

*National Museum of the Pacific War*

*Nimitz Education and Research Center*

*Fredericksburg, Texas*

Interview with

**Mr. Lester M. “Don” Wineland**

Date of Interview: March 29, 2013

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### **Fredericksburg, Texas**

#### **Interview with Mr. Lester M. "Don" Wineland**

Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler; today is March the 29<sup>th</sup>, 2013. I am at...in Fredericksburg, Texas at the National Museum of the Pacific War, and I am interviewing Mr. Lester M. Wineland; he goes by Don. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So, I want to start by thanking you, Don, for spending the time today to share your experiences with us, and I'd like to get started by having you give us...introduce yourself; give us your full name and date and place of birth, and we'll take it from there.

Mr. Wineland: Okay, (throat clearing) Lester M. Wineland is my name and I go by Don. I've had many other names like Mickey and Les and so forth, but it ended up Don long, long time ago. I was born in Curryville, Pennsylvania in...1926. As a matter of fact, June 26, '26.

Ed Metzler: 6/26/26?

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: There must be some significance to that.

Mr. Wineland: Yes (laughter).

Ed Metzler: I don't know what it is (laughter)!

Mr. Wineland: I suppose so. This is a very, very tiny, small town and still exists in Pennsylvania with a population probably...thirty or forty, and it's a farm country, so I did an awful lot of farm work as a kid.

Ed Metzler: Now, so your dad was a farmer?

Mr. Wineland: No, he was sort of a jack of all trades, but he worked in the farming industry from...for example, he had...chop mills, portable ones, and...uh, and I worked on a farm and...during the...season of thrashing and so forth.

Ed Metzler: So, where did you live? Did you live in town or out on the farms or what?

Mr. Wineland: In Curryville in a house...in Curryville, not on a farm.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: But...but their...kids worked in the farms, on the farms, and in the area.

Ed Metzler: Kids actually worked...back then (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: Actually worked yeah, yeah. I...started very early driving vehicles. My grandfather was a...International Harvester dealer and I drove a farmall, I guess, when I was in sixth grade, you know (chuckles). So, it started very early.

Ed Metzler: Now, did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Wineland: I had one sister...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...that's somewhat younger than I am.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And...she's still alive and doing fine.

Ed Metzler: Great!

Mr. Wineland: Uh, we had a...uh, high school called Morrison Cove High.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And a grade school...I might start with the grade school which was...

Ed Metzler: Sure!

Mr. Wineland: ...only a two-room school. We went from the, let's see, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth grade in one room, and I (unintelligible) goes back that far.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, we have a lot of those...little one and two room school houses spread around the county here.

Mr. Wineland: Is that right?

Ed Metzler: And the consolidated them all...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...back in the '40 and '50s and into a single school district, but...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah. And I went to...to high school and...get started on...what I'm going to talk about is when I...graduated from high school.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, now what year did you graduate from high school?

Mr. Wineland: 1944.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so let's go back to '41 which means you were like...fifteen years old.

Mr. Wineland: First year in high school, I think.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, so you were a freshman, I guess, or maybe it was sophomore, depends...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...on whether you had the three- or four-year high school program.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah...right, right.

Ed Metzler: And that's where you were when the war started then.

Mr. Wineland: That's...

Ed Metzler: You were a freshman or a sophomore in high school.

Mr. Wineland: that's right.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me what you remember about that fateful day when the war started.

Mr. Wineland: I'll never forget it. I was on a school bus going to...to school, and I remember somebody saying that the Japanese bombed Hawaii, and I had no idea where Hawaii or...I'm sorry, Pearl Harbor. I had no idea where Pearl Harbor was.

Ed Metzler: Most people didn't.

Mr. Wineland: No? Yeah. Uhm...

Ed Metzler: Now that was on a Monday you were going to school, is that right? Because the...the bombing actually occurred on Sunday, but you may not have known about it till Monday.

Mr. Wineland: I didn't, I'm sure I didn't.

Ed Metzler: Isn't that something!

Mr. Wineland: Uh, and of course, I was...probably didn't hear the radio. If we would have, we'd of been listening to Lowell Thomas or...Amos and Andy...

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: ...or something like that, you know (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Right, Amos and Andy; I'd forgotten about that (laughter), that's...

Mr. Wineland: Uhm, and that's all I remember really about it. I...uh, I knew it was...a...disastrous, but what...I didn't know the extent of it, of course.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well, I did...did things just change around the house and around town and everything after that happened or what?

Mr. Wineland: No.

Ed Metzler: Tell me if...

Mr. Wineland: No, the only thing I remember...even...probably during the high school period was...a friend of mine joined the Army...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...after he graduated from high school; I was still going to high school. And...during that time, he was killed, and that is about the only thing that really stuck in my mind other than the normal discussion everybody had about war.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: But...it wasn't...the top of my mind at all.

Ed Metzler: Right, well, you know, when you're fifteen, sixteen-year-old kid, if it's...not directly impacting you, it's probably not something you focus on.

Mr. Wineland: That's right.

Ed Metzler: Well, what about...things like rationing and...that kind of stuff which came in fairly early on as I remember. You couldn't get tires; you couldn't do this; you couldn't do that.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, if...if I remember right, it didn't bother our community very much at all. I can't remember...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...any instance where we were...uh, subject to rationing.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. Well, I know that...agricultural communities got a fairly high priority on things like fuel and stuff...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...because they needed the food; they wanted that...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...that food.

Mr. Wineland: And my granddad was also a...a car dealer, a DeSoto Plymouth car dealer, so we were pretty much...free from any of that stuff really.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and you didn't have any older siblings that...had gotten sucked into the war ahead of you.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, no, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So...so, you went ahead and graduated. Did you say in '44?

Mr. Wineland: In '44.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and what happened then, what did you do?

Mr. Wineland: I joined the Navy, let's see, and I was seventeen, so I had to get my parents' permission.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And on the...

Ed Metzler: Why the Navy?

Mr. Wineland: ...I don't know exactly why. I certainly didn't have any exposure to ships at all or the ocean by the way.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you're pretty landlocked in Pennsylvania as I remember (chuckles).

Mr. Wineland: But...but for some reason I...didn't feel like I wanted to go in the Army. And I guess I didn't think too much about the Marines. Anyway, another thing, three of my buddies were going to join the Navy...

Ed Metzler: That makes a difference, too, yeah.

Mr. Wineland: ...and I think...that had an influence on me.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. But I mean, you didn't get drafted; you decided to volunteer...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, right.

Ed Metzler: ...and why did you decide to do that?

Mr. Wineland: Because I knew I was going to get drafted, I think that's why.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), and you knew you (unintelligible) get you.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, were your parents reluctant to sign off on you going and...

Mr. Wineland: It...didn't seem to me that they were. I didn't have any kind of an argument at all about the thing.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: I think they also realized that it was...inevitable, one way or the other...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Wineland: ...at...that...that time.

Ed Metzler: So, where did you go to...enlist?

Mr. Wineland: I think in a town about twenty-five miles...called Altoona, Pennsylvania.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible), yeah.

Mr. Wineland: And I have recalled...

Ed Metzler: Did you go with your buddies or just...

Mr. Wineland: Yes, we did...all went together.

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Wineland: About four...four of us. And, let's see, three...of us...three of the guys went to a different...uh, what was it called?

Ed Metzler: Boot camp type thing?

Mr. Wineland: Boot camp, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Boot camp.

Ed Metzler: Basic training, I think is the official word, yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Navy was boot camp, but anyway, I went to...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: ...Sampson.

Ed Metzler: Where's that?

Mr. Wineland: New York.

Ed Metzler: Upstate New York?

Mr. Wineland: Yes, yep.

Ed Metzler: And where did they go, do you remember?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, no, I'm not sure where they went.

Ed Metzler: So, you kind of lose tr...loose touch with them for a while...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, yes.

Ed Metzler: ...'cause they kind of went their way and you went yours?

Mr. Wineland: Yeah. I can't...I can't really remember too much. It could have been that they went to the same boot camp, but they were not in the same company...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Wineland: ...or barracks that I was.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Wineland: Reason I say that is that...when we got to...uh, out of boot camp, we went to OGU...a (unintelligible) unit, and the four of us went on the same train. I just remembered that.

Ed Metzler: Oh...

Mr. Wineland: So, they must have...been at Sampson, too.

Ed Metzler: Okay. OGU?

Mr. Wineland: And...I didn't see them the whole time I was there.

Ed Metzler: Tell me what OGU is.

Mr. Wineland: Outgoing unit.

Ed Metzler: Ah! Okay.

Mr. Wineland: And we took a train and went to...uh, California. Trying to think...this was close to Sacramento.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And...they...yeah.

Ed Metzler: What was boot camp like for you? Is it...

Mr. Wineland: It was wonderful!

Ed Metzler: ...easy breezy or...

Mr. Wineland: Oh yeah, it was the best time I had in my life.

Ed Metzler: Really?! Tell me about that.

Mr. Wineland: When I was...in high school and even in grade school, I worked hard. I run...I drove a milk truck...which is a big truck that went around and...picked up ten gallon cans of milk and took...from the farmers and took it into the creamery. And that was a job I had from...say five o'clock till seven, and then I went to school.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle)

Mr. Wineland: So, getting up early was no...and...and my dad...had this...two portable chop mills and on Saturday I worked...on the chop mill with my dad and he would take off very early. So, it was a lot of work. We did every kind of work. I...remember tearing down a diesel with my dad and rebuilding the whole thing from scratch because what...it was a cylinder that went out on...one of the diesels. And I got uh,...my dad, like I said, was a jack of all trades, so...I knew how to paint; I knew how to cut wood and by the time I graduated from high school, I...I really was hard...let's say this, I was very strong.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Okay?

Ed Metzler: So, you were in shape.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, but in shape.

Ed Metzler: And you were...you were used to hard work.

Mr. Wineland: So, in...in boot camp, we were able to sleep in, I think, until five thirty, something like that.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Wineland: And then...what...we had the grinder which was a round circle that we used to have to run...in boot camp...just to get fit. And this, to me, that was just a breeze, so I loved boot camp.

Ed Metzler: But what about the city boys? It tore them up, didn't it?

Mr. Wineland: I...I put on weight in boot camp.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Wineland: Honestly, I did. So, I enjoyed it.

Ed Metzler: They fed you three squares a day...and...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned! So, but you saw all kinds of folks in the boot camp...that...met all kinds of people, I guess.

Mr. Wineland: And...some older...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...that...had hard times, yeah.

Ed Metzler: That's right because you're...you're just seventeen, at this point...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, right.

Ed Metzler: ...aren't you?

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Wineland: Matter of fact, I had my...eighteenth birthday in boot camp.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Wineland: So, I was there...seventeen days, I think, before my eighteenth birthday.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Wineland: I remember that pretty vividly.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So, then you ended up in California. Now, that is one...long train ride away for a...for a...

Mr. Wineland: Troop...troop train.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Open windows in the car, I remember that, you know?

Ed Metzler: What time of year was it, do you remember? Was it spring or what?

Mr. Wineland: It had to be summer.

Ed Metzler: It was...yeah (chuckle)...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, because it's now...June, July...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...maybe August.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: I think it is August. Uhm, in...in OGU, outgoing camp, OGU camp, I don't know what was it called? Can't remember, but it was right...prior before anybody is shipped overseas.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And I stayed there for...I can't remember. Uh, maybe a couple of weeks to...maybe then a month, I'm not sure.

Ed Metzler: So, you've never been to California?

Mr. Wineland: No.

Ed Metzler: California is different.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: What was your...reaction to it?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, where we were was a dried up...area with big cracks in the ground where it hadn't rained for...months and months; dried up, and that's the one thing I remember.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Wineland: Very vividly. And the other thing I remember...which is very strange...is there was a highway close by, and this was one...major highway, and I saw tractor trailers with two trailers. I'd never seen that in my life.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible), double...double trailers.

Mr. Wineland: Just...amazed me! We got separated now, the four guys. They went to San Diego, and I went to a destroyer.

Ed Metzler: You went to...?

Mr. Wineland: A destroyer.

Ed Metzler: You...okay, you went straight to the destroyer.

Mr. Wineland: And in San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: Okay, and so tell me about this ship that you went to.

Mr. Wineland: I really didn't know anything about the ship at all, and I had some interesting experiences. Uhm, they're humorous now, at the time they were very serious. Uh, the first thing that happened to me as I got guard duty...what they called on the fantail which was sort of in the back of the ship.

Ed Metzler: Now, this is the USS Pringle?

Mr. Wineland: Yes. Pier 77, if I remember right, Pier 77 I think in San Francisco. Uhm, we had...lines hooked up to the...the shore and also a platform...gang plank, and right there was where I had duty from, I believe, eight to twelve...or maybe it was twelve to four. I think it was twelve to four, I'm not sure. When I got there, there was a gun belt and rifle set, so, it was very strange, for me, okay, in that instance. But I put the gun belt on and...I held the rifle and...well, what was going on...was guys going back and forth on this line, and they had been doing that before and I saw them doing it. Well, apparently, they caught them while I was on duty and I got a Captain's Mast which is now...like...being...convicted in a jury; it was like having a penalty, a serious penalty.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Wineland: I remember the...

Ed Metzler: I mean, you were just fresh, young, barely...aboard ship then.

Mr. Wineland: I...I had...first...first got aboard ship; I didn't have...I had just walked...first...the first time I had duty, and the Captain now, is the one that has the Captain's Mast...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...and I remember him saying to me, "I can see we're going to have trouble." And I remember it just so vividly. Well anyway, enough of that...we went...

Ed Metzler: Well, what was your reaction to that? I mean...

Mr. Wineland: Scared to death.

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Wineland: I mean, just...oh! Well we left...San Francisco for Hawaii, okay? And...I had duty in the front gun mount. This is now under the...under the guns where all the ammunition is stored, okay?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: It's a round, circular...thing, and...all you do is sit in there; can't see out, okay? And I remember buying a can of Planters Peanuts and a book. And I went in and sat down and...we took off and about...I'm guessing two hours I started to get sick.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle)

Mr. Wineland: Okay? And...uh, I mentioned to the guys I was getting sea sick, so I put the can down and the book and thinking I'll go throw up and come back when it's over. I walked out, now it's in the front gun mount, so you...as you go back alongside of the ship you had to go through a door, hatch, and you had to undo the locks and so forth and...on the way back I'm going to my bunk. There was...hot air coming up from the bottom and I could feel that and I sat down there and all night I threw up...all night long I threw up. And finally come...I guess close to daybreak, I found my bunk and...the bunk has a tarpolean, uh, that's not the right word...linoleum-type thing to keep he moisture out; it covers the bunk, and of course, I weighted probably...maybe a hundred and ten pounds...something like that.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Wineland: I crawled in there and pulled that thing up over my head. Well, shit! They're looking for me now, and...everybody in the gun mount think I fell overboard.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Wineland: So, they're out there going like this...

Ed Metzler: Oh no!

Mr. Wineland: ...(unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: All because you're missing?

Mr. Wineland: And I finally had to pee so bad, I got up, and then they said, “Yeah, here he is!” Second Captain’s Mast I had. Okay. And I remember the Captain saying, “I told you we were going to have trouble with you.” (laughter) But this...a humorous story.

Ed Metzler: Hell of a start, isn’t it?!

Mr. Wineland: Isn’t it? (laughter)

Ed Metzler: To your naval career! (laughter)

Mr. Wineland: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: At this point, you must be wondering if you’re...

Mr. Wineland: Oh, anyway, I was sea sick every day of my life...aboard ship.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Wineland: Every day...every...we pulled into Hawaii, for example, and we had a four-hour leave meaning you get off the ship. I come back on...and it was tied up and I got sea sick when it was tied up.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Wineland: And I...you know, back then they give you a bucket...

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Wineland: ...nothing...nothing else.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: You know, nothing else.

Ed Metzler: You know, and it’s funny, there’s a huge...variability in how people respond to being...at sea. Some people it never bothers them at all.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Some people never get over it.

Mr. Wineland: I know.

Ed Metzler: You sound like one of the latter...

Mr. Wineland: I mean sick...have you ever been sea sick?

Ed Metzler: I have.

Mr. Wineland: You know how bad it is.

Ed Metzler: I do (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: Yes, sure; it's terrible. I would...go down and have breakfast and come up and throw up and go back and finish the breakfast. I mean, almost every meal.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Wineland: But there's nothing...can do about it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: You think you're...

Ed Metzler: Sometimes they transfer you off the...off the ship when...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, well they didn't. I think after a while, I sort of got used to it, but I was still sick, but I didn't feel like jumping overboard like...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you used to being sick (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: Yeah (laughter), that's the answer.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), boy! Oh my goodness!

Mr. Wineland: Yeah. Uh...

Ed Metzler: So, anyhow, the Pringle went to...Hawaii, and...what...just provisions or did she join a...a...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, I think probably...

Ed Metzler: ...task force or what?

Mr. Wineland: ...supplies...maybe.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And then we headed for the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Uhm...

Ed Metzler: So, this is getting what...into...fall of...

Mr. Wineland: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: ...'44?

Mr. Wineland: Uh hum, right. And the fighting is going on the Philippines, okay?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: On the way over...and it's a pretty long trip, I remember us stopping at several islands. Uh,...

Ed Metzler: Now, was the ship alone or was she with other...

Mr. Wineland: No, we were by ourselves.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: Okay. One of the islands was called Mog Mog.

Ed Metzler: I've heard of Mog Mog.

Mr. Wineland: I've...I had to look it up; I can't find it any place in the Pacific, but maybe it's discontinued as a...an island.

Ed Metzler: Well, they may have changed the name or something.

Mr. Wineland: Very small.

Ed Metzler: But Mog Mog was where they did a lot of...R&R or...?

Mr. Wineland: That's why we stopped; we had...a mound bigger than that building there of sawdust and it had beer in there.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Wineland: To keep it cool.

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter), right.

Mr. Wineland: And each...of us were allowed, I think, two beers...something like that, and that's all we needed when we opened it, you know, the...the foam wouldn't...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you lose about half of it before you could get it to your mouth (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, but you put your mouth over it right away.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: A lot of experiences on that.

Ed Metzler: Now I've heard that they had softball fields and...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...you know, football fields and all kinds of recreation and stuff like that.

Mr. Wineland: Uh, I don't remember that.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: I...some things I remember which are very strange. Uh, somebody...made a bet that we couldn't climb a palm tree and come down with a palm, uh, with a...coconut. So, two of us decided we would make this bet. And you shimmied up, but as the tree came back this way, it's impossible. And what happened is that we ended up sliding down, both of us, and we had, you know, skin take...here, here and here, we had to have tetanus shots.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my gosh.

Mr. Wineland: And the third guy who was making the bet, got up with his hands and the feet and went clear up and got the coconut; he knew how to do it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Wineland: Now...

Ed Metzler: You knew afterwards, but you...

Mr. Wineland: I think it was a couple of dollars we bet him, and so...that I remember.

Ed Metzler: Plus, you bled a little bit, too, I guess (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Wineland: Strange how things you remember.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it is.

Mr. Wineland: Now I...we stopped at several other islands but I can't remember anything important at this point in time.

Ed Metzler: Now, the Pringle itself, she is a Fletcher class...

Mr. Wineland: Yes, right.

Ed Metzler: ...I think.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, she's got what...the single...five, two...single turret five-inchers at the front...

Mr. Wineland: And two in the back.

Ed Metzler: ...and two in the back.

Mr. Wineland: And torpedoes in the back.

Ed Metzler: Right, right, and I guess twenty- and forty-millimeter AA and that kind of stuff.

Mr. Wineland: Forty millimeter.

Ed Metzler: Just forties.

Mr. Wineland: 'Cause I was the...well, getting back to...the story, it's a little bit later on, uhm, I was a range finder on that gun.

Ed Metzler: Ah! Okay.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, okay. This was during...this was...during general quarters.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: G...GQ.

Ed Metzler: And what was your normal station without general quarters?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, Radarman. They tried me out in several different things, and first of all, they took me up to the bridge and handed me the wheel and told me to steer a course. And guess what happened? It varied, so they said, "No, that's not good for you." So, ended up as a Radarman. And the basis of my entire story happens to be that decision; somebody put me onto Radarman. Radars were...a round thing, about so big.

Ed Metzler: Sort of like...two and a half feet in diameter?

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, and the thing got around like this in front of you.

Ed Metzler: So, it's a...a big screen then, huh?

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And you're only allowed to be on it for...it runs in my mind a half hour, and you had to get off of it for a half hour.

Ed Metzler: Why?

Mr. Wineland: I assume because of the radiation.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Wineland: But that's...now, back then that's what they figured that you should do. And a good part about that is (throat clearing) when you're off the radar then you're in an...area called...I think it's CIC...or ICI, but...it's the...Internal Control Center.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Maybe ICC, something like that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Okay? And in there is where...uh, the...the most of the...uh, officers duty was...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...in navigating and...doing everything except, you know, what was going on on the bridge telling him what to do as far as directions and things like that.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Wineland: So, I got to meet these people, and...I might be ahead of my story a little bit, but anyway, one of them...was a First Lieutenant of this ship by the name of Stanley Landeau (sp?). As far as I know, he's still alive, not sure about that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: But anyway, he was a Jewish fellow; I happen to be Protestant...which didn't make any difference really at that time because my three buddies on the ship...one was Catholic and one was Jewish and I was the Gentile.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Wineland: And we were very close...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...all three of us. Anyway, (throat clearing) this Jewish Lieutenant was a very, very smart man, and he was small...probably only about...five foot ten, and maybe a hundred and twenty-five, but very, very smart, very intelligent, and for some odd reason, he took me under his wing.

Ed Metzler: Where was he from originally, do you know?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, yes, he is...his parents uh, owned a...(pause)...hotel in Atlantic City.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), in New Jersey, okay.

Mr. Wineland: I remember that because I went to see...I went to the hotel afterwards and asked for him.

Ed Metzler: Huh!

Mr. Wineland: And he had been a CPA man in Chicago or tax man in Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum (laughter).

Mr. Wineland: But I never did get to see him.

Ed Metzler: So, he took you under his wing; why do you figure he did that?

Mr. Wineland: I'm not sure except we both had...a...a...what...hankering for...mathematics.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And I don't know how we started on that; maybe it was with a game or something, okay?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Uh, but we talked about everything during that half hour, and...we got into some music. I had been playing a clarinet in high school and things like that. But it always seemed like...when he was on duty and when I was on duty, we always got together and talked. And I'm still again, kid, okay? Again, important...in my, you know, estimation. And like I say...next...okay, we did...think we sunk a sub.

Ed Metzler: Well, let...let's...let me go back...

Mr. Wineland: Okay, okay.

Ed Metzler: ...and you left Hawaii and you were headed for the Philippines.

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: Now, tell me...let's just kind of chronologically work...

Mr. Wineland: Oh okay.

Ed Metzler: ...our way (unintelligible).

Mr. Wineland: Uh, as...as we're entering the Philippines, I think we had...an alert with a sub, and I think we...put depth charges down and I...believe that the ship was...given the...privilege of saying that they sunk the...the submarine.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: But I'm not sure about that. But anyway, we had...I think the first thing we did was went to Leyte Gulf.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And...

Ed Metzler: Well, that was...that was hot and heavy there in October of...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...'44.

Mr. Wineland: Now, this now is...uh, more...being with battleship and mother destroyers and so forth. We...I can't remember really, but we had three battles that I was in.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Leyte Gulf is one, and then...Mindanao is another island.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Now, I have to skip a little bit, but while we were in Mindanao, I think we got hit with a kamikaze.

Ed Metzler: Is it Mindanao?

Mr. Wineland: I think that's right.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Wineland: And then there was one of the islands up north in the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: Right. So, after the submarine event, I mean, that was...(unintelligible) that made everybody feel kind of good, huh?

Mr. Wineland: Well, I didn't know anything about that really at the time.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause you're radar guy.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, now...but...

Ed Metzler: ...not sonar.

Mr. Wineland: ...but apparently the depth...depth charges were dropped and then we kept on sailing, you know? And I think that the...honor came later on that somebody said that happened; I'm not sure about that, okay?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Okay.

Ed Metzler: But you're in route to the Leyte landings is...were you...did you...

Mr. Wineland: No, we went...past that now.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: I think Leyte was the first...isn't it the...the lowerest...gulf?

Ed Metzler: Well, it's...it's furthest east and kind of southeast of Luzon.

Mr. Wineland: Okay. And then Luzon is up north.

Ed Metzler: The big major island where Manila is and everything, yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Okay, well then, one of those islands up north is where we got hit with a kamikaze.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Again now, I'm on a...range finder for forty millimeter on...the rear stack, if I remember right. Anyway, the forty millimeters he...here and the range finder's right above it, and right there is the five-inch mount.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: Okay, and that's where the plane hit.

Ed Metzler: Wow! Right next door to you, huh?

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, as a matter of fact, I still have a piece of airplane with some Japanese writing on it.

Ed Metzler: Is that right?!

Mr. Wineland: Now, it bent...bent the, uh, what do you think, I'm trying to think of the word...clear around and there was a shell in there...which became very dangerous.

Ed Metzler: So, the...so the five-inch mount is...bent around?

Mr. Wineland: Yes, it just...the...the...

Ed Metzler: Barrel.

Mr. Wineland: ...barrel, yeah. (Cough), excuse me, but however, the...the whole...the whole gun is destroyed, and all those guys inside, of course, were...caught fire. Oh, it was just...it was terrible! And I saw them streaming out, you know? And one guy was totally burned all over. Anyway...

Ed Metzler: That sticks in your mind for a while, doesn't it?

Mr. Wineland: Yeah. Oh, I have to say this...that...I was so young and I think now so stupid I...I really didn't really realize the seriousness of the whole thing. I...I...I can't say anything more than that...really. I was scared. I remember ducking down, uhm, and...and I remember all the casualties and so forth, but...uh, again, I just don't think I...really knew what the hell was happening. Anyway...

Ed Metzler: Did...did you...anticipate...ahead of time seeing the aircraft coming into to...or was it just kind of a sur...you know...

Mr. Wineland: Oh, it was...

Ed Metzler: ...or did you get blindsided on it?

Mr. Wineland: ...it was clear, yeah. We didn't...I didn't know that was coming in. Apparently, they did because we were shooting at it.

Ed Metzler: Sure.

Mr. Wineland: And I remember...doing some range differences, but it wasn't necessarily for that...particular plane, if I remember right.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about range finding; how did that work on these forties?

Mr. Wineland: When you at...it explodes at different places.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Okay, so you can set it...where a plane is if you can...you guess where it is, but still (unintelligible) explode on the other side or even short, so you try to range it...so that it explodes close to where the plane is.

Ed Metzler: And how do you adjust the range?

Mr. Wineland: It was just a knob that changed.

Ed Metzler: On the...?

Mr. Wineland: Above the...the...forty-millimeter gun.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: I don't remember the details...at all.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Uhm, again, the only time that I can remember...firing that gun was then even though we had been in those battles.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Okay, so I didn't use it very often...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...that I remember, okay?

Ed Metzler: So, how many people on the crew for a forty millimeter? You got loaders, you got...aimers, you got...range finders, you got...uh...?

Mr. Wineland: I...I can't tell you that 'cause they were down below and there was only two of us above. They...we couldn't even...hardly see the gun. You could if you looked over, you know, it was there.

Ed Metzler: So, you and...

Mr. Wineland: Somebody else.

Ed Metzler: ...and that somebody else was doing what?

Mr. Wineland: I believe trying to find out what the range was...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: ...and then it was set.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: And all I did was...fire it. What I can remember is...

Ed Metzler: Sure!

Mr. Wineland: ...setting it, okay? The details are...very fuzzy (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: And it happened so fast...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, right.

Ed Metzler: ...it's not like you were focusing on all this...

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: ...you're just kind of...

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: ...knee-jerk reaction, I guess.

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: So, what happened after the kamikaze...hit your ship?

Mr. Wineland: Okay, we were heading...down to...Australia to get repaired.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me where the...where you were hit? This is up some...

Mr. Wineland: Well, I think it was...above Luzon, I'm just not sure.

Ed Metzler: Okay, but it was during the Philippines Campaign?

Mr. Wineland: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Maybe close to Lingayan Gulf or something like that up there? Does that ring a bell?

Mr. Wineland: I did...no.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: But I'm not sure.

Ed Metzler: Were you with other ships or was she solo?

Mr. Wineland: Oh yeah, it was with ships (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, it was a Task Force, yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, yep.

Ed Metzler: And was it just destroyers or did you have battleships or...?

Mr. Wineland: There was battleships around, yeah. It was...it was a lot of people, I mean a lot of ships around...really. In fact...

Ed Metzler: Were there other ships...being hit by kamikaze?

Mr. Wineland: Well, during the time of the battles, but...yes, I saw a number of ships being hit, yes...that were fairly distance away. One time, I remember this very vividly, and I can't tell it where it was other than it was in the Philippines. Oh, this during an area...a time when planes were coming in and hitting the various ships. I saw a plane hit a...a ship that had to be...of course, it's hard to say...maybe three, four, miles away, maybe even further, okay?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum

Mr. Wineland: And it exploded and the whole ocean...come up like this; you could see the whole ocean just...

Ed Metzler: Rise.

Mr. Wineland: ...rising like that, and then afterwards the oil just came down over all of us. It must have been an oil ship of some kind or...or...an ammunition ship.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: But it was very...oh, it was terrible, you know? Because the ship...totally exploded, not just part of it, the whole thing.

Ed Metzler: She didn't sink, she just almost exploded and just...

Mr. Wineland: She just...dis...disappeared, yeah. But I remember the ocean...coming up, so there had to be a lot of...ammunition down below, yeah.

Ed Metzler: This is pretty heavy-duty stuff for an eighteen-year-old kid!

Mr. Wineland: Oh, it really (chuckles), again, I think the whole thing is I didn't...really realize what the heck was happening, not totally. I mean, I...I guess I think about it later, and then I...think to myself, "Boy, you were...in a..."

Ed Metzler: You were in trouble (laughter)!

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, right (laughter). Now, on the way down to...this in (unintelligible)...on the way down to...

Ed Metzler: So, your ship is wounded; she's damaged; how badly?

Mr. Wineland: No, just the gun mount...

Ed Metzler: Okay! So, it's fairly localized.

Mr. Wineland: ...and...and in that...in that section around the gun mount, okay? There was nothing wrong with the steering or the...the...

Ed Metzler: Engines or the bridge or...

Mr. Wineland: No, no.

Ed Metzler: ...any of that?

Mr. Wineland: No.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you're headed south then?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, headed south...again, seems like we stopped some place, but I can't remember, okay?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Uhm, what...this is...now again, the interesting part of this is that...Stanley Landeau, my friend...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...First Lieutenant, said, “There’s a new program being introduced to the...the veterans in the Pacific; this has to do with two thousand men are going to be sent back to the United States for Officers Training School, and I think you should put your application in.” And I said, “Well, yes, if I can get off this...boat (laughter), yes I was...” So, we did; we...he...he made...he helped me fill out the application. The interesting part about this and I now remember we did stop at...two islands as a matter of fact. Uhm, I had to have a physical, and the doctor said, “I won’t approve it because you have a heart murmur.” And this just...really irritated Stanley like you wouldn’t believe. Said, “How can a guy here be on a ship in the Pacific with a heart murmur that you won’t send him back to the United States,” see?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, he...he was good enough to get on this ship, but not good enough to get back to the U.S!

Mr. Wineland: Right, right. And...and the doctor wouldn’t change his mind, okay? And...what Stanley did...is he went with...the...this other doctor to an island and got him drunk and had...and made him sign that (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Wineland: And this is...

Ed Metzler: This Stanley is a heck of a guy, isn’t he?!

Mr. Wineland: He really is, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Isn’t that something?!

Mr. Wineland: It didn’t mean much because now out of all the guys in the Pacific, you know, they’re going to pick two thousand, so...I was very happy that happened, but it didn’t mean anything to me other than it was funny.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Okay?

Ed Metzler: So, this was just to get your application in?

Mr. Wineland: That’s all.

Ed Metzler: You weren’t chosen?

Mr. Wineland: That’s all.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Now, I have to go back to...high school...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Wineland: ...for just a minute. My dad, like I said, is...was doing everything. He had an ice plant at one time. Ice plant is where you make these big...cakes of ice, and he'd take a pick, you know, and break them up, and then we delivered ice around all the houses. This had to be in...late '30s, early '40s, okay? Uhm, because now I'm going to grade school, no, no, I'm going to high school, that's right. Now I'm going to high school. Uhm, he also made beer, my dad; labeled it; put a cork, uh, put a top on it and so forth.

Ed Metzler: He was a jack of all trades, wasn't he?!

Mr. Wineland: He really was. And a neighbor across the street happened to be a minister, okay? And he fought with my dad constantly because Dad made beer, and they became...sort of enemies, okay? This minister was also...principal of the high school, and is my math teacher, okay?

Ed Metzler: Oh boy!

Mr. Wineland: Now we're back to the application (throat clearing); goes to Washington; Washington...rejects it...and sends it to the high school saying, "We can't approve this because Don never took algebra." And the minister wrote back and said, "Even though Don never took algebra, he did take...trigonometry and I would qualify for...a grade in algebra also." Can you imagine that? This is my father's enemy.

Ed Metzler: Isn't that something?!

Mr. Wineland: 'Cause I was...very good at math at the time, and I guess...he remembered and...

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Wineland: ...but it was...interesting story.

Ed Metzler: So, he rose above the...

Mr. Wineland: The (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: ...the feud with the family.

Mr. Wineland: Right, right.

Ed Metzler: Isn't that something?!

Mr. Wineland: Okay, we go to...instead of going to Australia, we stopped in New Guinea and got fixed up. I remember in New Guinea, we had a...some sort of a party where all the...the sailors sat in a bowl, and the...entertainment was down below and it was somebody that was very, very important that was entertaining. And I remember all of the sailors had...like their cigarette lighters so it was...it was very beautiful.

Ed Metzler: So, there was enough light for the...

Mr. Wineland: Just, no, no, this was just, no.

Ed Metzler: Oh, it was just what they asked you to do.

Mr. Wineland: Show them...showing how pretty it was that everybody had...listen, thousands of guys there, okay?

Ed Metzler: Back when everybody smoked and everybody had a lighter.

Mr. Wineland: Right. So anyway, we got fixed up; I don't remember how long it took; can't remember. We went back to...Saipan and Tinian and got...re-supplied and off to...Iwo Jima, okay? We...we got to Iwo Jima and did...patrol work...off the island...so that we could see the island, but back and forth like this...just to keep...the Japanese out and so forth.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And then we got a job doing some bombarding...of the...the hill. I remember very vividly.

Ed Metzler: Mount Suribachi?

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, I can't remember, you know, how long there or anything. But after that...it seemed like things started to settle down a little bit and I think this is when...they're going up the hill...or had been up the hill or something like that 'cause every...all this time, they were trying to get up, and that's when...I was standing on...was...during this time...right outside on the bridge...after radar work or after, yeah, I guess it was. I didn't...I didn't have duty...on the...range finder, and we have binoculars and it...and we traded binoculars as we saw that flag being raised.

Ed Metzler: You did?!

Mr. Wineland: But...just a glimpse.

Ed Metzler: Oh that's okay, a glimpse...

Mr. Wineland: Just a glimpse.

Ed Metzler: ...a glimpse counts.

Mr. Wineland: Just a glimpse, okay. Because there was a lot...quite a lot of us that were looking at...now, we were pretty close to the island at that time. And right after that, we got orders to go to...Okinawa, okay?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And the next morning we're leaving for Okinawa, and that day my orders come through to report to Princeton, New Jersey, and I was accepted...as one of the two thousand.

Ed Metzler: Really?! Isn't that something?! Well, Okinawa was worth missing, I'll tell you.

Mr. Wineland: Well, they...and what, ten days later the ship was sunk.

Ed Metzler: Ah my goodness!

Mr. Wineland: So, how lucky can you be?

Ed Metzler: So, where did you disembark?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, at...at Tinian, Saipan and Tinian I can't remember which island.

Ed Metzler: Okay...okay, so you went back there after Iwo?

Mr. Wineland: To...load up.

Ed Metzler: Now (unintelligible), right.

Mr. Wineland: Now we were loaded...ready to go to...

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Wineland: ...ready to go to Okinawa.

Ed Metzler: And that's when you...and that's when you found out that you'd been accepted?

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: And so, you stayed there and did...

Mr. Wineland: I left the ship...that day.

Ed Metzler: ...and the Pringle took off...

Mr. Wineland: The next day.

Ed Metzler: ...and how long before she is sunk?

Mr. Wineland: Well, I...I don't know. I tell you what happened. I got a thirty-day leave...back in Curryville, Pennsylvania, my home, and I read it in the paper that the Pringle

got sunk. So, it had to be within, I'm guessing, ten to fifteen days. They went in...Okinawa...well, Okinawa long before the ship was sunk.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Wineland: There were...have a list of all the survivors, and one of my friends of the three friends I had, the Italian man (chuckles), Catholic man, he invited me up to his house in New Jersey afterwards, and I had...dinner and an evening with him, and he was one of the guys in the water for quite some time. So, I got a lot of information from him.

Ed Metzler: Well, one of the three of your buddies survived.

Mr. Wineland: Yes, the...one or the other. The Jewish fellow died, uh, on the ship; what happened? Oh, we talked about this later, and I...I...the details are a little bit gone, but he was a guy that believed in...if it's going to happen, regardless what you do. What do they...what do they call those people; there's a word for it.

Ed Metzler: I know, and I'll think of it...after we're through (chuckles), but I can't think of it now.

Mr. Wineland: And...and...when this kamikaze hit, he ran to the other side, the side where the plane hit, and that guy got killed. I believe he was one of the people that died on the...he was the...uh, yeah, he was one of the Jewish boys. I remember...I remember him getting killed, but I'm trying to think...when it was. But anyway, he did get killed. And...Nick Capise (sp?) is the Italian fellow that lived and I went to visit.

Ed Metzler: What was his name?

Mr. Wineland: Nick Capise. The other...the other fellow's name was Nasbaum (sp?), if I remember right, yeah.

Ed Metzler: You're remembering these names!

Mr. Wineland: Nick, well, I've never...Nick Capise I remember it forever, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: Now, I spent...

Ed Metzler: Well, tell me...while we're on the subject of this shrinking...shrinking, of the sinking of the Pringle, rephrase for me what you found out from talking to...to

your buddy about what happened and how it happened even though you weren't there. I mean, I know it's secondhand, but...

Mr. Wineland: Okay. Nick told me that I had been given new orders, and I didn't know about this when I got transferred. A new orders for general quarters, okay? Instead of being now...uh, range finder, I'm now in a radar room under the general quarters.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Okay?

Ed Metzler: During general quarters, yeah.

Mr. Wineland: And...when the plane hit, that's the spot it hit, right through the main part of the...bridge...right through that...room where the...officers and the radar are. So, wouldn't have mattered anyway. Uhm, I mean I...I...if I would have been...stayed on aboard...the ship, I would have been killed, no question about it...according to him.

Ed Metzler: How do you feel...after hearing that?

Mr. Wineland: Lucky, you know? I just think...can you imagine saying, "Thank God I joined the Navy!" That's the way I feel about it. Now, that wasn't it. In Princeton, they decided to...weed out...one thousand of the two thousand men, okay? And luckily, I was one of the one thousand that stayed, and mainly because of my math ability, okay? They transferred me then to...and I chose it Bucknell (sp?) which is close to my hometown.

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Wineland: Stayed there and now the...uh, oh, what is it called? Uh, Officers Training; there's two kinds and I'm trying to think of the one...one they closed down and then I decided to go to the University of Pennsylvania.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, they had a V-5 and a...

Mr. Wineland: And...

Ed Metzler: ...and a V-12.

Mr. Wineland: The V-12...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Wineland: ...and the other one was...uh, I'll think of that in a minute.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Okay, but you...

Mr. Wineland: One of those that closed down there; some went to the University of Pennsylvania, and I ended up graduating from Wharton School.

Ed Metzler: Really?! After the war, of course?

Mr. Wineland: Yes, but during the...during...during that time that I was there, I either had to become an Ensign or discharged.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Wineland: And I decided to discharge.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: And I was discharged on my twentieth birthday.

Ed Metzler: Okay, now this is after the war is over then.

Mr. Wineland: Now, what happened is...yes. What happened is I was able to get...discharged because of the battles I was in in the Philippines, the time I was over there and so forth.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you get points for all that.

Mr. Wineland: Points, I had enough points...and grad...and got discharged on my twentieth birthday.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you'd been in a little bit over two years.

Mr. Wineland: Still a...still a kid.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, no kidding!

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Man! Wow! You were a lucky man!

Mr. Wineland: I sure was, yep, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, have you stayed in contact with any of...

Mr. Wineland: None, not a one. Not a one.

Ed Metzler: Is that...intentional or just the way it happened?

Mr. Wineland: I think just the way it happened. I got a job that sent me all over the United States and part of the world, and I think I just lost contact totally with them.

Ed Metzler: Now, Stanley...

Mr. Wineland: The...the, yeah, after talking with his parents I have never seen him or talked to him.

Ed Metzler: He was killed?

Mr. Wineland: No! No, he survived.

Ed Metzler: Oh, tell me about that.

Mr. Wineland: Well, after the war now, I went...that's when I went to Atlantic City.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay.

Mr. Wineland: And the parents told me that he was in Chicago.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay, so...he was aboard the ship when she was sunk?

Mr. Wineland: Yes.

Ed Metzler: But he was one of the survivors.

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: So, she must have gone down pretty fast.

Mr. Wineland: She did, yep. Uh, according to Nick Capise, yes, she didn't last very long at all. Uhm, he didn't tell me how long, so I can't tell you about that, and that's really about all I knew about...the sinking of the ship. I can't recall anything else that Nick told me. And I guess I didn't press him a lot either.

Ed Metzler: Understandable.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: That must have been a strange feeling to find out about your ship by reading it in the newspaper.

Mr. Wineland: Oh yeah, couldn't believe it.

Ed Metzler: That must have been a sinking feeling.

Mr. Wineland: It really was. Just couldn't believe it. And actually, my granddad found it in the newspaper and he remembered (cough) excuse me, that I was on the Pringle and he...he pointed it out to me. And he was pretty old at that time, too.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Wineland: And other than that (sigh) nothing else...really important. I...I had...because of the...kamikaze and because of the...all the...uh, the bombarding we did aboard the ship, I lost my...I had had a hard time with my hearing, and eventually I pretty much lost it. So, I finally applied for disability and the (unintelligible) gave me a ten percent disability or something like that which is...alright. That's...was very happy with that.

Ed Metzler: Well, that's more than zero, I guess.

Mr. Wineland: That's exactly right.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Wineland: I wouldn't...poss...tell you the truth, I probably wouldn't have felt right if it would have been any more than that...considering all they did for me, you know?

Ed Metzler: So, you went in as...wet behind the ears, seventeen-year-old, had to have your parents sign to even get into the...Navy.

Mr. Wineland: Right.

Ed Metzler: And you survived all that and came out. How did that experience change you as a person and the way you saw things and thought or did it change you?

Mr. Wineland: Oh, I think so. Uh, (pause) I'm not sure how...uh, I...I'm not sure that my upbringing...hasn't had more of an influence on me than the Navy...really. Uh, we were a conservative, Republican, well, I shouldn't say that. My...my parents were Democrat; I shouldn't say that.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Wineland: Uh, were a very conservative family. Not over religious, but, you know, we went to church all the time and so forth. But the experience that I had of working...early in life and finding out the good things that you're supposed to do and not the bad things I think had a...more of an influence than anything else.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: I...certainly abhor wars...in thinking about all the people that were killed, you know, just makes me sick to think about it. That part of the war I just try to put out of my mind quite frankly, except when you read the paper.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! Did you...pretty much put the war behind you after you came back and...

Mr. Wineland: Yes...(unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Did you even think about it or talk about it or...

Mr. Wineland: Not an awful lot, no. Uh, I don't think I ever really...told my parents the whole story. I sort of never went back to my parents. I got married in college and we lived in Philadelphia; they lived in Altoona which is pretty far away. Uhm, that...I...I don't think I ever talked an awful lot about it. I guess later on when

I...with my kids now in...particularly my son's wife who...has taken my story to heart (chuckles), you know, but that's all.

Ed Metzler: Did...did you ever...dream about it or have dreams or have it ever bother you at all?

Mr. Wineland: No, no.

Ed Metzler: That's...that's good.

Mr. Wineland: No, I...I've...I've pretty much put it out of my mind really, you know? It doesn't bother me.

Ed Metzler: Left it behind.

Mr. Wineland: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: What do you think about the Japanese having...been in mortal combat with them?

Mr. Wineland: Well, oddly enough, uh, I...I knew some fellow...military people that...that ended up hating the Japanese with a passion to the point where they wouldn't go to a Japanese restaurant or...or...anything.

Ed Metzler: Buy...a Toyota or (chuckles).

Mr. Wineland: And that...that...never bothered me...for some reason. I might...I didn't like the Japanese naturally. I mean, hated them, but when the war was over I...I didn't have a chance to think about it, I'll put it that way. I was working hard and trying to get ahead and got...into business and...and worked hard, and...that was my main object at the time...not thinking about anything like that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: Didn't bother me.

Ed Metzler: Hum. What kind of...education did you get when you...I know Wharton's a...business school.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, I finally got...my bachelor's degree in...in...at...in...in...actually in...uh, math and statistics...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Wineland: ...and insurance. I...pretty much...I started to become a...a doctor and I took my pre-med school for a while and then I decided not to after I got married.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. Wow! That's quite a story. I...talked to many veterans who said, "You know...I wouldn't be here today to describe this to you if this hadn't happened and that hadn't happened," and you're close to the top of the list of one of those that if that hadn't happened and...

Mr. Wineland: (Chuckles), yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...that hadn't happened...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...I'm sure...I'd be gone.

Mr. Wineland: Absolutely! Absolutely.

Ed Metzler: So, must be a grand plan of some sort.

Mr. Wineland: Must be; I think so.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Wineland: I think so. That's...I really think so.

Ed Metzler: Well, what else can we talk about on those four years?

Mr. Wineland: (Sigh), I...I really can't think of anything that's really important. Uhm...

Ed Metzler: Well, you described to me the coconut tree climbing incident.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: I think...that was a hoot! Any other...

Mr. Wineland: Things I remember?

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Any other things...

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, the...the boat...exploding was another one and getting the beer out of the...and the doctors...thing; those things I remember vividly. Uhm, not an awful lot about anything else.

Ed Metzler: Now, you mentioned that you had...uh, a piece of the aircraft that hit the Pringle...the first time.

Mr. Wineland: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you got that at home, right?

Mr. Wineland: I do.

Ed Metzler: And so, it was just what...laying there after the impact?

Mr. Wineland: I can't remember, I can't remember. There were...it seems to me like...there was a lot of debris...around...

Ed Metzler: Bound to be, yeah!

Mr. Wineland: ...I can't...remember picking it up; I can't remember much of anything. Later on I had it in my sea bag.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Wineland: So, I must have...been such a shock at the time; I just can't hardly remember that. I'm sure that something happened that I picked it up and kept it, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. What did you and your...crew mates think about...Admiral Nimitz? Did you ever think about him at all or he was just...somewhere up there...what about Franklin Roosevelt? Just wasn't on the radar, so to speak (chuckle)?

Mr. Wineland: Uh, as a Seaman Second Class, the only exposure we had was with Stanley Landeau as far as...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Wineland: ...anything in...I shouldn't say that...any...part of the ship that had any information...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Wineland: ...that more cared about those things. I think we were more...cared about...what duty we had and...you know?

Ed Metzler: When you were going to get sick and...(laughter).

Mr. Wineland: Yeah, that's right, that's right.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Wineland: Oh yeah, oh yeah. But we...we disliked her with a passion.

Ed Metzler: I can imagine!

Mr. Wineland: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: I mean, nobody liked her! (laughter)

Mr. Wineland: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: It always amazes me how she got that information.

Mr. Wineland: Isn't that...yep!

Ed Metzler: But...well, okay. Uhm, let me thank you for spending the time, Don.

Mr. Wineland: Well, I thank you, too, for...

Ed Metzler: And...

Mr. Wineland: ...having this...opportunity.

Ed Metzler: ...and thank you for what you did for our country during World War II.

Mr. Wineland: Well, thank you.

Ed Metzler: We still don't thank you guys enough, and so I'm hoping I'm not the only one that thanks you when you're here at the Museum.

Mr. Wineland: Thank you.

Ed Metzler: But, I think, with that I'll...go ahead and close it down.

Mr. Wineland: Okay.

(end of interview)

**FINAL** copy

CD – #OH03898 – Mr. Lester M. “Don” Wineland

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Houston, TX

January 15, 2020