

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

Raymond L. Bunfill

Mount Sterling, IL

May 29, 2015

L Company

108th Infantry Regiment

40th Infantry Division

My name is Richard Misenhimer, today is May 29, 2015. I am interviewing Mr. Raymond L. Bunfill by telephone. His phone number is 217-773-2091. His address is 206 Springdale, Mount Sterling, Illinois, 62353. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center, the for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Lozell, 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. Bunfill:

Well thank you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum to make sure this is okay with you.

"Agreement Read"

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes that's okay.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Bunfill:

Uh yes, my oldest son would be Tom Bunfill.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have a phone number for him?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes, it's 217-797-6432.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have an address for him?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes, let's see. Oh boy, I'll have to look though to see what his address is.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh no, that's fine. Phone for now is okay. Main thing is the phone number. And hopefully we'll never need that, but you never know.

Mr. Bunfill:

Alright.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What is your birthdate?

Mr. Bunfill:

February 3, 1926.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you born?

Mr. Bunfill:

I was born at home in Cooperstown Township of Brown County, Illinois.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, Brown County, Illinois. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Bunfill:

I had one brother and two sisters.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was your brother in World War II?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, he was in the Army later.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were your mother's and father's first names?

Mr. Bunfill:

My mother's first name was Ethel, that was spelled like Ethel, but it was pronounced ee-thel. Ethel May Herren. And my dad's name was Thomas Raymond, he went by Ray Bunfill.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay fine. You grew up during the depression, how did the depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well, I lived on a farm and of course we were able to, even though times were tough, we were able to have gardens and milk and eggs and garden produce and that sort of thing. I think we got by better than a lot of people did, but it was tough.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Your father was a farmer then?

Mr. Bunfill:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Would he own the land or rent it?

Mr. Bunfill:

He rented.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And about how many acres did he farm?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh not too many in those days, like a hundred and twenty acres and it wasn't all tillable either. Had livestock.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, and you used horses for farming is that right?

Mr. Bunfill:

Right, right in those days it was horses. Some mules in our part of the world, but mostly horses.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on December 7th '41 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you and how did you hear?

Mr. Bunfill:

I don't know if I can remember exactly how I heard, but I was a junior in high school. I don't know whether I heard it at school or no it wouldn't have been it was on Sunday morning.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right.

Mr. Bunfill:

I'm guessing I heard it on the radio, but I'm not sure now. But I'm guessing I heard it on the radio, or we heard it on the radio.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Bunfill:

I had no idea at that time how it was going to affect me, really I didn't. I was fifteen at the time, I had no idea.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Bunfill:

September 19, 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Bunfill:

I volunteered. I was registered of course with the selective service, but when it came time to go I volunteered to be drafted.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what branch did you go into?

Mr. Bunfill:

The Army.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And how did you choose the Army?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well they chose for me. At that time the enlistments were sealed, you couldn't enlist but you could make a preference and then it was up to them whether you got there or not.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What preference did you have?

Mr. Bunfill:

I preferred the Navy when I went, but I was partially colorblind and I couldn't make it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then where did you for your basic training?

Mr. Bunfill:

Camp Fannin, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about basic, how was it?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well when we got there it was hot and dry. The day we landed there it was all sand and raining, I thought it was a dreary looking place. But it turned out it wasn't too bad, I made it fine through basic.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all did you do in basic?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well it was scheduled for sixteen weeks of course. We did everything from training with different weapons, the M-1 rifle, the carbine, the bayonet practice, hand-to-hand combat, mortars, light machine guns, rifle range, and all that stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about a BAR?

Mr. Bunfill:

BAR -- we also practiced a little bit with those, not too much. However that's where I landed when I got overseas, is on the BAR team, at first.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what did you live in down there?

Mr. Bunfill:

We lived in wooden barracks.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the food?

Mr. Bunfill:

As I recall it wasn't too bad, not bad at all.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were your drill instructors pretty tough on you?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh they were, they were strict and rigid I'd say that for them, but I didn't have any problems.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A lot of marching?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh yes. Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything in particular you recall from your time in basic?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well before our sixteen weeks was up, it was during the time of the Battle of the Bulge in Europe and our training was cut short, I think three weeks. And we thought we were going to Europe but by the time they got us mustered out of there, why troops had been had been moved around so we didn't go to Europe we went to Pacific. But our training was cut short, I believe about three weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They did a lot of that during that time.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you traveled down to Texas how did you travel?

Mr. Bunfill:

On a troop train.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that trip?

Mr. Bunfill:

It was okay, but that train I think it must have dated back to about World War I, I don't know but it was an old one. Old canvas bunks in it, it was an old, old train. From Chicago down to Camp Fannin.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Had you been that far from home before?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, not that far.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then after you finished basic then what did you do?

Mr. Bunfill:

I had a five day, actually turned out to be six day delay en route being shipped to Fort Ord, California.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went home during that six days?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Another train trip?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes. Then when I left to go to Fort Ord I had to take a bus to Kansas City and board another troop train.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what did you do when you got to California?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well we weren't there very long in Fort Ord, but we did do a little bit more training. We had to pass under the machine gun fire at night and officers and enlisted men, everybody had to do it before we went overseas. That's about the only aspect of training that I remember there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

We called that the infiltration course.

Mr. Bunfill:

Right. That's what it was called, I didn't come up with the right name. Yeah, that's what it was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well we went from there up to San Francisco and shipped out on March the 6th of '45.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where did you go to?

Mr. Bunfill:

We went to Leyte Island in the Philippines by way of New Guinea.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know what ship you were on?

Mr. Bunfill:

The USS Sea Snipe.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Snipe, okay. How was that trip over?

Mr. Bunfill:

Long, twenty-seven days. Of course we were sailing alone until we got to New Guinea and there was a lot of zig-zagging and all that stuff and lights out and all that till we got to New Guinea where we picked up a convoy. From there up to Leyte Island.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there much sea sickness on the way over?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh my goodness, yes. I would judge 80% of the guys were sick.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About how many people on the ship, have any idea?

Mr. Bunfill:

I think it was, I think it was two thousand or I might be off it might have been three. It was two or three thousand.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Pretty good size ship then.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On the way down were you ever threatened by Japanese planes or submarines?

Mr. Bunfill:

Not on the way, no uh-uh.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you got to New Guinea did you stay there at all?

Mr. Bunfill:

No we were only there about half a day and we didn't even get off the ship. We were only there about half a day and the convoy was forming and so we went from there up to the Philippines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went with the convoy from there?

Mr. Bunfill:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that trip up there?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well, as I recall the ocean was pretty rough and there was ships of all sizes and kinds in the convoy. And occasionally I'd look out and some of those smaller ships I couldn't even see them in the swells.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That probably slowed you down too with all the other ships.

Mr. Bunfill:

I supposed it did I don't know, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any threats from Japanese planes or submarines on that part of your tour?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, there wasn't, uh-uh. No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

By then in '45 they weren't nearly as aggressive as they had been.

Mr. Bunfill:

That's right they were on the downhill slope you might say by that time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when you got to Leyte what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well where we got off the ship, of course there was no docking facilities there we had to anchor out in the ocean. And we were sent ashore on amphibious ducks, which was a new experience of course.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Had you had any training in amphibious landing, anything like that?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, no, no, had not.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was your training on it?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well I guess so, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know where on Leyte you landed?

Mr. Bunfill:

We landed near Tacloban.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, it was right close to Tacloban.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, I know where that is, right. Then when you got there what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well this was a replacement depot actually, a tent city. And we weren't there too long actually before we were assigned to our units. I went over as a replacement you understand.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, okay. What outfit were you assigned to?

Mr. Bunfill:

I was assigned to the 3rd Platoon of Company L, 108th Infantry as part of the 40th Division.

There was times when the 108th served or acted as a regimental combat team, but most of the time we were attached to the 40th.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when you got there, then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

When we got to the units you mean?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Bunfill:

Well, let me back up just a little bit, I might tell you something interesting that happened there at the replacement depot. I had an uncle that was killed in October before I got there. And I knew when we landed that I was nearby to where he'd gotten killed so I began to inquire through the Red Cross how I would find his grave. And they told me to go up to Tacloban there to a graves' registration office and they could tell me. So I got permission to go up there and they told me that where he was buried about 25 miles down the coast. And so I got a 24-hour pass and hitch-hiked a ride down there and found his grave and I thought that was unique that I found my uncle's grave right down there in a temporary cemetery, it was a battlefield cemetery on the..., well it wasn't far off the ocean, between the ocean and a small mountain range. And his body was later moved to Luzon and then eventually my grandmother had it brought back to the States. But anyway I visited his grave there, which was a unique experience.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was he killed, do you know?

Mr. Bunfill:

He was killed by our own fire, he was a forward observer for artillery fire and had a short round that killed him and a couple of other guys, I believe.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh yeah, a lot of that friendly fire.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, yeah it happens, couldn't be helped.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh that's right, yeah. Then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Then we were assigned to, our unit, that happened still on Leyte but it was up at Ormoc where we were assigned. And I already told you what unit I was assigned to, right?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, right, you did.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, and then we went, let's see I believe we went to various locations there on Leyte and I can't remember all of them in order. But I think we went to a place that was known as Villaba and from there we began to do mop up operations. Mop up activities over the island. This is following the major campaign there on Leyte.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, yeah that started in October, right.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, yeah and we were doing mop up there for quite some time. And I always considered that kind of as, served two purposes. One of them was to serve as training for us for greater events to come really. So, oh about the first or second time we were out on patrol we drew fire, my

platoon drew some fire from an unknown location and we were dropped behind a terrorist on the hillside. And it so happened I was the first one to spot where the fire was coming from and I took care of the situation. I became somewhat of hero for a little while. And lo and behold we found out we were being fired on by one of our own BARs that a lone Japanese soldier had captured and he was firing it from a standup fox hole at us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now do you have a BAR at this point?

Mr. Bunfill:

I was on a BAR team, but I wasn't actually carrying the BAR. The man that, on my team, that was named the BAR man didn't want either one of us helping him to carry it, he wanted to carry it himself. So we carried the ammo box.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever fire the BAR then?

Mr. Bunfill:

Not overseas, I never did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's what I mean overseas, right.

Mr. Bunfill:

No I never did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Let's see we were there like I said for several, I don't know, let's see. From that was in March through April into May and I contracted dengue fever, jungle fever, and had to go to the hospital back in Ormoc. And they filled me full of penicillin and brought me out of it. But while I was there my unit was shipped to Mindanao Island to make an amphibious landing in the campaign over there. So as soon as I was able, got out of the hospital I hitched a ride on a LST over to the

island and caught up with my unit. And we were assigned to open up what was known as the Sayre Highway, S-a-y-r-e, the Sayre Highway that went into the interior of the island at a place where Del Monte had an air strip and a plantation there. So we went all the way up to that, clearing the place of the Japanese, all the way up to Del Monte airport.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And then what?

Mr. Bunfill:

On the way up there we crossed a, had quite a battle at Mangima Canyon, M-a-n-g-i-m-a Canyon, we called it Purple Heart Canyon. I think we lost a few people there. Then after that was over we were trucked back to the beach where we first landed. And shipped back to Panay Island, I think they pronounce it Pin-i, I always pronounce it Panay, but I think they pronounce it Pin-i. And there we were in a tent city, started training for the invasion of the Japanese islands. Actually had a firing range and different facilities set up, kind of a repeat of what we did in basic training. While we were on Mindanao I was made Assistant Squad Leader in my squad and then shortly thereafter I was moved up to Squad Leader. We got to Panay and hadn't been there very long and our Platoon Sergeant was mustered out to go home and I was made Platoon Sergeant. And I was only a PFC at the time, but I was Platoon Sergeant. And they had, up to that point they had been advancing enlisted men from PFC to Staff Sergeant a lot to fill up their, the spots. But about the time they tried to do that for me, they got notice we had to stay in grade for thirty days at a time. So I stayed in grade for thirty days at a time and made Staff Sergeant while I was in the Infantry. But I was actually a Platoon Sergeant while I was only PFC. *(Laughing)*

Mr. Misenhimer:

But anyway, so go ahead then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Now while we were doing this training we actually did do some amphibious training. Of course all over the South Pacific it was training to invade Japan and there was a whole, I don't know how many different, how many troops were involved in this, I have no idea. But a lot of

different units were put on ships and taken to another island, Negros Island. Where we had all the small landing craft that took us to the beach and we made a mock landing on the beach. And we only stayed there a little bit and back on the ship and back to where we came from.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And then?

Mr. Bunfill:

There's something rather humorous there, I never could swim and when we were in Fort Ord before we left they told us we had to learn to swim the length of a swimming pool, before we went overseas. And they'd take us down in the evening -- give us swimming lessons. Well I never learned to swim, but when it came time to go well I went anyway. And when we were doing this amphibious training we had to get off the ship on a big rope ladder over the side with all our equipment on and I thought about not being able to swim then, it came to mind. I'll tell you it did. (*Laughter*)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh yeah that would.

Mr. Bunfill:

But then when we got through with the landing we came back, we had to climb back up the ladder to get back on the ship too. With all of our equipment, that was something.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, climbing up that thing is a lot of work I imagine.

Mr. Bunfill.

Yeah. So now let's see where were we? Back to our camp on Panay, yeah. Now this is about a..., I think this is probably the early August of '45, I'm not sure exactly, probably early August. Course they dropped the bombs August what?

Mr. Misenhimer:

August 6th was the first one, August 9 was the second.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah well this might have been a little earlier than that then. The amphibious training probably was a little bit earlier than that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right, July.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, probably.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When they dropped those bombs, did you hear about it?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah we heard about it and there was a lot of whooping and hollering and going on when we heard about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And did you have any idea what an atomic bomb was?

Mr. Bunfill:

No. What it was I had no idea, no.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay go ahead, then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

We were there a very short time and we begin to hear rumors that we were going to be sent to Korea. Or some strange land first, we had no idea where. And then one day some of the Filipino people hanging around there they told us they knew where we were going. They knew before we did. They heard that we were going to Korea. Well sure enough we did. We went up there, uh it was the Occupational Troops. This would have been, I think we landed up there the 1st of October in Korea. And by this time I'm Staff Sergeant and still Platoon Sergeant. And we landed at Incheon in Korea. There was a lot of, on the way up, well actually my platoon went in kind of advance of the rest of them. We went on a converted destroyer, the APD-59 I think it was. And we had the responsibility of watching for, as we neared Korea, watching for floating

mines and destroying them ahead of the others that were coming. Which we did encounter several of them and somebody was assigned to actually shoot them with an M-1 rifle and blow them up. We did several of those before we got into Incheon Harbor. But I remember when we got up there that harbor was, I mean it was full of ships, there was a lot of ships in there, various sorts.

Mr. Misenhimer:

American ships?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes. Yeah. And I was watching for an LST that my brother-in-law was on. I knew he was over there somewhere, but I didn't know where. And so I was searching all through that harbor, I was getting the number off of all the LSTs, but his wasn't there. He hadn't been there, he was somewhere else.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on these mines were they floating loose or were they still tied?

Mr. Bunfill:

You know I wondered about that since. I'm not sure whether they were still anchored or whether they were floating loose. I really don't know. I'm of the opinion they were still anchored, but I'm not sure.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You weren't a mine sweeper, you didn't have the paravane sweeper?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, no. No we didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, just see them out there and shoot them.

Mr. Bunfill:

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

When we got to Korea they just moved us about from here, there, and yonder. We lived in school houses and other public buildings, one location to another. Just supposed to be there just keeping order until all the Japanese were sent home and they could form a government. They didn't have any government of their own at that time. And so we were just moved here, there, and yonder. One thing I always remembered, we got there before our supplies got there and we had to eat package rations for, I don't know, a month or so I guess, maybe six weeks. And not only that, twice a day for about a month or six weeks because we were there ahead of supplies.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was that K-rations or what?

Mr. Bunfill:

As I recall they were C-rations, I may be wrong about that now, but I think it was C-rations.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah C-rations were in little tin cans.

Mr. Bunfill:

Right and K-rations were in a box. Yeah and then we had some, once in a while we'd get a hold of what they called 10-in-1 rations too. That was made up for more than one person in the box, it fed several. One thing I remember that we weren't supposed to buy anything off of the Korean people to eat. But we were out, my platoon was out in a town by ourselves for a period of time. Didn't even have an officer with us part of the time, so I was in charge. And we decided we were going to buy some chickens off the Koreans which we weren't supposed to do. We did and gave them to Mess Sergeant and he cooked them up for us, which was a treat. I still have the bill of sale for that, those chickens on some rice paper. *(Laughing)*

Mr. Misenhimer:

How much was it?

Mr. Bunfill:

I don't remember. I don't remember how much it was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Wasn't very much I don't imagine.

Mr. Bunfill:

No it wasn't, wouldn't have been very much. Anyway we had some fried chicken.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what?

Mr. Bunfill:

Let me see now. We were there until, in the Infantry, I eventually got transferred out of the Infantry. But we were there until January of '46 and it was in a place called Hayang, Korea.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How do you spell that?

Mr. Bunfill:

H-a-y-a-n-g, I believe. And at that time the whole 40th Division was disbanded. Those that were eligible to come home, came home. Those that were not eligible were transferred to other units. And the records and the flag came back to United States, I think the division was later reconstituted. But that's what happened at that time. I was transferred to a military government company, Headquarters Company was military government, 48th Military Government.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the number? Was it 48?

Mr. Bunfill:

No just 48th Military Government, Headquarters and Headquarters Company. And I was assigned to Commerce and Industry Department. What we were doing of course was supervising everything in Korea, business, police, everything.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The civilians or just the military?

Mr. Bunfill:

Civilians.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Civilians, okay.

Mr. Bunfill:

We did have a, just a few Japanese prisoners I remember that we watched over for a short time. See that was while I was still in the Infantry though, yeah I was still in the Infantry doing that. Most of them had been sent home by the time we got there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, they sent a lot of them home from Korea.

Mr. Bunfill:

Sure did. They had ruled there for forty years. One thing I thought when I was there, Korea was, I thought they were a hundred years behind the times. They'd been so oppressed for forty years by Japanese up to that point.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Let's see. We were there, when I got transferred to the military government we went to the city of Chonju, C-h-o-n-j-u. And we were housed in a school house and that's where I was assigned to Commerce and Industry Department. But after a short while I asked for a transfer out of there because I didn't like my officer in charge. And I transferred to the Public Safety Department. And that's where I served until I came home.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you come home?

Mr. Bunfill:

I came home I believe it was August 17th of '46. Well that's what it was, I got my discharge right here in front of me, that's what it says, August 17th of '46 left to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So when did you get back? Go ahead.

Mr. Bunfill:

I arrived in, not San Francisco, but next to it there, what is it?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oakland or whatever.

Mr. Bunfill:

Oak—no, yeah Oakland, September 1st '46. And while I was there in the Military Government I made Tech Sergeant and then Master Sergeant. So I was Master Sergeant from March 15th until I got out in the fall.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Let me go back and ask some questions here. When you're in the Philippines did you have much interaction with the local Philippine people?

Mr. Bunfill:

Some, there was people around the camp that would come by and usually young girls sell bananas, do our laundry, that sort of thing, you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were they friendly enough?

Mr. Bunfill:

The ones I recall were, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about in Korea did you have much interaction with the local people there?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, except that we had a few of them working for us you know, as interpreters or something of that nature.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were they friendly enough?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes, I thought they were, yeah I thought they were.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay go ahead, when you got out then what happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

Now when I got out of the service you mean altogether?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well, that

Mr. Bunfill:

Or out of Korea?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well on 9/1/46 is when you were discharged?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, no. That's when I arrived back in the States.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh I'm sorry, okay right.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, okay that's when I arrived September 1st.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay then what happened from there.

Mr. Bunfill:

Let me tell you an interesting thing that I've repeated several times.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, go ahead.

Mr. Bunfill:

Since I was a Master Sergeant when the ship got in to Oakland there, they called me over the P.A. system and put me in charge of a clean-up detail, to clean up one of the below deck areas. And so I got the men together and we cleaned it up. Then in a little bit I got the call back they

weren't satisfied, they wanted us to clean it again. So we went back and cleaned it again. All this time the men are being checked off at the gang plank by the MPs off the ship. So after the second time I decided I was gonna get off. So I went to the MPs to get checked off at the gang plank and lo and behold a voice comes over the P.A. system again, "Sergeant Bunfill, report." Oh they wanted me to go back and clean that area again. And I was afraid, I was afraid the MPs was going to put two and two together, but he didn't, he didn't, he evidently didn't hear the voice. And I walked off, they still called me when I walked off.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was wrong with your cleaning job?

Mr. Bunfill:

I don't know, just didn't suit them. (*Laughter*)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay.

Mr. Bunfill:

I thought when we, the ship docked in Oakland and I looked off the ship and saw all these white girls and white people I was amazed because in the Philippines and Korea we'd seen very few white young people, white girls or anything. I was amazed. For you know like nineteen months I was gone something like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what?

Mr. Bunfill:

Fort Ord, me and a friend of mine visited there, actually in San Francisco. He had promised, this friend of mine had promised a friend of his that he would visit the guy's wife. So we went by and visited her. And I called home from there and tell the folks, my parents and my girlfriend, that I was back in the States. And wasn't there very long. They put us on a troop train shipped us back to -- back to Fort Sheridan. where I was inducted, to be mustered out.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When were you mustered out?

Mr. Bunfill:

Actually when I got back to Fort Sheridan, I came home on the 11th of September but I'd never had a furlough. So I had fifty-six days furlough coming. So I was home fifty-six days on furlough before they mailed me my discharge. Which was dated November 5th, 1946.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Are there any other amusing or funny incidents you remember?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes, since you brought it up. On the ship going over and coming back both, they'd only feed us twice a day. It was hard to feed that many troops more than twice. They issued us, what we call chow cards and they punched it -- the ticket when you went through so nobody would go through twice you know. Well I lost mine. And I reported it lost and they gave me another one. Then in a day or so I found the first one, but I didn't turn it in, I had two. And I would either use it or I'd let one of my friends use it. And then one day, not long after I found the second one, I was going through the chow line and a Jewish Mess Sergeant standing there checking these cards and I'm walking up just chatting away with my friends and I didn't have my card out so when I got to him I pulled it out of my billfold and when I did the second one fell out on the floor. And I tell you he jumped higher than a kite, he had a spell and ordered me down to the, what do you call the sick bay on a ship, I forget what you call it. Anyway he ordered me down there to report for some kind of penalty that I was supposed to do, labor. They put me to washing bulkheads down there. I stayed about thirty or forty minutes and walked out and they never did call me back, but oh. A friend of mine brought that up several times later how comical that was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You didn't get your other card back though?

Mr. Bunfill:

No they kept one of my cards. (*Laughter*)

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else like that happen, anything funny?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh, can't think of anything right now.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, well if you do that's fine. When you got out did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Bunfill:

Not really. My family told me that later that they noticed I was, you know somewhat restless and one thing or another. I didn't think I had much trouble, but they told me that they thought I acted that way for a while like I was a little bit restless and kind of didn't know what to do with myself I guess or something.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How much combat were you actually in, quite a bit?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, I wouldn't say a lot. Not near like some people were, not near like. The mopping up operations and then the deal on Mindanao, that was it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Bunfill:

When we left, well of course it was always frightening to be shot at, and that happened a few times. But when we left Korea, and I forgot to mention that when we was We left in late afternoon from Pusan on the ship, the first night out we went through a typhoon. And it was, it was really something. It was a bad one. And it hit, the worse of it hit about midnight and the only thing you could do on the ship was lay in your bunk and hang on. That's about all you can do. Some guys even got thrown out of their bunks, but it was so bad even the next morning they couldn't feed us all day till the next evening. The ship was listing pretty bad, up and down and sideways, it was quite a storm.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of ship was that?

Mr. Bunfill:

This was a sister ship to the one I went over on. I went over on the Sea Snipe and came back on the Sea Star. They were sister ships.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Bunfill:

You know I don't believe I ever did. I don't think so because we didn't have much access to radio when I was over there, really.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you crossed the equator on the way down, any kind of a ceremony or anything?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes they did. Yeah they had a ceremony about that, I'd forgotten about that. I think I got some kind of a certificate.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, makes you a Shellback.

Mr. Bunfill:

I believe.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah. What all happened at that ceremony, what all did they do to you?

Mr. Bunfill:

You know I can't hardly remember whether they did anything to me or not. But I remember recognition and all that. That's about all I can remember.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Usually they made them crawl through garbage and do all kind of things to them.

Mr. Bunfill:

I don't believe we did, I'm not sure.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well on a troop maybe not done as much, I'm not sure. This was on Navy ships you know.

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, uh-huh.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now April 12th of '45 President Roosevelt died, where were you when that happened?

Mr. Bunfill:

I was in the Philippines and we were out on patrol, I can remember the spot but I don't know exactly where it was. I know we were up on a ridge and getting ready to bunk in for the night, fox holes and all. And somehow or another the word came to us, probably by radio to some of the people in communication. I'm not sure how it got there, but we heard the President was ill and died.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what was the reaction people had?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well I'm not sure I know now, but I think that everybody thought in the midst of the war it was bad to lose a leader, I think that. Other than that I'm not sure now.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Basically he was the only President most people had known.

Mr. Bunfill:

That's true and he was elected four times so....

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then on May the 8th of '45 Germany surrendered, did you hear about that?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes. I don't remember where I was though exactly. May the 8th I think I probably was on Mindanao. We were there on Mindanao during the rainy season, they called the monsoon

season, the month of May. And everyday, oh I think somewhere around four-thirty or five o'clock it rained everyday. And we'd get soaking wet and then of course we were sleeping in fox holes at night. And we'd lay down in the night in wet clothes, but I don't know of anybody ever got sick.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when Germany surrendered did you have any kind of a celebration or anything?

Mr. Bunfill:

I don't recall that we did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you mentioned the atomic bombs, then on August the 15th Japan surrendered, how about then?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh that, when we heard that Japan had surrendered there was whooping and hollering, I'll tell you, yeah that was all over the camp there in Panay, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well I can read that off of my discharge here.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir, if you would.

Mr. Bunfill:

Bronze Arrowhead, Army of Occupation Ribbon – Japan, Asiatic Pacific Theater Ribbon with One Bronze Battle Star, Philippine Liberation Ribbon with One Bronze Battle Star, Victory Medal, and Good Conduct Medal.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Two Battle Stars, okay. What did you think of the officers you had over you?

Mr. Bunfill:

We had some good ones I thought. Yeah, I said I had a dislike for one I had. But most of them I highly respected, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the morale in your outfit?

Mr. Bunfill:

Pretty good most of the time I thought. Pretty good most of the time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any experience with the medics?

Mr. Bunfill:

Briefly I guess. I developed, lets see this is in Korea. I developed oh..., what do you call little things on the bottom of my feet where I couldn't hardly walk, a little a ..., can't think of what you call them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Cyst or something.

Mr. Bunfill:

Cyst or something -- all over the bottom of my feet. And I had to have them, go into the hospital two or three times they burned them off with acid, burned those off with acid. That's about the only contact I had with the medics.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was anybody ever wounded anywhere close to you?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh yes, yeah. We had some wounded, we had a few, we lost a few -- killed.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when those were wounded, how about the medics then?

Mr. Bunfill:

Well I think they were good, yeah. Yeah. Of course we had medics attached to our company all the time you know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, now what did you call the medics?

Mr. Bunfill:

We called him "doc", you know a nickname for him, we just called him "doc."

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see that sign, "Kilroy was here?"

Mr. Bunfill:

No I don't think so.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get home from World War II with any souvenirs?

Mr. Bunfill:

Uh, yes. I had a Japanese samurai sword and some a..., oh other things that I'd bought in a PX in Korea. I don't believe I brought any, except money, paper money and some coins from the Philippines. I still have some of those. I have some from Korea. I had a Japanese samurai sword but somebody stole it from me. I had it for several years at home and then somebody got in my house and got it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yes, a few in Korea, never anything like that in the Philippines. The only entertainment we had while I was in the Philippines was after we got to Panay Island. We had a movie screen set up on the beach and we'd have movies several nights during the week. That's the only entertainment we ever had in the Philippines. In Korea, after we finally got to Chonju where I was in the military government, we had a..., American Red Cross had a recreation place there, building. And they would bring in a few USO shows and had places there, a place to go and play games, ping pong and the like, different things like that, daytime or evening.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any other experience with the Red Cross besides that?

Mr. Bunfill:

Just when they helped me out to find my uncle's grave there in the Philippines, that's all.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you were overseas could you get your mail with any regularity?

Mr. Bunfill:

No. No, you never knew how long it was gonna take. Some of it took a week, some took two weeks. Then you might get several pieces of mail at the same time, you know. Course in those days that was the only communication we had, there was no telephone or anything like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's right, no cell phones.

Mr. Bunfill:

Nope.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you use your G.I. Bill for anything?

Mr. Bunfill:

Of course I was a farm boy, when I got home I took on-the-job training on the farm for four years, after I got home.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your career, was it a farmer?

Mr. Bunfill:

I farmed for a, I got married shortly after I got home and farmed for forty years. I became a substitute rural mail carrier during that time and eventually went on as a regular carrier and I retired from the Postal Service.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But you did farm most of the time also?

Mr. Bunfill:

Yeah, I farmed for forty years, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What were your main crops you grew?

Mr. Bunfill:

Oh we grew corn, soybeans, hay, wheat. Had livestock, corn hogs, hogs.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you use your G.I. Bill for anything?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, I didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh let's see, anything else you recall from your time in the service?

Mr. Bunfill:

Won't come to me right now unless you remind me of something. *(Laughter)* Well?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else you've thought of?

Mr. Bunfill:

No, I haven't thought of anything else since we were chatting I haven't thought of anything.

Some grandkids, they entitled me in World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A book you wrote, okay.

Mr. Bunfill:

I did write a little book, I don't know if you're interested I could e-mail it to you. I don't know if you're interested or not.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, you don't have a printed copy?

Mr. Bunfill:

Uh, yeah I do. A little booklet, I only have one though.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Alright let me do this. I don't have e-mail, particularly here. But my daughter does, let me talk to her and then I'll have her get in touch with you and you can e-mail it to her.

Mr. Bunfill:

Okay. If you're interested, yeah I can e-mail it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah I'd be interested to see it, sure. Anything like that we can get, we like it.

Mr. Bunfill:

Okay.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Lozell, thank you again for your time today.

Mr. Bunfill:

Well thank you, enjoyed talking to you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Bunfill:

Thank you and thank you for yours.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Thank you.

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Harlingen, Texas

August 12, 2015

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