

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Nimitz Education and Research Center  
Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With

Warren L. Gilmour

Sandy, Utah

February 16, 2018

U.S. Navy

Entered Service 1/5/51

LSMR – 404

Korea

Grew Up During World War II

Mr. Misenhimer:

My name is Richard Misenhimer, today is February 16, 2018. I am interviewing Mr. Warren L. Gilmour by telephone. His phone number is 801-641-6538. His address is 8541 South Mivu Circle, Sandy, Utah, 84093. 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.

Warren, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country back when you were in the Navy. Now the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum to make sure this is okay with you.

*"Agreement Read"*

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes I do. Her name would be Jamay, spelled J-a-m-a-y Gilmour.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have a phone number for her?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, 702-701-4184.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Hopefully we'll never need that but you never know. What is your birthdate?

Mr. Gilmour:

November 30, 1932.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you born?

Mr. Gilmour:

Kingfisher, Oklahoma.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, I have one brother and one sister.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is your brother older or younger than you?

Mr. Gilmour:

Brother is older, served in the Navy during the Korean War period. He lucked out, was in the Atlantic (*laughter*). And my sister is younger.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Gilmour:

My mother was Irene Gilmour and my father's name was Glenn, G-l-e-n-n, with two n's. And no middle initial which bothered him to no end in the military, of course he put down "NMI" (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you grew up during the depression, how did the depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Gilmour:

It did not affect my family hardly at all. Kingfisher County in Oklahoma didn't seem to suffer, they got no rain, had no wheat for two or three years. But I was four years old, three, four, five years old and my dad seemed to do pretty well in spite of the depression, so called. Which is pretty much true about Kingfisher County, I do not recall anyone leaving and going to

California. In fact my Dad bought a new Dodge and a new tractor for that year. And had a daughter that year also.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you did okay then.

Mr. Gilmour:

Yeah, he did okay. Well he complained that when I was born in 1932 the price of wheat was so low that I cost 200 bushels of wheat as payment to the hospital (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now where did you go to high school?

Mr. Gilmour:

Kingfisher High School.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what year did you graduate there?

Mr. Gilmour:

1950.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now let's go back. On December 7, '41 Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes I do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you hear and what was your reaction?

Mr. Gilmour:

Actually we were on road trip that day up to Kansas and we stopped for gasoline in a small service station and the radio was announcing it. That was 10:00 or 11:00 in the morning, so it was just about the time it happened.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any idea how that might affect you?

Mr. Gilmour:

No, I was too young (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any relatives in World War II?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes. My uncle was an Army officer building runways in Karachi, India for two years I think.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is he still living?

Mr. Gilmour:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about friends or neighbors or people like that, any of those in World War II you recall?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well not too many. But I do have one more, my aunt. My dad's sister was a nurse and was ordered into active duty in about 1944. And for the Normandy Invasion, she was there on D plus six I think she said.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is she still living?

Mr. Gilmour:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

During the war, what do you remember about growing up and hearing about the war, what all do you remember about World War II?

Mr. Gilmour:

The war, well it was discussed daily in my house because my dad had been in the Army during

the Thirties. And so he tracked the war on my radio almost everyday, including maps. So I sort of grew up in it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you do anything like collect rubber or tires and that sort of thing?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh yes, we scrounged the farm for all the war materials we could find like rubber. Of course at that time we didn't know that rubber wasn't recyclable (*laughter*), so some of that was a waste. But metals and materials like that, yes we had a place in the town of Kingfisher where you could go turn it in. And they had a big pile of stuff there always that people were bringing in, which was then hauled off and recycled I suspect. And we had a small garden, it was a Victory Garden. And we had gasoline rations stamps pasted on the window of our truck. And I remember brown outs, when we were to pull the curtains down and turn the lights low even in the middle of Oklahoma. Which I think was more scary to me than anything else. It sort of indicated that they might be right out there over the hill, I just couldn't see over it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

We were down here close to the Gulf of Mexico, so we kept expecting them to come in here.

Mr. Gilmour:

You know we're six, seven hundred miles from water (*laughter*). So we weren't very much in danger of infantry approaching the house. I remember thinking about what it would be like if they did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did y'all have people watching for airplanes?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh we watched airplanes continuously in Oklahoma as you were in Texas. We had them in the air all the time because there were so many airbases all around us with B-25s, B-38s, and A-20s. We all knew all these airplanes by sight as they went by, of course the young folks especially. Probably kindled my interest in aviation.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you all go to movies and watch the newsreels and stuff like that?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh yes, yes. And I clearly remember the blitz of London, movies of London burning.

Mr. Misenhimer:

John Wayne fighting the war.

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh yeah, John Wayne came later, I don't remember him during the war, that was later.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah he was around there fighting the war, all of them were. Then when did you go into the service?

Mr. Gilmour:

January 5, 1951.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Gilmour:

As soon as I turned eighteen on the 30<sup>th</sup> of November of 1950 I got a notice from the draft board saying, "We want you." So I volunteered for the Navy instead of going to the Army.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Gilmour:

I chose the Navy because I took a little test and they said you can be a pilot without a college degree. And the Air Force said I had to go to college first so I went with the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then where did you go for your boot camp?

Mr. Gilmour:

Great Lakes. Great Lakes on January the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all happened in boot camp? It'd be cold up there then.

Mr. Gilmour:

It was cold the whole time we were there. I don't recall ever seeing the ground, it was snow all the time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How long was your boot camp?

Mr. Gilmour:

It was about two and a half months, maybe three months, I'm just not sure of the date I got out of there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What all happened in boot camp?

Mr. Gilmour:

In boot camp I volunteered for the regimental band and so consequently I didn't do any calisthenics, I stood in the corner and played "Anchor's Away" for the other guys to do that *(laughter)*.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Had you been in a band in high school?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, I had been in music in high school, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But you had to do some of the work in boot camp, right?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh yeah, we had to do some but not very much which probably cost me my aviation career in fact, because I gained thirty pounds but I didn't get any muscle, I got fat *(laughter)*.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you did not get into aviation then?



Mr. Gilmour:

So well when boot camp was out they said go to your next station and you know apply for the Naval Air there, which is what I did. And there I failed the physical. And before I solved that problem my ship came in so to speak from Korea and all of a sudden I was on a small boat getting ready to turn around to that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what kind of training did you have before you got on the boat?

Mr. Gilmour:

None.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So what kind of boat did you get on?

Mr. Gilmour:

LSMR, Landing Ship Medium Rocket.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And you had no training on that before you went on?

Mr. Gilmour:

No, we didn't even know what one was until we stood on the pier so to speak and watched it come in and tie up. Then we knew what one was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About what date was that you joined that?

Mr. Gilmour:

The 26<sup>th</sup> of May, 1951.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well then we did a little yard time, a little practice shooting at San Clemente and then we headed to Korea in October of '51. And we went over and participated in the coastal bombings and

blockade force it was called, through '51, '52. And in late spring of '52 spent about a year in the U.S., another yard period. Back to Korea in July of '53, during which the armistice was signed and the cease fire was signed. And we went on and spent another winter off the coast of North Korea because our job didn't seem to go away with the cease fire. We kept right on doing what we had been doing. Spent all our time up on the North Korean coast.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what would you do up there?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well we were used to protect some small islands on the west coast of Korea that were sanctuaries for guerilla operations and downed pilots and what not. It turned out many, many, many years later a book was published after declassified, only about ten years ago, as to the mission that we were on and what was happening on those islands. They were just islands as far as we were concerned, but obviously the North Koreans didn't like us owning those islands five miles off their coast. So they continued to try to invade them. But also guerilla forces were operating from them and they would get in trouble and we'd go in and provide some you know supporting fire to get them extracted back out, so. That was classified because it was really CIA operations.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what was your position on the ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

I was a Gunner's Mate, took care of the rockets and the 5-inch and the 40's and the 20's. A LMSR has more fire power than a battleship even though it's only 208 feet long and weighs a thousand tons. It can shoot more pounds per minute than a battleship or a cruiser. Well it's a little especially built ship that's one of the reasons that I think it should be mentioned. In fact I need to talk to you folks because I'm looking for a little museum place somewhere in the United States to have these little ships remembered, they are just totally forgotten. No one knows they existed. And they were built especially for World War II for the mainland invasion of Japan.

And they had twelve of them that were interim versions for the invasion of Okinawa and they worked so well there that they built forty-five more with a much improved main battery, a rocket mount, for the invasion of Japan. Fortunately as they were heading west in 1945 to do that the war stopped so they all turned around and came back to the U.S.. Most were scrapped, a few of them were kept and were used as we were in Korea and then again in Vietnam, four of them were actually in operation. But no one ever heard of them either. Mainly because they're too small for the press to be interested in and number two they always worked on the enemy coast, but where no one could see them except the enemy (*laughter*). Consequently no one knows about those ships. I've been working on a book about them for twenty years, I'm still working on it. I'm looking for a corner of a museum somewhere to put up a little remembrance of them, I haven't found that yet. Maybe Fredericksburg is the right place, I don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you talked to anybody in Fredericksburg about doing that?

Mr. Gilmour:

No I haven't. I have the documents here and I keep watching what you're doing down there to see if it's somewhere in the neighborhood of what I think should be done. It would be the front row as we were. My ship had already done a tour in Korea before I went aboard it. And it took part in the Inchon invasion, in fact it was the ship on the front row firing at the beach twenty-five hundred yards away. Both morning and afternoon invasions there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the number of your ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

The 404.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did it have a name?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well later after they were mothballed, ten years later they gave them names. Mine was given the

name of Black Waterboy or *Black Warrior (River)*.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But when you were on it it had no name?

Mr. Gilmour:

No it was a number.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you were involved in quite a bit of the bombarding of Korea there, is that correct?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, yes, I worked on both coasts. We worked all up the east coast clear to China and then on the west coast, most of the way up there close to the capital, up the river and so forth.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were bombarding the shore all that time?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, we just bombarded people and things on the beach. Usually at midnight because we weren't too well protected so we went in at midnight, fired for five minutes and then skedaddled at eight miles an hour out of there (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the top speed on your ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

Eleven knots I think. Normal cruising was about ten.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were firing the rockets what was your job at that point?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well I was on there three and a half years so I went from a mess cook to a Gunner's Mate 2<sup>nd</sup> Class. And my last job was the Gun Captain on the 5-inch 38, which we had aboard also.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you actually fire the guns or the rockets?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh yeah. We fired thousands of rockets, we fired three hundred rounds a minute. So we would usually sit down and shoot a thousand or twelve hundred rounds of 5-inch rockets and then if necessary we would shoot the 5-inch or the 40's also.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many rocket tubes on your ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

Five thousand rounds.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No, I mean how many actual tubes firing?

Mr. Gilmour:

The tubes were literally 5-inch diameter pieces of pipe about four feet long.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And how many of those were on the ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well we had ten mounts and each mount had two tubes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you had twenty tubes in total.

Mr. Gilmour:

So we had twenty barrels, yes. Those rocket mounts were conceived, designed, built in three months, four months.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now did you fire forward across the bow or across the side?

Mr. Gilmour:

No these were mounted on the main deck and they were literally modifications of the 40mm mount, which you can rotate and elevate from remote control. And so all of these rocket mounts were you could aim and you know control from a remote director in a separate room or from up

on the conic tower, there was a thing called a director that could be wired in to direct to you know, direct them. So they fired more or less automatically, there was a hoist that hung down to the next deck. And down there there were five guys loading rockets as fast as possible, two at a time. Which then fired four seconds later, they had to load two more and then they fired.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And you did some of that, is that correct?

Mr. Gilmour:

I never worked in the bottom. No, I was always on the bridge with the director. So I got a nice view of what we were doing on the ship but I can also see the target area, see the rockets going off over there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things that happened?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well every once in awhile one of those rockets wouldn't work just right and would fall out on the deck and lay there burning. And that was pretty exciting, to see a five inch warhead *(laughter)*. Then winters in the Yellow Sea, which is just downwind a little ways from Siberia, in January there it's about thirty below most of the time and so we were surrounded by ice. And fighting the ice was an interesting exercise for the ship's operator. Let's see what else interesting things that we did. Had a front row seat on the bombings of the Air Force and watched the Navy and Marines both do great bombing and strafing on the beach right in front of us. Let's see, one particular insight. We usually served with three or four other small boats like us of the U.N. Force, which means they were Australian, Canadian, British ships next to us. One of those ships with us, the *(HMCS) Cayuga* and aboard it was the only medical doctor in the whole group of five ships. We only had a pharmacist mate, you know we had a Corpsman on board not a doctor. The doctor on that ship turned out to be a famous fellow that they made a movie about called the *Great Imposter* because he was not a doctor, he was a fake totally. So for a while we

were under the care of a fake doctor (*laughter*). They eventually caught him just as they got back in and I think they put him in jail, I don't know what they did to him.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was your ship ever damaged?

Mr. Gilmour:

No, not by enemy fire. One of our sister ships took two hits where we normally parked. So there was a threat there. In Wonsan Harbor on the east coast there was a high threat of mines and coastal artillery. But we managed to not get hit by any of it. We did perform a feat, in Wonsan Harbor one nice sunny day we were watching the Navy bomb and strafe the city of Wonsan. And one of those F4Us got hit, caught fire and flew out over the bay and the pilot jumped out and we went over and picked him up. And he was forever grateful for that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were very many of the LSMRs damaged by enemy or sunk?

Mr. Gilmour:

I don't think, I think that one that was hit there was the only one that was hit.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Being that close in to shore you'd think you'd have more damage than that.

Mr. Gilmour:

Well when we got that close it was usually midnight, we were in the dark, radio silence. We fired and left. So the times that we were under fire was when during the day we were anchored out three or four miles off the coast. And that's when they took the hits because they had a gun on the beach there that had long enough legs to hit it apparently. They were close in at Inchon, they were fired on but were not hit. Just luck.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Gilmour:

I guess when a rocket launched and then it didn't explode on the beach, it exploded about 150

yards out of the barrel right in front of us. And shrapnel came down on the bridge and what not. The fuse mechanism failed on that one and we had several of those, so they went off right in front of us. I suppose that, you know your first foray into a bay surrounded by land mines and coastal guns is, you know that's pretty nervous. And we were there and shot and then we tried to shoot to get in and they turned on a search light and looked for us, they didn't see us. But then we were in a mine field, we got out of there so you know. Nothing happened but the nervous level was pretty high.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now how many men in the crew on the LSMR?

Mr. Gilmour:

We had about 135 people.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things you recall about your time over there?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh, oh gosh. Probably the most difficult mission we were in, we went up in the first of January we normally stayed on the line two weeks then went back into Sasebo for a week to rearm and refresh and go back out to relieve one of our sister ships. Well that time the sister ship had a problem coming up and turned around and went home so we stayed thirty days up there on the line, January. And the boiler went out and the heat went off and it got really cold. Sitting up there for thirty days with no heat. That was a memorable occasion (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the morale on your ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh it was good. You know it was a small crew, we were called "dungaree Navy" because we hardly ever dressed up because the ship was so small. And it was really was designed as a one way trip, it was expected to go to Japan, take part in the invasion and then either get sunk, blown up, or never come home you know. So it wasn't designed for continuous use and so we all kept



really close, lived really close. There was no rec halls or gedunks or any of that sort of thing that big ships have all. I don't know, consequently it was really close knit crew. And you know we just did what we're supposed to do. It was all male (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever cross the equator?

Mr. Gilmour:

No we didn't, we never got that far south.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now back in World War II times, on April 12<sup>th</sup> of 1945 President Roosevelt died, what was the reaction when people heard that?

Mr. Gilmour:

You know I think I was in the eighth grade at the time. I remember it being announced in school. But wasn't any, you know .... You know as a young person it doesn't have a great effect on you. He had always been president through my whole life (*laughter*).

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's right, he was elected the year you were born.

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, just about, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then on May the 8<sup>th</sup> of '45 Germany surrendered, any kind of a celebration then or anything?

Mr. Gilmour:

No, you know there wasn't a whole lot of celebration. Yeah you know the little farm towns they didn't have big parades or anything, they just you know, it happened and we were happy. I can remember thinking, well that means my aunt and my uncle will come home now.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then on August the 15<sup>th</sup> Japan surrendered, how about then, any celebration then?

Mr. Gilmour:

No, it was the same thing, quiet happiness I suspect. Because you know us young kids it didn't affect us a whole lot.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you were in the service did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes I did, only in Sasebo, Japan. The only time I was in the USO auditorium was when I participated in a put together band and entertained (*laughter*). So I never saw a USO show, I really was part of one once.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get home from the service with any souvenirs?

Mr. Gilmour:

Ah yes, I've got a few little things around here, yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What are some of them?

Mr. Gilmour:

I don't have any, well I do have one cold weather hat, but not sure which side it came from. But a few little things off of the ship that I brought home you know. But I don't have any war mementos in that sense. I have a ship's pennant.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were in the service did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Gilmour:

Red Cross, no I didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When were you discharged, what date?

Mr. Gilmour:

I think it's the 26<sup>th</sup> of August of 1954.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Gilmour:

No, I didn't. Like eight days later I was enrolled in college. Oh, I'll take that back. Yes, it took me a few days to adjust my language to where it was acceptable among polite company  
*(laughter)*.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I had the same problem.

Mr. Gilmour:

I was married, I got married about four months before I was discharged. And so I was working on that already, but I can remember the long drive from Seattle to Kingfisher having to remember to not say certain things. You know the language we used on the ship was not for polite company *(laughter)*.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got out did you use your G.I. Bill for anything?

Mr. Gilmour:

Absolutely, went to college five days later.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to college?

Mr. Gilmour:

I went to Oklahoma A&M College it was at the time. But by the time I got out it was Oklahoma State University.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your major?

Mr. Gilmour:

I majored in engineering, mechanical engineering. I got a BS in '58 and I stayed a year and got a Master's in '59.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you mentioned reunions, have you had several reunions of your outfit since you've been out?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yeah, I started having or finding people that served on my ship, oh it was after I retired which was twenty-five years ago when I moved here to Salt Lake City, I started looking for people. And there was a national organization included LSMRs and also included the basic hull the LSM which is an open well-deck ship, there were 500 of them. They moved most of the stuff in the Pacific during World War II, helped win that. You know those two types of ships, LSM and LSMRs. Went to a couple of their national meetings and at that point decided that we should have our own reunion. I had enough people by that time. So I started having reunions of my ship's crew only in 2000 I think it was. So like you know for seventeen years now I've held an annual reunion of the LSMR 404 somewhere in the country. And we're dribbling down to, I think I only had five guys this last September in Branson, Missouri. We're planning to do it again this year if enough people sign up. Oh my reunions yeah, I've been having them since the year 2000. We found 254 guys who had served on that boat at one time or other during its ten year life. So we've held a reunion somewhere in the United States every year since the year 2000. The last four or five years the group is down to mostly people in Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Missouri and down in there so we meet at Branson every time. And we're going to do it again this September and anyone that's still alive and shows up. And our newsletter, two or three pages of what's going on among the group four times a year. I'm still

doing that as well.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you mentioned that when you went in there's several of you went up together to join the Navy, what about that?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes, there was I think six of us, got on the bus in Kingfisher to go to Oklahoma City in January of '51. And went through boot camp together and three of us wound up on the LSMR 404. And all three of us stayed there most of the time. So we are still friends and when I go to Kingfisher I visit one of my shipmates, one of the others died already. But that's the way the Navy was operating then. During the early days of Korean War they were trying to man up ships in a hurry. Our whole boot camp company just got sent to LSMRs practically. So we knew people on all our ship with the two sister ships we were a flotilla.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh just the usual service medals you know. You know the U.N. and Korean medal and the..., oh we had campaign stars. I think we had three on there because we did the winter's periods over there on the coast. We all received the Korean Service Medal and oh we were issued the Occupation of Japan Medal because we were in Japan in 1951, that was still under occupation so we got that medal (*laughter*) as well. I'm sure we were very good at maintaining the peace in Japan because sailors don't do that very well in most cities.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was it like to go in Japan?

Mr. Gilmour:

Well we just went through the port city and none of us ever left it, you know we just went over on the beach. And you know go ashore in the Navy, that's called the beach outing. We would

take liberty and go over there and wander around town, that's about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were the local people friendly?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh yeah, very friendly. We were all highly impressed by the Japanese people and you know it was especially since it was only six years after the big war stopped you know. They were very friendly and very happy to have us there and so it was very, you know. We did usually stop in ports there on the east coast, Yokosuka, and that's only forty miles from Tokyo, so you know most of us got up to Tokyo at least once to see what it looked like.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there still much damage or had they got most of it repaired?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yeah it had all been repaired. Everything was, I do not remember seeing any ..., oh I take that back. In 1954 in Yokosuka again which was a major Navy base, but Japanese Navy base. In fact, oh, the guy that bombed from the aircraft carrier, I can't think of his name now.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Doolittle?

Mr. Gilmour:

Doolittle, he bombed Yokosuka, one of their targets was the Yokosuka Naval Base there. Any rate we had heard earlier that there was a large Japanese brand new ship sunk there in the bay right outside of the shipyard. And sure enough in 1954 we were there for about a week and they were down there with underwater torches cutting that thing up and bringing up pieces of it. Because I was pretty interested in it, it'd been down there for about ten years. Some brave fellow in a submarine sneaked in there and when it was launched as soon as it came off the ways he torpedoed it, sunk it right there (*laughter*), middle of town. Which must have been a shock to them. It literally was there and they were bringing it up in pieces you know. But other than that

I saw no damage. What I did see was the network of tunnels and shooting spaces all through town. And caves in the hills next door that had a cannon in them and guns and you know the invasion of Japan would have been an absolute slaughter on both sides. Because they were outfitted to defend to the death. There were pillboxes on the corners, in the, like the middle of town that were all connected by tunnels underneath. And boy, for infantry to go in there and chase them out of there would have been an unbelievable job you know. You saw how that was gonna go.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, they were not going to give up.

Mr. Gilmour:

They had no choice really.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you think of the officers you had over you on your ship?

Mr. Gilmour:

Oh in general well they were (*laughter*), we had a mix. We had some experienced World War II guys and academy graduates. But we also had brand new ninety-day wonders out of college and they would be sent there. At one time, we only had six officers on the ship, a Navy Lieutenant was the Captain of the ship, a Lieutenant JG as the Executive Officer and then four division officers. Each division was -- the gunners, the ordnance division; the engineering division that ran the engines; the deck force that swabbed the deck; and the communication guys. At one point they shipped us four brand new ninety-day wonders for each of the four divisions. So we had all these green Ensigns running the ship basically. That was interesting (*laughter*). One of them was a music major and here's back to your comment, the Navy never let you do what you know what to do. He was a music major, he was made the engineering officer, he was in charge of the engines. We had two large diesel engines that was on the boat. The ordnance, the

ordnance division engineer was a microbiologist from Kansas. He knew nothing about guns.

And so on, it was like that so.

*(End of side one of tape.)*

*(Beginning of side two of tape.)*

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now have you been on the Honor Flight to Washington, D.C.?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yes I've been to Washington a lot. My career after college was with Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, California. And for whom I worked thirty-one years, always in Burbank. And all my dealings were with the military. So my traipsing to Washington was a regular occurrence to deal with people back there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Are you familiar with the Honor Flight where they fly people out there?

Mr. Gilmour:

Yeah I've heard of those. I've refrained from going because I'd been to Washington so many times so that it's not very exciting *(laughter)*. I figured if I released my seat to somebody who has not been there and seen all that stuff. So I never participated in that but you know like I say I'd been there way more times than I care to remember. Back with regards to the LSMR 404, my career put me in touch with, I was a program manager of projects and I dealt with Army and Air Force and Navy, all three. And in particular the Navy folks, once in a while my duty on the LSMR 404 would come to the conversation and from secretaries and undersecretaries and Admirals over a ten year period I never met one that ever even heard of a LSMR. That's what caused me to decide to write a book. They were interesting devices that were put together in a very rapid acquisition process and put to sea you know. And I just think that they should show up in history somewhere and they do not, they just really were totally forgotten there, almost just



forgotten as the Korean War in the first place, *(laughter)* well not almost, way more forgotten. But most people never heard of them even though they participated you know for four years in Korea and for three years in Vietnam. Nobody ever heard of them or gonna have. Any World War II movie you see always shows rockets being fired off of these and that's because that's the way they done that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I understand they also converted a few LCIs to rocket ships.

Mr. Gilmour:

They had, LCIs were earlier rocket ships and those were rack type rockets that they took off from airplanes and hung racks all over the ship where they could fire a salvo of those things. And that's what they started doing that, at Normandy in fact. And throughout even other places in Europe but particularly in the Pacific Island Campaign the LCIs and even smaller boats had rockets, fixed rockets, racked rockets sitting in them and firing, but you had to.... But they're so inaccurate that you know you had to point the boat, you don't get to point the gun, you have to point the boat. And you don't know where they're gonna go. So for the invasion of the mainland they designed and built really quickly, like in five months, these mounts and ships to carry them. And they were going to be the front row on all the invasions, there were gonna be dozen of beaches hit. I actually have a copy of Phase I of the invasion here showing all the beaches then. You know there was gonna be one rocket load at each of the fifteen or twenty different defined beach landings. It would have been a slaughter.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I think I've told you that a close friend of mine here in Alice was on LSM 96.

Mr. Gilmour:

On LSM 96?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes and I've interviewed probably six or eight people that were on LSMs.

Mr. Gilmour:

Yeah, well the LSM had a smaller crew of course. They only had like 60 people on them. And *(laughter)* when they converted it to an LSMR they filled up the well-deck with ammo and they didn't provide any more sleeping space. So with 125 of us slept in about the same space that there were 50 guys in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well Warren, that's all the questions I have unless you've thought of something.

Mr. Gilmour:

Alright, well it's been a pleasure.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Warren, thanks again for your time today, thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Gilmour:

Well thank you sir.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Alright.

*(End of interview.)*

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