

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Bobby E. “Bob” Osborne

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Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler, and today is April the 8th, 2017. I am interviewing Mr. Bob Osborne here in Fredericksburg at the Admiral Nimitz Museum. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center Archives, for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So, first, thanks, Bob, for spending the time with us this morning to talk about your war experiences. Let's get started by having you introduce yourself. I need your full name, date and place of birth and we'll take it from there.

Mr. Osborne: I'm Bob ... Bobby E. Osborne. I was born in Elmo, Texas, that ... right out of Dallas in 1924, in February of '24.

Ed Metzler: So, let's see, how old does that make you?

Mr. Osborne: Ninety-three.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my goodness! You're just a youngster!

Mr. Osborne: Well yeah, 'cause I got a older brother that's ninety-five.

Ed Metzler: Is ... it sounds like you got some good long ...

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: ... long-lived genes there!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: So, were you born in the country, in hospital, what?

Mr. Osborne: I ... we was all ... four boys and one girl was all born at home.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: In the country.

Ed Metzler: That's back when they used homes instead of hospitals a lot.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. Mama ... Mama had me by herself, nobody there, just the fam ... just her ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm! Now, are you ...

Mr. Osborne: ... just her dad.

Ed Metzler: ... are you the oldest, no, you're not the oldest.

Mr. Osborne: No.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause you got an older ...

Mr. Osborne: I'm next to the oldest.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay.

Mr. Osborne: I had two brothers younger, still got one younger.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And sister was younger.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And we've got a baby sister that was a crib death. So ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... there was really five ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... people in ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... in the family.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me about your father; what did he do for a living?

Mr. Osborne: He farmed up until ... in the '30s and then we moved out of ... out of the country to Dallas. He went to work for the Federal Bureau they called it. He was a janitor in one of the buildings somewhere. And then later in the years, they started building the Veterans Hospital in Waco, and there were three men got together and they drove back and forth between Dallas and Waco.

Ed Metzler: That's a long drive!

Mr. Osborne: And ... and built the Veterans Hospital.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: And ...

Ed Metzler: They didn't have in ... IH-35 back then.

Mr. Osborne: No, that was just that little flat ... black-top road.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, (chuckles), you were lucky to get blacktops on ...

Other Person: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. But anyway, they drove back and forth for about a year, and we moved to Waco in '34, and he finished building the hospital.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: He went to work there, retired from there.

Ed Metzler: So, if that was '34, you were ten years old.

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: So, you were still in elementary school ...

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ... when you moved to Waco. So, did ...

Mr. Osborne: Went ...

Ed Metzler: ... you finish your schooling in Waco?

Mr. Osborne: ... in Waco; went to grade school was Bells Hill, and then went to South Junior High or junior school, and Waco High for high school.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. Now, back then didn't they have eleven grades in ...

Mr. Osborne: Twelve grades.

Ed Metzler: ... they had twelve, okay.

Mr. Osborne: They had twelve grades.

Ed Metzler: Because I know in some of the country schools, they only had eleven grades back then.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, no, we had ... we had twelve grades there at ... (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you must have been about eighteen when you graduated, so that means you ...

Mr. Osborne: I didn't ... I didn't ...

Ed Metzler: ... graduated ...

Mr. Osborne: ... I didn't get to graduate.

Ed Metzler: Oh! Well, tell me about that.

Mr. Osborne: Well, I tried to join the Navy when I was seventeen, and Mama wouldn't sign the papers (laughter), said, "Finish school." So, I was in high school; I turned eighteen on February the 25th, took the oath of office on March the 12th and was gone to the Navy.

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Osborne: As a matter of fact, they took me right out of high school; I was in my senior year. (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you ... you, and did you ever finish your ...

Mr. Osborne: No.

Ed Metzler: And it didn't make any difference, did it (chuckles) ...

Mr. Osborne: No, I ...

Ed Metzler: ... not getting that piece of paper.

Mr. Osborne: ... I ... I went back ... twelve years after the war to Baylor University and got my GED.

Ed Metzler: Good for you!

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: That's cool!

Mr. Osborne: And when I went in to get my GED ... was on a ... on a Friday, and I went down to Baylor University, and they was ... having class.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And that lady says, "Why don't you sit down here and take half of it this afternoon, come back in the morning and take the other half?" And I says, "Okay." So, I sat down and took half of it Sat ... uh, Friday afternoon, went back Saturday morning and took the other half, and I asked her, I said, "When can I find out how much I made?" She said, "Well, if you got time, I'll grade these papers out and tell you." After twelve years and the war, I made a ninety-eight ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... on that damn test.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: And she says ... said, "You must read and keep up with news and everything." I said, "I read everything I can get my hands on ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: ... and I keep up with current affairs."

Ed Metzler: So, you were seventeen when the war started.

Mr. Osborne: Yes, yes, I was.

Ed Metzler: And so, tell me about December the 7th, 1941, what do you remember about that day?

Mr. Osborne: I think I was in Bellmead right out of Waco, suburb of Waco visiting some people we knew that used to be our neighbors when the broadcast come over that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

Ed Metzler: What was the reaction to everybody?

Mr. Osborne: I didn't realize really what it was all about, you know? I ...

Ed Metzler: I've been told a lot of people didn't even know where Pearl Harbor was.

Mr. Osborne: No, and ...

Ed Metzler: Because it ...

Mr. Osborne: Some ... somebody said that was Hawaii, so I knew then.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Others: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: And you'd never been there.

Mr. Osborne: No, I never been there.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Read about it, and that's about all.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: That was one of those foreign countries.

Ed Metzler: So ... so, did things change after the war started? I mean, what ... what changed?

Mr. Osborne: Well, my brother, my older brother, he volunteered right after the war.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, he would have been about ...

Mr. Osborne: ... uh, in '41.

Ed Metzler: ... nineteen then, at that time, yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, he was ... well, he's two years ... a year and a half or nearly two years older than me.

Ed Metzler: He ... year ... uh hum. So, he ...

Mr. Osborne: He went ... he went in the Air Corps and went to Europe.

Other Person: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, he went in the Army Air Corps and ended up being a fly boy?

Mr. Osborne: No, well he was a mechanic.

Ed Metzler: Mechanic.

Mr. Osborne: He ...

Ed Metzler: Even more important! (laughter)

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: He ... he wanted to get ... he wanted to be a pilot, but when he was growing up, he fell on a pair of scissors ...

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: ... and stuck one in his eyeball.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my lord!

Mr. Osborne: And it made a cat eye out of it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Instead of being round, the pupils ...

Other Person: Ah!

Ed Metzler: So, he had eye issues ...

Mr. Osborne: ... straight up and down.

Ed Metzler: ... that kept him ...

Mr. Osborne: So, they made him a mechanic instead of a pilot.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Other Person: Uhm.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: Anyway, he went through all of Europe.

Ed Metzler: So ... but you chose the Navy?

Mr. Osborne: Well, 'cause Dad was in the Navy.

Ed Metzler: Oh, he was?!

Mr. Osborne: He was on a destroyer in World War I.

Ed Metzler: Oh, he was on a tin can in World War II?!

Mr. Osborne: Yes. He was in.

Ed Metzler: A four ... a four stacker probably.

Mr. Osborne: An ole four stacker, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And during ... during World War II they took his destroyer out of storage and put it back in the service, and it wound up in the Pacific as a small troop ship.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: And instead of a destroyer fighting, well, it was made into a ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, a lot of those four stackers were used in World War II.

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), yes.

Ed Metzler: They brought them out of mothballs and ...

Mr. Osborne: Yes! His ...

Ed Metzler: ... and they did a lot of lend-lease to the British and ... and lent ... lent them as well.

Mr. Osborne: His was a ... his was the USS Wade.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: I remember that.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned!

Mr. Osborne: So anyway ...

Ed Metzler: So, you ... you ... you decided to go into the Navy.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, I went in the Navy.

Ed Metzler: And you waited until you were eighteen, did you say?

Mr. Osborne: I had to wait till ... turned eighteen; they drafted me right out of high school

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: I didn't get to finish.

Ed Metzler: Your mom wouldn't sign off for ... to let you go.

Mr. Osborne: For me to go in the Army (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Isn't that amazing (laughter)?

Mr. Osborne: Might not have been here if I had.

Ed Metzler: Well, that could be, that could be. So, where did you go to actually enlist? Did you go to Dallas or Waco or ...

Mr. Osborne: Went to Waco. Let's see, I went ... yeah, I had to go to Dallas.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: For where they examined us and make sure we was ...

Ed Metzler: Did your thirty (?).

Mr. Osborne: ... fit to go, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did your thirty shots in each arm and ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... plus, then had to go to Belton and caught the train out of Belton.

Ed Metzler: So, you did basic training in Belton?

Mr. Osborne: No!

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: San Diego ...

Ed Metzler: Oh.

Mr. Osborne: ... Naval Base.

Ed Metzler: West coast!

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, this ... this Waco boy got on a train and went all the way to the west coast?

Mr. Osborne: Yep! Went west coast, what was it, two days?

Ed Metzler: Its along trip!

Mr. Osborne: On a train ... on a train, sleeping in the seat.

Ed Metzler: So, did you know anybody else on the train that was headed to boot camp, or were you solo then?

Mr. Osborne: No, I ... I don't recall knowing anybody on that train. I don't know where the boys went that was in high school when I was.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: They all went different directions, I guess, 'cause I didn't ...

Other Person: See (unintelligible).

Mr. Osborne: ... wind up with anybody I knew.

Ed Metzler: So, what was basic training like for you – easy, hard, mean?

Mr. Osborne: Nah, didn't bother me.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: We just ... I stood a lot of guard duty, we ... our exercises or long hikes.

Ed Metzler: Did they give you a test there to determine what they're going to make out of you or they just run you ...

Mr. Osborne: No.

Ed Metzler: ... into the ground (laughter)?

Mr. Osborne: They just run ... just run you, going ... aboard ship and they'd assign you when you got there.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I see.

Mr. Osborne: And when ... when we got through training there at San Diego, put on that troop train going to San Francisco where our ship was going to be.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so ... so this is 1942 then?

Mr. Osborne: '43.

Ed Metzler: '43, okay.

Mr. Osborne: '43.

Ed Metzler: Okay, I needed to get my years straight here.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, no everything starting out in '43.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And on that ... my sister was out with her husband at a little town right out of San Diego, and we come by the motels which was right on the railroad tracks, well, they was standing out in the yard of that motel and waving and ...

Other Person: Ah!

Mr. Osborne: ... and we saw each other.

Ed Metzler: Oh, as you went by?!

Mr. Osborne: As we went by.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my goodness!

Other Person: Ah!

Ed Metzler: Headed north.

Mr. Osborne: (Chuckles), headed north, and that was the last time we got to see them till I ... I was home on leave in '44.

Ed Metzler: So, you went up to the Bay area ...

Mr. Osborne: Went out in the coun ... in the desert ...

Ed Metzler: Oh.

Mr. Osborne: ... in a holding station way out in the desert.

Ed Metzler: Okay!

Mr. Osborne: Was out there about a week or two weeks waiting.

Ed Metzler: Waiting for what?

Mr. Osborne: Go on a ship.

Ed Metzler: Did you know what ship you were going to go on?

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), had no idea.

Ed Metzler: You're the last one to find out I bet.

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: We got ... Navy shipped us in there in ... in the evening, late in the evening and told us ... to bunking and where we could ... well, most of them ... we had our sea bag and our hammock and mattress and everything. And they had hooks in the mess hall that you hook your hammock ropes on. So, a lot of us strung our hammocks up.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: We slept in them and I slept on the floor ...

Other Person: Ooh!

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Osborne: ... on my mattress.

Ed Metzler: That doesn't sound very comfortable.

Mr. Osborne: Well, why I (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: You made it.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. And late at night ... in the midnight when all them ole sailors been out drinking all night ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... come in late that night saying, "Whoopee!", and there was one ... one of them just went down through there with a knife and cut ropes on all the hammocks.

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: And I was ... dumped all them boys out on the floor (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Oh, those sailors!

Mr. Osborne: Oh, they was ... just raising hell! (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible), what are we going to do with those sailors!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Other People: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Coughing and laughing), yeah, it was my ... a mad bunch in there, so ... (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Well, let me ask you something now.

Mr. Osborne: (Chuckles).

Ed Metzler: You're eighteen years old, you're just a teenager, and here you are all the way across the country, in with a bunch of strange other guys, and drunk sailors coming in in the middle of the night; tell me how this was setting with you? I mean ...

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), I just ... just looked around and it (chuckles) just thought, well, I don't know, I'm ... I'm glad I wasn't in one of those hammocks.

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), but it just ... I didn't ... went ... really went back to sleep (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Were you home sick by that point?

Mr. Osborne: No.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Just excited.

Ed Metzler: Excited. That's a ... that's the word you would use?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, I was just excited to see ... had no ... really, no fear.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and didn't know any better (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Didn't know no better, yeah, I didn't know no better, and ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah!

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... and of course, when we all got settled down, they assigned us to our ... which division we was going to be in.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: And I was on the number one division, so I was on the Fo'c'sle.

Other Person: Oh.

Mr. Osborne: On the front of the ship.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: So, tell me the first ... describe to me your feelings when you first saw your ship. When'd you first lay eyes on her?

Mr. Osborne: A big son of a bitch (laughter)!

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: A big son of a bitch!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: Now that's one term. I think I'd call that a sailor's term (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter). Yeah, that was a big hung of iron.

Ed Metzler: A big rascal, huh?

Mr. Osborne: A big hunk of iron sitting out there we was going to be on.

Ed Metzler: Yeah? Yeah. Were you glad to be on a cruiser or ...

Mr. Osborne: Well yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... did you want on an aircraft carrier? What did you want?

Mr. Osborne: No, I didn't ... didn't have no idea ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... at the time what ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... what different ships were, so I got a cruiser and (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you went aboard?

Mr. Osborne: That was it.

Ed Metzler: And they told you that you were on what ... which group?

Mr. Osborne: The first division.

Ed Metzler: The first division.

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: And so ...

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: ... where did that put you on the ship? Is that ...

Mr. Osborne: That ... in the forward ... forward ... forward part of the ship, first from the bow back ...

Ed Metzler: From the bow ... up on the bow?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And she is CA-27 (unintelligible).

Mr. Osborne: CA-27.

Ed Metzler: She was CL-27, did you know that?

Mr. Osborne: No.

Ed Metzler: At one time? And they changed her to a heavy cruiser.

Mr. Osborne: I didn't know that.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well, that's ... well that's what my ...

Mr. Osborne: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: ... my papers tell me anyhow.

Mr. Osborne: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: But that was before you went aboard.

Mr. Osborne: I don't even know what the CA ever stood for.

Ed Metzler: Well, it means ...

Mr. Osborne: I never did find out.

Ed Metzler: ... well, the A part means heavy cruiser. I don't why the ... why it wasn't a H, but ...

Mr. Osborne: No, I don't know.

Ed Metzler: ... you know, it was ...

Mr. Osborne: But all the ships had a prefix.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Battleships was BB.

Ed Metzler: Right, now ... the hull designation they called that.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, and destroyers was DD.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. What was your normal station ...

Mr. Osborne: Well my ...

Ed Metzler: ... aboard ship?

Mr. Osborne: ... my battle station was on an eight-inch gun.

Ed Metzler: Ah ha!

Mr. Osborne: But my standby station was on the five-inch anti-aircraft gun.

Ed Metzler: Okay. And if you weren't at battle stations, what were you doing?

Mr. Osborne: Well, either ... cleaning, uh, painting ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... you know, scratching or cleaning ship or just laying around ... and waiting for ...

Ed Metzler: So, maint ... maintenance and ...

Mr. Osborne: Yes, I was ... we ... we maintained our part of the ship.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: From the Captain's veranda forward on the ... on the ship.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: Did she sail very soon after you went aboard?

Mr. Osborne: Yes, we ... they give ... they would give us our rations of clothes and our bedding, where we was going ... and our bunks. Well, we could pick any bunk we wanted.

Other Person: Was it three to a ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, they was ... four high.

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we had four high in that compartment.

Ed Metzler: Was it best to be up high or down low? Which was best?

Mr. Osborne: (Unintelligible), really didn't make much difference. I was, I think I was the second one off the deck on my bunk.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: And we had our lockers, (unintelligible) lockers there. Little locker was ... wasn't quite this big, it was about ... it was about that wide.

Ed Metzler: So, twelve inches wide and maybe ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, about twelve inches and there's just about ...

Ed Metzler: ... eighteen inches deep (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... just about that deep.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: And just ...

Ed Metzler: Twelve inches high.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, just about twelve inches high.

Ed Metzler: And you had to put all your worldly possessions in there.

Mr. Osborne: All of our clothes, extra shoes or everything we had went in that locker.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: You rolled your clothes.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: *Tight.*

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Osborne: Everything was rolled real tight in rolls and stack it in there.

Ed Metzler: So, this is '43 ...

Mr. Osborne: (Cough).

Ed Metzler: ... and when you went aboard the Chester.

Mr. Osborne: When I went aboard ship.

Ed Metzler: And what ...

Mr. Osborne: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: ... about where and when in the year was it, about September or June or ...

Mr. Osborne: It was Mar ... it was March.

Ed Metzler: It was March, okay.

Mr. Osborne: No, let's see, I'm sorry, March is when I went into boot camp.

Ed Metzler: Okay,

Mr. Osborne: It was March, April, May, it was about June.

Ed Metzler: So, mid-year?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, before we went on the ship.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Headed for Pearl Harbor. Of course, they issued us a ... our water bucket for washing our clothes in, and that's what we used to throw up in when we got sea sick.

Ed Metzler: I was going to ask you that.

Mr. Osborne: For the first three days, oh boy (laughter).

Ed Metzler: You were sick as a dog?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), and not ... not only me, but all them new ... all them new sailors on there.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: Which was half the crew.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Was all sea sick. And I ... I didn't eat nothing but a couple of pieces of toast for about three days.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! So, you got over it though!

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, yeah, settled down and then everything ...

Other Person: So, you washed your clothes in the same bucket as you got sick in?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, when (laughter) ... you washed it out and used it and used it and used it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Call that multi, multipurpose, I guess.

Mr. Osborne: It was a multipurpose ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... it was a multipurpose bucket.

Ed Metzler: So, did the Chester go alone to the Hawaiian Islands?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, oh, yes ...

Ed Metzler: Or did she have escorts?

Mr. Osborne: No, we didn't have no escorts going that ...

Ed Metzler: So, you're zigzagging, I guess, when you're crossing ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we zigzagged across. I didn't realize, but they did. They ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... changed course to ... but yeah, in five days ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... we made it to Pearl Harbor.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me about Pearl Harbor; what did it look like?

Mr. Osborne: Ships all over the bay. All over the harbor, all kind of ships anchored. And there was a lot of repair work going on. They were still repairing the bombing ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... of one of the ships (unintelligible) now.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And no memorial set up or nothing.

Ed Metzler: No.

Mr. Osborne: Big cranes everywhere working on the ships.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And we got there and they gave us shore leave one day, and then we loaded up and headed south.

Ed Metzler: What'd you do on your one day of shore leave?

Mr. Osborne: Just walked around looking at ... at what little town there was there.

Ed Metzler: So, you didn't get into Honolulu then, huh? The big ...

Mr. Osborne: No.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: Stayed ... well, I ... I don't know what they called Honolulu there; that ... that's the name of the island.

Ed Metzler: Well ... well, it's the big city on the island there.

Mr. Osborne: That's the big ... but we was just sort of on the edge of ... of town there. Of course, all the ...

Ed Metzler: So, you didn't ...

Mr. Osborne: ... houses over there. It just (unintelligible) was all busy with all them sailors there in town.

Other Person: Gosh!

Mr. Osborne: So, and I ... I stayed clear of that (laughter).

Other Person: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: So, you didn't stay there long before ...

Mr. Osborne: No, no.

Ed Metzler: ... she headed south, huh?

Mr. Osborne: No, we ... oh no, we was there probably about three days, four days 'cause they was needing ships ...

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Osborne: ... down there. So, yeah, when we left there, we didn't know where we was going, but ... we were going to Tarawa.

Ed Metzler: Did she leave alone or did she go with other ships?

Mr. Osborne: No, there was ... there was more ships, and destroyer escorts, and I ... I forget whether there was any bigger ships with us or not, but ...

Other Person: Hum.

Ed Metzler: So, where did you stop first after you left the Hawaiian Islands?

Mr. Osborne: I ... I think ... I think that was Eniwetok.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Which was a ... had been already secured. It was a secure harbor.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And probably had to cross the entrance way ... ships ... they had to move them before ships could go in and out.

Other Person; Wow.

Mr. Osborne: So, there's a story on that.

Ed Metzler: Do you remember crossing the equator?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, later on.

Ed Metzler: So, that came later?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so I guess that shows you my ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... lack of geography.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. We ...

Ed Metzler: I guess Eniwetok is north of the equator, huh?

Mr. Osborne: Yes. And the ... the Chester was involved in taking it in '42. That's the reason they made it into a secure harbor.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: See, the Chester was all in that area in '42.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, she was in the Battle of the Coral Sea and everything, yeah.

Mr. Osborne: The Coral ... see, in '42 it took a five-hundred-pound bomb in one of their battles, and then it was repaired. And then ... and one of their other battles, they took a torpedo in the side.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And they ... and when it was repaired in ... on the east coast, they come back around to San Francisco, that's when we went aboard.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: From that ... from that damage.

Ed Metzler: So, did you talk to any of the old salts that were onboard about what some of those old times were?

Mr. Osborne: No, not really.

Ed Metzler: Didn't really come up?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, just ... I was the secretary of our reunion for a while, and I had a letter from a girl ... South Carolina, I think, wanting to know if I knew her brother was on that when it was torpedoed which I didn't.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And I didn't know anybody that ... I asked around but nobody seemed to know, so ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... I couldn't do no ... write her back and tell her I didn't.

Ed Metzler: Tarawa was coming up.

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: So, was the Chester involved in ...

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, we ... we went in there and bombarded once, I think, before invasion day. And then, of course, we was there invasion morning.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And standing way offshore (unintelligible), you know, a couple of miles or so bombarding.

Ed Metzler: So, using those eight inchers to bombard ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we ...

Ed Metzler: ... the island?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, that was a bunch of ships around there.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Osborne: Battleships and cruisers and all destroyers in close. Of course, we always had a screen as a part of destroyers out past us trying to keep submarines, always checking for submarines. And ...

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Osborne: ... you know the story of Tarawa? How we lost so many men?

Ed Metzler: Uh, tell me about it.

Mr. Osborne: Okay. Supposed to have been high tide because we had coral reefs out there that was tall, and the landing craft couldn't go over those reefs unless they had high tide. So, that's when the invasion was planned. In day ... invasion morning, they went in there and run up on all the reefs, and they couldn't understand why. It's supposed to have been high tide to get over them, but it was low tide, so we lost a lot of boys 'cause they had to jump out of them boats and walk four hundred yards to the beach.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, Tarawa was a mess, you know.

Mr. Osborne: There was ... we lost ... and I read an article in Reader's Digest, they had finally discovered why we had low tide at that time. Because once, about every hundred years, all the waters of the oceans all go in one direction, and its in the books of that. Nobody saw it. And it was one of those phenoniums that happened that morning. Created low tide so our ...

Ed Metzler: What a coincidence!

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: It was ... it was a ... but the Reader's Digest had a big article on it and I was reading that and I was ... well that's why. So ...

Ed Metzler: Now you were assigned to one of the eight inch ...

Mr. Osborne: Five inch ... five-inch gun.

Ed Metzler: You were five inch?

Mr. Osborne: Five inch, twenty-five they called it.

Ed Metzler: Okay, the twenty-fives!

Mr. Osborne: These ... destroyers had five inch, thirty-fives. The difference was the twenty-five, you used a whole bullet, case and all.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Osborne: The thirty-five you ...

Ed Metzler: Had to load the bag of explosives.

Mr. Osborne: ... you used a bullet in back of the powder behind the ...

Other Person: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: (Throat clearing), so that was the difference in those. So ...

Ed Metzler: So, how many ... so how big was the crew on a ... on a ...

Mr. Osborne: We was ...

Ed Metzler: ... on a five-inch gun?

Mr. Osborne: Uh, about ... it's one, two, three, four, there was five of us.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: The pointer and trainer and the loader and one that opened and closed the breach, called a hot shell man.

Ed Metzler: So, what was your job?

Mr. Osborne: I was a hot shell man.

Ed Metzler: Alright.

Mr. Osborne: I caught that big case when it flew out of the barrel, uh, out of the chamber when it was fired.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: When they opened that chamber, that big brass case would come out, well, I'd catch it. And so ...

Other Person: And was it hot?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, I had asbestos gloves on. It ... it would burn you, but it wasn't, you know, smoking, it was ... just been fired so it had ... I caught it to throw it away from the ... of the deck, so it wouldn't get under the deck and cause it to stop or something. Well, on one of our training, the whole damned shell come back and I caught it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Now that's a problem!

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Whole bullet. And they set me down on the deck, wasn't expecting the whole thing, you know? And I'm sitting there looking at it 'cause it's already been primed (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So, what'd you do with it?! (laughter)

Mr. Osborne: Well, the pointer and the trainer bailed off and grabbed it and throwed it over the side (laughter). So, whether it went off or not, we don't know (laughter).

Other Person: How heavy was it ... full?

Mr. Osborne: Ah, it probably weighted ... probably sixty pounds or more. With dead weight hitting you ... you not expecting it ...

Ed Metzler: When ... especially when you're not expecting it.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, yeah, it just set me down on the deck, and I was sitting there looking at it ... one, you know (laughter), when is it going to go off (laughter)!

Other Person: Did you hear it go off in the water?

Mr. Osborne: No, we didn't ... never heard it, so ... whether it went off or not, don't know, you know? Yeah, it was (chuckles) ...

Ed Metzler: Now, where was the five-inch located aboard ship? I mean this is in ... but ...

Mr. Osborne: Uh, I was in ...

Ed Metzler: Those are the eight inch.

Mr. Osborne: ... that ... that's eight-inch gun.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Osborne: I was in it.

Ed Metzler: That's an eight.

Mr. Osborne: The five-inch gun was ... should have been ... should have been right in here on that ... (looking at photo).

Ed Metzler: Right in there, okay. So, you were just ... and you were on one side just behind the ... the four stack?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, I was ... I was on ... I was on the other side of the ...

Ed Metzler: So, you're on the port side?

Mr. Osborne: ... port, on the port side. And you had a five inch gun there and one here.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And we didn't have ... we had forty millimeters back here.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: See, there's ... forty millimeters right there and there.

Ed Metzler: And there's the back eight.

Mr. Osborne: And that's ... that's ... in number three turret.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: This is the crane that picked the seaplane up.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Osborne: See this right here?

Ed Metzler: That's a seaplane tender launch right there.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, that's the ... that's the ramp ... that's the launch right there, these (unintelligible). Put that plane on there and swing it out and he'd rev his engine up and then they'd shoot him out. Okay, when they wanted to pick him up, they always ... it was always picked up, uh, on this side.

Ed Metzler: And they'd pick them up with ...

Mr. Osborne: They ...

Ed Metzler: ... a crane out of the water.

Mr. Osborne: Well, they ... from here, they swung a ... a out of ... and put what they called a sea sled. It was a big hunk of canvas with a rope ... lattice work on it, and it would slide in the water, sitting on top of the water and that seaplane would ...

the ship would turn and make a flat and seaplane would come up here and taxi up here, and put his pontoon on that rope lattice work and hook it, and he'd be floating there and then they'd let this crane down and here ... hook it on the ship. And they'd pick it up, set it back on the hoist.

Other Person: Did a seaplane ever miss?

Mr. Osborne: No, the only time we (laughter), the only time one of the seaplanes missed was ... we was ... every time we went by Wake Island, we'd bombard it, and stir the ...

Ed Metzler: This ... this was (unintelligible) ... (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... stir the Japs ... stir the Japs up on it (laughter), and ...

Ed Metzler: That was before Wake Island was taken (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: No, that was after.

Ed Metzler: Oh, because they still were hanging out (unintelligible).

Mr. Osborne: Oh, the Japanese were still on ... on Wake Island. Yeah, every time we'd pass it, we'd ... we'd bombard it and tear up what they had fixed. And we run into a storm there and we had a seaplane up, observing, and he'd kept telling them, "I'm getting low on gas, I'm going to have to come in," and they'd say, "Okay, just a little bit more." Well, he said, "I've got to come in!" And, "Okay," so they fixed the ship and he ... he was taxiing up there and he got just about ... maybe the far end of that door from it, and run out of gas.

Ed Metzler: Whoa!

Mr. Osborne: So, he missed ... he missed the ramp.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: Well, they didn't ... that was a brand-new plane, just put on there before we left port. You'd think they'd turn around and pick that plane up? Nope! They sent a destroyer out there and blowed it up (laughter).

Ed Metzler: They just ... they did! They didn't even bother to pick it up.

Mr. Osborne: Nuh uh, uh uh, no.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: Got the pilot and destroyed the plane.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned!

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: Another story on ... on one of our seaplanes like that. We was ... I forget what harbor we was pulling into. One of the islands down there, and it had a ... a channel marked off to come in, so submarines couldn't get in and ... and the ship was rolling. Every time we turned, one of those sharp ... the ship would roll and roll. We made one of those turns and that seaplane (unintelligible) (sounds) ... upside down right in the middle of the well deck (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), off that ramp (laughter). Knocked ... knocked an officer down; he was walking by and it knocked him down, didn't hurt him bad, just bruised him.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: But anybody might have been under it, they ... really under it, they'd of been dead. So, they had to bring a barge out and pick it up with a crane and took it ashore. Whether they fixed it or not, I don't know. But ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... that ...

Ed Metzler: Speaking of officers, who ... what did you think about the officers aboard ship? The Captain and your direct officer? I guess you had an Executive Officer of some sort.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we had a ... we had a Lieutenant that ... in charge of our company.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And he was nice. I can't remember, I think we had two different ones over the period of the three years.

Ed Metzler: They seem to treat you enlisted guys ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... reasonably well?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, they ... they ...

Ed Metzler: Looked out for you and what have you?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. And we ... some of the boys cooked down in the ship and the scent would go up through the officers' quarter (laughter), and he'd comment on that, "Somebody's cooking something awful smelly the other night." (laughter)

Ed Metzler: They eat different food than you guys did, right?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yes, yeah. They ... they had their own mess hall, mess room. And them attendants, all colored attendants back then.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: And ...

Ed Metzler: What was the food like aboard ship?

Mr. Osborne: We ate good food. Yeah, we had good food and we ... uh, the only thing I didn't eat was their mutton (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). I've heard many stories ...

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter and coughing).

Ed Metzler: ... about Australian mutton!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), when you see an eighteen-wheeler back up to the dock there and they opened the door and it ... ain't nothing but mutton hanging there ...

Other Person: Uh!

Mr. Osborne: ... and they'd unload that ...

Ed Metzler: And you could smell it, too, can't you?

Mr. Osborne: ... and you could smell it and ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... and you smell it when they start cooking it that morning for ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... (sound), I said, "Well, I can go hungry today!"

Other Person: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah, see if I can hold out till tomorrow, huh?

Mr. Osborne: Ah man, I couldn't go that! And ...

Ed Metzler: So, you ...

Mr. Osborne: ... most ... most of their food was good.

Other Person: Did you have a little commissary that you could purchase from or nothing?

Mr. Osborne: No, it ... had a little ... you can get candy by ... but no commissary on there. And the carriers, well, they ... they did, but ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the battleships and carriers ... might have that.

Mr. Osborne: And the battleships, they had their ...

Ed Metzler: What about ice cream? Did you have ice cream?

Mr. Osborne: About once a month maybe.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, and milk. Every so often, they'd bring in five gallon cans of frozen milk.

Other Person: Of frozen milk?

Mr. Osborne: And ...

Ed Metzler: Beats powered milk!

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: We had a lot of that (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I'll bet (unintelligible).

Other Person: (Unintelligible) milk?

Mr. Osborne: And powered egg, yeah.

Other Person: (Unintelligible) milk?

Mr. Osborne: No, they ... flat (laughter and coughs).

Ed Metzler: But they had their own bakery and they baked ...

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: ... fresh bread and that kind of stuff.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, they had, yeah, they had fresh bread. And I was in the Chief's quarters as a mess attendant one time for about a month ... really eat good back there in the Chief's quarters.

Other Person: Hum.

Mr. Osborne: Had ... make you big ole pancakes and have pure butter!

Other Person: Wow!

Ed Metzler: Sounds good! I'm hungry!

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And their mess attendant he'd make his own mayonnaise and everything like that.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: And so, yeah, they ...

Ed Metzler: So, after Tarawa, where did ... where did you guys end up?

Mr. Osborne: Back in Eniwetok. Then we started bombarding a bunch of the smaller islands there in the ... in the Gilbert Islands.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Just every one of them because the Japs had supply bases on all the little ones that supplied different airfields. The main ones that we took had airfields on them that we needed to get the planes from our back, and place for our airplanes to fly out of. We bombarded quite a number of those smaller islands. I think one of those ... I think one of those islands we lost a submarine. Showed up on depth finder ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... destroyers and they traced it to the ... close to one of the islands there that we was bombarding and it never would show itself or do anything. They ...

Ed Metzler: ... figured it was Japanese, huh?

Mr. Osborne: ... and they sunk it, but it was one of ours.

Ed Metzler: Oh no!

Mr. Osborne: So ... and why they wouldn't ... recognize or come up, we don't know.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: It was just one of those accidents of war.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Other Person: Was the Chester ever hit when you were on it?

Mr. Osborne: No.

Other Person: No.

Mr. Osborne: No, we ... we ...

Ed Metzler: She took a pounding earlier, but that was ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, that ...

Ed Metzler: ... before you came aboard.

Mr. Osborne: ... before I went onboard. We had ... missed by ... torpedoes three times while I was ... uh, one ... one morning we was, I don't know where we was going, but the three cruisers and destroyers and some other ship was at Eniwetok, and late

one evening one of those big fleet tankers come in and he had so much fuel that water was washing over his well deck.

Ed Metzler: (*Phew* sound!)

Mr. Osborne: And he come in and anchored way down in the harbor. Well, the next morning before reveille, the cruisers and us was going somewhere. I think it was Peleliu, but anyway, we was ... was going out and as we was going out the gate, one of the lookouts reported, "Periscope." And our Captain turned that cruiser to ram it and when he turned the cruiser, swung that rear-end, the torpedo went by.

Ed Metzler: (Whistle sound), good he turned!

Mr. Osborne: But it hit that fleet tanker down there.

Ed Metzler: Oh no!

Mr. Osborne: Just one big *boom!* And the destroyer that was escorting us, he was faster, he cut his cruiser off and he had to straighten up and the little destroyer rammed that little submarine and sunk it right there.

Ed Metzler: They got it right there, huh?

Mr. Osborne: And they, uh, the destroyer lost two sailors in the forward five inch magazine because it knocked a hole in the ... the ship, and they drowned down there ...

Ed Metzler: Oh, my ... !

Mr. Osborne: ... because they wouldn't open a water-tight door ...

Ed Metzler: Uh, uh, uhm!

Mr. Osborne: ... flood the rest of the ship. So, we lost that ... uh, screen there.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: But we had enough to go. And about noon that day, you could still see the column of smoke on the horizon back there on that ...

Ed Metzler: That was a heck of a fire, wasn't it?!

Mr. Osborne: ... (unintelligible), oh yeah, it was ...

Ed Metzler: It was *a lot of fuel!*

Mr. Osborne: He had a lot of fuel on that thing! But anyway, that's another little ... little story of the ... of the war. Of course, like I say, I don't know, I think we was going to Peleliu, and that was another big, uh, loss of life. But they had two airfields on it, and they knew it was down close to the Guadalcanal which is ...

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... you look at the map ... they needed to get the Japs out of that airfield. And when we left there, I don't know just ...

Ed Metzler: Did you go back to the States at any time during this period of time?

Mr. Osborne: Yes. We ...

Ed Metzler: Didn't she go back to San Francisco for a ...

Mr. Osborne: ... we went ... went back to San Francisco, and ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... and had one of the mast's lowered and our big mast ...

Other Person: Oh.

Mr. Osborne: ... make a lower (unintelligible) out of the ship. And we also got a camouflage paint job ...

Other Person: Oh.

Mr. Osborne: ... while we was there.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I saw photos of that camouflage job.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: It was really striking!

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, you can't ...

Ed Metzler: With all the ...

Mr. Osborne: ... if ... you have to look real close to see it all ...

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: ... because it blends.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: Part of it blends with the ocean, and it was like a little one, look again, there's a big one. So yeah, that ...

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: ... so, and I got ...

Other Person: Did you get leave at that time, too? Did you get leave at that time?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, I got leave while they was doing that and went home.

Ed Metzler: What ... did you ride the train home?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Was it a brief leave or did you get ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, no, in fact, I was gone a week; that was a week ... week.

Ed Metzler: What'd it feel like to walk into home again?

Mr. Osborne: (Chuckles), just excited (coughing). See everybody, you know, and ...

Ed Metzler: They were happy to see you I suspect.

Mr. Osborne: ... and, oh yeah, yeah. And then one trip we met ... went back on another of our repair jobs we ... we got rammed at Iwo Jima ...

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: ... (unintelligible) later in the war.

Ed Metzler: Now did you go up into the Alaska area?

Mr. Osborne: Yes, we was ... when we left San Francisco from getting our ship repaired from being rammed at Iwo, little story on that ramming. Uh, there was a smoke screen laid; we'd already been to Iwo Jima three times. On our second trip up there, we escorted a load of frogmen, and they went in and sur ... surveyed the beaches. And back then frogmen were just ... had a bathing suit and a knife.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: And underwater slate to write with, that's all they had.

Other Person: Wow.

Mr. Osborne: And they went in there and surveyed the beach to see what kind of obstacles was there. And later on, they could go blow them up. Well, D-day, day before D-day, we was in there with a task force. You couldn't ... you couldn't see the ships ... they was so far, so many. There was eight battleships around Iwo Jima, eight square mile island; there was eight battleships with all the destroyers and rocket boats and gun boats, and D-day morning it was such a smoke screen laid down you couldn't see fifty foot out there.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: Every ship had his little perimeter he was supposed to stay in.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Well, somewhere in that length of time, I was back in ... on the head, my morning constitution back there, four big ole blasts on that steam whistle on our ship let go and that's danger, four blasts is always danger. And I was sitting

there holding onto (laughter) and all of a sudden all them screws wound up vibrating the whole thing and turning, and I'm holding onto that seat and, "I got to get out of here! (laughter)" And about that time, the ship hit us back there on the stern right ... you might say right where I was sitting back there. And I said, "Oh hell," I didn't know what was going on (laughter).

Ed Metzler: What ship was it that struck you?

Mr. Osborne: The USS, uh, caught me off guard.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), gotcha! (laughter)

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, you got me there.

Ed Metzler: That's alright, doesn't matter.

Mr. Osborne: Anyway, it ... communication ship and it got out of its perimeter and rammed us. And it knocked one of our screws and (unintelligible) blew a shaft off and damaged ... and pushed a side in, knocked a bunch of the boys out of their bunks down there in that area.

Ed Metzler: So, this was at Iwo, right?

Mr. Osborne: At Iwo Jima.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Of course, battle stations started, and I had to go all the way to the front of the ship to my battle station.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Just shortly after that, well we started bombarding. It was getting close to eight o'clock there and getting ready for the Marines to come in.

Ed Metzler: This is the first day of Iwo?

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: When the first wave was getting ready to go in?

Mr. Osborne: On the first wave.

Ed Metzler: Did she stay around Iwo in time to see the flag going up?

Mr. Osborne: No, we stayed there and bombarded all of that day and the next day and the [USS] Pensacola we was in one area here going backward and forward, and the Pensacola is up here going backward and forward. And for some reason or

another, the Pensacola come down here and stopped, and we was coming up this way to turn around.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: And when she stopped, the Japs run a twin, eight-inch gun out of a cave and shot her six times ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: ... before she could move, and then it run that gun back in that cave. But we had already pinpointed, and we turned around and went back and the Pensacola turned around and come back, and come back and just as soon as we come back and she stopped, and they run that eight-inch gun out and we put three eight-inch shells in the middle of it and knocked it out. And then she went out and had burial for their dead, twenty something killed in there.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! So, the Pensacola was a ...

Mr. Osborne: It was our sister ship.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so she was a ... she was a heavy cruiser as well.

Mr. Osborne: Yes, it was a heavy cruiser; the Pensacola, [USS] Salt Lake City, and [USS] Chester were all sister ships.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay.

Mr. Osborne: Fifth Cruiser Division. Anyway, the story on that twin gun. I read way after the war I was reading another military story, and it told about that incident.

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: And that was a British eight-inch gun that was captured in Burma and shipped out to Iwo Jima and set up. And about the flag, they raised ... we had to ... we left to go down to Saipan to see how much ... so the divers could go down and see how much damage we had, and they were (coughs) ... they raised the flag two days after we left.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: And I was at Saipan when they raised the flag. I celebrated my twentieth birthday at Saipan.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: February the 25th (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: See, they raised the flag on the 23rd. And ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, its that flag right there.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: That flag right there. They said, “That’s the stateside (unintelligible) ... whoopee!” (laughter)

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: So, we went from there to Pearl Harbor on into San Francisco, and Mare Island Navy Yard. And when we left there after all the repairs, my mother come out from Waco and visited ...

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: ... with me out there. So, they wouldn’t let us go nowhere (laughter), and ...

Ed Metzler: Did you ... did you write letters home during the war?

Mr. Osborne: Yep, oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you get letters from home?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we got letters and got fruitcake. I got ...

Ed Metzler: And you shared your fruitcake, didn’t you, with your buddies?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, I ... I got as fruitcake about a month or so after the ... Thanksgiving or Christmas, and it wasn’t nothing but a box full of crumbs (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Cough), but ...

Ed Metzler: Kind of dried out, huh?

Mr. Osborne: No, it was still damp, but it’d been ...

Ed Metzler: But it was ...

Mr. Osborne: ... it’d been ... in all that mail and packing and (unintelligible).

Other Person: How long did mail take?

Mr. Osborne: It ... just crushed it.

Other Person: Did mail take like a month or ...

Mr. Osborne: Oh, some it did, yeah.

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And it still smelt of the wine and ...

Other Person: Oh (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... and goodies that was put in it, everybody had to have a bite of that caramel cake so it got spread around (laughter).

Other Person: (Chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Did you have a ... a particular buddy or buddies that you kind of hung around with ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... during the ... your time on the ship?

Mr. Osborne: I had a ... Joe Pena, a little Mexican boy, and a couple of others there, but ... and Philip. We ... we kind of ... we had a ... we had a picture, all three of us, but I give it to Pena's sister.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: I went down to Uvalde one year, about five years ago, was going to visit Joe and he had already passed away.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: So, I ... I located one of his brothers and he took me over to their other sister's house, and I give them that picture.

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: So, they'd have something. While we was in Saipan way back there, our Captain, I believe it was Captain Hartley (sp?), Henry Hartley, he gave every crew member a rifle or bayonet off of Saipan that had been collected.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: Japanese.

Ed Metzler: That's a lot of bayonets and rifles!

Mr. Osborne: Yes. Well, there ...

Ed Metzler: 'Cause there's six hundred and something on the crew!

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, that was nine hundred and something with the officers and men.

Ed Metzler: And the officers, yeah!

Mr. Osborne: Anyway, he ... well, there was more than that ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... there was ten thousand ...

Ed Metzler: I bet!

Mr. Osborne: ... or more Japanese on that island, too.

Other Person: So, you still have it?

Mr. Osborne: Yes. I've got it out here in my box, bayonet. I didn't bring the rifle. Joe got a rifle and it had a "thirty-aught-six" bullet right in the breach of that Jap rifle.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Where it was shot out of. And that's what he wanted. So, and this is in the museum down at Uvalde now.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: He donated all of his stuff to that museum down there. And I think that's what I want to do with all of my stuff that I've got ... donate it here.

Other Person: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Other Person: That's very ...

Mr. Osborne: Anyway, we left ... they issued us cold weather clothes ...

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: ... there at San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: I bet you're going to tell me an Alaska story now, aren't you?

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: Lay it on me!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), well, we headed up north and of course, we wound up at Adak, Alaska.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And they let us go ashore there for one day, sort of a shore leave party, walked around, it wasn't nothing there, it just had the airfield ...

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: ... and a few buildings. And the wreckage of planes up on the sides of the mountain ... 'cause it was a ... oh, they said it had more crashes up there and still do as far as that goes.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: And then we moved from there down to Attu, up to Attu rather, anchored there. Then we had a small task force accumulated there and we went, I can't remember, there's a name of an island up there above Japan that we went to.

Ed Metzler: The Kurile, K-u-r-i-l-e [s/b K-u-r-i-l?]

Mr. Osborne: Oh, the Kuril Islands.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And there was a base, a supply base, in there, we tore it up pretty bad before we left out of there. And then went back to Adak and ... and a little later on we made another run over to Pemishiro (sp?) which is a big island above Japan, and blowed up another big supply base for them. And that's when the torpedo boat come out and fired two torpedoes and both missed – one went down one side and went down the other. And we had a boy a twenty-millimeter gun up on the Fo'c'sle, and he said, "I seen them torpedoes coming," and he said, "I didn't know whether to run," he said, "it wasn't no place to run," (chuckles), so he said, "I thought I'd just ...

Ed Metzler: You can't run and hide!

Other People: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Osborne: And he said, "I thought I'd jump in that ammunition box and close the door," and he said, "that wouldn't help nothing either."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: So, he said, "I just hung onto that gun and *hoped!*"

Ed Metzler: Well, that's what you got to do! (laughter)

Mr. Osborne: And he said and seeing both of them torpedoes go by and he said how they missed he didn't know.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: But that's how close we come to getting sunk up there. And then, I forgot to tell you about these ... there was three ... three times we got missed by torpedoes.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Well, all three cruisers were going somewhere, I don't know where we was going there ... just escorts out, and I was on lookout on port side and I just happened to be looking at ... close to the horizon, saw this bright ... come up out of the water, splash and go down. Well, the only thing it would flash like that was a torpedo, and it was a torpedo, and I reported it, and all the ships turned. And of course, the destroyer went out to ... never could find the sub, but the torpedo come down between us and this other ... two cruisers. So, that missed us by my report. And that ... and of course ...

Other Person: Did you see that ...

Mr. Osborne: ... after I reported it, there was two or three other lookouts reported it, too.

Other Person: Wow.

Mr. Osborne: So, anyway, the Captain called me up to the bridge and thanked me for being a good lookout.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Other Person: Yeah!

Mr. Osborne: That's what you're supposed to do. So, I said, "Well, I was just ... luck." I happened to be looking at that particular spot.

Other Person: Wow! Its lucky!

Mr. Osborne: I caught it with my field glasses.

Other Person: Uh huh.

Mr. Osborne: And so, we missed ... that was the third torpedo that missed us.

Ed Metzler: Did the Chester ever have to deal with kamikaze attacks?

Mr. Osborne: No. After we left the Aleutians up there, we went back to Pearl Harbor, went in dry dock. They wanted to check the hull, be sure everything was alright going back (unintelligible). And there was a little destroyer in the dry dock in front of us, the USS Reid (throat clearing), and two days before we went out of dry dock, well it come out, loaded up with fuel and supplies and ammunition and

headed for Okinawa which was being in (unintelligible) with a suicide plane then.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it was bad there.

Mr. Osborne: And then two days later, well we come out of dry dock and started loading up with fuel and everything, and we left heading down. Two days after ... before we got to Okinawa, the USS Reid was sunk by suicide plane.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: That's how fast (throat clearing).

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And we went into Okinawa and we done a little bombarding there cause they was still fighting for the island. And while we was there we ... a typhoon come in and every ship in that harbor moved at one time going out. And Pensacola ... and it was already got so rough and it was diving under the water.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And the Pensacola lost a sailor over the side.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: It was a supply ship behind him, and somebody I guess saw it, and they throwed a landing net down the side (chuckles) and when they went back ...

Other Person: In the bottom?!

Mr. Osborne: ... that sailor grabbed ... grabbed that durned net ...

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: ... net ...

Ed Metzler: That's amazing!

Mr. Osborne: ... and crawled on his ... stayed on that ship then.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: And of course, everybody was ... nobody slowed down, everybody getting ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... out of that harbor. We lost a destroyer, he disappeared out there in that storm.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: So, went down and didn't come up on one of those big waves.

Ed Metzler: So, when you look out and all you see is a wall of water ...

Mr. Osborne: Wall of ... wall of water and you ...

Ed Metzler: ... and which ... which is the next wave.

Mr. Osborne: ... you go ... go into it, you liab ... water I believe is fifty, sixty foot above your bow; that's a lot of weight and a lot of water!

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: And the Chester do ... wonder if that big ole thing is going to come up.

Other Person: Any thoughts that went through your head when you saw that?

Mr. Osborne: I ... I hope (laughter).

Other Person: Just hoping!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), I hope it comes up (laughter)!

Ed Metzler: What do you ... what do you figure was your closest scrape during ... during your period in the Pacific? When ... when were you wondering if you were going to make it?

Mr. Osborne: I guess Iwo. I don't know, really, we didn't have ... we didn't have no surface battles at all.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Planes, we had ... we shot down some planes.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: I'll tell you a quick story on the planes. I don't know where'd we been, but we was anchored in Saipan and waiting on ... waiting on something, and of course, the anti-aircraft guns is manned ... manned all the time whether you're in port, wherever you are, they're manned.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And all of a sudden here comes a Jap plane from the other side of Saipan. He come in from the other side of the island somewhere. We figured he'd come from Iwo 'cause we hadn't taken it yet.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Come right over us! Didn't do nothing, just ... of course, I remember two five inch guns started shooting just as quick as he got over us, and the fourth round brought smoke from him, so we knew he was hit. In the meantime, fighter pilot from Tinian which was a ... made a B-29 base ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... out of ... had taken off was ... was going to come after him, and he went on down ... just the far end of Saipan which ... pretty far down there. We just ... barely see him, and that fighter pilot caught up him down there, and circled and ... and he says, "Hey, that son of a bitch just bailed out of that plane there; he's floating down in his parachute!" Then about thirty seconds or so later, "Hey, that son of a bitch just dropped out of that parachute; there he goes!" (laughter) So, (laughter) that's what happened to the ... the pilot of the Jap plane (laughter).

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned!

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: And he was up high enough, he didn't survive (laughter).

Other Person: Yeah, wow!

Mr. Osborne: He didn't want to get captured, so (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: You figure that was a ... was it a bomber or a fighter?

Mr. Osborne: No, it was a little ...

Ed Metzler: It was probably a Betty then, if it ...

Mr. Osborne: ... little fighter. No, it was just a single engine.

Ed Metzler: Oh, a single engine? Okay.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, a little single engine, no ... they said he strafed a hospital on the other side of ... of the island.

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: And probably didn't even know we was there till he flew over us.

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: If he'd of had a bomb, he could just drop it right in the middle of (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Nobody expecting a plane.

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Osborne: You know?

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: But anyway, that's what happened to that (chuckles).

Other Person: Did you have your camouflage paint by that time? Or was that before or after?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, no I think we had our camouflage there just sitting there anchored and (chuckles) popped over.

Ed Metzler: Were you involved at all in the Philippines Campaign?

Mr. Osborne: No, no. We went ... we went down close. We ... we bombarded uh, Guam once.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: When they decided to retake it.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And that was one of the ... (unintelligible) cruise at all. I think five ... we entered ... we crossed the international date line and ... and the equator five different times, backward and forward just ... if you had breakfast ... if you had beans for breakfast this morning, and it was the same day when we crossed that line, you had beans for breakfast that morning.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: Whatever you had that meal ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... you ... you doubled up!

Other Person: Did you ...

Ed Metzler: You just did it again!

Other Person: Did you have one of those crossing the equator parties?

Mr. Osborne: Nah, it was ...

Ed Metzler: They did ...

Mr. Osborne: ... right there it was battle zones and they didn't have a big party.

Other Person: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Oh, they call them shellbacks ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Other Person: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... for the first time they ... they crossed the equator.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, pollywogs or shellbacks.

Ed Metzler: Pollywogs and shellbacks and all that ... that stuff.

Other Person: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: The Captain congratulated all the new crew when ... when going from a pollywog to a shellback and ...

Other Person: (Chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Did you ever have any rest and relaxation ...

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: ... trips ...

Mr. Osborne: We had ...

Ed Metzler: ... R&R?

Mr. Osborne: ... we had one ... one R&R on the little island of Funafuti. It was a recreation island.

Ed Metzler: Spell that for me, or can you (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: F ... I might of wrote ... I might have wrote it down.

Ed Metzler: I've heard of Mog Mog island.

Mr. Osborne: No, it ...

Ed Metzler: But it ... but this was a different one.

Mr. Osborne: Funafuti.

Ed Metzler: Funafuti?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. Anyway, it was ... it was divided, well officers had and nurses and all had one end of the island and ...

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: ... and we went on there and there was five thousand sailors on that island at one time.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Other Person: All having fun, fun at Funafuti?

Mr. Osborne: And they ... when ... when we went ashore, they give us a ... a carton of Coca Cola and a carton of beer.

Other Person: Oh man.

Mr. Osborne: Well, I didn't drink beer at the time, so I had all the Coca Cola I wanted to drink.

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter).

Other Person: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Cause I traded my beer for ...

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... all the beer that I had.

Other Person: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, you just swopped beer for Coca Cola?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, and ...

Ed Metzler: And I'll bet not one for one either (laughter)!

Mr. Osborne: No, (laughter) they ... they ... and you'd stand on a stand dune there and see a fight here and a fight there, a fight down there.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Or playing ball over here and ...

Ed Metzler: What'd they play ... softball and baseball and ...

Mr. Osborne: Just, yeah, just throwing a ball or just ... just having a good time, just relax ...

Other Person: And how long were you on there?

Mr. Osborne: We was just on there on one day.

Other Person: Oh, just one day.

Ed Metzler: One day R&R.

Mr. Osborne: And there was ships, all kind of ships out there, and of course, they had the destroyers out. We was way off the battle zones, but ...

Other Person: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: ... down there on that island.

Ed Metzler: Did you have any USO shows or have any of ...

Mr. Osborne: We had one USO show, and I can't ... I ... Donald O'Connor, I think was one of them.

Ed Metzler: Oh, okay, yeah!

Mr. Osborne: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, was that a big deal for you guys?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, yeah!

Ed Metzler: Did you enjoy it?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, oh, we enjoyed it. I had two fights while I was on the ship (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Oh, tell us about your fights.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: Well, we was anchored at Saipan (throat clearing), and we was going to show a movie. Well, the movie was going on and it was, I don't know, probably eight ... eight o'clock at night and all of a sudden, get underway, had to go somewhere at that time of night, so cancel the movie. Everybody was mad, and didn't get to watch that good movie. So, we ... and I was on the anchor detail at the time, and my job on the anchor detail was ... a ball-peen hammer, and I hit each link of that anchor chain as it come in. If ... if it was good, it would ring; if it was cracked, it'd just (thump sound).

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: So, we had to ... so, it was dark, it was pitch black, you couldn't hardly ... you couldn't hardly see how to walk. Well, I had a, at the time, I had a flashlight with a blue lens in it, no light nowhere, so I told whoever it was there in charge I was going to go get that flashlight so I could see that anchor chain good and he said, "Okay, go get it," which was in my compartment. Well, I went down there and while I was down there, there was two or three others in there getting stuff. And the Boatswain's mate come down there, and told me, "Get my A-SS out on that deck where I was supposed to be." I said, "Well, when I get my flashlight, I will." He said, "I said now!" And reached up and slapped me right across the face; shouldn't have done it!

Other Person: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Shouldn't have done it.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Man, I landed into him, you're not supposed to hit a Boatswain's mate or a Coxswain or ... and the next morning, an ole ... another one ... one of the ... Red, called him Red, and he was more husky, he said, "Bob, you going to get in trouble," he said. "I want to whoop him," I said. "No, I'm going to whoop you if you don't quit!" (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: I ... alright, so I quit. And all we had was our battle lamp which was red for our light down there, you can see by it, but you couldn't see good. Well, the next ... I got my light and went on up.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Done my job and next morning at ... at quarters on the deck, we was all standing there in rows, you know, and ... and I'm looking up there and that Boatswain's mate ... jaws ... checks all hanging down here and black, and ole Lieutenant up there said, "Looks like we had a little altercation last night, everybody alright?" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: I didn't have no marks on me (laughter).

Other Person: So, did they ever know you did it?

Ed Metzler: You didn't ...

Mr. Osborne: Huh?

Other Person: Did they ever know you did it?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, Red ... Red knew (unintelligible).

Other Person: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Did they do anything to you?

Mr. Osborne: No. No, I ... Lieutenant said, "Had a little altercation last night didn't we?" (laughter), so ...

Ed Metzler: Well, tell us about the other fight.

Mr. Osborne: Well ...

Ed Metzler: You said there was two.

Mr. Osborne: ... yeah, okay. I don't know where we were. Every so often we'd take all of our mattresses and pillows to topside so they'd air out.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: Well, everybody had their mattresses; there was ... there was mattresses all over that ship.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: Well, that afternoon, I went to get my mattress. There wasn't no mattress there. So, I started walking and I walked all over the forward part of the ship looking at mattresses, and I started down the passageway past the well deck going to the stern of the ship. And I was walking around there and looking and looking. Everybody had their name on their mattress.

Other Person: Oh okay.

Mr. Osborne: So, I was walking around there, "Huh! There's (unintelligible)!" And an ole boy was laying on it, you know, (unintelligible) himself.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Osborne: And I ... , "Hey," says, "Hey, what's your name?" "It's so and so." I said, "That's funny, my name is B.E.R, and that's my mattress." And that was ... I didn't have a fight on that. I had enough fight on ... and he just got up and walked over to the guardrail and didn't say a word. And I ... rolled my mattress up and walked off with it.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: 'Cause he knew if he'd of said something, I'd of been right in the middle of him. He done stole my mattress!

Ed Metzler: That ... that would have been Fight #3 (laughter)!

Mr. Osborne: You damned right!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: But didn't have no fight over that, could have.

Ed Metzler: Could have though; the potential was there (laughter).

Other Person: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, he ... yes, there was my big name on that mattress, and it wasn't dirty, it (chuckles) I kept it clean.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: And, in fact, I still got it at home.

Ed Metzler: Is that right?

Other Person: Wow! That's great!

Mr. Osborne: Believe it or not (laughter). Anyway, the other fight was at ... right at ... almost midnight. I was on a five-inch gun watch (throat clearing), and another crew come on for the midnight watch. And I was standing there on the guardrail of the ... of the gun pit, and the guy that was going to relieve me, he was wanting me to relieve him about ten minutes early. I said, "Ah, (unintelligible) time!" And he just walked over there and just slapped me just as hard as he could, knocked my hat off of the side, he shouldn't have done it! (laughter) Man, he started to run, and I reached out and I grabbed him right around the neck, and it was right at the back of the platform of the gun ...

Other Person: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: ... gun, and I just sat down on that deck ... with a neck hold on him, threw my two legs around his ...

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: ... partial there, and I put back on him. He couldn't even move! And I was choking him. I was fixing to choke him right on down until he couldn't ... past out, and I said, "I'll let you up if you'll get the hell out of here and leave me alone." And he jumped up wanting to fight.

Other Person: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, he wanted to fight, and I said, "You know what I told you, didn't ... you better get the hell out of here!" He says, "Yeah, okay." (laughter) Well, he took off.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: So ... but, there was lots of fights on the ship. One time we had ice cream, everybody was lined up in the mess hall to get their little bit of ... and some guy dragged in the line up there (laughter).

Other Person: Oh! You don't do that!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Don't (unintelligible) in the ice cream line (laughter).

Other People: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: And the other boys, they went together right there in the middle of the deck. Man, they was just rolling and pounding.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: We just kept ... everybody ... everybody ...

Ed Metzler: And the line kept moving (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... getting their ice cream.

Other Person: You can cut in line, but not in the ice cream line. How often did you have movies?

Mr. Osborne: Not very often. I ... I can't remember ... maybe three times in ...

Ed Metzler: So, this was a special deal then. (Unintelligible) movies.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, any ... anytime you had a movie.

Ed Metzler: What else did you guys do in your spare time? I've heard lots of stories about gambling and ...

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: ... and poker and ...

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah, payday ... they had a gambling ... they had a gambling in ... in our compartment there. If you was going to be on watch and you wanted to get your sleep, you didn't get no sleep. Well, one night I was ... I was extra tired or something, I don't know, and I was trying to go to sleep and they had one going and they was making so much noise you couldn't sleep.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Other Person: Did you ever participate?

Mr. Osborne: So I ... no, no, I didn't gamble. Anyway, I called Master at Arms, and I said, "Come up here and break this damned game up; they don't need ... be this time of night," and pretty soon they come slipping in there (laughter). They broke the game up (laughter). (Unintelligible) some of the money.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Other Person: So, since you liked to read so much, did ... was there a library in there?

Mr. Osborne: No.

Other Person: No?!

Mr. Osborne: No, no library.

Other Person: No reading. So, no books that ...

Mr. Osborne: You know, I can't remember whether I had a book.

Other Person: Magazines of pin-up girls?

Mr. Osborne: All we had ... they had, no (chuckle), we had occasionally they would put a ... I didn't bring with me, I should have ... put out by the Navy, uh, it was ... I can't think of the name of it now, but it give information about our ... all of what was going on and ...

Other Person: Wow, okay.

Mr. Osborne: ... and ... but that's about all ...

Other Person: Yeah, wow.

Mr. Osborne: ... all the reading we had. Some of the boys tried to learn how to play guitars and what not. Now, I made a ring while I was on ship.

Ed Metzler: What kind of ring?

Mr. Osborne: Took a half dollar ... back then it was big half dollars.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: The Walking Liberty they called it ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... back then. Its rare, collectible now.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And a spoon tapping that ...

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: ... tapping that ring and turning that silver dollar, I mean, fifty cent piece, and I beat it right down to where it made a wedding band. Took a knife and cut the inside of it out and trimmed it down smooth.

Ed Metzler: You still have it?

Mr. Osborne: No, its melted. I give it to the girl that I thought I was going to marry, and she married another boy which was alright. And on their wedding night, they was at Bandera up at the ... at one of the riding, dude ranch ... up there in Bandera, and their cabin caught on fire, and she lost all of her jewelry and everything in

that fire. Everything they had, they was just in their night clothes when they got out of it.

Ed Metzler: Oh my gosh!

Mr. Osborne: Propane.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: It caught the place.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: And all they found was a little melted pile of gold and stuff ...

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: ... where ... where that ring ... it ... the ring was in that. But that was something to do there.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Other Person: Yeah!

Mr. Osborne: Give you free time ...

Other Person: Yeah!

Mr. Osborne: ... carried it in my pocket, take it out and beat it a while.

Other Person: Did you make anything else?

Mr. Osborne: No, that was the one thing I made. Oh, I made my knife scabbard, yep, it's out there in that box.

Other Person: Wow, okay.

Mr. Osborne: (Throat clearing). And my knife, I carried all the time I was on the ship.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: Where ... do you remember where the Chester was when they dropped the atomic bomb?

Mr. Osborne: Yes. When we ... when we left Okinawa, they had finished taking Okinawa and there was no more suicide planes coming in, we went to Pearl Harbor and loaded up. And there's other ships we didn't know, and then we ... started heading back to the Aleutians. We didn't know what was going on, but there was a pretty good task force that was accumulating behind us.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: And we get up to Adak and I know there was two heavy cruisers and light cruiser and there was a battle ship, and I think there was a little carrier in that bunch, and I don't know how many smaller. And what it was ... we was to be, uh, make the Japs think we was invading in northern Japan in what we were doing.

Ed Metzler: Kind of a diversion type thing, yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And what we didn't know that we had a hell of a task force sitting in off of Formosa. I'm trying to think of the name ... they had a name for it, and I can't think of it now. And we started out from Adak heading towards Japan, and they stopped us out there in the ocean, and we was sort of milling around for a day and waiting. And while we was doing that, they was dropping the bomb.

Ed Metzler: Phew!

Mr. Osborne: And so after the ...

Ed Metzler: So, people figured things were over at that point when they heard about the bomb or what ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. Yeah, when ... when they dropped the bomb, well they ... and when they dropped that second bomb, well the Japs had surrendered.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: So, when they ... when they surrendered, well then they turned us lose to go on in and we went in and occupied ... Obatan (sp?) Naval Base on northern Japan.

Other Person: Uhm!

Ed Metzler: What'd you see there?

Mr. Osborne: Two ...

Ed Metzler: Are any ships left?

Mr. Osborne: ... two or three sunk ships in the harbor.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Osborne: No ... was no big ships.

Ed Metzler: Nothing floating anymore.

Mr. Osborne: There was no (unintelligible). In fact, Japan only had a few ships, fighting ships left ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I know.

Mr. Osborne: ... down, uh, off of ... in Japan, I guess, 'cause we'd sunk everything down there. Anyhow, it was ... last big battle they had, sea battle they had, is when they sunk the big Japanese battleship Yamamoto, and it was a super battleship.

Other Person: Wow.

Mr. Osborne: It ... it just had enough fuel to get down there.

Ed Metzler: It was a one-way trip.

Mr. Osborne: It was a one-way trip on it, plus all those other ships that went down there. So, they had a ... all ... all ... most all the Jap ships were sunk down there on that one big battle.

Ed Metzler: Did you go ashore at ... where ... at the ...

Mr. Osborne: Naval base, oh yeah, they ... we occupied it. We wanted to show the rifles. We just ... what was ... what would happen.

Ed Metzler: What was the reaction of the Japanese locals there when you went in?

Mr. Osborne: (Throat clearing). There was no army, no army there.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: No, as far as I know, no ... no ... probably no naval ... few ... few men around ... probably officials of some kind. And we just walked the streets, walked up in the housing areas. I've got a little (unintelligible) a woven basket that's got a doll in it. They wanted to give us food. Now we wouldn't take no food because they used human fertilizer to ...

Ed Metzler: To grow their crops.

Mr. Osborne: ... for, you know, grow their ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... crops.

Other Person: Hum!

Mr. Osborne: So, she give me that in place of food. And I said ...

Other Person: So, they treated you okay?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah! Yeah, they just very nice people, and yep, just like nothing had happened, you know? So, we walked around. And they had a cemetery there, walked through the cemetery. And ... they had a big warehouse. I've got a ... a bayonet come out of the warehouse, and it was just ... it's just a bar of steel with

a handle; it looks like a bayonet. It would ... it would kill you if you stuck it, you know.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: But the fighting bayonet is tapered steel with a blood groove and everything in it.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: But that was just a bar of steel ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: ... shaped like a bayonet. And they had a bamboo case for the fighting ... fighting bayonets had a metal case for leather holster to hang it on your belt.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: So, this thing up there had a clip; I've got it out there in that box. So ...

Ed Metzler: How do you feel about the Japanese?

Mr. Osborne: Well, I feel kind of like (clicking sounds) the Japanese people didn't know what was going on in the islands, and they're ... they're fighting men were doing, torturing and raping and everything. But if we had of invaded Japan like we started to, we would have lost as many, if not more ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... because we'd of had to kill women and children because they was already armed them. So, if you had a woman coming at you with a pitch fork or an axe, what are you going to do?

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Or a kid?

Other Person: Or a kid.

Mr. Osborne: A kid running at you with a hand grenade in his hand? That's what it would have amounted to.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: So, and people say, "Why'd he drop that bomb?!" Well, ma'am, I'm glad he dropped that bomb 'cause ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: It would have cost more Japanese lives, too.

Mr. Osborne: It ... it would, yes, yes.

Ed Metzler: Because they all would have had to of been killed practically ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... to take the island.

Mr. Osborne: Yes.

Ed Metzler: So, do you ... I know at the time, everybody ... I'll use the term hated the Japanese because they ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... were the enemy.

Mr. Osborne: At the time ... now, if you got to Hawaii (throat clearing), you'll see more Japanese ...

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... tourists there than Americans or anybody else. We went there ... I went there in '010. (Throat clearing), I had a free trip to Pearl Harbor, and everywhere we went, we had to wait for the Japanese tourists to get out of the way.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: So, you can see (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: Times have changed.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you, uh, after you occupied the naval base, was there another destination for you and the Chester ...

Mr. Osborne: (Cough).

Ed Metzler: ... before you went home?

Mr. Osborne: When we left there, went back and stopped at Pearl and got supplies, and we took off. Anything, it wasn't necessary and built bunks in the hangars where the seaplanes' bunks was ten, twelve, fifteen foot high or ... or higher.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: They just rose up. And we went to Saipan and Iwo Jima and picked up Marines.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: And we'd have ... we made two trips.

Ed Metzler: So, they put down in this low area here ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... where you had that.

Mr. Osborne: ... the ... the, uh, hangars were under this ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... right here. Had two of them. And big, big folding door. And one of those doors that knocked those doors in ... we ... we had a bunch of Marines in there, and they got wet (laughter), 'cause we run into a storm when we was coming home ...

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: ... with that one load of them. We made two trips.

Ed Metzler: So, you were kind of part of the Magic Carpet, uh, thing that they talk about?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we ... I guess I ... probably called it. We ... we made two trips bringing Marines home.

Other Person: How many Marines could you take back at once?

Mr. Osborne: Oh, we'd take, uh, two hundred or more.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. Yeah, we took everything off the ship that didn't ... and we had ... we also, uh, took a bunch of crew members off because we just kept a skeleton crew that ...

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: ... didn't need ... didn't need them. Then the ones that was eligible to get off, well, they was ready to go anyway. So, one of the first trip that we made to the States with a load of ... well, they all left. And then we made another trip to ... where another one of those. And on one of our trips, we lost a Marine off the ship between the ... San Francisco and Pearl Harbor.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: They don't know whether (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Don't know how it happened?

Mr. Osborne: Don't know whether he fell over or somebody threw him over or he jumped over or what.

Other Person: So, do you remember how long one trip back and forth would take you?

Mr. Osborne: Oh, it was about five days from Pearl Harbor to San Francisco.

Other Person: Okay.

Mr. Osborne: Its according to how fast they run, but ... but yeah, it was weeks in there and just cruising. You don't ... fast ... fast as that ship will run and ... and speedometer time was thirty mile ... thirty ... about thirty-five miles an hour.

Ed Metzler: That's a fast ship!

Mr. Osborne: And that was fast!

Ed Metzler: That's fast!

Mr. Osborne: Uh, in knots, they ... mile and a eighth ...

Other Person: Oh.

Mr. Osborne: ... I think is a knot. So, you kind of have to deduct time in there, but we didn't ever ... very seldom we cruised that fast. So, we just ... probably fifteen, maybe twenty miles an hour.

Ed Metzler: So, that would be the typical ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, just ...

Ed Metzler: ... cruising?

Mr. Osborne: ... yeah, just cruising speed.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So, on the second return trip bringing Marines home, was that when you stayed at ...

Mr. Osborne: No, at ...

Ed Metzler: ... you got off the ship at that point?

Mr. Osborne: No, when we hit San Francisco at that point, was in March or late February, the trains was on strike ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), oh no!

Mr. Osborne: ... on San Francisco.

Other Person: Oh no.

Mr. Osborne: Trains was on strike. San Francisco was literally covered up with sailors and Marines.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: You couldn't hardly stir them with a stick!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: And the only way you got out of there was either on a bus or a private car.

Ed Metzler: Or hitchhiking or something.

Mr. Osborne: Or hitchhiking, yeah. And I almost bought a motor scooter.

Other Person: Ah (sigh).

Mr. Osborne: Friend that I knew there in San Francisco that I met, he had a motor scooter that he had built, and it was nice. Fact, and that's what he had used all during the war, back ... go back and forth to work on. And he was going to let me have that to ride to Texas, and I always regret not doing it.

Ed Metzler: So, what ... how did you get home?

Mr. Osborne: I signed over an extra thirty days to take the ship through the Panama Canal.

Ed Metzler: Oh, yeah!

Mr. Osborne: I got to see it.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause she went back to Philadelphia, didn't she or ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we went to ... took it to Philadelphia ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... and put it in the mothball fleet. And then in '55, '56, they sold it for scrape iron, and towed it to Florida and chopped it up (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And I've got a piece of wooden deck.

Ed Metzler: Do you?

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: That come off it when the five-hundred-pound bomb went through the deck.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: Was the man ... his daughter's the secretary of our ship ... Chester reunion, and she's supposed to be here to ... tomorrow for our dedication.

Other Person: It's today.

Mr. Osborne: Huh?

Other Person: It's two o'clock.

Mr. Osborne: That's right, today, isn't it?

Other People: (Chuckles).

Ed Metzler: And they're down there, I mean, we met them. I think that's who we ...

Mr. Osborne: What ... and that's ... that's two of them, but ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... you know, these ... they're coming ...

Mr. Osborne: ... you know, they're coming ...

Ed Metzler: Oh, these are the other two.

Mr. Osborne: She ... she's coming from Springtown.

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: But they was going to be at her daughter, her granddaughter's, oh, about an hour, two hour drive from here 'cause they ... they was full.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: But they said they was going to be here. I'll get to see them tomorrow ... uh, today.

Other Person: Do you?

Mr. Osborne: They may be here now.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: But yeah, I ... I signed over with the ... little story on that. While I was ... in Balboa, we got liberty, and I bought a little pint bottle of Puerto Rican wine, uh, not wine.

Ed Metzler: Rum.

Mr. Osborne: Rum to drink when we got to Philadelphia.

Other Person: Really?

Mr. Osborne: Well, I put it in my locker, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Osborne: 'Cause ... locked it, and I think we was about a day out of San Fran ... uh, Philadelphia there getting ready to ... told some of those boys, "Let's get that bottle out and drink it." (laughter) I started to get that bottle out, and that done eat the cap off and it all leaked out (laughter).

Other People: Oh!

Ed Metzler: Probably just as well you didn't drink that stuff (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), yeah, it just (unintelligible) ... (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, it done eat the cap off and all drained down in there (laughter), so we didn't ... we didn't no nip (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's okay; you didn't want that stuff if it was eating the bottle top off (laughter).

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: I think about that and (laughter).

Other Person: Well, you know, think about what it would have done to your stomach if you (unintelligible).

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, we ... all ...

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Osborne: ... we all laughed about it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's a good laugh.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: So, did you leave ... uh, when she arrived in Philadelphia, is that when you left the Navy and went home?

Mr. Osborne: Yes, put us on a train, and when we pulled into Houston, there was a car run up on the train track and we run over it, right at the intersection. It pulled that car between one of them big ole square signal things and just shredded it out.

Other Person: Ah!

Mr. Osborne: And didn't kill nobody, but it left them laying on the ground. The motor of the car was ... we shredded that car out like (chuckles) ... scrap.

Ed Metzler: Now, this was in Houston?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, in Houston.

Ed Metzler: Okay, this is when you were coming back home?

Mr. Osborne: Coming home, just got into Houston, pulled in there and ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... hit that train. Of course, all the sailors are just (ah, ah, ah sounds). Little gal laying out there like this.

Ed Metzler: Holy mackerel!

Mr. Osborne: A little colored girl (chuckles), no britches on (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Lucky nobody was killed!

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, them sailors just hooping a hollering and carrying on (laughter). Didn't kill nobody like I said. And they didn't ... she didn't look like she was hurt. Probably was a little bit.

Other Person: Yeah!

Mr. Osborne: But it shredded that car out like scrap iron (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So, Bob, you were just eighteen when you went in.

Mr. Osborne: Yes, just turned eighteen.

Ed Metzler: And you came back basically three years later.

Mr. Osborne: No, not sixty-three (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Huh?

Mr. Osborne: Three years later.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you were what, twenty-one at that point.

Mr. Osborne: Twenty ...

Ed Metzler: About twenty going on.

Mr. Osborne: ... I was twenty-one.

Ed Metzler: So, how were you different when you came back from the war ...

Mr. Osborne: Well ...

Ed Metzler: ... compared to when you went in?

Mr. Osborne: I learned a lot of things, or thought a lot of things, and I tried to go back to school. My younger brother was a ... failed a class, and I told ... I made ... I made him go back to summer school and I was going to go take a class, try to get my ... finish my schooling. But when they tried to teach me to talk like King Arthur, I said, "No, this ain't for me!" (laughter). So, I said, "I'm gone." And my little brother said, "I'm going, too!" I said, "The hell you are, you're going to finish this school!" (laughter) And he did. He finished (unintelligible).

Other Person: What about your big brother? Did he make it back?

Mr. Osborne: Oh yeah! He's ... he's down ... he lives down below Waco; he's ... he's ninety-five.

Other Person: Wow!

Mr. Osborne: He don't get around as fast as I do; he's a ... few odds and ends happened to him.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Osborne: Like he had a knee joint put in and while he was in the hospital to getting already, he had a heart attack.

Ed Metzler: Uh, uh, uhm!

Mr. Osborne: Had to do open heart surgery on him, and we like to lost him.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: That ... that's that. And then after he got out of there, well, fell and broke his hip. He ... finally got over that. And then he was in HEB and some guy shoved a buggy, hit him and knocked him down and he broke his shoulder on the curb there.

Other Person: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: So, he don't get around as fast as I do.

Ed Metzler: No, he's had a few events, hasn't he?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Osborne: Well, I ... I got two steel knees, a steel shoulder, and steel clips in my chest.

Other Person: Well, you're the bionic man!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), and a few broken bones here and there.

Ed Metzler: We've covered a lot of ground. What ... what stories have you not told us about the war?

Mr. Osborne: What ... that's about all I can ... mention. I met some good people over the years. People lost contact with in California, and I had three daughters. Met ... met one little girl at ... the USO club and escorted her home. She had an angora sweater. You know what angora is?

Other Person: Oh yes!

Mr. Osborne: Well, when I got to the base, I looked like a pink airball! That angora all over me.

Ed Metzler: Sluffed off ... sluffed off on you a little bit, huh?

Mr. Osborne: All over that blue suit.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Very ... very nice, just nothing happened ... just ... we just had a good time dancing. I wasn't around her then. I didn't go to them bars and things. I got in ... I think ... I guess I was ...

Ed Metzler: So, you've been active in the, uh, Chester ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, the association? Yeah, I've been (unintelligible) ...

Ed Metzler: ... association?

Mr. Osborne: ... for the last ... about fifteen years now ... nearly.

Ed Metzler: That's a good way to touch base with some of the ...

Mr. Osborne: When I'd started, we'd have anywhere from ten to fifteen sailors, and the last ... the last three that we went to besides the one in Dallas this last year, there were three of us ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: ... showing up. And I'm on the board with, I think, these other two ... that when it gets down to where we ... its not profitable to have them, that we can abandon it. We give everything from the association to the Museum.

Other Person: Oh wow!

Mr. Osborne: So ... and we had it in Dallas this year; I was the lone sailor.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter), I was the lone sailor!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: The other two that had been coming, one of them was about half sick and the other was afraid he might fall.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: Getting pretty weak. And the last time we had one we was all together, we was sitting on a bench and one of them leaned out and looked at me and said, "You're going to have to get you a walking stick!" I said, "Not yet!" And they

both had walking sticks (laughter). And they was ... I was the oldest; they was ... but they ...

Other Person: And they were younger?

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, they were ninety-one and I was ninety-two (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). They were only ninety-one! (laughter)

Mr. Osborne: Yeah (laughter).

Other Person: Well, you were showing them up (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, yeah I ... and I said, "Not yet!" (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Well, two, you got to, so ...

Mr. Osborne: So anyway, I was the only ... lone sailor and we're going to have it in Georgia this year.

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: That's what they were talking about down there; we wanting to know if I was going to ride with them. See I ... year before last, no last year, went to Alabama. I had a neck brace on. I fell a ... I fell in my yard and broke my neck (chuckles).

Other Person: Oh my gosh!

Ed Metzler: My lord!

Mr. Osborne: So, I (laughter) ...

Ed Metzler: Well, at least it wasn't on a motorcycle!

Other Person: Yeah!

Mr. Osborne: No, no I ...

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible) that's what you getting ready to tell me (laughter).

Mr. Osborne: ... I tripped on a damned, little (unintelligible) there on the ground (unintelligible), and I hit ...

Ed Metzler: Ouch!

Other Person: Just right?

Mr. Osborne: ... I hit just right and broke my neck.

Ed Metzler: It ... yeah.

Mr. Osborne: In fact, when ... I couldn't feel nothing from here up.

Other Person: (Gasp sound).

Mr. Osborne: I couldn't move nothing. I could move my legs is all I could do. So ... and my daughter was there with me when I ... when I fell. And I was laying there and I told her I says ... as I kick myself around, and I told her, I said, "Lean me up against that rock there," so she picked and leaned me up. And ... and I had one of these buttons on, I don't have one with me 'cause it don't work no (unintelligible) there, and I pushed it, and knew the ambulance was on the way. And I told her I said ... and ... and I knew the machine in there would be talking wanting to know what's going on, and I ... and I told her, I said, "Pick my hands up and lay them in my lap." So she picked my hands up and laid them in my lap like this, and I was leaning there just sitting there against that rock, and she went in the house to tell them what was going on. And I could feel my neck, you know? And ... and pretty ... of course, she got back, well my ... I started feeling ... getting movement in my hands.

Other Person: Oh okay!

Mr. Osborne: So, I started coming back alive in there, so I knew I wasn't paralyzed.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: Except my neck. And when they got there, I told them, I said, "Y'all stabilize my neck; I think I done something to it." Well, they put me a ... they had a ... one there that they ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: ... put on me before I got to the hospital.

Other Person: Phew!

Mr. Osborne: So, I wound up with a ... one of them neck braces (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: And I told them, I said, "I'm going to ... I'm going to that reunion!"

Ed Metzler: I'm going anyhow!

Mr. Osborne: So, they said, "Well, you're going with us," so ... (unintelligible) they carried me.

Other Person: But no cane! (laughter)

Mr. Osborne: No cane! No ...

Ed Metzler: No walking stick!

Mr. Osborne: ... no, no walking stick!

Other Person: No walking stick!

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: Okay, Bob, thank ...

Mr. Osborne: See, I haven't got no walking stick.

Ed Metzler: No, and you still don't, and that's ... really remarkable.

Mr. Osborne: So ...

Ed Metzler: I want to thank you for spending the time today with us.

Mr. Osborne: Well, I enjoyed it; I hope I ...

Ed Metzler: And I bet you get tired of people thanking you for what you did for our country.
But I'm going to thank you again.

Mr. Osborne: I ... I get it all the time.

Ed Metzler: And we just ...

Mr. Osborne: If ... if I wear my ...

Ed Metzler: You bet!

Mr. Osborne: ... I ... I ... (unintelligible).

Other Person: And you guys deserve it!

Mr. Osborne: I didn't have ...

Ed Metzler: Absolutely!

Mr. Osborne: ... one with Chester on it. I wear them a lot of times.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Osborne: And I thought I'd wear this one today. But ...

Other Person: Well, we are proud to have you guys here!

Mr. Osborne: I ... I get my lunch bought a lot of times ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Osborne: ... just sitting ... I ... I'll go to pay my bill and they say, "Oh, it's been paid for."

Other Person: Oh!

Mr. Osborne: Somebody ...

Ed Metzler: That's cool!

Mr. Osborne: ... somebody did.

Ed Metzler: That's good.

Mr. Osborne: I was sitting in McDonalds one morning having breakfast, been probably a year ago or so, a little girl come through there and put a gift card on the table ... , “thank you,” and walked out ... fifty-dollar gift card.

Other Person: And you know you deserve it.

Mr. Osborne: Well, I didn’t do as much as some of them ole boys did (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Well, the ones that didn’t come back are ...

Mr. Osborne: Yeah. I’ve got three that didn’t come back.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: I mean ... one of them was in the Merchant Marine; his ship was sunk going to Murmansk on that Murmansk run they called it.

Other Person: Ah!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that was a rough one.

Mr. Osborne: And they ... all they found was ... his ship was a life boat was frozen ... to ... five frozen bodies in it.

Other Person: Uhm.

Mr. Osborne: So, he disappeared up there. And I have ... two that disappeared in the Pacific. So ... that’s where it is.

Ed Metzler: Okay!

Mr. Osborne: And I’m still going (laughter)!

Other Person: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: We’ve been going for an hour and forty-five minutes!

Mr. Osborne: Oh, lord!

Ed Metzler: And you thought it’d be thirty minutes.

Mr. Osborne: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: But it’s been fun and thanks.

Mr. Osborne: I hope ... I hope somebody listens to that and say, “That ole (unintelligible)!”

Other Person: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), uh, people will be listening to it for years now. So I’m ... unless there’s something else you want to talk about, I’ll go ahead and end the recording.

Mr. Osborne: Uh, just a minute, let me look, see if I've missed something over here (laughter). I kind of made a bunch of notes. And I told you about the little USS Reid?

Ed Metzler: Yes, you did.

Mr. Osborne: Yeah, that ... that's one of ... that's when I stopped it, yeah. Where we occupied Japan up there. Just ... so I guess I'll ... I don't know of anything else on the ship.

Ed Metzler: Far as I know, you're the only crew member of the Chester that we've ever interviewed.

Mr. Osborne: Well, I ... was looking yesterday, we was walking around looking.

Other Person: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: And there's no briefs down there for ... from the Chester.

Other Person: Until today.

Mr. Osborne: So, I'm ... when secretary gets here, I want to ask her about it ... if they can't ... some of these other crew members ...

Other Person: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Osborne: ... would like to ... there's some that lives around Dallas.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Osborne: That's on the record, but I've never seen any of them. So ...

Ed Metzler: Okay. Thanks again, Bob.

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