's right. Yeah. You see a guy go running a long, and down he goes. And, most of them Japanese was inside, but they got rid of a lot of them. Well, they didn't want to give up. See, they got down to -- What was it? There was only about two thousand and something left. The rest of them was all dead. So, they fought for that country. And, you just can't imagine such a little teeny damn country, but they got a lot of people over there.

CCB: They had 100 million of them. They [had?] about 100 million of them. I was stationed there for three years.

CRC: But, we went into [Amor?], Japan, up in the north after the war was over. We went in and took all their guns and ammunition out and dumped them in the ocean.

CCB: Did they pile it up for you and everything?

CRC: We took it out of the warehouses and here, there, and yonder. We got rid of all of it.

CCB: They had a lot of it?

CRC: Oh yeah. They had a gang of it. Yeah. Yeah. And they had a lot of them guns that wasn't worth a damn. They were second-hand. (laughs) Well, I brought one home with me. A nephew of mine still got it, but we had a -- Well, it's just different. But, there's another boy and I, got on a little train and went about 35 miles inland -- don't remember the town -- but the kids just got out of school. And, we had gum in our pocket. We was passing it here and there, and there was a little boy and a little girl. We went home with them. They were about 11 or 12. The folks invited us in, and we sat there and talked sign language. Those people are just like we were. You just can't imagine it, and the war was just over. (laughs)

CCB: Yeah, they probably would have fought you tooth and nail, if you invaded.

CRC: Oh yeah. If we went in there, we'd have been fighting bad if they hadn't dropped those bombs. Yeah.

CCB: I ask every veteran -- I don't know if it's a fair question -- what's the morality of dropping those bombs?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: And, I can tell you what every single one has said, "What?"

CRC: Yeah. I'll tell you one thing. We was glad they dropped them.

CCB: Oh yeah. That had to a real (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

CRC: We was on the way to Japan. And well, we might have got in up there, and they might have sunk us too and killed us all.

CCB: Yeah, they were pretty ferocious.

CRC: Oh yeah. Those people were fighting people. Yeah.

CCB: The -- You have to watch when modern history people are trying to say, "Well, we didn't need to drop the bomb," or something like that.

CRC: Well, they can think what they want to think, but they weren't there. (laughs)

CCB: That's why these interviews are so important because you were there.

CRC: Yeah. That's right. If they'd have been there, they'd have thought just like I do. They might not think so, but they would have.

CCB: Tell me about that typhoon that hit you right after the battle.

CRC: Oh, that was something too.

CCB: What day was that? Do you remember? Was it right there--

CRC: I don't know. We had just left northern Japan and was heading back toward the Philippines. And, they said, "There's a typhoon coming." We turned around, and they said, "It's not going." We turned around, went back, and run right into the damn thing. And, we were in about 83 or 84 mile an hour steady wind, and the waves were way up here and way up here. We had a destroyer escort with us. He'd go zipping up over that wave, and you couldn't see him half the time. He was underwater. And, we were empty, and we'd slide up that thing this way and slide back down the other side. (laughs)

CCB: Now, how many days were you in that thin?

CRC: We was in there -- Let's see -- It took us -- We were about five or six days, and we got up north of -- up in [Amor?] -- the next island up from Japan -- and we pulled into a port up there. Minesweepers hadn't been in there or nothing. That little escort went in in front of us and dropped his anchor. We went in right behind him and dropped the anchor. When the storm was yelling, we both

backed out and left and never hit nothing. (laughs) You don't know what you're going to do.

CCB: Oh, I just can't imagine 80 --

CRC: Well, see, that one cruiser over there lost a whole front end off, and he was just a little ways from us -- the one that lost the front end off there -- and he made it into port.

CCB: Could you keep your distance during this thing? You were always in a convoy weren't you?

CRC: No, there was just two of us.

CCB: Oh, it was just two?

CRC: Yeah. Just two of us. Yeah. Then, when we came back down, we went in down where that hit real bad and took everything off our ship. We left off all our food, clothing, dead. There was boats up on the bank. Well, there was LSTs up there an eighth of a mile or better on the bank. It washed them up there. So, made a heck of a mess. (laughs)

CCB: Sunk warships (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

CRC: People can't imagine something like that unless you see it. It just took everything out.

CCB: Yeah. I was stationed in Japan, but we never had any major typhoon the three years that I was there. Yeah. The houses are built out of nothing.

CRC: Oh, I know they were. That's right.

CCB: Now did -- You say you got inland on that train that one time as far as you went in.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: You didn't seen any of the destruction or anything from the bomb?

CRC: Not up there.

CCB: It was just all -- Up there was pretty --

CRC: Just like here. Yeah.

CCB: And, the people were very --

CRC: Sort of said, we got into that one house and they were just as friendly as visiting your neighbors. So, you just don't know.

CCB: Were you surprised by that, or --

CRC: Well.

CCB: You didn't know what to expect.

CRC: No. We didn't know what to do. I sort of said, our language were different, but we still talk to each other. You just don't know. It surprised us. (laughs)

CCB: You never had any submarine scares or anything. Because as you said --

CRC: We had some, but they were -- We were in convoys, and they was out from us.

CCB: But, that one time when you went over -- first time -- you were alone.

CRC: We was alone and never had a submarine. If one had seen us, we wouldn't be here. (laughs)

CCB: Because I was thinking about the *Indianapolis*. That was the last week of the war. Got hit by a submarine.

CRC: That's right.

CCB: I've interviewed two guys that were on it.

CRC: Oh, is that right? I'll be darned. You just --

CCB: Scared the heck out of them.

CRC: Oh yeah.

CCB: Guys were in the water for three days, four nights.

CRC: Yeah. Wow. So, you never had any close calls, though. I mean, you guys --

CCB: Sort of said, that one airplane just missed us, but other than that, we never had anything real close. And, when we was in Lingayen Gulf over there, when the -- see, the boats were pulling out. What's them big ones where the big front end goes down?

CRC: The only thing I know is the LST.

CCB: LSTs. One of my buddies --

CRC: Did they call it a Large Slow Target?

CCB: Yeah. Went to school and run around with, was on the LST587. They went right beside us. We was laying a smoke

screen around for the airplanes right then, and those LSTs were going out. He was right within two blocks of us, and we didn't know it, that he went out until after the war was over. We got to talking and said, "Oh, we was right beside each other." (laughs)

CRC: But, you don't know those things.

CCB: What was the difficulty of keeping all you all fueled. I mean, with all those ships out there.

CRC: Yeah. But, those fuel ships come around and kept us fueled all the time. They did everybody.

CCB: They just kept flowing, and fortunately submarines. They came by convoys more than likely.

CRC: Yeah. They sure did.

CCB: And, they were coming out of California mostly?

CRC: Yeah. Wherever they come from.

CCB: They could have come out of Huston. Go through the canal or something like that.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: It's -- When you look back at it, you know, the big picture. What does it tell you? Anything? You know, what do you think when you think back.

CRC: Well, it's what I said. You was a young man. You really don't think too much about it. (laughs)

CCB: Don't get too philosophical.

CRC: No.

CCB: Don't have time.

CRC: No. That's right.

CCB: See I'd be fascinated with it at this age, you know what I mean? And, that's why it's so great talking with you all. So, war ended, you were one of the first to go into Japan -
-

CRC: Right.

CCB: -- and then you turn around and went down to Okinawa did you? Unloaded your stuff?

CRC: No. We was back down in the Philippines.

CCB: Philippines. Unloaded your supplies, and then where did you go after that?

CRC: We went back up to Japan, and we left Japan and went to the states. We took another load back up there.

CCB: I see. So you dropped off a bunch in the Philippines.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: You came to Japan. Where did you pick up the supplies then? Out of Japan?

CRC: We picked our supplies up down here and took them back up into Japan. And, we left up here and went --

CCB: Up down the Aleutians and then came down the coast and came back into, what, Sand Diego?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: What did it look like when you go there?

CRC: Oh God. We come underneath that Golden Gate Bridge, and I just had a smile on my face.

CCB: What was that like?

CRC: It was nice. (laughs)

CCB: How far away did you see it when you first --

CRC: Well, I don't know, but I seen it quite a ways. And, I had my eight hours off --

CCB: So, you were on deck?

CRC: -- and I was standing on the front end. And, watching them people go across on them cars up there. (laughs) Went under the bridge and seen that big Hollywood sign on the bank. (laughs)

CCB: Oh, that's amazing. You know, what -- So, you see the bridge -- I know, I can only imagine this. And, you go underneath it of course, right?

CRC: Yeah. It's way up there, too. That sucker's a long ways off the ground.

CCB: You dock in Oakland, do you?

CRC: Yeah, we went into Oakland. Then, we went up that river and stopped at a little town up there.

CCB: Were they still greeting the ships when you came back?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: The people out there, bands playing, and all that?

CRC: Yeah. They sure did.

CCB: That had to be something.

CRC: And, then we got in and parked, and I was on the second half to get leave. So, I stayed on the ship for 30 days, while the other guys was gone. And, when I got on -- I just got on and Christmas Day come the first day I was on the train. (laughs) But, I enjoyed it. (laughs)

CCB: And, home was Missouri, at the time?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: I see. Did your folks know when you came in?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Anybody out there to meet you or they just --

CRC: No. There wasn't anybody there.

CCB: People didn't travel as much.

CRC: No. They sure didn't.

CCB: Telephone calls were expensive?

CRC: They were. You didn't do too much. They didn't cost much, but you didn't have much money either. So --

CCB: What did you get paid a month, back then at third class?

CRC: I got \$78 a month in the states and \$91 overseas. I got --

CCB: Combat pay?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Call you a millionaire?

CRC: Yeah. (laughs)

CCB: What are you going to do with all that?

CRC: (laughs) So --

CCB: And, af-- You started -- You took off in the *Warrick* in '44?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: October? Was that about right?

CRC: Well, we took off September/October. Yeah.

CCB: Forty-four?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: And so, your war lasted until August, right?

CRC: Yeah. All the time we was gone, we was 13 months in the combat zone without getting out.

CCB: Wow.

CRC: We got down there that one week and back -- but they didn't count that -- so they give us 13 months in the combat zone.
(laughs)

CCB: Wow. So, what was it like? You had to stay on the ship for 30 days.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Then you couldn't get off at all?

CRC: Oh yeah. We got off on liberty.

CCB: Each day?

CRC: Every other day.

CCB: But, you still had to live there?

CRC: Yeah. You still had to stay there.

CCB: The other guys had just gone?

CRC: Right. Yeah.

CCB: They all go home, or --

CRC: Yeah. They went wherever they went for 30 days. Then, when they got back and I went home, I got home for 30 days. And, when I got back, they was putting people on other places. Then I got on a seagull and tug, and I got on that seagull and tug, and we pulled a yard oiler from San Diego, around to Norfolk, Virginia. (laughs) And, we made about four miles an hour.

CCB: You were towing this?

CRC: Towing it with a big cable.

CCB: How big was the ship you were towing?

CRC: It was just a tugboat.

CCB: The one you were pulling?

CRC: It was a seagull and --

CCB: Oiler?

CRC: Oiler. Yeah.

CCB: Is that a big ship? I don't know.

CRC: Well, not real big.

CCB: It was dead in the water?

CRC: Yeah. It was dead in the water.

CCB: So, you towed it through the canal?

CRC: We towed them down through the canal, and we stayed down there. We was down there four days, I think. (laughs)

CCB: How long did that whole trip take?

CRC: Oh, we were pretty near a month going around there.

CCB: (overlapping dialogue: inaudible)

CRC: By the time we stopped here and stopped there -- We pulled in down to Cuba, and when we was in Cuba, we pulled in there and dropped the anchor. And, we looked, and there was a battleship. I don't remember which battleship. One of them over there. And, this was on Sunday. The guys were painting with their dress blues on, and we wondered yet what they done. (laughs)

CCB: It wasn't anything good.

CRC: No, it wasn't good. (laughs) We laughed about that.
(laughs)

CCB: Now you're on the East Coast. Now, how'd you get back?
Did they train you back?

CRC: Went on up north and -- Yeah, we was up north in New York, and went in and was going to decommission. And, I had points to get out, but they wouldn't let me off until we decommissioned. But, my tonsils weren't too good, and we had a first class petty officer, was our doctor. He said, "I'll get you off." He went over to a hospital, got me a thing and signed it, took me out of there, and put me in.

I was in there and got my tonsils out. They sent me to Saint Louis, and I was home. (laughs) I didn't have to stay. (laughs)

CCB: So, you were gone from home. Let's see, you left --

CRC: Not quite three years.

CCB: What'd it feel like coming back home? Did it look small? Or how'd it feel?

CRC: Well, it's different. And, after I got back, I went to school, but me and my buddy couldn't stand the school. You're grown up, you know, and you just can't do it. So, did I tell you before? OK. Went to school for six weeks, and we couldn't do it. So, they said if you take the test on this, every time you pass a test, you get a full credit. So, we took four tests, got four credits. And, we needed four more, and it was duck season. So, we took the four. And, he done two and I done two. And, when they looked at them, they was exactly alike. We passed them, but they wouldn't give us our grade. (laughs) So, we never went back.

CCB: So, you were finishing your high school during this?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: So, you had left high school to sign up.

CRC: Yeah. I left high school.

CCB: What grade were you in?

CRC: I was in the 10th grade.

CCB: A lot of people did that didn't they?

CRC: Oh yeah. There was a lot of them. Yeah.

CCB: That's why you're so young.

CRC: Yeah. That's right. Yeah. But, we had good times.

CCB: I talked a little bit about the food, and all that was
always pretty good?

CRC: The food was always good. Yeah.

CCB: And, I was told that whenever you got steak and eggs and
everything that would mean you were going into battle the
next day?

CRC: Well, some of that was. Talking about the food, when we
was pulling that yard oiler down off the coast of Mexico,
one of the guys on there knitted a turtleneck -- one that
you throw, goes way big -- We threw it out and got one of
them big sea turtles. There was 34 of us for a crew on
there. We got to counting and there was 34 guys on that
rope. (laughs) There wasn't anybody -- We was only going
about four miles an hour. (laughs) We got that turtle
pulled in and cleaned that thing, and that guy cooked that.
And, let me tell you what. It was good eating. I wondered
about it, but it was good.

CCB: How much did it weigh, you think?

CRC: I have no idea. It was one of them great big rascals. Had a lot of blood. Oh.

CCB: So, probably the most intense battle you think you were involved was the Iwo Jima one. Would that be correct in saying that?

CRC: Well, we probably had more in Lingayen Gulf than we did in Iwo Jima. We was at Iwo Jima, but we sat out there. And, at night we took the ship out and run around at night with no lights on, so we didn't have any airplanes around us. Then we'd come back in daytime. Drop the anchor. And, the Japanese wasn't sending any planes in the daytime.

CCB: Oh. So, you were just sort of chilling out there?

CRC: Yeah. Just sat there. Yeah.

CCB: And, at night they couldn't find you.

CRC: No.

CCB: Where were the Japanese planes coming from?

CRC: I guess they come -- I don't know. They must have come from Japan. I have no idea.

CCB: Because, I think they captured the airfield pretty early. And then did you see any planes -- American planes -- come in when there was still fighting at that time?

CRC: No.

CCB: Some people said that some of those crippled B-29s came in early, you know, when it was incomplete.

CRC: Yeah. They said they did, but we didn't see any of them.

CCB: Did you ever see any Japanese soldiers on the surface?

CRC: No.

CCB: You never saw them out?

CRC: No.

CCB: They were always in their holes.

CRC: No. They was in a hole or somewhere.

CCB: And, the only thing you saw was our guys getting hit?

CRC: That's right.

CCB: Was it noisy. I mean, did --

CRC: Oh my God. It just puts your ears out.

CCB: Now, of course, those big shells coming across the air.

CRC: Yeah. That's what makes so much noise.

CCB: Yeah. You can tell -- Probably, you can tell by the sound, which shells they were.

CRC: We just had a five inch on the back, but we were by the big mountain on there. And, they had a great big hole back in there with a big gun in it. And, we blew that hole shut. They cleaned that sucker out and shoot again, and we'd blow the hole shut. (laughs) You don't know what they're going to do.

CCB: Did you lose any men on your ship, the *Warrick* from any kind of hostile action?

CRC: No. We never lost any. We lost two or three boats. The little boats, but we never lost any of the guys. Never lost a person.

CCB: Well, that's a good record.

CRC: I know it. We was lucky, and they were lucky. You took that -- When you took that stuff into them beaches, you didn't know. So -- Because they took that in there and let the front end down, and they drove them trucks out and drove tanks out.

CCB: It's hard for me to imagine that you had ships big enough in your ship that were carrying trucks and stuff.

CRC: Oh yeah. That's right. Yeah. But, it carried them on top.

CCB: Wow. It had to be big. I'm going to have to get on the computer and look at it and see what the *Warrick* looked like and so forth.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Did you ever get a chance to drive one of the trucks in or anything like that?

CRC: No. I never went. I stayed on the ship.

CCB: You were happy right there?

CRC: That's right. I didn't care about going in with them.

(laughs)

CCB: You weren't that interested. You could see it enough, right. It's amazing you were watching through the binoculars when they were fighting.

CRC: Yeah. We were watching them, oh, all the time.

CCB: Wow, when the flag went up. What did you do on your, you know, you had your eight hours off. What did you do?

CRC: You'd just piddle around: played card or looked over the side or whatever. We played a lot of cards.

CCB: Became a pinochle champion.

CRC: Yeah. We did. We played pinochle. We played poker, but we had a quarter limit. (laughs)

CCB: That's a long time to have not much to do, though. I mean, would you get sort of bored or --

CRC: No, it didn't. Back at that age, it doesn't bother you. It didn't seem to bother us any.

CCB: But to hear you were anchored out there --

CRC: I've wondered about it myself, you know, about what I done some of them times. But -- (laughs)

CCB: Well, you think about it. You're playing cards. You're sort of leading almost a normal on deck, and here -- What are these guys are --

CRC: That's right. Three miles from you.

CCB: What a contrast. I mean, did you think about that at time?

CRC: That's right. And, they were shooting each other.

(laughs) That's what I say when you raise your flag, well, the cocks and I sitting up on top of the smoke stack watching them. (laughs)

CCB: You had a ring-- You just, actually, were almost like an observer.

CRC: Yeah. Well, inside that big smokestack, had a ladder went up in there, and you could open the door and get out on top.

CCB: Did you take any pictures or anything like that?

CRC: No. They wouldn't see then. Back then, we couldn't have a camera. We couldn't take a picture; couldn't do nothing.

CCB: I see. For security right?

CRC: That's right.

CCB: And, you got to hear Tokyo Rose?

CRC: Yeah. (laughs)

CCB: Tell me about it.

CRC: They had them on the radio. (laughs) You never know what's going to happen.

CCB: See, I can only imagine this stuff. You were there. Can I ask you this over and over again? But, when you think of Iwo Jima, what comes to mind? Your shipmate told me, came to mind is he was very disturbed by the wounded coming back.

CRC: Oh, that's what I said. They're -- They come out and pulled in by our ship looking for a place to take them, and we couldn't take them. And, it'd almost make you sick to look in them boats.

CCB: So, they must had a lot --

CRC: Oh, they had a lot.

CCB: -- of hospital ships and stuff.

CRC: Oh yeah. We had a hospital ship not too far back from us, but those things got full quick. And them boys come out in the boats, and they didn't know where to go.

CCB: Yeah, I think most people, probably at the time, didn't realize how bloody that Iwo Jima was.

CRC: That's exactly right. That's what I said. They killed the biggest part of the first bunch that went up there.

CCB: Got stuck in its --

CRC: Wounded a lot of them.

CCB: Wow.

CRC: Yeah. A cousin of mine was in the Navy, and he was a corpsman, and they transferred him in the Marine Corps. See the Marines was the Navy then, and they transferred him into the Marine Corps. He was over there. He couldn't carry a gun. All he had was a knife.

CCB: He was on the island?

CRC: Yeah. He was up there and getting them guys on the stretcher and bringing them back and trying to patch them out there.

CCB: He was as easy to pick of as anybody.

CRC: Yeah. That's right.

CCB: Wow. He made it?

CRC: Yeah. And, he's still going. (laughs)

CCB: Is that right?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: You all talk about it now and then?

CRC: Oh yeah. Every once in a while. Yeah.

CCB: Wow.

CRC: Yeah. Let's see. He's 86. Still going strong.

CCB: Fantastic.

CRC: Yeah. I know it. Yeah. You just don't know. And, them kids over there now, they just let them shoot one way, and occasionally they shoot the other way. I probably got a bad mind, but I don't think we ought to be there.

CCB: Yeah, we're not supposed to get that on tape. We talk about that, we shut the tape off, but --

CRC: (laughs)

CCB: You know, Lloyd's son was in Vietnam, and he was about a year on the ground there. And, it was --

CRC: Yeah. I know it. Some of my brother-in-laws was in Vietnam.

CCB: Did you have any siblings -- any brothers or anything -- that were in the war too or were you the only one in your family?

CRC: No. I was the only one.

CCB: Cousins or anything like that?

CRC: I had cousins in. Yeah. That one in the Marine Corps, he was a cousin. Then, he had brother about two years older than him. He was in the Army, and then I had another cousin was in the Army. And, he never left the United States. And then, one of my buddies from Brookfield, Missouri, was a stainless steel welder, but they didn't have hardly any of them then. They never let him leave the United States. He stayed out in California and done the stainless steel welding. When he went to get out -- he had his lungs were gone -- and they said, "You had this when you came in," but they didn't tell you. He lasted about three months, and he was dead.

CCB: Wow.

CRC: They wouldn't -- They let him work instead of taking care of him. So, that's what they done during the war. You didn't know what was going to happen. (laughs) Them bigger

boys over you done what they wanted to do, and they never worried about it.

CCB: Was there a lot of corruption, in your mind, as far as senior people and stuff.

CRC: Well, not too much, but some of that like that. So, just hard telling.

CCB: The comradery and so forth on the *Warrick* sound like it was pretty good.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: That you worked together and --

CRC: Yeah. That's what I said. We had pretty good crew on there and got along good. The old ship run good all the time, and we hauled a lot of stuff.

CCB: And, mealtimes. I mean, you had to divide that. Had to eat, you know. Had two, three breakfast times and all that.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Were the cooks always sort of snotty like I see in the movies or are they pretty good?

CRC: No, they -- (laughs)

CCB: Always remember, "If you don't want to eat it, you want to wear it?" Gee, that's not true, huh?

CRC: No, it didn't work that way.

CCB: I see. They were OK.

CRC: They were all pretty good. (laughs)

CCB: Well, I know everybody I talked to in the Army said that the Navy ate the best of everybody.

CRC: Well, we had good food. Like I said, we carried the food and that's the reason I was glad I wasn't in the Army. I didn't have to eat out on the field somewhere and --

CCB: By in large, I think we've said, the equipment and it worked pretty well, and you had good stuff. They were putting things together. Was Kaiser making any of your ships that -- He was making Liberty ships so --

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: The ships were built well, and --

CRC: Yeah. They was pretty good.

CCB: -- of course, the *Warrick* lasted a long time.

CRC: Oh yeah. See, it was up -- Well, up in the late '60s they use it for target practice. (laughs)

CCB: Now, the sleeping arrangements? You slept in hammocks and all that?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Was it spread all over the ship, several layers?

CRC: Four-high.

CCB: What do you think was the biggest inconvenience, the thing that bugged you, about being on the ship as far as being a pain in the you-know-what?

CRC: Ah.

CCB: Nothing much?

CRC: No. We never had any trouble.

CCB: Good shower stuff.

CRC: The showers were good.

CCB: The latrines were good.

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: The food was good?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: The country did well by you then?

CRC: They did, really. Yeah.

CCB: Yeah. Made a big difference, I imagine.

CRC: We got along pretty good.

CCB: Did you run into any Navy vessels from Australia or English or anything like that?

CRC: Yeah. We was -- Some of them were around. And let's see, we were in the Philippines, in Luzon. (pause) We parked in there, and right above us was a ship one of my buddies was on. And, I went up and got to visit with him from Brookfield, Missouri. (laugh)

CCB: That was a real thrill for you?

CRC: Yeah. It was. For both of us.

CCB: Probably said, "What are we doing here?"

CRC: Yeah. That's right.

CCB: "Could be duck hunting down in Missouri."

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Yeah. They -- Very, very -- Trying to think of -- What else do you think of that -- When you think about those, you must have some wild thoughts now and then that come popping in.

CRC: Oh yeah. Well, when we were in the harbor that time, there was Japanese ships and United States ships sunk all over the place, and the top of them sticking out, and we just zigzagged through them. (laughs)

CCB: Where was that particularly, again?

CRC: In the Luzon area, in the Philippines. Yeah.

CCB: So, there were all kinds. They're probably still down there, aren't they?

CRC: Oh, I imagine. Yeah.

CCB: Every so often, you see something about a truck, and apparently there's an awful lot of stuff sitting there.

CRC: Oh yeah. There's a bunch of it there. Yeah. We pulled in the ship over there. I remember, was getting up close to where we was going to park, and they -- Guys got a gun and shoots that little thing with a rope on it. He shot out and it went right through the side of a building. (laughs)
We all laughed about that too.

CCB: That's another thing you see in movies and stuff. Did you
guy every, you know, just park the ship and go swimming in
the ocean, or --

CRC: Oh yeah.

CCB: What was that like? You guys knew there were sharks down
there.

CRC: We parked. Well, what was nice, they give us three beers.

CCB: Before you went in?

CRC: Yeah. They give us three beers. Couldn't drink them until
you got to the beach. They put us in a little boat. We'd
go over to the beach and get out. The beer was hot. Time
we'd open it, it'd foam all over the place, but it still
tasted good. (laughter)

CCB: No time to let it sit in the water and cool off?

CRC: One of the places we was at, they had the pecan trees and
the pecans up, and --

CCB: Pecans?

CRC: Yeah. Or not pecan. Coconuts.

CCB: Coconuts, OK.

CRC: I'll get it right in a minute.

CCB: You guys (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) --

CRC: So anyway, this native boy came up. He was probably four
foot tall. Well, he wasn't as young as he looked. But
anyway, I was trying to climb this tree, and I couldn't do

it. He laughed, and took a knife and he cut a little tree. Took the bark off of it, and made a circle with the bark. Put it around his feet, and leaped right up that tree and got the coconuts off and come back down. Anyway, I give him my white hat. We was down there just about 11 months later, and stopped in the same place. He was still there and still had the hat. It wasn't white anymore (laughs) but he was still wearing it. And, that ocean out there, we'd jump in there, and that tide was so strong, you couldn't hardly go. It'd just wash you right down to the bottom.

CCB: Really?

CRC: So, I went down once like that and got back up and got back to the bank.

CCB: That's enough of that, huh?

CRC: Yeah. That's enough of that, and the rest of them done the same thing. So, we stayed on the beach most of the time.

(laughs)

CCB: So, there were native people in a lot of these islands.

CRC: Oh yeah.

CCB: And, you'd see them occasionally.

CRC: Well, there's a lot of headhunters over there yet.

CCB: Really?

CRC: Yeah. Sure was. And, they stayed in the camps, and the women carried everything. Even in the Philippines, there after we'd been there quite a while, them women would come out of them camps and carry that stuff on their head. They'd go down and get stuff and go back up. And, we was in them camps, and them guys sat up there, smoked.

CCB: They got it right, huh?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: Now, did you -- You had leave time in the Philippines occasionally?

CRC: Yeah, we got off whenever we could. They'd get in some place, why they'd give us a day off. Yeah.

CCB: What did you all do, other than drink, or I mean --

CRC: Nothing. (laughs) Drink and run around. Well, you got to look at a lot of stuff.

CCB: Yeah. Well, did -- You look back on it now. Does it seem to be the highlight of your life, if you would say?

CRC: Oh, I can remember it, but it's a long time ago. And, some of the things you remember, some of them you don't remember. So --

CCB: As I said earlier, I felt I missed something big.

CRC: That's right.

CCB: My wife said to me, often -- You know, I watch all the World War II stuff -- She says, "Look, we won, they lost.

How many times do you have to watch this?" I said, "Well, I may see something I hadn't seen before."

CRC: That's right, too. You just don't know.

CCB: Have you been back to Asia at all since then?

CRC: No.

CCB: You've never traveled there? Traveled to Europe, anything like that?

CRC: No. Wife and daughters been out, and I didn't go. Well, my son-in-law and daughter-in-law was over in France. He was help building a plant over there, and wife and daughter went over. I said, "I'm not going. I done had enough of them countries years back." (laughs) So, I stayed at home.

CCB: But, you enjoyed yourself. At what you wanted. Stayed up as late as you want. Watch TV to the middle of the night, and not be bothered.

CRC: That's right.

CCB: What was it like when you first came home? You know, you just came back. You still had your parents and so forth, and family and all that? What it tough to get back into -- I mean, you know, it's such a --

CRC: Not too much. Well, he wasn't my brother-in-law then, but we run around together, and he married my sister later. But, him and his family commercial fish on the Mississippi River, right out of Quincy, Illinois. Well, I went to work

with him, and we fished for a year. Never made a whole lot of money, but we made enough to get by on. And, we'd fish all day and clean them fish, and we sold them. Well, we had a fish market, and we sold them to a bunch of the breweries. And, we'd go around drinking beer where we'd sell the fish. (laughs)

CCB: What did you do for a living after that, most of your life?

CRC: I got in with Gardner Denver Company, and I was a foreman in the pattern shop. They make air compressors, water pumps, all this big stuff: like the big pumps they use out in the Gulf of Mexico; they drill for oil. We made those big pumps, and they were great big rascals. Had pistons in them were about that wide and about that deep and about that long, just the head. And, we made three cylinders, and the side of the crankcase was an inch and a quarter thick. And, we'd put them in on the hydrostatic test and move the side of that crankcase. (laughs) That's how much pressure they got in them. You don't realize what's out in them gulf doing.

CCB: Now, are these diesel engines, all pretty much?

CRC: Yeah.

CCB: So, they're compressions --

CRC: See, we made the compressors, but we hired additional engines. Put the additional engines running. Yeah. You

just don't realize what goes on out there and how much money is out there.

CCB: Well, I think we got a good taste of your life out there for those three years in the Military.

CRC: Oh yeah, had a good time.

CCB: We can't thank you enough for participating in our --

CRC: That's all right.

CCB: -- history. We'll have this all typed out and --

CRC: And, we've been getting together since 1990.

CCB: The *Warrick* crew?

CRC: We started every two years. We dropped down to a year and a half. Now, we're every year. And, we may ought to start going every six months. (laughs)

END OF AUDIO FILE