

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Nimitz Education and Research Center
Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With

Michael E. Long
Logansport, Indiana
August 22, 2017
E Battery 2nd Battalion
14th Marine Artillery
4th Marine Division

Mr. Misenhimer:

My name is Richard Misenhimer, today is August 22, 2017. I am interviewing Mr. Michael E. Long by telephone. His phone number 574-753-9350. His address is 717 Lynnwood Drive, Logansport, Indiana, 46947. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

His alternative contact is his son, Brad Long who lives at the same address and same phone number.

Now any questions you have for me of what I want to do?

Mr. Long:

Yeah, this is Mike. This is Mike, the one you wanted to talk to.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

"Agreement Read"

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Long:

Oh yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What is your birthdate?

Mr. Long:

November 7, 1923.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you born?

Mr. Long:

I was born in Chicago, Illinois.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Long:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now where did you go to high school?

Mr. Long:

Well I went up to 1942. I graduated in 1942 from Logansport High School.

Mr. Misenhimer:

From Logansport High School?

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what did you do when you finished high school?

Mr. Long:

I joined the Marine Corps.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What date did you go into the Marine Corps?

Mr. Long:

Well I'll tell you my memory's not too good. I went in the Marine Corps in ...*(counting years)*

I graduated in '42, about '43, 1943. I can't tell you the exact date.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's fine, 1943. And you volunteered?

Mr. Long:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you choose the Marine Corps?

Mr. Long:

Let's say it this way, I was going to be drafted, but instead of joining the draft I enlisted in the Marine Corps. That's why I did it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where did you go for your boot camp?

Mr. Long:

San Diego.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about boot camp, how was boot camp?

Mr. Long:

Good. I met a lot of nice guys and a lot of good training in groups.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all did you do in boot camp?

Mr. Long:

Talked and went to calisthenics and did a lot of exercise—running and walking and scouting.

Did several things in boot camp, nothing drastic.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of weapons training did you have?

Mr. Long:

None.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You didn't train on the rifle or anything in boot camp?

Mr. Long:

I don't think so.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you learn how to shoot?

Mr. Long:

Later on when I went in to my outfit.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have a lot of marching in boot camp?

Mr. Long:

Oh yeah. A lot of drilling and marching, went down on the ocean and marched along the island and stuff like that, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were your drill instructors pretty tough on you?

Mr. Long:

No, no, they were good guys. They were strict but they were good, they never hurt me.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when you finished boot camp what happened?

Mr. Long:

Well they started putting guys in different outfits. I put in for sea school, but I didn't get it. So I went into E Battery, 2nd Battalion 14th Marine Artillery Outfit. I was just warming up to go overseas.

Mr. Misenhimer:

E Battery of what?

Mr. Long:

E Battery, 2nd Battalion 14th Regiment 4th Marine Division. They were training at Camp Pendleton, forming up and that's when I went in that outfit.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your job in that E Battery?

Mr. Long:

Well we didn't have a classified, we just, PFC, as a Private First Class. And I trained as a machine gunner and I was assigned to a 50-caliber machine gun crew. And that's what I went all the time I was in the Marine Corps. I was a specialist in 50-caliber machine gun.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what did you do to the guns, what was your job with them?

Mr. Long:

To protect everybody else. We put the 50-calibers out on the flank, out in front and on the side to protect the infantry. The infantry in a line and killing the guys that cut their throat. So our duty was to protect them while they were firing their big guns, the 105 Pack Howitzers.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you had big artillery in your outfit, is that correct?

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you have, what kind?

Mr. Long:

105's, Pack Howitzers.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You didn't do anything with them did you? Did you work on those guns, on the 105's?

Mr. Long:

No, but I did maintain 50-caliber machine gun. I was a gun Captain and I maintained, we had three men on the crew and one is the loader, packer and the other guy did the shooting. And that's all we did is shoot at Japs or the enemy I should say.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you go overseas?

Mr. Long:

I can't tell you the exact date on that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go?

Mr. Long:

Well we sailed out of San Diego aboard ship. Went into Hawaiian Islands, we stopped at Maui on the way over. The next day we sailed out again and we sailed directly into the Marshall Islands. After that battle was over in the Marshalls we sailed back to Hawaii. And we made our base on Maui in the Hawaiian Islands. So we trained there, at our base there until we went into battle again, going to Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas, and then come back and train again. Back and forth, you know. Back and forth.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you went to the Marshall Islands, what islands did you go to there? Now on the Marshalls there's Kwajalein and Majuro.

Mr. Long:

I was in the Marshall Islands.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What islands are in the Marshalls?

Mr. Brad Long:

What islands in it?

Mr. Long:

That's one! There's two big islands.

Mr. Brad Long (son):

So there's two big islands?

Mr. Misenhimer:

In the Marshalls there's Kwajalein, Majuro, and Eniwetok.

Mr. Brad Long:

You're in Eniwetok, right?

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What happened on Eniwetok?

Mr. Long:

Nothing, just fought and lived and died.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you invade it?

Mr. Long:

Yeah. Yeah we was on the invasion.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all happened in the invasion?

Mr. Long:

I can't tell you, that's just normal thing. We landed and went on the beach and secured the island.

Mr. Misenhimer:

As I understand there was some pretty tough fighting on Eniwetok.

Mr. Long:

Oh yeah, not as bad as the other one's though. Not as bad as Iwo (Jima).

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were many people around you wounded or killed?

Mr. Long:

Few.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did the Japanese attack you?

Mr. Long:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what happened?

Mr. Long:

We killed them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did they have one of their banzai attacks?

Mr. Long:

Yeah, couple of times.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And you were the machine gunner, is that correct?

Mr. Long:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What are some other things that happened on Eniwetok?

Mr. Long:

That was about it. Maintain security and we got the island secured and then we went back and loaded aboard ship to go back to Hawaii, on to Maui. That's where our base was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And then you went from there back to where?

Mr. Long:

Back to Hawaii.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But when you left Hawaii where did you go this time?

Mr. Long:

This time after we left Hawaii we went to the Marianas, Saipan and Tinian.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Which one did you land on, Saipan or Tinian?

Mr. Long:

I think it was..., I'm not sure. Saipan or Tinian, one of the two. There's two type of islands.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about landing there, what was it like to land on those islands?

Mr. Long:

Oh, just a boy doing his job. You know I didn't think about too much. I just did what I was told. So I didn't have much feeling about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I understand that the Japanese did several banzai charges there.

Mr. Long:

Yes. Secured them and take care of..., when they did those banzai attacks we retaliated by killing them Japanese so that maintained our superiority over them. They weren't too smart.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now the fighting on Saipan started on June 15th of '44. That's when you were there?

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things that happened there?

Mr. Long:

I can't recall.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long were you there?

Mr. Long:

I can't tell you that, it's been too long ago.

Mr. Misenhimer:

A couple of months?

Mr. Long:

Probably a month or two anyway. Not too long anyway.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Long:

Then we went back to Maui in the Hawaiian Islands. We trained and we got re-enforcements, replacements. So we had the big one on Iwo Jima.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah that started February the 19th of '45.

Mr. Long:

I saw them put the flag up on Mount Suribachi I know that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You saw them put the flag up?

Mr. Long:

I was there when they put the flag up, up there was flag raising. I was on Yellow Beach 1, but I could see back of me a couple of miles, I could see the flag going up with you know my eyesight.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And then what happened?

Mr. Long:

That's it. Stayed there and fought until I had to get relieved. Then we got sent back, after we defeated the Japanese on Iwo Jima we loaded aboard ship again to sail back to Maui in the Hawaiian Islands. And then the war was declared over. The Japanese surrendered, so we sailed back to the States. But I was lucky, I got to fly back because I got wounded and I flew back on an airplane into Oakland, California. Then I was released from my duty and shipped back to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. And that's where I finished out my tour of duty in the Marine Corps and I got my discharge and release from the Marine Corps.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About when would you have been discharged, what year?

Mr. Long:

I'm not sure. It had to be '44, '45 along there. The war was over, the Japanese surrendered.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah the Japanese surrendered on August the 15th of '45. Where were you when the Japanese surrendered?

Mr. Long:

I was in the hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where was that?

Mr. Long:

In Philadelphia.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were in Philadelphia in the hospital when Japan surrendered?

Mr. Long:

Philadelphia Naval Hospital.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What kind of wound did you have?

Mr. Long:

(Laughing) All kind, nothing serious.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you shot by a gun?

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you shot, what part of your body?

Mr. Long:

Well I got ricocheted on the hip, but my hearing was bad on me.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what did they do to you in the hospital?

Mr. Long:

I have no idea. I forget. Mutual training and anything else I needed to be done. And invert me back into citizenship.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when they dropped the first atomic bomb on Japan on August the 6th did you hear about that?

Mr. Long:

Yes I heard about that. I think I was in Philadelphia when that happened. No, I take it back I was in California. I was in Oakland, California in the Naval hospital before they sent me back East, yeah. I was in a Naval hospital in Oakland, California.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have surgery?

Mr. Long:

No, I didn't have no operation anytime.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now were you wounded in fighting?

Mr. Long:

Yes, no I was slightly, nothing bad.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Of those three battles which one would you consider the worst?

Mr. Long:

Iwo.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Iwo was the worst?

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was bad about it?

Mr. Long:

Iwo Jima. A lot of boys died that shouldn't have died. We got slaughtered there. They was waiting for us and they set us up. They laid down like they were going to give up easy, they all hid underneath the ground and on the crevices and stuff and then they bounced on us and nobody had a chance. They slaughtered us for awhile until we got the upper hand then. Finally we gained the upper hand and we took over the war, we killed them, ha, ha.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well they had so many tunnels there on Iwo Jima they could hide in.

Mr. Long:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get inside any of those tunnels?

Mr. Long:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things that happened while you were overseas?

Mr. Long:

That's about all I can remember.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now April the 12th of '45 President Roosevelt died, did you hear about that?

Mr. Long:

Yes I did, I heard about Roosevelt the president died.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you when you heard that?

Mr. Long:

I was in California.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was in April.

Mr. Long:

Whenever it was I can't remember that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The landing on Iwo Jima was February the 19th of '45. Did you land there on the first day or when?

Mr. Long:

I landed on the first day.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And then by April you were back in the States then?

Mr. Long:

I'm not sure on my dates, you got me mixed up.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you heard about President Roosevelt dying what did you think about that?

Mr. Long:

Terrible. He was a great president, good leader.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when Japan surrendered on August the 15th, where did you hear about that at?

Mr. Long:

I can't remember that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any kind of celebration?

Mr. Long:

Probably.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What else do you recall from your time in battle over there?

Mr. Long:

I'm getting tired sir, can you come to the end now, I'm getting awful tired.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Long:

I'm not answering that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got out did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Long:

No. I got out of the Marine Corps and I went on the police department in Logansport, Indiana. I retained that position for 25 years, I was Chief of Police and high ranking offices. That's about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What would you consider your most frightening time in the Marines?

Mr. Long:

All the time, I was frightened all the time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It was pretty frightening everywhere.

Mr. Long:

Yeah, when you're in war you're afraid.

Mr. Brad Long:

You said you liked getting away from home though and you liked the independence. After fighting the war you liked the rest of it. You made a lot of friends.

Mr. Long:

Oh yeah, yeah. I did I made a lot of good friends, I enjoyed the Marine Corps yeah. Good guys. They were just like I was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now on December 7th, 1941 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Long:

Yep.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you and how did you hear?

Mr. Long:

Well I think that I was, I can't tell you where I was at.

Mr. Brad Long:

You were a senior in high school.

Mr. Long:

Oh, I was a senior in high school, Logansport High School.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Long:

Yeah, I'd hoped it wouldn't. It did affect me. I joined the Marine Corp. I wanted to do my part to fight for my country.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Long:

No, not what so ever.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Long:

What'd I do about it?

Mr. Brad Long:

Did you use it for anything?

Mr. Long:

I'm not sure.

Mr. Brad Long:

You were going to go to college, but you didn't want to then, you didn't work out.

Mr. Long:

I was going to go to college with it, then I changed my mind. I went to a little college in Indiana, but I didn't care for it so I dropped it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you use it to buy a house or anything?

Mr. Long:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What else do you recall from your time in the service?

Mr. Long:

That's about it.

Mr. Brad Long:

Tell him about how you met (Howard) Jiggs Wolf, your friend.

Mr. Long:

I met Jiggs Wolf from Young America who recently passed away. I met him on Iwo Jima.

I went down to get ammunition one day on a work detail and I run into him. He was in the 5th Marine Division, I was in the 4th and he was in the 5th. I said, "Jiggs!" And I talked to him for a long time and we shook hands and was glad to see each other. He's a good friend. Okay that's it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you say something about Admiral Nimitz?

Mr. Brad Long:

Just tell him your story about Admiral Nimitz, when you met Admiral Nimitz.

Mr. Long:

My son said to tell you about Admiral Nimitz. I was on guard duty on Maui, before we were getting ready to go to Iwo Jima, and we was getting information and stuff. And Admiral Nimitz, who's complete commander of the Navy and Marine Corps in World War II, he was coming on to the base to talk to all officers. And they had a big party at the main gate to greet him and have a big doing. And he came in the back gate and I was on guard duty by myself and he come by me and red lights a going and everything on his big car. And I pulled up and saluted him. And he reached out and he returned my salute and he went on through the gate. And I told my son I never forgot that – he saluted me one-on-one. Not just as a group, but as one officer. That was a kind of a pride in my life.

Mr. Brad Long:

Well you must of covered it.

Mr. Long:

That covers it.

Mr. Brad Long:

I do have that radio show that he did about ten years ago. I've got to find that and make a copy for you sometime and you're welcome to use information from that. But I've heard a lot of his stories, this is pretty much it you know. He doesn't really talk about Iwo or the battles, but he talks about your Admiral Nimitz and you know things that happened to him and he's got one more story. Tell him about you saw the helicopter crash in Philadelphia.

Mr. Long:

Oh yeah, Brad my son said to tell you about.... One day when I was washing my clothes out in the lot of the hospital in Philadelphia, South Philly, I heard a plane coming over and a helicopter. The propeller came off and all of a sudden the propeller started coming down and the thing dropped and the guy bailed out with a parachute. And he lands, I didn't hear any more about it. But I saw that helicopter crash, that was the craziest thing I ever saw. You know, we rarely, you've never seen nothing like that. Well that's about it sir, have a good day, okay.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Thank you Mike.

Mr. Brad Long:

... probably twenty of those guys but he made a lot of friends. And he did say on record on that radio show that you know he enjoyed the time very much in there except for the fighting and the war you know. But making friends and the training and some of the other things, experiences, to get out of a small town he kind of liked that you know. So you know and he came through it in one piece so. It could have been a lot worse. He always gives the credit to the veterans, you know the boys that lost their lives or got hurt really bad you know. And he felt he was one of the lucky ones you know, very humble about that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well Brad thank you for his time today and thank you for your time.

Mr. Brad Long:

Well thank you and I'm sorry we had to wait so long on this. So I say he's going through a rough time here physically. He's supposed to wear a trilogy mask, like a CPAP kind of. And the mask is not fitting him right, so we've had a few rough nights. And so he's been awful tired last few days and they're supposed to get him a new mask but not for a couple more days. So we've got to try to make this stupid mask work for the next two nights so he can get a good night's sleep. And I think once they fix that that'll be a big help to him. But I didn't know it was going to take this long when I talked to you last time, last week. I thought we'd have that mask replaced and you know he'd be a little bit stronger right now, but we just had the fellow from home health care and they say he's a little weaker actually than he was a week ago which is not a good sign. But we're trying to get it all straightened out, so I gotta get on the phone with this company again, make sure they get over here Thursday.

(End of interview.)

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