

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The Nimitz Education & Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With

Calvin N. Beem

Nevada, IA

July 17, 2013

Second Class Motor Machinist – US Navy

LST 454

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is July 17, 2013. I am interviewing Mr. Calvin N. Beem by telephone. His phone number is 515-382-2576. His address is 1001 "T" Avenue, Nevada, IA 50201. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific Wars, the Nimitz Education & Research Center for the preservation of historical information related to WWII.

Mr. Misenhimer

Cal, I want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview today; and I want to thank you for your service to our country during WWII.

Mr. Beem

Thank you.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Museum, to make sure it's OK with you. (Agreement read). Is that OK with you?

Mr. Beem

That's alright.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the next thing I would like to do is get an alternative contact. We find out sometimes that several years down the road we try to get in contact with veterans and they have moved or something so do you have a son or daughter that we could contact if we needed you?

Mr. Beem

I've got a daughter in Des Moines, Iowa, Bonnie Lee Beem.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you have a phone number for her?

Mr. Beem

It is 641-691-9460 in Des Moines, IA.

Mr. Misenhimer

We hope that we don't need that but you never know. Cal, what is your birth date?

Mr. Beem

November 26, 1924, in Clome, South Dakota.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have brothers and sisters, and how many of each?

Mr. Beem

Well, I had four sisters and seven brothers (chuckling, no television back then).

Mr. Misenhimer

Quite a large family, a whole dozen of you then. Were any of your brothers in WWII?

Mr. Beem

I had one brother in the Merchant Marines.

Mr. Misenhimer

Are they still living?

Mr. Beem

I'm the only one left.

Mr. Misenhimer

If they were I'd like to interview them, also. So there were 12 in your family then?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now you grew up during the depression. How did the depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Beem

Well, I was too little, really, to know, but we always had food on the table.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. What was your father's occupation?

Mr. Beem

He was a blacksmith.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he able to keep working during the depression?

Mr. Beem

Pretty much so.

Mr. Misenhimer

As a blacksmith, did he shoe horses and that sort of thing?

Mr. Beem

He sure did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did he work with other kinds of equipment, also?

Mr. Beem

Well, whatever they brought to him. If he couldn't fix it he could make it as he was one of those handy guys.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now where did you go to high school?

Mr. Beem

I went to high school in the little town of Ferguson, Iowa.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what year did you graduate there?

Mr. Beem

'43.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what did you do when you finished high school?

Mr. Beem

I joined the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go in to the Navy?

Mr. Beem

In '43.

Mr. Misenhimer

What date, month I mean?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right I think it was right around September.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you finished high school in May or June?

Mr. Beem

In May.

Mr. Misenhimer

So what did you do from then until the time you went in the Navy?

Mr. Beem

I worked in a greenhouse. Of course, that was for a short time.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Beem

I volunteered.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Beem

Well, I wanted to join the Marines but their quota was filled up and I didn't want to go home with nothing so I joined the Navy. And it was the smartest thing I ever did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go for boot camp?

Mr. Beem

I went to Farragut, Idaho.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about boot camp. How was that?

Mr. Beem

It was alright. I think we were supposed to have 16 weeks but wound up with 8, something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were your drill instructors pretty tough on you?

Mr. Beem

Oh, not too bad, no.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some of the things you did during boot camp?

Mr. Beem

Well, there wasn't a whole lot we could do. We were holed up there. I joined the boat crew to have something to do and that was about it. I didn't get to stand any watches because I joined the boat crew.

Mr. Misenhimer

There was a lake close by there as I understand it.

Mr. Beem

There was a very good lake.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a lot of marching?

Mr. Beem

I didn't get a whole lot of that in, no.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about swimming?

Mr. Beem

Just one time, they didn't make you go back.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about knot tying?

Mr. Beem

We had a little bit of that. Like I said, I joined the engineers right away and they didn't do much of that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any kind of weapons training?

Mr. Beem

We just had 30 06 when we went out on the rifle range and that was only one time.

Mr. Misenhimer

The 30 06, was that a bolt action?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

The Springfield 03.

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. Now you said you joined the boat crew. What all did that consist of?

Mr. Beem

Well, we marched down to the lake, got in our boats, went out in the middle of the lake and goofed off and then we had two or three of us in our company would have races back to shore.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of boat was this?

Mr. Beem

I don't know what the name was anymore, but there were probably 10 of us and the coxswain.

Mr. Misenhimer

It had an engine on it then.

Mr. Beem

No, no engine.

Mr. Misenhimer

No engine, then sort of a rowboat.

Mr. Beem

Yeah, you could call it a rowboat.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had to row it to get it out there.

Mr. Beem

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what would you do out on the water then, anything?

Mr. Beem

Just sit there and goof off.

Mr. Misenhimer

How often did you do that?

Mr. Beem

Every day.

Mr. Misenhimer

For how long?

Mr. Beem

I think it was three or four hours.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many days?

Mr. Beem

Every day but Sunday.

Mr. Misenhimer

For several weeks then. And you would just paddle out there and sit in the lake until it was time to paddle back?

Mr. Beem

Yeah, that was about it.

Mr. Misenhimer

No kind of training of any sort?

Mr. Beem

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then where did you go from there?

Mr. Beem

Came home for 10 days, back to Idaho and got on a draft going to California to that Navy base out there around Sacramento.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you travel down there?

Mr. Beem

Train.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that train trip?

Mr. Beem

(Chuckling) It was alright. Back then we were all young and we didn't care one way or the other if it was good or bad. We had a pretty good ride, no problems.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do when you got down there?

Mr. Beem

Stood around and did nothing.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were getting pretty good at that, huh?

Mr. Beem

Yeah, I was getting very good at that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Beem

After that I got a draft to go out to the Pacific.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, where did you go in the Pacific?

Mr. Beem

From San Francisco I wound up in Brisbane, Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how did you get over there?

Mr. Beem

It was on an LST, an amphibious force.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you join the LST?

Mr. Beem

It was in '43, too, I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

And was that the LST 454?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

And where did you pick it up at?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right I think it was San Diego.

Mr. Misenhimer

You didn't get on it when it was first commissioned?

Mr. Beem

No, no I didn't make it then. It was a new one but they had their crew that checked it out and I joined the crew there in San Diego.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what was your job on the LST?

Mr. Beem

I was a motor machinist.

Mr. Misenhimer

That means you worked down below deck.

Mr. Beem

Below deck, that's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Working on the engines and that sort of stuff. Did you have any kind of diesel training or anything like that?

Mr. Beem

Some did but I didn't get to because I had worked on engines before I went in and that was on my papers. That's where I wound up and that's where I stayed.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had worked on engines before you went in?

Mr. Beem

Yes, I had.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you travel on down to Australia?

Mr. Beem

It was on a liberty ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you didn't take the LST 454 down to Australia then?

Mr. Beem

No, I didn't. But I picked it up there in Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you joined the LST in Australia?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was your trip down on the liberty ship?

Mr. Beem

A lot of guys were on it; it wasn't a very good one, but at least it got there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Much seasickness?

Mr. Beem

No, I never did get seasick.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about other people?

Mr. Beem

Oh, some of them were a mess.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how long did it take you to get down there?

Mr. Beem

I don't know, I want to say pretty close to three weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer

I imagine that's probably about right. Were you in a convoy with other ships?

Mr. Beem

No, we were single. We would go so far and then zig-zag around.

Mr. Misenhimer

The liberty ship isn't very fast as I understand.

Mr. Beem

No, they're not.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any trouble being threatened by Japanese submarines or airplanes?

Mr. Beem

We never did, no.

Mr. Misenhimer

And you went to Brisbane, Australia?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do there?

Mr. Beem

Just waited for the ship and boarded the LST down there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh yes, that's where you boarded the LST down there. And that was in Brisbane?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then what happened?

Mr. Beem

We went up to New Guinea, Townsville, if I remember right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Townsville is in Australia.

Mr. Beem

Yes, Townsville, Australia, and then we went on over to New Guinea. Christmas Day of '43 we made the invasion of Cape Gloucester, New Britain.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that your first invasion?

Mr. Beem

Yes, first invasion.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the ship had made some before that, right?

Mr. Beem

I think they had made one; that was Good enough Island.

Mr. Misenhimer

They may have gone into Port Moresby as I recall. Goodenough Island, I think.

Mr. Beem

Yes, right, I was there, too.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, you were on Goodenough Island?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was before Hollandia. When you went into Hollandia, what happened there?

Mr. Beem

We went in and unloaded. We had planes flying around, you know. We came out of all that alright.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were you carrying there?

Mr. Beem

We carried troops, trucks and tanks.

Mr. Misenhimer

Into Hollandia.

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have much enemy resistance there?

Mr. Beem

There was quite a little bit but not all that bad, I don't think.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was your ship shot at by shore batteries or anything like that?

Mr. Beem

They shot at us but we escaped everything pretty good.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about enemy aircraft?

Mr. Beem

We had quite a few of them coming down but we all wound up being safe, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

There were a lot of ships there, too, other ships.

Mr. Beem

Yes, there was.

Mr. Misenhimer

Probably other ships with antiaircraft guns such as destroyers and cruisers and all that. And then what happened?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right after we made that invasion, what did we do . . . I don't remember if we went back to Port Moresby or not. But I think maybe we went back and loaded up and came back again.

Mr. Misenhimer

And where was your next invasion?

Mr. Beem

I don't remember. Goodenough was one but I just don't remember. If you would mention the name I'd tell you.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, Lae?

Mr. Beem

Yes, that was before I got there.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was before you got there.

Mr. Beem

Yes

Mr. Misenhimer

How about Finschhaven?

Mr. Beem

Yes, made that one.

Mr. Misenhimer

That would be up the line there from Lae and Port Moresby. Do you recall anything that happened at Finschhaven?

Mr. Beem

Not really, you just took it a day at a time, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK. And then you went to New Britain for the invasion there; that was Cape Gloucester.

Mr. Beem

Yes, I remember that one, it was on Christmas Day.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was Christmas Day? New Britain would have been before Hollandia, so that was probably Christmas Day, huh? Hollandia was April, 1944.

Mr. Beem

Yes, that's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything in particular that you recall from these invasions when you went in there?

Mr. Beem

Not really. Quick as we unloaded we backed off and had to go back to our home port.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where was your home port?

Mr. Beem

There for a while it was Port Moresby but then we went down to Milne Bay which was where we were the biggest share of the time.

Mr. Misenhimer

Milne Bay is down by Port Moresby, right?

Mr. Beem

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Another place you went to according to this was Biak, do you remember that one?

Mr. Beem

Yes, I do.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything in particular happen there?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right, on that one, we had two bombers or Liberators came down that got shot down and they landed probably half a block away from us in the water, maybe a little closer.

When it hit the water it was nothing but a ball of fire, I remember that.

Mr. Misenhimer

So nobody came off the planes then?

Mr. Beem

No, nobody survived it all.

Mr. Misenhimer

What else?

Mr. Beem

We just worked around the island, then when our big general wanted to go back to the Philippines we took him back to the Philippines.

Mr. Misenhimer

Who was that, MacArthur?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

You went to the Philippines then?

Mr. Beem

Yes. First time I saw MacArthur was in Hollandia in New Guinea. He walked in front of our ship. I remember that because our officers ran down to the ground to see if they could get their handshake but he just bypassed them and walked right on by them.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of MacArthur?

Mr. Beem

Looking back, I thought he did a good job.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got to the Philippines, what did you do there?

Mr. Beem

We made three invasions in the Philippines. We were at Leyte, then we went down to Cebu, (that was a submarine base there in the Philippines), we made that invasion, and then we went on up to Luzon.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything in particular happen on those invasions?

Mr. Beem

About every half hour we had general quarters. It started getting warm as we went up that way, started getting hotter, but we had quite a few air raids up there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was your ship ever hit?

Mr. Beem

No, it wasn't. One kid said we got hit on the side but I don't remember that at all.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where was your battle station?

Mr. Beem

I was up in the bow on a 20 mm.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever shoot at any airplanes?

Mr. Beem

Oh, a lot of them. I remember one week one came down over there and I could see the pilot with his goggles and everything on sitting right in there and he was about as scared as I was. I would say he wasn't over 20' above us when he came down over the ship.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of plane was that, do you know?

Mr. Beem

I think it was a Zero.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all shoot him down?

Mr. Beem

I don't know. We were all shooting at him and he went on over inland so I don't know if he went down or not. I never saw no smoke or anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you see many planes get shot down?

Mr. Beem

Yes, I saw quite a few of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Japanese planes.

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know if your ship shot any down?

Mr. Beem

Our ship?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes sir.

Mr. Beem

Well, our boys up there on the 40's, they shot down a Japanese bomber with one shot. Of course, we couldn't live with them after that (chuckling).

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any kamikazes?

Mr. Beem

I never saw any of those until we got farther out of New Guinea and up into the Philippines, then we saw some of them up there.

Mr. Misenhimer

I know there were a few kamikazes at Leyte.

Mr. Beem

Yes

Mr. Misenhimer

That was about the first time they saw many of them.

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What else happened?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right, it was the same stuff day in and day out. I remember one time up there in Leyte we would anchor out there at night and the deck crew had to walk around and stand

guard or the Japanese would try to swim out and put a bomb on your ship. But that's about all I can remember on that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you in a particular squadron or anything like that, with a group?

Mr. Beem

No, just the engineer group.

Mr. Misenhimer

No, I mean your ship.

Mr. Beem

Yes, we were in Flotilla 7, if I remember right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Flotilla 7, OK

Mr. Beem

Right. And I think that included six ships.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you were in the 7th Fleet, is that right?

Mr. Beem

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

I think Admiral Kincaid was in charge of the 7th Fleet.

Mr. Beem

Yes he was.

Mr. Misenhimer

What are some other things that happened?

Mr. Beem

I can't really remember too much . . .

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Beem

Well, where was it? We made one landing and they shoved a counter-attack on us and we thought for a while that we were going to have to get off of our ship and go, but I can't remember where that was.

Mr. Misenhimer

But then what happened?

Mr. Beem

Our Marines did a good job of kicking them back.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there other ships coming after you, or on the land, or what?

Mr. Beem

Not so much of that, no.

Mr. Misenhimer

I mean when the Marines kicked them back, where was that?

Mr. Beem

Do you mean what island?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes sir.

Mr. Beem

I can't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

But were this people on the land threatening you or other ships in the water threatening you, or who was threatening you?

Mr. Beem

No, it was the ones on land.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were beached up there or something?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have trouble getting off the beach at any time?

Mr. Beem

Yes, at one time the tide went out and we got stuck on the ground but that was only one time.

We had a destroyer I think it was that came in and threw water at us but we got back off of that alright.

Mr. Misenhimer

What would you consider your worst day?

Mr. Beem

I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

There were probably several of them, huh?

Mr. Beem

There were quite a few of them, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there any particular friends you had on the ship?

Mr. Beem

Being in the engineer group, the biggest share of our friends were down there; we didn't associate too much with those on the top side.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many men on the crew of an LST?

Mr. Beem

I can't remember exactly but it seems like about 160 some.

Mr. Misenhimer

Quite a few. What did you think of the officers you had over you?

Mr. Beem

Well, just an average bunch, I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there any one that you felt particularly good about?

Mr. Beem

Yes, there was an officer by the name of Guisey. He was an engineering officer and he was regular Navy. Looking back he was an exceptional man.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there one that you thought was pretty bad?

Mr. Beem

Yeah, he was a 90-day wonder.

Mr. Misenhimer

What happened to him?

Mr. Beem

His name was Johnson, if I remember right. He would come down to the engine room and lay down in front of our switchboard and take a nap, instead of going out to his own sack. Nobody liked him.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any funny incidents anywhere along the way?

Mr. Beem

I can't remember anything like that offhand.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all get down to Australia for R & R or anything like that?

Mr. Beem

After we made the invasion of the Philippines we took turns and went to Sydney, Australia.

Mr. Misenhimer

And how was that?

Mr. Beem

That was good.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there?

Mr. Beem

Ten days.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were the Australian people friendly?

Mr. Beem

The ones we met, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get a chance to mingle much with the civilians?

Mr. Beem

Quite a little bit but people back then would like to keep to themselves.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you been back to Australia after the war?

Mr. Beem

No, but I've said more than once that I'd sure like to go back.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes, it's a nice place.

Mr. Beem

Yes, it was. I went to Brisbane and Sydney . . .

Mr. Misenhimer

You said you went to Townsville . . .

Mr. Beem

Townsville, yes, but this was in Australia and it was on the tip of where we got loaded up and ready to make the invasion of Borneo.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, Borneo. Did you go to Borneo?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, I didn't know that.

Mr. Beem

But I can't remember the name of that town; it was a little dinky town, but the people were nice.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you only had the R & R down there one time?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What are some other things that happened?

Mr. Beem

Every day wound up being about the same, depending on where you were, but nothing else really rings a bell.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you come back to the states?

Mr. Beem

That was in the wintertime, if I remember right. Now that's a blank; I really don't remember when I came back.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Beem

Yes, we were in Hollandia, New Guinea.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what were people's reactions when they heard that?

Mr. Beem

It was more like a quiet . . . it was like they didn't know what to expect and what would come up next. We were just dumbfounded I guess is the word.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

And what was the reaction to that?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right there wasn't too much said, we just felt like we were getting closer to the end.

Mr. Misenhimer

Any kind of celebration or anything?

Mr. Beem

No, we never had any celebration.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then on August 6, 1945, they dropped the first atomic bomb. Did you hear about that?

Mr. Beem

After it was over with we did. We didn't hear it right away.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then on August 15 when Japan surrendered, did you have a celebration then?

Mr. Beem

No, we didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you when that happened?

Mr. Beem

I was on a aircraft carrier from Guam coming home.

Mr. Misenhimer

You were on your way home. So you would have gotten home towards the end of August of 1945?

Mr. Beem

Yes, pretty close.

Mr. Misenhimer

So, tell me about getting to the aircraft carrier, how did that happen?

Mr. Beem

Well, it was on the point system. We were on the submarine base in Guam and then I got my orders to come home. After I got to Guam I was assigned to an LCI and then I went on up to Okinawa and Iwo Jima and then after we went there I got my points to come home. I landed back in Guam and I got on an aircraft carrier to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now when you went to Okinawa and Iwo Jima, was this when the fighting was going on there?

Mr. Beem

It was just more cleaning up than anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did your ship do there in Okinawa and Iwo Jima?

Mr. Beem

On that LCI we just loaded up with troops and hit the beach and when the troops got on we backed off and headed for Samoa.

Mr. Misenhimer

So was the fighting going on when you were doing that?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Iwo Jima was February 19 of '45 and Okinawa was April 1 of '45. So had you left your LST before that then?

Mr. Beem

Yes, that's when they shipped me back to Guam and I got on the LCI.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you went to the LCI before the war ended?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know the number of the LCI?

Mr. Beem

639 I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your job on it?

Mr. Beem

I was a motor machinist and stuck with the engines.

Mr. Misenhimer

Why did you go from the LST to the LCI? They just transferred you?

Mr. Beem

Because I was out there long enough that they just sent me home; I got a 30 day leave. And when I went back I got on a transport and went to Guam and then I was assigned to this 639 LCI.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, so about when you would have come home, January, February?

Mr. Beem

If I remember right it was in December that I came home.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, December of '44.

Mr. Beem

No, '46. After I went out there I got a 10 day leave, that's when I went to Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer

I see, and this would have been before the invasion of Iwo Jima?

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Iwo Jima was February 19 of '45. So you probably came home in December of '44, then went back over there. Was your LCI ever attacked by enemy planes or anything like that?

Mr. Beem

No, the only thing we had was the end of a typhoon.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about that.

Mr. Beem

That was a rough ride. It was like a cork bobbing around.

Mr. Misenhimer

And where would that have been?

Mr. Beem

That was off the tip of either Saipan or Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer

There were several typhoons out there. Now, when you were on this LCI, what fleet were you with there?

Mr. Beem

I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it Halsey or . . .

Mr. Beem

I think it was Halsey, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now riding that typhoon out, it was pretty rough, huh?

Mr. Beem

Yes, everything was hatched down tight; nobody could go outside for anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

But, you made it through OK.

Mr. Beem

We made it through OK.

Mr. Misenhimer

So when you got on that aircraft carrier coming home, about when would that have been? Was the war over yet?

Mr. Beem

Yes, it was over.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, because the war got over in August of '45, when Japan surrendered. So you said you were on the aircraft carrier then?

Mr. Beem

No, after that, because I made it home I think a couple of days before Christmas.

Mr. Misenhimer

So in December of '45 you came home.

Mr. Beem

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that trip home?

Mr. Beem

It was alright. I don't think I'd want duty on an aircraft carrier.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you know what carrier that was?

Mr. Beem

It was a CVE, the USS Maynard.

Mr. Misenhimer

A CVE, OK. And when were you discharged?

Mr. Beem

That was in December.

Mr. Misenhimer

December of '45?

Mr. Beem

'45 I think, I don't remember really.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, December '46 would have been a year after the war was over, a year-and-a-half after the war was over.

Mr. Beem

It was before that.

Mr. Misenhimer

Yeah, December of '45 when you were discharged. Now when you got out, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Beem

Not really.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you see many changes in this country?

Mr. Beem

Well, no, I don't believe so.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you use your G.I Bill for anything?

Mr. Beem

I did not.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see any USO shows anytime?

Mr. Beem

I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer

No Jack Benny, huh?

Mr. Beem

Oh yes, yes, we saw Jack Benny a couple of times and there was a couple of singers, Frances Langford?

Mr. Misenhimer

And there were The Andrew Sisters.

Mr. Beem

Yes, saw them. Seems like there was another group but I can't lay my hands on it right now.

Jack Benny is the one that stood out more than anything.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you see him, do you know?

Mr. Beem

I saw him in New Guinea, I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

He was there. Did you get home with any souvenirs?

Mr. Beem

I brought a Japanese parachute home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Do you still have it?

Mr. Beem

I had it for a few years. I brought it home and I thought if I ever had a daughter I would make a wedding dress out of it. But it just laid around and she got married anyway so I gave the parachute to the museum in Branson, Missouri.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Beem

Yes. I don't remember where it was but I had to pay for a cup of coffee. I really did.

Mr. Misenhimer

Didn't like that, huh?

Mr. Beem

Well, I thought they were there for something better than that. I don't even remember where I was.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was the morale on the LST?

Mr. Beem

Oh, it was just a bunch of guys cussing one another and getting along.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about on the LCI?

Mr. Beem

Same way.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever see that sign, "Kilroy Was Here"?

Mr. Beem

Yes, yes, I have.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Beem

On the LST we have a reunion every year.

Mr. Misenhimer

Have you been to quite a few of them?

Mr. Beem

Been to all of them but one if I remember right. Been about 30 some of them I think.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Beem

Yes, a lot of times.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of her?

Mr. Beem

Oh, we just laughed.

Mr. Misenhimer

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

Mr. Beem

The first time I went across they tried to scare you with what you were going to do and all that but it was . . . you didn't know what was going to happen for a while. Maybe 14 times I crossed the equator.

Mr. Misenhimer

But the first time is when they would initiate you.

Mr. Beem

Yes, I got my card.

Mr. Misenhimer

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Beem

I don't know what all I got because I don't have all of them. I know I got the Philippine, American Theater, Asiatic . . . eight Bronze stars in them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Eight battle stars?

Mr. Beem

Yes. And I had others coming but I never bothered to get them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Anything else you recall regarding your time in the service?

Mr. Beem

Not really.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were overseas, did you get your mail with any regularity?

Mr. Beem

Oh, that was something. We would be out for I don't know how long and then you would have a pile of letters and then you would have a dry spell for a long time, then you would get a few more. It depended on where we were and what port we came in to, but the quicker you got to a port the mail guy would try to find out what he could get.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Beem

Second Class Motor Machinist.

Mr. Misenhimer

OK, I think that's all I have to ask unless you can think of something else.

Mr. Beem

No, I can't think of anything else.

Mr. Misenhimer

Thanks, again, for your time today and for your service to our country.

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October 1, 2013

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