

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Ben Cranefield

Date of Interview: November 11, 2011

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Interview in progress.

Interviewer: Good afternoon, this is Dr. James Lindley, and I am interviewing Mr. Ben Cranefield, Jr. Today's date is 11, November, 2011. This interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas. The purpose of the National Museum of the Pacific War Oral History Project is to collect; preserve and interpret the stories of World War II veterans; home front experiences; the life of Fleet Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and the Old Nimitz Hotel by means of audio and video and/or video recordings. The audio and video and/or video recordings of such interviews become part of the Center of Pacific War Studies; the Archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War and the Texas Historical Commission. These recordings will be made available for historical and other academic research by scholars. We the undersigned have read the above and voluntarily offer the National Museum of the Pacific War full use of the information contained on the audio and/or video recordings; and/or the written text of these oral history research interviews. In view of the scholarly value of the research material, we hereby assign rights; title and interest pertaining to it to the National Museum of the Pacific War, and the Texas Historical Commission. This is Dr. James Lindley. Today's date is 11, November, 2011 and I am interviewing Mr. Ben Cranefield, Jr. This interview is taking place

in Fredericksburg, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, the Archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War, and the Texas Historical Commission. These interviews are for the preservation of historical information related to this site. Mr. Cranefield, thank you ever so much for giving your time to provide us with this oral history, and we also thank you for your service to our country. Begin please by telling us your full name and giving us a little background information about yourself; where you might have been born and where you were...something about where you lived as a child and your family and how you came to learn that we had been attacked by the Japanese on December the 7th. Thank you.

Mr. Cranefield: My name is Benjamin Franklin Cranefield, Jr. and my dad was the same name; my son was also the same name except he was the III. And I was born in Seattle, Washington. I have two brothers and three sisters. We grew up in...just seven blocks out of the city limits of Seattle, but seven miles from downtown Seattle. kind of...like on a farm. And we went through the Depression and I guess we had enough to eat...and...but we didn't have any luxuries at all...just mainly necessities. And...we...we had an old car and we drove...once in awhile we'd go out on Sunday and...and have a drive or something like that, but not anything real special. And I...I played baseball a lot...thought I wanted to be a professional baseball player, but I turned out to be a little runt, so I couldn't make it. One of the things I remember and I keep telling everybody is...during...during these times every Saturday we would pack up the car and leave at 8 o'clock in the morning and go downtown to go

shopping. And we went to Pikes Place Market and that...you watch...that TV show that comes from Seattle and that's one of the first pictures that shows on the screen. And we spent the whole day down there and we kind of...loved it. We bought groceries; we bought twenty loaves of bread...and...and if you...if...we had no refrigerator in those days, we had an icebox and hopefully we had a little ice in it once in awhile. But we took this twenty loaves of bread that we bought and put it in the...in the...pantry for the...for the week. And if you can imagine what a loaf of bread smelled like...not refrigerated...we got it on Saturday and we...didn't get anymore till next Saturday. So the Friday after we got the...the bread...it was...kind of stunk a little bit. But we made it. And we had a cow. We...we spent...nowadays we don't think much of putting \$60...\$70...\$80 on our credit card at all...we don't even think about it. We had to figure out...my folks did...how they're going to buy this cow for \$60 or whatever like that. It kept the whole neighborhood in milk, so...we...we got away with that one. When Pearl Harbor got attacked, we...I was in...my buddy's basement...we were playing football probably...and his mother said, "Boys come on up; there's something on TV...I meant something on ...no TV...something on the radio." And they were talking about the Japanese bombing Pearl Harbor. Nobody even knew where Pearl Harbor was except this guy's brother just got of the Navy after four years and he told us where Pearl Harbor was...he'd just call it Hononolulu. So I said to myself...I'm not quite 15 I guess...not quite 16 maybe...okay...and I knew if we didn't settle this thing right away, we were

going to go in the service. And the only good thing about Pearl Harbor was that it got rid of the Depression...like in one day! And everybody...the service people wanted more people; the factories wanted people; everybody wanted them; ship...your shipyards; Boeing...and so that took care of the...the unemployment people...right now! In fact they were looking for people after that. But Pearl Harbor...the next day the...the lines at the Marine Corps...recruiting and Navy and Army and downtown was just crawling with people...going around the block...waiting to get...waiting to enlist. And like one of my shipmates, Stan Holzar (spelling ?) said the other day he didn't even think about the fact that you didn't know how to swim...we didn't...neither one of us knew how to swim at all. Well that was one of the things we did at boot camp. When I got to be...after...after...the first year after the war started I was still working at Seattle Box Company and finally I...I run into a friend of mine on the bus and he said, "I'm going to go down and enlist in the Navy Saturday." So I said, "Okay, let's go!" So...

Interviewer: What year was that now?

Mr. Cranefield: 1943. And...so we...we joined the Navy and went to boot camp in Farragut, Idaho. And while he was at Farragut, Idaho he vol...they...they wanted people to volunteer to go to Sound School, and so he volunteered. He...he got rid of half of his boot camp experience by going to Sound School. And I never wrote to him; didn't get around to doing that, but one day I heard that...that Halsey's 3rd Fleet...or...I guess it was the 3rd Fleet...Halsey's Fleet went through a typhoon and he drowned in the Philippines

and...in...December...November or December in 1944 and three destroyers rolled over and sunk...and...he...his was one of them. So the guy I joined the Navy with...didn't make it. After boot camp I went to Corps School in San Diego, California. Then I...then I went to Oak Knoll in Oakland, California. And...and there I ran into a couple of Marines who were kind of special. They...one guy had a...just a couple of little holes in him...another one had just one, but it was a big one and...and he'd already had about fifteen or twenty operations before I ever met him. And later on when we got ready to go aboard ship, he was doing shore patrol duty while we were standing there and I ran over to see him and...and he finally got out of the sun...finally got out of the hospital after all that time. He got hurt on Tarawa.

Interviewer: How long was Corps School?

Mr. Cranefield: Oh about twelve weeks. About all we learned how to do was...we...we took a needle and stuck it an orange a couple of times and...maybe we give each other one shot or something, but not much...and we learned anatomy a little bit, and that's about it...not...not too much for twelve weeks. So after...Oak Knoll Hospital, then we went to Shoemaker Receiving Barracks in Oakland and ...we were supposed to just get our overseas shots and go the next day and we stayed there all summer. We...we were there when Port Chicago blew up...and so...finally we got on a...on a draft that...that took us...and we went to amphibious training base in Oceanside, California...and did training for...eight week maybe...something like that. And...then went on aboard ship to the USS Hansford – APA-106. And so after we...we took a shake-

down cruise to...southern California and back and on day after Thanksgiving we headed for Hawaii...1944 (unintelligible). And...we picked up the 1st Battalion, 27th Regiment of the 5th Marine Division at Hilo, Hawaii, I think. And then we went...went on maneuvers with them for awhile and left to go into battle. And so we stopped...the first stop we made that was important was Saipan and there was a little beach party of forty-five. We...we had a...what they called an advanced element...they were supposed to go in first and set up for the rest of the...before the rest of the beach party came in. And they...they left our ship and went to...two LSTs. Thirteen on...I mean seven on the one LST and six on the other LST. And the...the one LST with seven had executive officer of the beach party; had two radiomen, and one seaman... and one seaman; and one coxswain...and a seaman. And...and out of that load, we had four casualties...four deaths. And on mine we had two wounded. So we...we actually had six casualties out of thirteen people...that was pretty high. When we...when my Amtrak...Amtrak by the way...is a...it's a water borne boat...like sitting way down low on the water...on tracks. And when we got like thirty or forty feet from the beach or so...not very...real close, we got hit with a 3 inch anti-aircraft by...a dual-purpose anti-aircraft gun and it blew a hole in the side of the...the boat. But it was above water level so it didn't hurt anything. When we finally got to the beach...well we got off. I...I did a couple of things I was supposed to be doing, I guess. One of them that said to put your pack in front for a little added protection, but I...I don't think they meant what they...what they said

right there...but I...maybe for later on. But anyway I took it off and sure enough they unloaded an LCM...shortly after that and they drove right up there and put his big tires right on my...on my pack and that was it. And another thing was...while I was there...I...I saw this guy swimming in from the water...it kind of caught my attention...so when he got close I grabbed his arm and grabbed him on...got him on the beach...up to his beltline...it was probably to his beltline where's...everything was on...dry there but legs...his legs were still wet. And so I...and then he died. And I looked and looked and looked and I didn't find a mark on him! I don't know...how he...what happened, but he didn't make it. And it was one other thing...there was a Marine came by and he could hardly talk...he was so nervous...you know...scared...and he says, he told me how scared he was. I says to him, "You got *lots* of company, and I'm one of them!" And he...later on...we...there was a...a Duck got blown up and he...risked his life and helped me carry this one guy...pulled this one guy up through a shell hole which I'll tell you about in a minute, but...anyway the...the truck that ran over my...bag...my...all my gear was...looked like a pretty good place because there was a lot of mortars dropping right then. So I crawled under it and stayed there awhile. And a Marine came and said, "Hey we got to get out of here; this is too hot!" So he...we went up the rest of the bank and over a flat area about fifty feet wide or something like that...seventy-five and then we got into what they call a tank trap area. And when I got on the other side of the tank trap...

Interviewer: What was the tank trap like?

Mr. Cranefield: Uh, just a big ditch; it wasn't too wide, but it was...kept it so a tank couldn't get across it. And so...they'd already shot at me a little when I come across that flat area and then hit me...and then I got in a tank trap and I noticed some sand blowing in front of me...blowing away from me which meant somebody was shooting at me from behind. So I kind of worked my way into the bank there and...and got out of the way. While we were there, a Marine came and said, "You a corpsman?" I said, "Yeah." So he said, "Would you take care of our pharmacist's mate if we bring him down to you?" I said, "Sure I would." So I...I...the...the training we had...that started to kick in a little bit, but not too awful much. Anyway...he...he got hit somehow, I guess, and he had a broken leg. So I put a splint on his leg and I put a big M on his head for morphine shot and made a tag out...the only one I ever made...in all the time...and so the Marines took him down to the beach to be evacuated. And also...while I was in that same spot...I saw that nice truck I was laying under when they...got hit with enemy fire of some kind and...it...and up she went! And I'd just been laying under it for awhile. While we were still there I...I...still didn't find my outfit...didn't know where they were. Oh I was real close to them but I didn't know it then. So about that time here comes a Duck...a Duck is kind of like an Amtrak when it's got wheels instead of...tracks. And...we heard a big explosion and it was one guy went over the windshield; one guy went straight up in the air. And so I ran over to see

if...to see about the guy went over the windshield...but he was dead. And the other guy...I heard him moaning, so...we got...that Marine...that scared Marine and I got him up in the shell hole...a place where we stayed the rest of the night. And...while we were in the shell hole, I still didn't know where my troops were...not at all. And...so...during the middle of the night...guess it got cold...I took my green jacket off and put it on this Amtrak...uh, this Duck guy...and underneath it was a black leather jacket with short sleeves because I was carrying a 30 odd sick and it kicked like the dickens! And so that kind of padded it a little bit. So I gave him my green jacket and I'm wearing a black...just a black jacket all by itself and I didn't even think about it at the time but...anyway...while I was in the shell hole I...in the middle of the night...we got...we got a mortar shot come real close...you know...and made my ears ringing...my eyes trying to...pull out of the socket or whatever...but I was up on the edge of the foxhole when...when it hit. And when it got done, I was in the middle of the foxhole laying on my back...and I was taking inventory real quick! Two of these...two of these...and I was okay. So while I was there also we had a Marine doctor...Navy doctor, but...attached to a Marine unit telling me how bad off we were...you know...how bad they were. And so I told him what my problem was, "I'm supposed to be relieved tomorrow morning and I still don't know where my outfit is," you know. He says, "Don't worry about it." He said, "If you'll...if...if you can't find them in the morning, you can go with us up to Air Strip #1. And of course if I'd done that...I...I might as well have been a Marine... 'cause it was kind of

nasty! Anyway, after that night...it started to get light and I looked down there and...where I thought they were...and they were just...almost exactly where I thought they were. They were...I was inland maybe twenty feet more than they were and to the left...forty feet or something like that...not very far. So I dropped everything I owned and took off running. And this Dick Haw (spelling ?)...did you talk to him yet?

Interviewer: Not yet.

Mr. Cranefield: Dick Haw was the other...one of the other corpsmen and he...he said, "Oh look what's coming down the hill?!" And I call myself an unidentified object..that was me! Black leather jacket...running like mad...and they were ready to shoot! (laughter) Well anyway he...okay we got down...he...he took me for a tour of the beach party area and that's where I saw our exec and two radiomen and...and seamen and also a coxswain. The coxswain he disappeared...don't know where he went; he got hit in the back kind of...and he was blind...and nobody knows where he went to. A couple of Marines...corpsmen saw him, but that wasn't good enough. They had to make him missing in action for a whole year. So, then...that was just about it. That was day two now and we just pretty well stayed in a foxhole most of that day. The third day...we had...okay...the end of the first day we had fifteen of our seventeen casualties had taken place already. And then the third day our...I was sitting in a foxhole and...with some sandbags around it and this guy came over...it was our ship fitter...I hadn't seen him since we left the ship and...and we were talking. He was shaking hands with me and all of a

sudden I saw his shirt shake like that...he just got shot. But he...it was a good clean...it was a...luckily a little caliber...like a 25 or something like that.

And he was just...he left the beach just...he was more mad than anything else that he was going to be...wind up being a casualty of Iwo Jima.

Then...then...oh, oh I missed one. There was a...at the end of the evening of the second day we had three guys in one foxhole...Dick Haw and Willy Wilson and me. And then in a foxhole right close to us was three more guys...one of which was Jim Brady and...and so the Japanese hit our ammo dump and here's Jim Brady sitting in the other foxhole wrapped in his blanket and a piece of hot steel landed on his (unintelligible) and started smoking. He thought it maybe it was a hand grenade or something and he ripped that off and dove like that...into our foxhole without even so much as touching ground! And here he comes heading for us into our foxhole and we had three guns pointing at his head...you know. "Don't shoot...its Brady!" We got a laugh about that! And then the third day...the ship fitter got hit and before that...before that...we hadn't had any...I hadn't eaten in two days but we weren't even thinking much about it, but I did miss my cigarettes...which were in my pack. And so we saw the shore party of the Marine Corps unloading stuff...part of which was *10-and-1 rations*...one meal for ten guys or ten meals for one guy. Oh well...I know I got some and that...that tasted real good...and cigarettes, too. And then on the fourth day our doctor was walking from where we were down towards the beach and a Jap was laying on his belly on a raft and he shot him in the knee! And that's not life...that's

not...death (unintelligible)...but it was very painful, and so we evacuated him. And then we had all of our guns stacked up on the beach, so we had...couldn't do a thing about it...but we did have 105 millimeter howitzer that could...and he turned it around and aimed down and...the last time we saw that raft it was still going up! So at the end of the fourth day, we were relieved and went aboard an LST and had something to eat and a bed to sleep on; some dry clothes and the next morning we went back to the Hansford and up to (unintelligible)...and that's...went aboard ship. And about hour later we...flag went up on Iwo Jima. But I forgot to mention something. While we were going to Iwo Jima, we had a guy that had his face on a postage stamp...one of only four guys...four Marines ever to have that...and his name was Gunnery Sergeant John Basilone. He got his Medal of Honor at Guadalcanal and he came back to stay with his boys; there's a book about it. 10:30 on D-Day he got killed. And also we brought two or three other guys in to Iwo Jima from the 1st Battalion; 27th Regiment and that...received the medal of Honor also. So of the twenty-seven Medals of Honor at Iwo Jima...three of them could have come from...could have come to Iwo Jima on the Hansford. Uh, that was pretty good! So after Iwo Jima...and that was probably the four big days of our life...you know...in the Navy. We went...

Interviewer: How...did...when did the Hansford leave Iwo Jima?

Mr. Cranefield: Uh, the 28th I guess. We got to the 19th...and nine is 28, I guess. Okay, we had...we had...our ship was designated as...(unintelligible) problem...you know...try and repair them or...or take them off, one of the two. And then we

went to...to Guam and delivered them to an Army hospital and then we went down and...to Espiritu Santos...down on Guadalcanal and then back to Ulithi and we picked up...at...at Espiritu Santos...we picked up...(unintelligible) and 27th Division of the Army and took them to Okinawa. And we dropped them off and we were...we were kind of half way scheduled to go to that Ie Jima, but we didn't have to. And I was kind of glad because we hadn't gotten this other one out of our system yet. But...

Interviewer: What kind of duties did you as a corpsman have there on the Hansford at...when you'd gotten back on board the ship?

Mr. Cranefield: We had a...we evac...we brought in fourteen...fifteen hundred troops and all the gear and after that then we had officers quarters...our troop officers quarters right adjacent to the sick bay...and they were all...they were...we just...we took one of those great big long tables and put a sheet on it...and that's an operating table...we had lights already pre...pre-installed. So we had probably three or four operations going on at the same time. And what we did...now some people were...were...(unintelligible)...operating room technicians. I wasn't, but they were...and they were...and...but we...we had a job to do...we had arms and legs and stuff that we took down to the incinerator, yeah...I did a little of that. But...and we buried three Marines at sea. And aft...after...Ulithi then we went to Okinawa. And while we were there we had...we had air raids...constantly...you know. One night I remember we had a Betty flying aboard...uh, above us. And they...we had oh, eight hundred ships or something shooting at that...one airplane...never

did hit it, but we were shooting. And one of the guys that were in our...reunion...he was shooting a 20 millimeter gun and it...she exploded...it jammed or something...I don't know...anyway, he...he got hurt. And then after...after Okinawa we took some casualties back to Guam again. Then we went to Subic Bay in the Philippines and we...after...we went to liberty in Manila for a couple of days then we went to training battalions of troops a week and that went on for thirteen weeks or something like that...training for the invasion of Japan. And we were going to be assault troops for the invasion at Kyushu, Japan on the first day of November, 1945. And also...if we still were a unit, we would have been on the...the invasion of Tokyo area...in the 1st of March. Luckily we...got a bomb dropped in the meantime...or two of them. So...I...I remember one day they had an article in the paper, "Should we have bombed Japan?" Yeah, sure we should have...yeah...with atomic bombs...because it kept us...we had...I read a whole bunch of stuff on that and the estimates that we put out were 4-15 million Japanese would have died...which was like...better than a quarter of the population. And we were expecting a million casualties out of five million, so I don't know...it was...anyway it didn't happen. The day after the hostilities ceased, we picked up Rear Admiral John L. Hall to...he put his flag on our ship for...till the 15th of October. And while he...when he came aboard he was Commander of Amphibious Group 12. While he was aboard ship, he was promoted to...relieved Admiral Harry Hill and he was promoted to Commander of Amphibious Forces, 5th Fleet and eight days after he left our

ship he was promoted to...he took Admiral Turner's place and was Commander of Amphibious Forces of the Pacific. So...and because he was on our ship we came to Tokyo Bay and we were the first transport coming into Tokyo Bay. He was also the Tokyo Force Commander. So...we parked five hundred yards off the starboard bow of the Missouri while the ceremonies were taking place. I couldn't see them. I was on the main deck but some of the guys were up on the...up on the flag...flight deck or whatever...not the flight deck but the flag deck, I guess, and they could see it pretty good. They saw this fellow looked like...big top hat and they thought it was the Emperor, but it turned out to be...whoever...foreign minister or something like that. So...and we stayed there for quite awhile. We had a lot of people coming in and out...off our ship all the time. And so after...after...Admiral Hall left the ship...the next day we got orders to start Magic Carpet duty and we picked up thirteen hundred in crew...uh thirteen hundred troops and went to...to San Pedro, California. Then we went back to Japan and into China to take some people over to...pick a LST or deliver them, I guess...to China and then we went to Seattle for a second load...came back to Japan and then we got orders to...that Magic Carpet duty was over with, so we went to San Diego and then through the Panama Canal to Norfolk, Virginia...decommissioned. So then by that time we had just a skeleton crew going to Norfolk, Virginia. Then I went for leave to Seattle for a little while and then I finished my tour of duty in amphibious training base in...for...Coronado, California. And that took care of that.

Interviewer: So how many months were you in the...active duty in the Navy?

Mr. Cranefield: Three and a half...three and a third, I guess...three years and three months and seven days and twenty-eight hours (laughter).

Interviewer: Let me ask a few questions and get you to maybe remember...back to Iwo Jima. What do you remember about the flag raising when that occurred? Did...did you actually see the flag?

Mr. Cranefield: No, no. Okay we...we got off the LST after we stayed overnight just to rest up. We went back to the ship and the old man said, "Go ahead and lay...rest," because we hadn't had too much sleep...and just...just shut our eyes and they announced that the flag just went up...and that was the little flag. And...

Interviewer: Some people I've interviewed about this episode said that the noise...the people yelling on the beach was...just un...unbelievable.

Mr. Cranefield: I read that...but I...I didn't know about that.

Interviewer: A lot of ship's whistles were blown and things of that nature.

Mr. Cranefield: Incidentally...when I got out of the Navy...and...actually I worked at I (unintelligible) Box Company for awhile and then I came to California...and I'm looking for a job and I found one at the San Francisco News. Just...it was just a front office. And so they wanted some representatives in the San Francisco/Oakland newspaper...you know...which is their (unintelligible) and so I said, "Yeah, why not?" You know...so the day came that they were going to install a new president of the San Francisco/Oakland Guild and I happened to recognize who he was. So I says, "Would you like me to introduce you?" He says, "No, you can't!" Because the picture he took was

also taken by a guy named Campbell and...and he says, "I don't want to make him feel bad; he took the same pictures I did, but he took them for the Marine Corps and they died...you know...didn't get any recognition from them. His name was Joe Rosenthal. So I have a picture of him in my collection.

Interviewer: Oh my goodness!

Mr. Cranefield: ...who was there...and...

Interviewer: Yes, he took a very famous picture!

Mr. Cranefield: Yeah. Actually...there...there are a lot of arguments but there shouldn't have been any arguments at all, you know. First they put this little flag up...which is fine, but it was...you could hardly see it. In fact...I don't know how far we were out...but maybe two or three miles maybe...but you could see the flag blowing but it was a tiny little thing, you know...and then if you look at it a little while later...it get's triple the size or whatever...which helped...you know. But...

Interviewer: I think when he took the picture he had no idea the picture was going to be what it was.

Mr. Cranefield: He didn't even know...what picture they were talking about, yeah, yeah...very interesting.

Interviewer: What was life like aboard ship? What was the routine like when...when you were doing the Magic Carpet business?

Mr. Cranefield: Well first of all, we didn't have too awful many people; they cut that crew way...way down! It wasn't...wasn't a skeleton crew yet, but it got a lot better. We had...less to do. We still had the same captain. Our exec by that

time had been relieved and he went wherever he went...I don't know...and another exec came in. That was about the only major change there. Played a lot of pinochle...every...everybody thinks I'm a pro (laughter)...but lots of experience but...that's about it.

Interviewer: Sick call twice a day?

Mr. Cranefield: Naw...not...not too much. When we had troops aboard, we had they...they supplied the mess cooks; they supplied lots of the cooks. We had some cooks, too, but they did...they did a lot of work...you know...because there are millions of them doing nothing and they kind of liked it because it beat the boredom down...quite a bit. We didn't go to the...we went to the Panama Canal and we went...there's three locks there. And I started watching the first lock and I said, "That's interesting, but it's awful boring!" I went to sleep, and finally I had...when we started going through the second and third ones, It got better but...people pay good money to go through that now...funny!"
(laughter)

Interviewer: What was it like to cross the Equator?

Mr. Cranefield: Well I...I didn't hardly know how to swim and one other thing...first of all...they said, "Okay go up this...go up this...ladder." And we get out on the main deck, and when we got out on the main deck...and they started shooting water hoses at us...and we kind of moved...they kind of moved us around...you know...and we...we went through one area and the doctor said, "Now this'll keep you (unintelligible)...I don't know what he said, but he said something about making us feel better or something...it tasted awful! I don't

even know what it was, but it was nasty! And then we got...still blindfolded...we've been blindfolded the whole time...and so we get to this guy and...and they're talking about, "it's not too far down to the water," you know...like where we're at...the side of the ship...ready to go and so this guy says, he...he was asking all kinds of questions. He's talking to his buddy and he says, "I don't like his tone," or something like that you know. "Let's throw them over the side!" And...and they did...except I was in about a foot of water! I said, "I'm dead," you know; it was terrible! (laughter) And the night before...the week before it was the...the pollywogs and the sea...going after the chaw backs (spelling ?) and that's kind of nasty...but they said, "Okay...I...I remember your face and boy, they worked those guys over bad! Yeah that was...but...but we went to Tahiti...my wife and I went to Tahiti...much later than that and that's one of the things I took with me...my shellback card...just in case, but nothing happened...we...we were flying.

Interviewer: Yep, well there were lots of...kind of fun experiences intermixed with some of the...other things. Can you remember some humorous things that might have occurred?

Mr. Cranefield: Uh, just that...just that one...I told you when that...that...our ammo dump got hit...that was fun. And...he didn't think it was funny, but I did!

Interviewer: Yeah, yeah. Well I know that many men who experienced these...the trauma of the combat had a lot of bad troubles with dreams...bad dreams.

Mr. Cranefield: Oh yeah, it never affected me...except...well...the dreams didn't...I didn't have dreams but I...I just got out of the service and I...six

months...maybe...something like that...and I was going with this girl. We went to a 4th of July fireworks and...just as it started (explosion sounds)...like that...just exactly the same sound as an incoming mortar! And I'm scratching on the ground...trying to make a foxhole...before I realized that...what was happening. But that was too real...you know. That...that really wasn't funny. They thought it might have been funny but I didn't. (laughter) But other than that it didn't bother me, you know. I...I guess I was lucky that way. Now we had a president of our association that...that drove a LCM and he didn't take troops; he took jeeps and he took cargo and stuff like that, but he...and all the coxswains met with the captain at...just before the invasion of Iwo Jima...the night before and the captain said, "I don't care what else you do, you're going to follow this order to the letter or...or you're gonna wish you had of." And so he said, "When you start that run for the beach you're going to keep that line straight...all the way to the beach. I don't care if there's...if there's water that's crawling with people, you're still going to do it!" And so I guess he...I guess he could have just imagined running over people...or whatever. And when he got to the beach, then he has to drop the ramp and...if there's somebody down there, he's going to hit them. But...so that...that bothered him and...as the years go...went by he kept on...he kept getting worse and worse and worse. I talked to him one day for thirty...forty minutes and he says, "I don't know what to do." And I said, "I don't know either," you know...how to handle it. But that got...post traumatic...whatever...

Interviewer: ...Stress Syndrome.

Mr. Cranefield: Yeah, yeah, real bad.

Interviewer: We didn't know to call it that back then, but...that...that's what it was.

Mr. Cranefield: But...now it wasn't funny, but...but one of...the only time I really got scared aboard ship was...not have anything to do with wartime at all. We...our ship took a real...real...after we left Seattle we went back to Japan and we hit a bad storm; not a typhoon but...rough water. And the ship listed real bad...like I don't know what the number was, but it was getting kind...I was wondering if it was going to come back up...just once, but that was enough! But...but I never...I was a little too dumb to figure...if I was to do it now what I did then, I don't think I could...could do a very good job, but...we had...we had some people that were a little older...had been through invasions and they didn't handle it too good...you know. So...

Interviewer: Thinking back to Corps School...when you were in Corps School...what...what...how did you come to be part of...in the hospital corpsmen...did you take a test and they...assigned you to Corps School or did you volunteer?

Mr. Cranefield: No it had something to do with my name. We...we ...I got back from boot leave and a couple of days later I went over to...I looked on...I was on the list...didn't look at any other names but I saw mine. So it told you where to be at what time. So started calling and I said, "Yeah." And the guy that I joined the Navy...that was in my boot camp also was right behind me. His name was Davenport which was A, B, C, D or whatever...they just took three

hundred guy...in almost alphabetical order to San Diego. That's how you got your corpsmen...you know. And the training we got was...it couldn't have been much worse...you know. "Be sure and get your band-aids up right...this way," you know...not...not...didn't get much training. They didn't have much time...that's all.

Interviewer: When you went to...to the hospital...for further training...what did you do at the hospital?

Mr. Cranefield: What'd I do the first night?

Interviewer: Or there...yes, during that time at the hospital.

Mr. Cranefield: First night we got to the hospital...it was a Saturday and we got liberty till Monday morning. And so I didn't know even where to check in so I just...kept...I thought I was supposed to...when I went on duty...I'd check in, but that...that's a little late. I got put on report. So being that I was on report...then I had a little special duty just for a little while. And there was a Marine had gone through Guadalcanal...had gone to Tarawa and he was driving his wife's car in Oakland and hit the A-train...either head on or whatever and killed him...but he caved his chest in and I was on special watch for him until he died...you know. That was my first...thing. And then the other thing was...one of the things that I did was go down and get the chow every day. So I get to see a whole bunch of people. And this one guy I told you about...at...one...just before we went aboard ship...that had all these operations. I...I saw him a whole bunch; he was a very interesting guy to talk to...you know. And there was another guy in the same...same room or so.

He had a whole bunch of operations also. But they had...they had a whole hospital full of real bad looking guys...you know. Probably after Iwo Jima they had...a bunch of them came in there, too. I think we sent ours to...to Guam and then take boat loads or airplane loads and drop them off in Hawaii and...and maybe then from there to Oak...Oakland or something. But we had a lot of people in there. It was a busy, busy place!

Interviewer: Yep. Are there any other experiences that you can remember that you would like to share with us?

Mr. Cranefield: Can't think of any. You mean Navy?

Interviewer: Yes.

Mr. Cranefield: Not really. We...we were in the Philippines and...we...training for the invasion of Japan and...and (unintelligible) and Ilo Ilo and I don't know that we were in Ilo Ilo because that looks like a pretty good size city...and we were...we were in the country...and...and almost in the jungle. Anyway we ran into some of these natives and one of the...one of the guys was going to take us on a tour around there, you know...somebody asked for it...or whatever and so I am walking on this...I'm walking like this and they're walking down here and I says, "Hey, how come you guys are down there and I'm way up here?" He said, "What's here?" He says, "What do you want it to be up there?" And...and I says, it...they said that just...branches and stuff like that...but dirt built up more than it was over here. I says, "What's under it?" He says, "Anything you can think of...snakes; lizards; you name it." I says, "Good bye!" But...they were...they were good and they told us about

a...they...they had machetes...there wasn't many of them...two dozen or three dozen or something...not...not a big bunch and these Japanese patrols would come through and they would start...after the patrol went by then they would get the last guy and *swish*...lob his head of, you know. And then they'd work their way up to the front. And he said that this one day he...he's way towards the back and maybe one, two from the back and he swung...and it didn't...he cut him...not...he cut him right in the middle of the head...and he yelled like a...and then they had...they had a real mess on their hands! But all they had was...all they had was machetes and the Japs had all kinds of rifles, you know. But they didn't...they got them...before they got to shoot them. That was...we had one more thing...in the Philippines also. We...we made a lot of (unintelligible)...

Other person coming into room: You still here?

Interviewer: Yes, uh-huh. That's alright, we're just about finished. Come on in.

Mr. Cranefield: We...we made these landings and so when we came ashore...once we came ashore and dug a foxhole or whatever...and we're done...and we're waiting for the Marines to go through their routine which would take hours...and so we got kind of acquainted with the people...and we noticed these great big huge bumps all over them...anywhere...legs, arms, face, everything. They were just...filthy, you know...bad water...whatever. And so our doctor said, "Hey, we're going to be here again next Thursday"...or whatever, and he says, "if you bring your people down here, we can take care of this for you." And so, we not only had eight beach party corpsmen, but we had ship's

corpsmen also. And so we all came on the beach and knife and...and you hold your arm like this...like this...and it blows stuff clear over to that table...you know...under terrific pressure! And so after that...they...they had a luau for us and...real nice, you know. Later on...next...next landing...or one after that. They're pretty nice people...enjoyed them. They took a real beating! The Japanese hated the Filipino really bad and vice versa, you know. And I think today...it's not changed much.

Interviewer: Well thank you very much, Mr. Cranefield.

Mr. Cranefield: Okay.

Interviewer: We appreciate you taking the time to give us your story and we...will...I will make the copy of this for you and send it to you sometime in the next week.

Mr. Cranefield: Okay.

Interviewer: Are you...which address do I need to send it to?

Mr. Cranefield: Florida.

Interviewer: Florida, okay. Alright, we'll take care of that and I...I'll see to it. Thank you again and thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Cranefield: Okay, thank you.

(end of interview)

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