

**THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR**

**Nimitz Education and Research Center  
Fredricksburg, Texas**

**An Interview with**

**Salvatore R. Coviello**

**Riviera Beach, Florida**

**July 11th, 2013**

**LST-454**

Mr. Misenhimer:

My Name is Richard Misenhimer, today is July 11th, 2013, I am interviewing Mr.

Salvatore R. "Sal" Coviello by telephone. His phone number is 561-842-3910. His

address is 4179 70th Lane North Riviera Beach, Florida 33404. This interview is in

support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research

Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II. Sal, I

want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today, and I want to thank

you for your service to our country during World War II."

Mr. Coviello:

Thank you sir.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum to make, but

since this is not being done in person, it is by phone, I will need to read it to you.

Mr. Coviello:

Alright.

Mr. Misenhimer:

"Agreement Read"

2.

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Coviello:

That is fine sir.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, the next thing I would like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out that sometimes several years down the road, we try to get back in touch with a veteran and he has moved or something. Do we have a son or daughter or someone we could contact, if we needed to find you?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes sir, I have a daughter, you have talked to her.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That is the daughter I spoke to? Does she live with you? What is her first name?

Mr. Coviello:

Her name is Helen-Anne. She is my secretary and everything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Does she live there with you permanently?

Mr. Coviello

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer:

So, if you were to move somewhere else, she would stay there?

Mr. Coviello:

No, we would go together. She is disabled at this time.

Mr. Misenheimer:

I see. Is there someone else if we needed to find, if you would move, that could locate you?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes. I have a niece in Connecticut.

Mr. Misenheimer:

What is her name?

Mr. Coviello:

Her name is Rosemary LoRusso.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have a phone number for her or an address?

Mr. Coviello:

It is Rosemary LoRusso. The street address is 1041 Bunker Hill Avenue. It is in Waterbury, Connecticut, 06708. The phone number 201-755-1579.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I hope we will never need that, but you never know. What is your birthdate?

Mr. Coviello:

August 25, 1923.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you born?

Mr. Coviello:

Waterbury, Connecticut.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, there were 7 of us in the family. There were 4 daughters and 3 sons.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were any of your brothers in World War II?

Mr. Coviello:

No, I was the only one in the service. They were all older than I was. I am the baby.

Mr. Misenheimer:

You are the baby? Now, you grew up during the depression? How did the depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Coviello:

You know, I think I should have memories of it, but I don't. I know that my sisters kept telling me that it was tough. A lot of times we did not have food and they had to split a potatoe or something like that, in order to get something to eat. I had no remembrance of anything like that. I guess they babied me and made sure I got my food when I came. I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your father's occupation?

Mr. Coviello:

At the time, he made parts for furnances in a manufacturing company that was in town.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was he able to keep working during the depression then?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, they were always struggling through the whole thing and they did not have any hours and stuff like that. I remember I used to walk down with a little kettle with my father's lunch and I would give it to him through the fence. Then I waited until he got through and I would walk back home with it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you live in town or in the country?

Mr. Coviello:

It was town.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you all have a garden?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, he made a garden. There was a plot of land, not far from where we lived. It was just open land. The guy who owned it just said if we wanted it, just to farm it. It was all the neighborhood. We grabbed a little piece of it. They all put in their own plants and stuff. Then at the end of the year, if we had surplus, then we would have a big party.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Good. Did you have chickens or anything like that?

Mr. Coviello:

No, we were actually in the city. We did not live in the outside of town.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to High School?

Mr. Coviello:

It was Leavenworth High School.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Coviello:

It was 1941.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do when you finished High School?

Mr. Coviello:

I took a machinist course. I worked in one of the factories there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On December 7, 1941, is when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, we were sitting on the wall in Waterbury Connecticut. There about 6 or 8 boys around. We were just talking and talking. We usually just layed back and this one kid ran up to us and said, "did you hear, did you hear?" He went through the whole thing for us, something like that. I could not believe what he was telling us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you heard that, how did you think that would affect you?

Mr. Coviello:

You know, I did not think about it then, because it really hadn't sinked in, I could not believe it could happen. Later on, when I was working in the factory, it was actually equipment for the boys, in fact, it was for a ship that was called the Sperry Speed, Gear motor that turned the triplet gun turrets, it was running back and forth without losing any time. It was something that was fantastic. I worked on part of that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, was this before or after the war started?

Mr. Coviello:

It was during the war.

Mr. Misenhimer.

When did you go into the service?



Mr. Coviello:

I went into the service on my 18th birthday. I was sworn in on my 18th birthday. I was 17 or 18, I can't remember that far back anymore.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were 19? You went in on August 25, 1942? That would have been on August 25, 1942. Now, had you signed up for the draft?

Mr. Coviello:

No, wait a minute, at that time everybody did, and I had a card, but that was nothing. I was a little young still then too, but they took all the older ones first.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, I think, they were drafting at age 21 only at that point. Not long after that, they started at 18. So, you volunteered then right?

Mr. Coviello:

I did yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went into the Navy?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, well when I graduated High School, in 1941, I went down to the U.S. Marines with my buddy. No, it was the U.S. Navy. I later went down, and they refused to take me because I had 2 molars missing. That is how strict the requirements were before the war. After the war, I went down with another guy and the recruiter says, "well what about you?" I said, well you don't want me. He says, "why not?" Well, I have 2 molars missing.

He says, " that does not matter anymore." He said, " take these papers home and have your parents sign them and come back."

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, you went to the Marines then?

Mr. Coviello:

No, I was in the service. I went to the Marines first. They told me I had a perforated eardrum and I could not get into the service. Then, I went over to the Navy and they took me and I told them about the eardrum. They said "it does not matter, we will take care of it."

Mr. Misenhimer:

On August 25, 1942, you joined the Navy?

Mr. Coviello:

That is right. My father drove me from Waterbury Connecticut to New Haven Connecticut, where the recruiter was swearing in everybody down there. Then we spent an overnight there. From that point, we went to Newport Rhode Island to boot camp. We were the last boot camp going through Newport. After we left, they closed it and they went through Great Lakes or some place like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

10.

How was your boot camp?

Mr. Coviello:

It was not that bad. You would have to get up really early in the morning and run around in your skivies in damp weather being on the ocean. It was alright. I did not mind it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were your drill instructors pretty rough on you?

Mr. Coviello:

No not really. You know, it was such a short time, we were only there for 30 days.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Only 30 days?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, only 30 days and from that point, they gave me a 15 day leave to get to Chicago to Navy Pier, where I took my lessons on how to operate the diesel engines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, you went to Diesel School there then?

Mr. Coviello:

They had the Diesel School and an Aviation School right on Navy Pier. The aviators were 6 months courses and ours was an 8 week course.

Dr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened, well tell me about the Diesel School and how was it?

Mr. Coviello:

Well, it was kind of crazy. They worked on these small diesel engines. The instructors would say you have to learn how this thing goes. You are never going to see another one like this in your life, but you have to know how this works. Then they throw us in to the LST's on these 2 big V-12 GM diesel engines. They are the same ones that drive the locomotives, the trains. Then they throw you into there and say "this is what you are going to be working on." I said, Oh, God, of course they had chiefs and everything above us that knew more than we did. Of course, we were just standing by watching them most of the time. Then they would let us go around and one of the things they would ask is "Do you know how to do this?" We would say, "yeah." One of the guys, said to me, "Do you know how to change the oil in the generator?", then go down and do it. After that I wasn't volunteering for anything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else happen there?

Mr. Coviello:

No, it was actually like a nice cruise, you know. We were commissioned, let me see I got it right here. The ship was commissioned January 25, of 1943. That was the

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was the USS LST 454.

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, 454. It was decommissioned, I think in Norfolk, I don't know where it was, but it was March 25, 1946.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you on the ship when it was commissioned then?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, I was called a plank-owner is what it was called. There are very few of us left.

The last time, I believe we had 3 or 4 other guys show up plank-owners and a couple of other guys that came in late.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, when you finished the Diesel School did you go straight to the 454 then.

Mr. Coviello:

No the 454 was not even made then. So, from Navy pier, I got up to Norfolk Virginia and in about a weeks' time they called me into the office and said, we need you here within 10 or 15 minutes with your sea bag and if you have got a friend you can call him and take him with you. We need another guy and you will going onboard a crew. The LST 454, I thought we would join them in Norfolk, but we did not get to the ship until we got across the states there. The ship was commissioned in Vancouver Washington.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I see.

Mr. Coviello:

We took the longest train ride I have ever been on. I think it was 6 nights and 5 days across the states. They were going back and forth. They were not in any hurry to get us there. The ship had not even been built yet anyway. We were there for maybe, oh I guess a month or so.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, there was 2 of you that went over there then?

Mr. Coviello:

Actually 3. A crew had already been organized. They needed 3 more men and the other guy wasn't my friend, but he was in charge of us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, on that train trip over there, how was that trip?

Mr. Coviello:

Oh, it was lousy. They did not give us any compartment, they just slept there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

In your seat?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, in your seat. As far as food goes, whatever they had on the train, that is what we got.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It took you about 6 days?

Mr. Coviello:

Do you know where the Moffit tunnel, where the heck is it? I don't remember where. It is a tunnel the train goes through. It was the longest thing I have ever rode. I think it was about a mile long. It was a steam locomotive. The smoke was coming in the windows and I remember seeing this young lady with a baby in her arms. The baby would not stop crying and she couldn't do anything about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I have heard that smoke coming through there was pretty bad. It turns your clothes black.

Mr. Coviello:

Yes. Actually, when we got up to Washington. We went to Portland Oregon, where they had been saving a ship for us. We waited for our ship to be built, but our gear, clothes, bags and everything went to Walla Walla, Washington. We were living in Portland 3 days without any clothes. Just what we had on our backs.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Coviello:

We had a beautiful time. Portland is a great liberty town. People come up to you right on the street and ask if you want to come home for a home cooked meal or something like that, or it was do you have some friends you would like to take along with you? It was very good. I think it was one of the better liberty towns we had ever hit.

That was nice, we used to go to USO. They had a USO club there in town and we would go down there and have milk and hot dogs. We were still too young to go to a bar and dancing with the girls that you could not date after. You could never leave the place with them.

It was really nice, as far as that was. I have to say, I had a good time, because when we get through you will know why actually.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Go ahead.

Mr. Coviello:

Well, our ship was in the first wave all the time. We were under General MacArthur. We were General MacArthur's Navy. We would be the first squad in there all the time. It was always a place where they would hint to the Japanese, that we were going to hit a certain town in New Guinea and he would hit 35 or 40 miles North of it. He would cut them off and not even, saying just let them be, don't even bother with them. They will get hungry and they will come around. You never know how many lives this man saved by the way he operated.

Mr. Misenhimer:

We will get to that in a little bit. So, you had been in it about 4 months when you got to the ship then?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes. We took it from Vancouver, this was a new ship in Vancouver, we took down to San Diego and they changed it all over.



Mr. Misenhimer:

What did they do to it?

Mr. Coviello:

Well, they painted it all new, they did a couple of other things, I forget what it was.

They changed the appearance of it. Generally, it was the same thing except for a paint

job. We had gone on a 3 day pass, it was a Friday night. We were going to come back

Monday by noon. We left the ship at San Diego, but they moved it to Hunter's point.

We got there, just about in time. We got on the base, but it took us 2 hours to find the

ship, because they had painted it and we could not recognize it. They did not put

numbers on it. We walked around, and walked around, where the heck is it? We finally

found it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your job on the ship?

Mr. Coviello:

I was in what they called the "black gang", taking care of everything below deck, all the

generators. The shaft, all the equipment below deck is what we took care of.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Coviello:

After that, they put a LCT, which is a smaller landing craft, on our deck and we carried that to Australia. First we hit Hawaii first. There we went up to the battleship Alley, where all the ships were. The Arizona was there and all the ones that got knocked out in Pearl Harbor. That was something to see. As we sailed up, everybody was looking at us wondering what the heck kind of ship are we? They never saw one like us before. Even the boys in the Navy were the same way wondering what the heck have you got there? Because, we had the small ship on top of it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They never seen that?

Mr. Coviello:

They never saw that and they never saw our ship either.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do with yours?

Mr. Coviello:

We had no guns to speak of, we only had 1- 3 inch 50 with that at the stern. Then we had 4- 20 mm around the bridge, that's all we had. Nothing up forward, because then when we hit the beach, we could not have anything pointing at the beach, if there were snipers or anything there, we could not fire back. So, we only had anti-aircraft things.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Your 3-inch 50 was an anti-aircraft.

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, and so were the 20 mm.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, 20 is right. Did you get liberty in Hawaii?

Mr. Coviello:

Oh, yes, they gave us liberty. We were in for I think 10 days and we had 5 day liberties to get port side and starbird side liberties. As we were in Hawaii, we could not take liberty without carrying a gas mask. Everybody on the island had one, from the youngest kid you could see to the oldest person around. We could not leave the ship unless we had one on our side.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then we went swimming up in Wakiki for a couple of days. You see pictures of Wakiki beach and you see the Royal Hawaiian Hotel. That was the only building standing there when we were there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is that the pink Hotel?

Mr. Coviello:

The Royal Hawaiian.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was it pink?

Mr. Coviello:

I think it was because that was the Army headquarters at that time. Now, you can't find it amongst all the buildings there now. We went out there swimming in the beach.

There is where I suffered my most disappointment in I don't know how long. We got through swimming. We went and took a shower. Just went inside and we said lets go get something. You know, we could not go to a bar. I said lets go get a drink, there is a place that has pineapples. Lets get some fresh pineapple juice. We went up to the stand, I said to the young lady, I would like a glass of pineapple juice? She turns around and grabs a can picks it up and pours it out. I said, oh my God, I thought it was going to be fresh.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You could do that back home right?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, I thought I was going to get a nice fresh glass of pineapple juice.

We were ashore for a couple of hours. They would not let us stay. We had to get back before 5. It was still to close to the time that they were still fearful of what could happen.

That is why everyone was carrying a gas mask.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, they were still thinking that Japan might attack there? Anything else happen there in Hawaii?

Mr. Coviello:

No, not really, we just had that liberty. When we took off, from there I guess we went to New Caledonia, no it was Fiji first. There, when you are sailing in, you could smell the town before you could see it. When you get there, you get to walking outside and everything else you know. Then these policeman that they had there, I think they looked like they were 8 feet tall. They would come around and yell at you "Boola!" I said, "Oh my God" we got to be careful around here. We did not spend too much time there, I think it was only a couple of days.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, when you went down there, did you go by yourself or you were in a convoy?

Mr. Coviello:

There were 6 ships to our squadron and we were going over that way and then we had a couple of cans running with us too. We did not have the equipment to run away from subs or anything like that. We only did 15 knots top, actually it was only 12 knots we always were on.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, what squadron exactly were you in?

Mr. Coviello:

It was actually not a squadron. We were nothing actually. Until we got to Australia. From Fiji, we went to Noumea. At that time the fleet was stationed there, but then they moved it because there were so many jelly fish in the water, that they were getting into the engine. So, they had to move that from there. We went to Sydney Australia. We spent a couple of days there the same way. They we went up from Sydney up to Brisbane. At Brisbane is where we dropped off the LCT. That was another big thing that everybody had to come from all over to see, but the hitch went off fine. While we were in Brisbane, actually there was a young fellow named Daniel E. Arbey. He finished off as head of U.S. Navy Reserve. He became an Admiral. He and another gentleman were the 7th amphibious fleet until we got there. There was a 7th fleet down there, which was Admiral Halsey? He was in charge of the 7th fleet, but we became the 7th amphibious fleet. Then they attached us to General MacArthur, who was kind of hurt, Halsey, anyway, they were not on too good friendly terms. MacArthur was supposed to be in charge of him too, but he would not take it. But, we got into it and that is when they started calling us MacArthur's Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What the Admiral's name that was in charge of the 7th fleet? Admiral Kinkaid was the one in charge of the 7th fleet?

Mr. Coviello:

No, it was Bull Halsey.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well, he was in charge earlier, but then he was in charge of the 3rd fleet after that.

Mr. Coviello:

Oh, I do not know who the other one was, I can't remember that far back. At that point, we went up to Townsville Australia and we go into our first invasion. The first island we hit, I think it was called Goodenough Island and it was a night. We had to jump over a sandbar with the ship into the beach. The sandbar was off too far to let the guys off. If you are familiar with an LST, we had to get close enough to shore to open it, but looked off the ramp, it is too deep, the water was too deep. So, we had to jump over the sandbar. Then we went full speed, you know but that was only 12 knots. Hit the bottom and went right over, flying. Then we got on to the beach and then got unloaded. Then we couldn't get off. We had sand from underneath and we couldn't get back. We were stuck on the beach. At that time, I think they had, I don't know how many, I think it was 4 tin-can, destroyers going just off shore back and forth as fast as they could. You know, making waves. That washed the sand out from underneath us. Then we finally got off the beach.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you went in there, what did you have on your ship?

Mr. Coviello:

We, had a company of Army. We were supposed to be able to take a full company of a tank division. The ship was made for tanks. Over there they could not use them because there was too much jungle over there. So, we were carrying half-tracks and trucks and Jeeps and men that we could house, which was 200 men with their gear. Then, that is what we did. We went up there and just as we landed they just went ashore. Then we wanted to get off. Then we go back to the base that we were at when we started, get another load and then come back up again.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, when you went into Goodenough Island. You say you were in the first wave. How much enemy opposition did you have?

Mr. Coviello:

Not there, we had nothing. The ship went through about 12 invasion and 8 of them were major invasions. The other 4 were like Goodenough, Island. They went in there, and there was nothing there when we got there. Not that, they knew it was going to end up in there, but when we got there there was nothing. He said they were hit down below, they probably moved all their forces down there you know.



Mr. Misenhimer:

How many trips did you make to Goodenough Island.

Mr. Coviello:

Well, after a while, we had probably almost like a milk run. When things were quiet, we were stationed in at Milne Bay, in New Guinea. When things were quiet, we would get in there and load up and 8 o'clock in the morning we would leave and then at about 4 o'clock in the afternoon, we hit Goodenough with extra supplies and all. Then we would unload it. Then at 8 o'clock the next morning, we would leave there and come back to Milne Bay. For a while there, it was, well it was almost boring, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I am looking at a map and I see Goodenough Island isn't all that far from Milne Bay, but it is a ways, but it is not far.

Mr. Coviello:

It is not too much, like when we would be traveling, we would be traveling maybe 4 to 6 knots, nothing in a hurry. We had maybe 4 to 6 ships and then we had a couple of tin cans with you. We would just take our time and we would get up there. That is about it. After that, then they started planning their invasions. You know, from Milne Bay they went to one of the larger ones that we hit was Lae. That was a big one. We went in the first wave and it was fine. We got on in there, got unloaded and then come out.

There were 2 ships that were disabled. We had to pull them back at that time to Morobe. We transferred back down there and then the next day we would take their load. It was Australians there, and we would take them off their ship or whoever was left. We would take them and then whatever supplies we could get and bring them back up. When we brought them to the shore at Morobe. They got out, some of the boys in our crew went over there with body bags and picked up all the boys that did not make it. The ship that we had towed back. I think it was the 460 something. The helmsman on that ship, his name was Johnny Hutchins. He was the only man in the LST fleet that got the Congressional Medal of Honor; he, died at the wheel. They told me that when he was there, the way it sounds, is like one of the John Wayne movies. Two torpedoes were coming and he turned the ship around so they both missed. He died at the wheel. The guys were saying they actually had to pry his hands off the wheel.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes.

Mr. Coviello:

We went back again to get ready for the next one. Maybe a week or so, we heard all these rumors. We had to go back and get our mail. The mail was delayed so many days. Nobody knew where we were at. They put the mail at Milne Bay, we used to go back up all the time, then they would say, "oh they shipped up to there." Then, we would go over there, and they would say, "shipped it back because no one was there." So, it was days without mail.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your next invasion after Lae?

Mr. Coviello:

I think it was Lae, Finchhaven and then it was Morobe and then we went up to New Britian off of the coast there. That is where we carried the first Marines, that were in Guadalcanal. This was their next invasion, they went in there to New Britian.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, they did.

Mr. Coviello:

That was the first time for that mishap. They shot at our own planes. They fired at 3 B-24's came over and our gun crews opened up on them because they had a Japanese alert. We were all amongst the trees. We would hear the roaring of the planes coming up over the trees. The planes just took right over our heads and we just opened up on them. I think they got 1 or 2 of them down. That is also in that book of MacArthur's Amphibious Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Our first Marine division went into Cape Gloucester in New Britian. Did you take them up there?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes. On Christmas day, or the day after Christmas. They spent Christmas day on the ship. The next day we hit the beach.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that one?

Mr. Coviello:

That wasn't bad at all. Except for that mishap that we had with our own planes. Everything else went off pretty good. One of the other invasions we were on was up in Los Negros, in the Admiralty Islands, I think it is. That is the one that our squadron Commander at that time was Captain Scruggs and he later made Admiral. If you see a map it shows a little inlet on the left hand side, just about 1 ship could go through it and into the Bay. They told him that he could not take more than 1 LST at time in there and get it unloaded. We had 6 of them sitting them out there. Then he looked it over. He said, no, no, we are getting them all in here. We got to get in here and get out. We went in there, the six of us on the beach scraping sides, and they got on there. They were all on the beach. At that time, these guys went in earlier, the rangers or something like that went in first on the island. They captured the air strip, but then afterward the Japanese came back with more reinforcements. They pushed them off, back all the way onto the beach that we were landing on. If we had another day or two we would of lost a whole bunch of them. But, anyway, we got in there with our 6 ships because Captain Scruggs was something else. We put them all in there one side-by-side.

Remember we were scraping sides, but we got in there and we got out. If we were coming through that narrow pass way, then one ship goes out at a time, the Japanese had a mortar nest in there. They kept lobbing things at us. The order came in and said turn your 3-inch 50's over there and shoot whatever you can. Let them drop. Everyone that passed through there have shot about 80 or 90 rounds at a time, you know, while they are going through there they kept firing until there was no more action. I guess they must have been blowing them up.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was your ship ever hit by any kind of fire?

Mr. Coviello:

No, that is one of the things that I am very thankful for. Of all the invasions we went through, we never had any enemy fire that hit us. None of our men got hit, I think that none of our men even got hit with shrapnel. I think that is when I say we were in the first wave and that was, well we were the surprise wave.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Coviello:

Well, we would go back and rest a little bit longer. Then we would start working on Hollandia. There, the big operation was 3 invasions at the same time. We went into actually right into Hollandia itself.

The other guys went above us and then we got in there. Before we got in there, just before dawn, we had cruisers and destroyers.

They were helping fire on the beach and just keep going on all night. A couple of the ships with their rockets go in there and just keep firing, and firing and firing until daybreak. Then we would move in then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was Hollandia compared to the other landings?

Mr. Coviello:

It was a lot busier than where the other ones were. They was so much of it, I do not know how many ships were there. It was many ships, and all kinds. Not just us, there were cruisers offshore, there were aircraft carriers and there were Big Rigs all the way through. They would start bombing or firing in there and then like daybreak things would start to slow down. We went in and got our load off and went back and got another load.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It was in April of 1944, when they landed on Hollandia. Then they went to BIAK after that, May 44.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh, yes there was quiet a few before that. Because Hollandia, was in April of 1944.

Then BIAK was May of 1944.

Mr. Coviello:

I don't think that is when that happened. You see after BIAK is when I left the ship on the beach on a small boat pool. We were running water taxis for like big merchant ships and they did not have motor launches just regular row boats on there so. They wanted to get in shore, so we had to go out and pick them up and bring them to shore and then bring them back again. Not just the merchant ships, anyone who needed an extra boat of some kind. Like one of the times, we had to go and pick up the nurses for the captain's party he had.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You did that for how long?

Mr. Coviello:

I think it was for 6 to 8 months. I was on 8 and they pulled 4 or 5 more invasions after I had left and then they got into the Phillipines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many invasions did you actually go on?

Mr. Coviello:

I think it was 8 of them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was Hollandia the last one or which was the last one?

Mr. Coviello:

No the last one was BIAK. They were just getting off of New Guinea then. They went into Borneo and that is the one I remember anyway. I could not see why, but that is the way they did it I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well it was Warke after that and then they went into Noemfoor. There were several more up there, right?

Mr. Coviello:

I was sitting on the beach then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That didn't make you mad did it?

Mr. Coviello:

Actually, no I started in Madang when they took me off the ship. Then we had a move after the Army got settled. We moved ourselves up to Hollandia. There was no amphibious 7th fleet, no headquarters. We had the small boat for them, and we are the only ones from the 7th Amphibious Fleet there. There was no one, not even officers that we could talk to. They were all on the 7th Fleet. We can't do anything with you, you are 7th Amphibious and we have no jurisdiction over you. Finally, I said, can't we take the boats and go to the Phillipines or whatever. No you can't. Finally, from Hollandia is when I got the ship to go home. That is when I contracted malaria too.



Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about that?

Mr. Coviello:

On board ship, they were giving us Attabrine for every meal for every day. Then they put us ashore and they were not even regulated. We just stayed taking what we normally took on the ship, but even at that, after I contracted malaria. They told me you should have been taken with more Attabrine, but no one told me that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the malaria, pretty bad?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, it is when you are first starting to get it. You are sweating, and freezing, and just sweating and freezing, getting sick, and having to sit there and throwing up you know, but I am fortunate to have made it through.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About when did you get malaria. When I left Hollandia, it was 4 or 5 months before that. I guess I had another seizure the day before I was supposed to go home. I said I am not going to sick bay. I am going to talk to the guy again and have them give me some Attabrine. I will just dose myself up and I want to make sure I am on that ship.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After you got out of this Navy, did you still have trouble with malaria?

Mr. Coviello:

No, although I was getting a pension from it. A 10 percent disability. Two-years after, about 1947, I never reported any relapse from it, so they took my pension away from me. I was no longer sick, but I am fighting it now to get it back. All this time, I had contaminated blood or blood that they would not take. I did not do anything about that then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, you would have had to come back to the states in June of 1945. Did anything else happen before that?

Mr. Coviello:

No I got home and they gave me 30 day leave and from there I went up to Boston, to the Fargo building waiting to be assigned to another ship. I did get in with an LSD, which is landing ship dry dock. There is the LSD 40 the USS Nueces. It was brand new, I was a plank-owner on that too if I had stayed with it, but I did not stay with it. I went through all the shake down cruise with it. At that time, I was in charge of the machine shop. I got all the tools lined up and everything on it. The day before they were going to go, I got my orders, I had enough points to get out of there to go to Lido Beach to get my discharge.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What day did you get your discharged?

Mr. Coviello:

It was December 18, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After the war quite a ways then?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you joined the LSD, was that before the war was over?

Mr. Coviello:

No, the war was over then, it was just sending ships out. I had an incident just trying to get off the ship at that time. I do not know if you are familiar with the Navy used to have these blue flat cap, instead of the white caps that they wear. At one time, at a certain date you changed caps and then that day they changed to blue flap caps. I did not have my hat at that time, someone took it from me. I did not have a cap to get on the ship. They would not let me off. I went down below and said to the guy, let me take your hat and follow me off just to the dock and I will give you, your hat back again.

That is how I got off the ship that day. Then I went down to Lido Beach in New York and that is when I got my discharge and went home.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did anything else happen before you got the discharge?

Mr. Coviello:

No, not really, just passing through they were just getting this guys back home just as fast as they could.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, the all your time on the ship, your ship never was hit by enemy fire, or anything like that?

Mr. Coviello:

No, very fortunate that it wasn't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, you all were very fortunate.

Mr. Coviello:

Of course, it was close a couple of times. Now, we were riding by one night. We were going on an errand, and all in that area, the Pacific, there is a lot of phosphorus in the water. The screws turning the water, it was like a light following you. Then they hit us at night one time. They dropped one of their bombs and they hit the wake, because they saw the light I guess; they did not hit us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You, got your discharge. What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Coviello:

Aboard ship, see if you are familiar with this.

You see the mast and the cross beam. I had to go up there and stand watch.

They don't have a crow's nest, so I am scared of heights anyway, I still am, and I had to climb that ladder all the way up to that cross-beam, strap myself in and sit there for 1 hour. They only had to use 1 hour. I am up there and that ship is going back and forth. I am reporting seeing planes in the distance. There are planes, but they can't see them from the deck. You know, you still you rise like a yard and you got to see 3 or 4 miles and they couldn't see what I am seeing. Well just keep your eye on it. I did see something great there, I am up there and looking down and this great big giant manta ray, came under the ship was about half-the-size of the ship. At this point, I am yelling and point down to the guys on deck, "look!, look! look!" They did not know what I was talking about, but I saw that, and at least it was something I treasure being up there for that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, that would be something.

Mr. Coviello:

Then I had the toughest time trying to find the first step trying to get off that thing. But I made it down.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever get sea-sick?

Mr. Coviello:

Every day we left port. I was in the shaft allies for sea detail, that is when you are coming in and going out, the first day. I just could not take the smell down there and it was so warm down there, I got sick every time, but the next day I was fine. After that, it was a pleasure all the way through. Now, the only other time that I did not get sea-sick, the first day was when we were leaving Townsville, Australia, we were inside The Great Barrier Reef. It was very calm there. The next day we went into the ocean there. Now lets go back a little bit. These Army boys we were taking onboard ship, said, "oh, you guys got it easy here, look how easy it is? All this stuff. I said, you all wait. Now, we got into the rough water and half of them got sick. But fortunately, at that time I never did get sick.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, on April 12, of 1945, President Roosevelt died. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. Coviello:

We had heard about it, but that is it, we just heard about it and heard that Truman was taking over.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No reaction to it then?

Mr. Coviello:

What was that?

Mr. Misenhimer:

People did not have any kind of reaction to it?

Mr. Coviello:

No not really.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, on May the 8th of 1945, Germany surrendered. Did you all hear about that?

Now, that was before you came home.

Mr. Coviello:

Now, lets see.

Mr. Misenhimer:

May the 8th of 1945?

Mr. Coviello:

No, I guess it was just something and we were excited, that probably it was going to end now, we would probably get help from the guys over on that side; except we were shipping out to the Pacific and it was going to go a lot faster, thats all.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you got out, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Coviello:

Not really, I guess I shouldn't put it that way. I did not work for the first year I was home. I joined the 52/20 club, you know, what that is?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, the 20 dollars a week for 52 weeks.

Mr. Coviello:

I stayed on it for about 10 months. I guess, it was just boring and I decided I better get a job. I wanted on the job training that they gave us. Your pay scale is the lowest you could be as an apprentice, but they made up the difference, that if you were a mechanic.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, what kind of work was it? Go ahead.

Mr. Coviello:

I was making safety pins. It was a boring job there too. There were 6 machines where I am supposed to be at. Me and another fellow. The other fellow was experienced. He was just teaching me, but every time the machine would broke down, he would say, well you watch the other 5, I have to fix this. So, I wasn't able to look anymore, I just put wires, put the wire on a rack now, and put the heads in a slot and that was it. Then, they went on strike. That was the best thing that ever happened to me. I got off that and I got into a plumbing supply house in 1947 or 46. I have been in one ever since. I have been working in a supply house here too now. So, that is about a 65 or 70 year stretch.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh, yes, that is a long time. You are 90 now?



Mr. Coviello:

I will be 90 next month.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, in August, that is right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the morale on your ship?

Mr. Coviello:

The morale was fine. There were a couple of guys that did not get along. When you figure that there weren't very many men. We only had 58. Incidentally, we did not realize, they used to tell us that if you made one safe landing, the ship would have been set. It would have paid for itself, you would not have had to worry about that. They never told us that see. They didn't ever experience with it before, that we were running one of those suicide ships. I always wondered, because I was reading the books and everything, when I read this book and in it saw how many guys were jumping ship in San Francisco, because they were assigned to LST's and they just weren't going to go on those suicide ships.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the nickname for them " Low-Slow-Target?

Mr. Coviello:

Low-Slow-Targets, but we didn't realize this, a bunch of 18, 19-year-old kids, figured what is the difference, we are in the Navy now, lets go we will show them what to do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you think of the officers you had over you?

Mr. Coviello:

Some were fine. An engineering officer I didn't seem to hang out with him too much, although he was my supervisor. One time, I quit the Black Gang and went to Deck Force for about 2 months. Then, they decided at 2 months, he got a notice to send back his oldest fireman first, the one that had the most experience on the ship, I was it, but he did not send me, because I was in the Deck Force. I saw him in the foc'sle leaning over the rail and kind of watching things. He comes up and sneaks up beside me, and he says " You know Coviello, I got to send back the Fireman First with the oldest record onboard ship. I can't send you." But, that was all we were good, everybody got along fine as far as the general. There were 2 or 3 little mishaps here and there, but nothing that really mattered. We were more family then we were a crew.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many different Captains did you have?

Mr. Coviello:

I think, that when I was onboard it was just 2.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Two?

Mr. Coviello:

Captain Swanson, I believe was the first one, and I forget what the second name was, because I was not on that long.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see that sign Kilroy was here?

Mr. Coviello:

Oh, God, all over the place.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Coviello:

No, I had a couple and I do not know what happened to them, I was saving them. One of the soldier boys made something out of liquid plastic that would solidify. He would put a seashell or something inside of it, just like a paper weight. I do not know whatever happened to that. The only souvenirs I had was actually when I was playing Black Jack, I took money away from them. One time, I had to go on watch at 8 o'clock and we started playing at about 6 o'clock. At about 7:30, I was the banker that time, and I said I gotta leave, I gotta leave. I had about 3 or 4 hundred pounds in my pocket. This guys says no, you can't leave, you gotta spend this last round with me, and I am gonna put 20 pounds on the card.

Then he gets a double and he splits it, so its 40 pounds, at that time the pounds were 3 dollars and 25 cents, and I beat him. He went crazy. He threw the cards all over the place. I guess I am the only one that sent money home rather than ask for money. I sent my mother home I guess 6 or 7 hundred dollars overtime.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you using pounds, because you were near Australia is that the reason you were using pounds.

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, that would be Australian, we were down there and they would pay us in pounds and at that time they were 3 dollars and 25 cents a pound.

Mr. Misenheimer:

Did you get much liberty in Australia?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, it was pretty good there, you know it is still a case of starboard side and port side, but we spent half the time ashore. Like, when we first got over there we were over there for a couple of weeks because we did not know where we were going to get things going, they did not even have us assigned anywhere at the time. Then, from that point down, like I say Brisbane first, where it became a fleet and then we went up to Townsville and they had to clean out the ships. Okay, that is another thing, they had to clean out our ships. They would get this portable landing gear.

The guys used a metal that they put down on the ground for the planes to come in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, that's Marsden Matting?

Mr. Coviello:

I don't know, but it is a big piece of sheet with the holes in it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, they called it Marsden Matting.

Mr. Coviello:

Well, they put that on the beach, and we were told to come in flank speed whatever you can make and hit that place. We hit split all the way up and every time the tide went out we were dry. Then we would clean the bottom of the ship and I went into the sea locker that is the big place that was 6 x 6 with all holes in it, the water would come in but the animals could not pass through it. I went in there one day, and these are only holes that may be about one inch and a half or so in diameter. I got to cleaning this thing out and I pulled out a 6 inch crab out of that, he must of got in there as a pup you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

He grew up in there huh?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about some other things that happened?

Mr. Coviello:

Well, lets see if I can think of any. Well, we went to Townsville one day to try to get me to ride a horse, well, I couldn't ride a horse. This guy was from Texas, he said I wanna rent that horse, I want to ride that horse. He started riding up all the roads with it. He gave the boys rides, then he says now you can take it Sal. I said no, I can't. I had never been on a horse and I still have not been on a horse. I did get drunk a couple of times and I did not know what I was doing but they told me the next day.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I understand the Australian people were pretty friendly.

Mr. Coviello:

Oh, they were, they were terrific as far as that goes. One of our R&R's, which is rest and recreation, we had from when were up there like after one of the invasions at that time, they would send half the crew down to a 10 day R&R. We went to down into Sydney. We went over towards the beach there and we went over to this Tourist House.

At that time, cigarettes were 50 cents a carton. So we got a room and breakfast for 7 days for 3 cartons of cigarettes. You could get a bottle of liquor down there for a carton of cigarettes. We spent that way, the guys would just take cigarettes down instead of clothes.

It was a beautiful Tourist House there, the food was good, nice clean rooms and everything. There we met a couple of Air Force boys. We started talking one day and then this guy comes over and says to me, " How about swapping uniforms?" I says yea, I don't mind. I put on his uniform and he put on mine and it looked like they were tailor made. Our sizes were exactly the same. You could never tell what the boys would put on. Then we went out of town for a day.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You did not get into trouble with doing that?

Mr. Coviello:

No, we were too far out.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, in New Guinea, we saw Bob Hope, Jerry Colona, oh what is the lady's name?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Frances Langford?

Mr. Coviello:

Frances Langford, yes. We saw them in one night down there, that is the only one I ever saw.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Coviello:

No, the only thing is I am trying to think of where it was, whether on our R&R leave or when we came home. One place we walked off the ship and there they were with cold milk and hot dogs. I hadn't had a drink of milk, "real milk" in a long time. I did not have any experiences, but a couple of guys did, they weren't too happy with them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Coviello:

No, we never did get it, I don't know if in the radio shack if they heard it, but they did not put over for us to hear.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, when you crossed the equator, did you have any kind of a ceremony?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes we did, shell back.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did they do to you?

Mr. Coviello:

They had one guy acting as King Neptune, there wasn't too much of an initiation going on, because it was the whole crew out there actually, no shell backs.



Nobody, ever had crossed the equator. Well I should say one guy an engineering officer I should say was the only one that was a shell back.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, what ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Coviello:

Oh, gosh, there is a whole list of them, I have them here some place.

LST's and battle stars. Whoever wrote this says LST's awarded 8 battle stars as follows and we are on that list. That was the 8 major battles and they still have like 4 or 5 after that or in between that. I did not get all the 8.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You got 8 Battle Stars right?

Mr. Coviello:

As far as I was entitled to them yes, so you got 1 gold and 3 silvers on the ribbon because you could not put 8 on the ribbon.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What other medals?

Mr. Coviello:

It says here, we got The Combat Action Medal, Good Conduct Medal, not everybody seems to have. Asianic Pacific Campaign that is the one with the 8 stars.

Then we have the American Campaign, World War II Medal, Phillipine Liberation, Phillipine Unit Citation and Occupation Medal.

Mr. Misenheimer:

Did you get to the Phillipines yourself?

Mr. Coviello:

No I didn't. Because, then they told me you were on the ship long enough you can deserve it anyway. So I got the ribbon.

Mr. Misenheimer:

So, you got the ribbon?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer:

How many reunions have you had?

Mr. Coviello:

I think this is the 14th or 15th, but I have been maybe to only about 8 of them or so.

When they first started, I just could not see it going, then finally my wife talked us into going to one in Arizona and I haven't missed one since. I did not realize how wonderful they were just to sit and talk to the boys. That is why the wives would tell us, every time you guys get together you fight the war all over again. That is alright as long as you keep winning.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now in your reunion is that just your ship or more than that?

Mr. Coviello:

Just our ship, actually now it is in to the second and third generations, our guys are gone now and their families are starting to come now with us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When was the last one?

Mr. Coviello:

The last one was in Phoenix Arizona.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When?

Mr. Coviello:

In about the second week of October.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, it is coming up in October right?

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, my daughter is in charge of that.

Mr. Misenheimer:

Where is that going to be?

Mr. Coviello:

51.

That is going to be in Chattanooga Tennessee. We are going to be in a Chattanooga Choo-Choo Hotel.

Mr. Misenheimer:

Now, when Japan surrendered you were back in the states right? Any kind of celebration then?

Mr. Coviello:

Actually, one of the boys from the ship got out early on a medical discharge and he lived in Medford, Mass, and I was in Boston waiting for my ship. I usually would go to his house about every night actually and we were having dinner that night and his brother-in-law came running in and says, Japan surrendered!, Japan surrendered!, why don't you go down town. I said what do I need to go down town for, I said, I will be happy right here and glad it is over with now and I am with friends. He said they are having such a blast down there. I said I will get lost down there, what am I going to do. I stayed with them and spent the evening and just reminisced. That is all we do every time we get together. You know, remember this and remember that, and what is this guys name that we used to see there. That is why I love going to reunions. I told him we take a lot of sight seeing trips too you know that they plan for us. Where ever we are at, I said if we don't go on any trips as long as we stay in the hospitality room and talk. That is all I go for.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Had you been back to the Pacific after the war?

Mr. Coviello:

No. We did get to San Francisco in one of our reunions and I went up to Alcatraz, I had to go by boat, so I was on the Pacific for a little while.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else you recall from your time in World War II?

Mr. Coviello:

It is a long time, I can't think of anything else. I told you my ship was in Vancouver Washington and when we left Noumea, going for Sydney, the water was so bad, you just could not drink it. They sent it away to have it analyzed. By the time we got to Sydney, we were still drinking the water and they found out that it was contaminated. They opened up the tanks and not only they found painters workman's overalls all kind of debris in there and they finally in Sydney, they had to send men in to reline the whole tank with liquid cement. At that time, when we had our fruit for meals I would always ask for fruit because we had a lot of apricots, I would ask could you just give me the juice and forget the apricots? I wanted to take a drink and I wanted to drink something good for a change. Things like that happen you know. In the boat yards in Vancouver where they were making ours.

They worked there on 6 at a time and just about every week one would come off and they would keep moving them, just moving down when they were up and down.

This guy would do this, and the next guy would put it over there and then would go down to another guy. About one a week it was coming of the rails. They were making 6 at one time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They weren't careful about keeping the things clean.

Mr. Coviello:

No they were were just keeping up the contracts, making their money.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well Sal, thanks again for your time today, and thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

Mr. Coviello:

It was a pleasure and thanks for the reminiscing.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Your are welcome. You were talking earlier, where you felt like MacArthur helped save a lot of lives. My bypassing and things like that.

Mr. Coviello:

Yes, where they cut them off and just left them. After a few months in Hollandia, those Japanese would come in and try to get into our chow line with us, just to get food.

I kept thinking about that, I said imagine, who knows how many lives he could have saved or did save? Not only ours but the Japanese.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you think of MacArthur?

Mr. Coviello:

I thought well of him. I think he still is one of the most brilliant strategists we have ever had, but there are some guys that won't listen you know. Even on board our ship, there was one of the guys, he has passed on now. At one of the reunions we were at a Naval Museum and they started showing the things around and they showed the picture of the signing of the Japanese surrender. The guy showing all of this started naming everybody there but he said that this guy, I don't know who he is? This guy in a wheelchair jumped out of his chair and said what do you mean you don't know! That is Wayne Wright, that is the guy that MacArthur left back in the Philippines to take all the brunt. He was screaming, I never saw him move so fast, but he did not care for MacArthur.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A lot of people didn't.

Mr. Coviello:

A lot of people didn't, and I tried to straighten him out, and you can do what you want, I said but this guy is great, was great.

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