

The National Museum of the Pacific War
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)

Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Michael R. Jewett

15312243

0539990

1st Lt.

160th Infantry Regiment 40th Infantry Division

Infantry Unit Cannon Company

Colonel

428th Field Artillery

4160th USAR School

Interview of
October 7, 2005

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Medals Earned:
American Theater Service Medal
Asiatic Pacific Theater Service Medal
Victory Medal
Philippine Liberation Service Medal
Occupation Medal - Japan

Interviewed
by
John B. Tombaugh and Peg Van Meter

October 7, 2005

My name is John Tombaugh. Peg Van Meter and I interviewed this gentleman on October 7, 2005.

Mr. Tombaugh

Would you please state your name and address?

Mr. Jewett

Michael R. Jewett at 1405-2 Pembroke Circle, Goshen, Indiana 46526.

Mr. Tombaugh

What were your parents names?

Mr. Jewett

Robert and Olive (Scifert) Jewett.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you go to school?

Mr. Jewett

I attended kindergarten in Monticello, Indiana; first grade at Reynolds, Indiana and then back to Monticello and finished Junior High School. I then moved near to Lafayette, Indiana and attended Klondike High School and graduated in 1940.

Mr. Tombaugh

When is your birthday?

Mr. Jewett

I was born on August 14, 1922.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where were you on December 7, 1941?

Mr. Tombaugh

A buddy and I were in Indianapolis, Indiana. We heard of the attack on the car radio.

Mr. Tombaugh

What did you do after you graduated from High School?

Mr. Jewett

I was living at home helping my dad with the farm. Then in the fall I started attending Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. After my second year at Purdue, the war was on, they had a speeded up program. So, I went each semester to school and graduated a half-year ahead of my class. I graduated in August of 1943.

I was inducted into the service while still an ROTC cadet. I was inducted into the Army at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indianapolis, Indiana. Then came back to Purdue University and finished the last semester. We were housed in Cary Hall dormitories. We were inducted

into the service and brought back and finished school. I was twenty-one years old the day before I graduated from Purdue.

Mr. Tombaugh

Do you still keep in contact with your friends from college?

Mr. Jewett

Some of them, but mostly the ones that were in County Extension work.

Mr. Tombaugh

After you graduated from ROTC were you discharged as a private or a Lt? After completing OCS I received an honorabe discharge as an enlisted man at Fort Sill before I received my commission as an officer.

Mr. Jewett

Normally in years previous they received their commission at graduation. Since I had not had a summer camp, my first orders were to report to Fort Sill, Oklahoma and go through the OCS course.

Mr. Tombaugh

When was that?

Mr. Jewett

I was there from September 1943 to January 5, 1944. Then we were commissioned at Fort Sill.

Mr. Tombaugh

You started to see the war wind down?

Mr. Jewett

It was still in Europe, and the Pacific was still very active

Mr. Tombaugh

After you did your OCS training what was your job assignment?

Mr. Jewett

The first assignment was to go to Fort Brag, North Carolina to the replacement training center as an instructor and for basic officer training. About that time they needed more Lt.'s in the line in Europe. I was sent to Fort Benning to become an infantry officer, which I was through out my active duty.

Mr. Tombaugh

Have you kept in contact with any army buddies?

Mr. Jewett

Well, the only one I have been a close buddy to is a fellow by the name of James Jackson. He was from Alabama. He was sent to Fort Sill, Oklahoma the same time as I was. We had the same orders when we moved overseas. We got reacquainted late in our life. He has now

passed on.

Mr. Tombaugh

Where did you first ship out to?

Mr. Jewett

The SS Cape Nettigh. This was previously owned before the war by the United Fruit Company. It wasn't a very large ship, we just loafed around on the deck. The officers stayed in the infirmary.

On the trip over we thought the Japanese were trying to locate us. We pulled into Hawaii and Eniwetok to lay over; then we went on to Leyte in the Philippines. It took almost a month to make the trip. We never did see the Japs but around Leyte they were there and some ships got attacked.

Mr. Tombaugh

What were conditions like aboard ship?

Mr. Tombaugh

Well, you didn't have much room to do anything and it was hot; it was a disagreeable trip. But coming home was a different story. It was a new transport and we came back to Seattle. The name of the ship was the Marine Swallow. I got home in June of 1946.

Mr. Tombaugh

While in Manila and the Philippines you could still see the destruction of war?

Mr. Jewett

Actually, I was assigned to the 40th Infantry Division that was on Panay, which was another island. I never did see Manila. From Panay I went to Korea. There was considerable damage on Panay. None in Korea as the Japanese had occupied Korea.

Mr. Tombaugh

While there on the island what was the food like?

Mr. Jewett

Typical army chow, really pretty good.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you have any special assignments while on Panay?

Mr. Jewett

When I joined the 160th Regiment I was assigned to the Cannon Company. Each Regiment of the Division had a Cannon Company, which was right in the Regiment; so the Regimental Commander could call in artillery directly. The unit I was in was self-propelled, we had six M 6's.

Mr. Tombaugh

Was that the M7 Priest?

Mr. Jewett

No. I believe they were M6's, it was 105mm self-propelled. It was a good weapon for its day.

Mr. Tombaugh

Anything you would like to tell while there?

Mr. Jewett

The war was over as our Air Force had dropped the bombs. The 40th Division was in training for the invasion of Japan. Operation Olympia. When they dropped the bomb that was canceled, so they shipped us to Korea. I became part of the military government unit. While there I was transferred to the military government units in Korea. Since I had agricultural training I was assigned agriculture officer for these units. We distributed rice which came from the captured warehouses of the Japanese. The people were hungry. We provided them with what food they needed.

When we first got there the 40th Division's job was that of processing the POW's, putting them on boats and shipping them out from Pusan, Korea. The Japanese units were coming in and we had to see that they were disarmed. You did the best you could in checking for leaders that would be on the list to hold. You didn't see many high ranking officers coming in, it was usually the small unit officers. One Lt. came in and had his sword and didn't want to give it up to an enlisted man. He wanted an officer to accept his sword. I accommodated him.

I lost one foot locker. It had all my clothes in it at the replacement depot when I went to Panay. I got orders to go with the 40th Division and the foot locker was to go also, but it never arrived.

Mr. Tombaugh

What was your sleeping conditions like at Pusan?

Mr. Jewett

My Company was billeted in a former Japanese Army barracks.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you have wood floors?

Mr. Jewett

Partially, about half was built up with wood. The barracks were not insulated.

Mr. Tombaugh

Was there fighting in your area?

Mr. Jewett

No. When I got on Panay the old officers had been through most of those campaigns and they were looking to go home. I was assigned as Company Commander. They did move with us to Korea. We spent several months processing Japanese and processing the Koreans in. The

Koreans had been conscripted by the Japanese and were doing forced labor for the Japanese. They had then come back by boat to Pusan from China then proceeded on north. There were about as many Koreans as Japanese soldiers as I recall.

Mr. Tombaugh

By the time you got to be Company Commander there was nobody left of the original company?

Mr. Jewett

Just a few were left as they didn't have enough points to go home. I was in the same situation.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you came home from Korea what was America like compared to when you left?

Mr. Jewett

When I left I had just a graduate from college. I got married after I received my commission in January, 1944.

I came home late compared to the other veterans. I tried to find a job. I interviewed for the V-8 Company and didn't want that, so I went back to Purdue University at Lafayette, Indiana. I then accepted a position as an assistant County Agent.

I was a 1st Lt. in the reserves and then was promoted to a Capt. at Lafayette with the 303rd Anti-Aircraft Group and later in units in Fort Wayne I was the Battalion Commander. I became Colonel at 428th Group Headquarters in South Bend, Indiana and was the Commandant at the 4169th US Army School at Kingsbury.

Mr. Tombaugh

When you were married?

Mr. Jewett

I was married first in January of 1944 to Juanita Rowe. Then I married Barbara Swihart on June 10, 1973.

Mr. Tombaugh

Children?

Mr. Jewett

Two daughters, Pamela, and Rebecca who is now deceased. Barbaras children are Bruce, Randall, Jack and Dawn.

Mr. Tombaugh

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. Jewett

I don't recall every attending any USO programs. While on Panay, there were movies available most nights.

Mr. Tombaugh

When did you retire as County Agent?

Mr. Jewett

In September, 1982.

Mr. Tombaugh

What would you tell young people of your experiences?

Mr. Jewett

I was proud to have served my country for 32 years in active and reserve duty. In the service we learned discipline and it's something we do not have much of today.

Mr. Tombaugh

When and where did you get discharged from?

Mr. Jewett

June 16, 1946 at Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

-END-

15 hours