

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Nimitz Education and Research Center
Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With

Ernest Harper

Lufkin, Texas

December 12, 2018

U.S. Navy

USS Cowpens, CVL-25

Mr. Misenhimer:

My name is Richard Misenhimer, today is December 12, 2018. I am interviewing Mr. Ernest Harper by telephone. His phone number is 936-632-3626. His address is 2201 Spence, Lufkin, Texas, 75904. 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 daughter Felita Harper is helping with this interview.

Ernest, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II.

Ms. Harper:

Okay, we're going to try something, let me put this on the speaker.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

"Agreement Read"

Is that okay with you?

Ms. Harper:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Felita, what is your address?

Ms. Harper:

It's the same address that you have for my father.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And do you have a separate phone or cell phone or anything?

Ms. Harper:

Yes I do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, what is your cell phone number?

Ms. Harper:

713-504-3692.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Ernest, what is your birthdate?

Mr. Harper:

My birthday is December 27, 1925.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you born?

Mr. Harper:

I was born in Manning, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Harper:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many of each?

Mr. Harper:

I had one brother and three sisters.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was your brother in World War II?

Mr. Harper:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was he younger than you or older?

Mr. Harper:

He was oldest, there were five of us and he was oldest and I'm the youngest.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Is he still living?

Mr. Harper/Ms. Harper:

No, he passed away about five years ago in 2013.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

My father was named Cleveland Harper. And my mother was named Charlcie Harper.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

Why it was, if you promise me you won't cry I'll tell you exact how it was. I was born in 1925 and I didn't get a pair of shoes until I was nine years old. I started school when I was nine.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you had it pretty rough then?

Mr. Harper:

I had it real rough.

Ms. Harper:

Tell him when your father died.

Mr. Harper:

My father died when I was four years old. And my mother in 1981.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have other relatives to help you?

Mr. Harper:

No, it was during the depression with no help in sight. Everybody back then were struggling.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then where did you go to high school?

Mr. Harper:

I didn't. I started school when I was nine years old and I just finished sixth grade.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, what year did you finish the sixth grade?

Mr. Harper:

I think that was in 1942.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

Oh yeah, I remember that. Sure, I was in the cotton field working when the news came out.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

Well I really didn't know at the time, I didn't know it, the meaning of war. We were back in the country on the farm and we didn't know much about the war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You would have been sixteen at that time, is that right?

Mr. Harper:

Yeah, about.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when did you enter the service?

Mr. Harper:

I entered in April the 6th of 1944.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Harper:

No, I was drafted.

Ms. Harper:

Tell him about your brother.

Mr. Harper:

My brother, he was drafted also.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was he drafted earlier than you or when was he drafted?

Mr. Harper:

He was drafted before I was. He went overseas in Germany, he went across the Atlantic and I went across the Pacific.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now you went in the Navy, is that correct?

Mr. Harper:

Yeah, I was in the Navy.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any choice or did they just put you in there?

Mr. Harper:

No, back then you didn't have a choice.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then where did you go for your boot camp?

Mr. Harper:

I went to Bainbridge, Maryland, that's just out of Baltimore.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And how was boot camp?

Mr. Harper:

I was in boot camp for nine weeks. Oh to me it was rough because I hadn't experienced anything like that.

Ms. Harper:

You didn't know how to swim did you?

Mr. Harper:

I knew how to swim what you call a frog swim, but I had to learn to swim overhanded.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then after boot camp where did you go?

Mr. Harper:

After boot camp they sent me from Baltimore to San Diego, California. And we left one Sunday morning and got to San Diego the next Sunday. The reason it took us so long is we stopped in a lot of small towns picking up recruits. Then we'd get to the mountains, up there we had to sit there for four hours and wait until another engine come and give us a boost over the mountain. And then a lot of time we stopped in a town and then wait there three or four hours for them to bring a load of recruits there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Harper:

Well we stayed at the camp two weeks and they put us on a transport ship and sent us to Honolulu, Hawaii. And we were there two weeks and then they assigned me to the aircraft carrier, *USS Cowpens*.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, what's the number of that ship?

Mr. Harper:

The ship is CVL-25.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what was your job on the ship?

Mr. Harper:

Well I had to, oh my job was a Steward's Mate and they had us working in storerooms and what they called breaking out. Every day we had to go down and bring supplies up to the pantry. Then we scraped sludge off of the ships to be painted. We did a lot of things that really wasn't doing our job, but they made us, that was during the war, we had to do a lot of things.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Harper:

While I was aboard ship, is that what you're talking about?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Harper:

You mean what my job was?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Harper:

Yeah like I said we did a lot of different kind of work. It was a lot of cleaning, I never did do any cooking or anything like that, but did a lot of cleaning. We had to bring supplies up from the loading dock for different compartments, compartments of the ship. And that was an everyday job. Then when we went into action, well we had to do a lot of toting supplies up to the hangar deck, that was every day. And then when we'd jump into action we had to go up and man our post. When an alarm came on everybody had a certain place to go. My post was six feet from the gunner.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay, then what happened?

Mr. Harper:

That was when we were being attacked. And we had to carry supplies to the catwalk where the

gunners were. We'd do that when we were in action.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Harper:

After we're being attacked then about every two days we'd cruise back out of the war zone and take on supplies and food and ammunition and all. And then we'd go right back into, into action.

That was a scary time.

Ms. Harper:

But where all did you all sail to?

Mr. Harper:

Oh my, now that's a big question. We went to a lot of different places, we went to Guam, Ulithi, Saipan. They struck all of those and we'd seen all of that. Getting everything ready.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the first battle action they got into?

Mr. Harper:

First battle action that we got into, the way that I remember is a little island called, Saipan and Guam, little island called Ulithi. They struck all of those little islands. What the aircraft carrier did was to sail up so far and then the fighter and the bomber planes would fly out and drop bombs on these islands. The fighter planes would go ahead of the bomber, we called it "striking." They'd go out and go down on the island there regardless, kind of spraying, striking it. They'd go just ahead of the bomber, the bomber would come behind them and drop the bombs. That was a scary part.

Ms. Harper:

What about your assignment?

Mr. Harper:

Well my assignment was during the, we called it being striking. Because we had a certain place to go in doing this striking. So we wouldn't be on the catwalk where the gunners were.

We had a certain place to go when the alarm went, "All decks, man your post," and we had a certain place we'd go. So we had different departments of someplace to go during that time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Keep going.

Mr. Harper:

And I remember one night we were being attacked and it's two destroyers went down within five minutes and I saw them go down. It was the *USS Texas* and the *USS Cranbury*. But I saw them two ships go down one night, it wasn't a man saved off it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where was that at?

Mr. Harper:

That was between ..., in fact they were traveling on to Philippines during that time, Philippines and Luzon. And that was one night.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was your ship ever attacked?

Mr. Harper:

Yes, yes we got torpedoed one night. It went all the way into the post office. And we had to rush and close off those hatches. It went all the way into the post office and we had to pull back out of the war zone and we made it back to Hawaii, taking us twelve days to get back to Hawaii for temporary repair. And after we got temporary repair in Hawaii then they sent us to San Francisco, California to get repaired. And I got a twelve day leave. And once we were repaired we headed right back out to war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About what date was it you were torpedoed?

Mr. Harper:

Now I don't remember what night it was. It was one night.

Ms. Harper:

You don't remember the date?

Mr. Harper:

No I don't remember the date.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you located at when this happened?

Mr. Harper:

When that happened I remember I was in the, I think I was in my bunk.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where was the ship at?

Mr. Harper:

The ship, we were somewhere near the Philippines. That's where they were striking.

Ms. Harper:

He said near the Phillipines.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where on his ship did the torpedo hit?

Ms. Harper:

He said it went all the way into the post office, closer to the stern of the ship.

Mr. Harper:

Yeah.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then after you got repaired in San Francisco where did you go?

Mr. Harper:

After repaired in San Francisco we came right back out to sea. We went right back out in the war zone.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to, do you know?

Mr. Harper:

Right after we left San Francisco?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Harper:

Well we came back out and I don't remember whether we were ..., was that before we struck Saipan? I don't remember.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It would have been after Saipan I'm sure.

Mr. Harper:

Yes, it was after Saipan.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what was your battle station on the ship?

Mr. Harper:

My battle station was on the deck, six feet from the catwalk.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what did you do there?

Mr. Harper:

During the battle?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah during the battle, what did you do?

Mr. Harper:

During the battle, it depends on where we were. I would be passing ammunition or supplies.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you man a gun or anything like that?

Mr. Harper:

Oh no I wasn't no gunner. No, I wasn't a gunner.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you ever attacked by kamikazes?

Mr. Harper:

I don't remember.

Ms. Harper:

Those were the suicide bombers.

Mr. Harper:

They never did hit us head on like that, they would bomb us. I'll tell you what, there were some good gunners on our ship. In fact back then they were gunning by sight. And sometime in the evening time, the Japanese would come in on the sunset. On a clear day we saw it, they'd come in on that side, that was gunners. They're waiting on them those gunners. I remember that.

Ms. Harper:

What else do you remember?

Mr. Harper:

I remember one evening there was a fighter plane coming toward our task group, he came in real low. And they couldn't shoot at him because he was too low. He flew in low and he got away.

I don't remember where we were, but we had done left Saipan by then.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you ever at Iwo Jima?

Mr. Harper:

Iwo Jima, sure was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do there?

Mr. Harper:

Well we went that way, the best I can remember. Iwo Jima, I'm getting that mixed up with Guam. I don't remember what I was doing there, Iwo Jima, Guam, Saipan, Luzon. I remember when we hit Tokyo.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about that.

Mr. Harper:

Well when we made it to Tokyo after they surrendered we all were anchored in Tokyo Bay. We all stood at attention as we all anchored in that bay and they signed the Peace Treaty on the *USS Missouri*. And General Douglas MacArthur and then the Japanese dignitaries they all signed the Peace Treaty. We all were anchored in that bay. We stood at attention on the flight deck.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How close were you to the *Missouri*?

Mr. Harper:

Oh I wasn't real close to the *Missouri*, I wasn't close enough to even see the action on the deck of that *Missouri*. I could see the ship but I couldn't see the ceremony.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you in the fighting at Okinawa?

Mr. Harper:

Okinawa, yes. Yes we were, we were striking Okinawa. I don't remember when that was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Harper:

Well the night that I told you we got torpedoed. And the night that those two destroyers went down and there wasn't a man saved off those two destroyers.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How close were those destroyers to you when they went down?

Mr. Harper:

They were right on each side of us. I'd say about, you know they didn't operate real close, but one of them was on one side, one was on the other side. We got torpedoed at night, but we didn't go down. But those two ships went down that night. I will remember that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Harper:

Yes sure did, nearly every day, Tokyo Rose.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you think of her?

Mr. Harper:

Well I think about her like I do Tojo. She caused a lot of men to be killed.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I hear she played good music.

Mr. Harper:

Well I guess it was to those that liked her kind of music. Yeah I used to hear her, Tokyo Rose. I forget about it almost.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now April the 12th of 1945 President Roosevelt died, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Harper:

Yes, yes that was a sad day that happened. I was a young man raised on the farm and I thought when he died I would never make it home. A lot of us young guys didn't know the role of a president. Being a Texas boy we didn't know so many. When he died well we lost hope, a lot of us young country boys did. And Roosevelt came over there once. It might have been in Hawaii. But I remember Roosevelt coming over there once. When he died we lost hope.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now May the 8th of 1945 Germany surrendered, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Harper:

Yes we heard about it. A lot of their fleet came to help us out and the war ended just as they were beginning to arrive there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On August the 6th of '45 they dropped the first atomic bomb, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Harper:

Yes we heard about that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And what did you think of that?

Mr. Harper:

Well I just know a lot of men were destroyed, a lot of people were destroyed. So that was

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then on August the 14th of '45 Japan surrendered, did you have any kind of a celebration then?

Mr. Harper:

Yes, yes we did, we had a kind of celebration because that was a wonderful time. We knew then we'd be starting to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And where were you when that happened?

Mr. Harper:

I don't remember where abouts at sea we were when that happened. I was out there but I don't remember exactly where we were. A lot of times at sea we patrolled a lot, we patrolled out at sea sometimes for three months before we come in. It had been three months since having seen nothing but water and sky, no land just water and sky. Ships brought our food, supplies, everything out to sea.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when that torpedo hit your ship how many people did that kill?

Mr. Harper:

I think it was, I'm not sure of it but twenty-six I want to say.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there any other time people on your ship were killed?

Mr. Harper:

No, it had been times that guys went overboard. When we pulled back out from the war zone we had to pull out our mattress, hang it out on the catwalk, some of the guys would fall overboard. During the war the ship never stopped regardless of what. And sometimes the planes come in for landing and they missed that cable and they'd go overboard. I remember once one pilot went overboard, the plane hit the water and he stepped out on the wings as that plane went under. The ship never stopped for one that's gone overboard. And the ship picked up a man once we had pulled back out for supplies. And another ship had picked up a man had been out at sea for eleven days. They picked him up and then he transferred to our ship, we found out about two months later he went overboard. During that storm you couldn't have survived going out on the catwalk really. He did and he went out there and he went overboard. The man had been at sea for eleven days and still he went back overboard.

Ms. Harper:

Did they get him?

Mr. Harper:

No, because it was night when he went overboard at that time. And I remember it was another man out on the catwalk, another mate, he slipped and went overboard. And he was still up above water waving for help but the ship couldn't stop to pick him up. They couldn't stop in the war zone because it's too dangerous for submarines, that's when the ships could not go straight, you had to go zig-zag all the time. I wouldn't want to go through that again.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now what was that?

Ms. Harper:

He just said he wouldn't want to go through that war again.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh right, right I don't blame him. How was the morale on your ship?

Mr. Harper:

Well I hate to say this but it's true anyway. It was bad segregation during that time, the black

couldn't associate with the white, the black had their own compartment and the white had theirs. And the black they had their mess table. When you'd go to the movie, when we cruised back out of the war zone we had movies on the ship. You'd go to the movies, the white would go first and the black next. That's just how it was back in those days.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when did you all come back to the States?

Mr. Harper:

You mean after the war was over?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes sir.

Mr. Harper:

Well I had six months after the duration.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Six months after the war was over you came back, right?

Mr. Harper:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then when you got back what happened, what did y'all do?

Mr. Harper:

When I got back to the States I went back to the farm, to the country where I was drafted from. And I married my sweetheart, the one I started to school with when I was nine years old and she was seven. She had a pair of shoes but I didn't. And after I got married and then I went to Houston looking for a job. Stayed down there three months then I came back. Decided we'd come back to the farm in San Augustine. That's a little town northeast of Houston. And I farmed for about three years. And then I left and went to Lufkin, which is about twenty-eight miles west of San Augustine. Then I went to work in a paper mill, that's where I raised my children and that's where I retired from after 37 years.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What date were you discharged?

Mr. Harper:

I was discharged February the 6th in 1946.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

No, no I didn't have any problems then.

Ms. Harper:

Remember what the man told you at the country store?

Mr. Harper:

Yeah well I hate to mention this but it's true anyway. Yeah when I got back to the country, back in the community where I left from, the farm and all and There was one law down there and it was rough on us black folks but we didn't know any better because that's all we ever knew. But it was back when they were quick to let you know that you were a n-word when you left, you'd better remember you're still the n-word they called it. They know what you were when you left, well that's what you are when you come back. They have you remember that and you couldn't do nothing about it, you had to accept that. They didn't even consider you had been in the war and back, they didn't even consider that. So we all had to fall back under the same environment that we left. And if you didn't submit to the people and their laws whatever, they'll make it hard for you because it was a little country store up the road that we all could buy whatever we need on credit. And then you'd pay for it when you sell your crops. But now when you go into war and you come back they'd let you know your rights. You didn't have any. You were right where you left, so you got to remember and accept that. Because if you didn't, you say anything out of the way or they'd say you got smart with them why they would make it hard for you. They'd go up there and tell the man, tell the store clerk that you got smart with them, and don't let you have anything else, and so he wouldn't either. But you had to fall right back to

what you left in order to survive. It was rough, it was really tough on us. But that's what you had been used to, that's all you ever knew. And so although you've been in military, but they didn't have no respect for that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

Yes, matter of fact when I got out with the, we left and we

End of side one of tape.

Beginning of side two of tape.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay now what did you say, go ahead.

Mr. Harper:

Yes sir, we heard that they had a G.I. school that you could go to and I went. The school was farming or either cabinet building. That's all they had available where we could take a course on our G.I. Bill. But after I moved out of farming and come to the town where I'm living now, which is twenty-eight miles from there, I went to work at the paper mill. So when I learned that I could buy a home on my G.I. Bill and so I did and that's where I raised my eleven kids, my wife and me. These are wonderful kids.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many kids did you have?

Mr. Harper:

My wife and me we didn't have but eleven.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Eleven, that's a lot.

Mr. Harper:

Yeah, you have a bunch at eleven. Five boys and six girls.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Are they all still living?

Mr. Harper:

All but one, I lost my baby boy in 1998.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Oh, sorry to hear that. Now when you were in the Pacific were you ever in any typhoons?

Mr. Harper:

Oh yes. We were in terrible storms at sea, terrible storms. So much so we had to tie ourselves in the bunk and buckle ourselves down in our bunk. I could see, you could see a storm coming way over the horizon and clouds get down real low. And tides were pitching over the ship. Yeah I've been in some terrible storms, terrible storms.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

No I didn't bring any souvenirs back. Sure didn't.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. Harper:

No. You talking about when I was in the military?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Harper:

No, I never did.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you had any reunions of your ship crew?

Mr. Harper:

No, I get a letter every year from *Cowpens*. South Carolina that's where the ship I was on was commissioned at, Cowpens, South Carolina. And they sent me a letter from them every year.

They'd explain it and invite me to this reunion, but I've never gone.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Harper:

3rd Class Steward's Mate.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Harper:

I didn't, I didn't get any.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get any Battle Stars?

Mr. Harper:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever cross the equator?

Mr. Harper:

Yes I did. I will remember that, I got a rib cracked. When they initiated all the new ones crossing the equator and they really worked us over. Initiate the new ones that had never crossed the equator. And that was initiation too. They greased the flight deck and all the old crew would be lining up on each side. And then have all the new ones that You take off running out down the aisles and they all would be beating on you. I got a rib cracked. Leading up to that, about a few days before that, it's real hot out there in that South Pacific, they make you put on your winter coat, that's what the older guys would do, that's the way they initiate you, I'll never forget that. They really tell you to do something. So it was a great experience and I'm glad, I didn't volunteer, but I'm glad I went. Being a country boy I'm just glad I did go.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Harper:

No I haven't. My children took me to Niagara Falls. And my oldest daughter lives in Saginaw, Michigan and I've gone up there about three different times.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well Ernest that's all the questions I have unless you've thought of anything else.

Ms. Harper:

Let me see if he has any other questions, hang on. Something else he wants to mention to you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Okay good, go ahead.

Mr. Harper:

Well I understand that, different ones have told me that the United States did not have a suicide squad and I've never heard of one, of having one. But when they were striking Luzon or getting ready to strike Luzon, well they had already struck Luzon, they wanted to send a terrorist group like, they didn't have ways of knowing what was back in Luzon, that was back behind the Philippines. And they didn't tell us exactly what the reason they were doing, well I'm fixing to tell you. They had, they got so many of us and transferred us to another ship. The way I understand it they didn't know what was back there and they sent, they made up a task group to send back there. And while they were getting prepared for that they'd take some men off each ship. And they sent a task group back there to see how strong they were back there. And so when they were preparing, getting us ready, getting different ones of so many of each ship to send back there, on the ships. Well they had us take out all our personal belongings and they put it in a case, in case we didn't come back. And I was explaining that to different ones after I was discharged and they told me, "Well the United States said the Japanese had it, suicide, but United States didn't." But I remember them sending us back there. In case we might not come back they had us get all our personal belongings and they put it in a case. And then they put us aboard this ship and sent us back there. But we went back there and we came out. That was in 1945. I didn't hear much about that, but that's actually what happened.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else you've thought of?

Mr. Harper:

But I had forgot about that until my daughter here reminded me because they heard me talk about that at different times. The Japanese came down to shoot the gunner ahead of the bomber plane. They killed a lot of gunners when they came down. They shot the gunner, would pull them out, another guy would step in. And I'd seen a lot of that.

Ms. Harper:

Gunners and ammunition.

Mr. Harper:

There'd be six men that you'd be passing ammo to the gunners. But we weren't no gunners though, we passed, each gun had two men shooting them 20mms. And battleship had them 16-inch, the big guns.

Ms. Harper:

Alright Richard.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well Ernest and Felita thank you all for your time today and for all your work that you've done on this and thank you

Mr. Harper:

You tell him

Ms. Harper:

Tell him what?

Mr. Harper:

When we pulled back into Hawaii for repair, we had to line up down on that ship on scaffolds and scrape paint. I figured that all that sludge had dried up on that ship we had to get out there and scrape all that off. We're out on scaffolds. But we anchored in Hawaii, washing it off. We had to get on scaffolds, line it up and on that ship out there on scaffolds, scraping that sludge

where they could repaint. I hated that smelly, I was right there scraping that sludge off.

Ms. Harper:

Alright I think that's all right now, we appreciate your time and your voluntarism to record his story, we appreciate you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well thank you for your time today and thank him for his service to our country.

Ms. Harper:

Yes sir.

(End of interview.)

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January 18, 2019

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