

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Nimitz Education and Research Center
Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With

Charles C. Kayhart
Chapin, South Carolina

June 5, 2019

U.S. Army

Pacific

3116th Signal Service Battalion

Mr. Misenhimer:

My name is Richard Misenhimer, today is June 5, 2019. I am interviewing Charles C. Kayhart by telephone. His address is 225 Pointe Overlook Dr. Chapin, South Carolina 29036. 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 Susan Mallini is the alternate contact. Her phone number is 803-920-7390. His phone number is 803-603-9742. Her address is the same 225 Pointe Overlook Dr., Chapin, South Carolina 29036.

Chris, I want to thank you for taking the time to do this interview today.

Mr. Kayhart:

I'm glad to do it, I know it's for a good cause, and it's a matter of history, and history is always a good thing.

Mr. Misenhimer:

And I want to thank you for your service to our country during WWII.

Mr. Kayhart:

You're entirely welcome, it was my honor to serve my country.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

"Agreement Read"

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yes, that is OK.

Mr. Misenhimer:

OK, good, thank you. Now, what is your birthdate?

Mr. Kayhart:

My birthdate October 14, 1911.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You've been around for quite a while then.

Mr. Kayhart:

Yes, I have, and apparently from all the tests I've had, I'll be around for quite a while yet barring an accident.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you born?

Mr. Kayhart:

I was born in New Jersey.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any brothers and sisters?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yes, I had two brothers and two sisters.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were your brothers in WWII?

Mr. Kayhart:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

They were too old, or too young?

Mr. Kayhart:

They had families.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Kayhart:

My mother's first name is Viola, my father's first name, Charles, same as mine.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Kayhart:

My dad had a very good job, he was an executive in the corn products refining company, he was a Vice President, and they made everything from corn so although he got a cut in salary, he survived it pretty well. He was one of the fortunate people. So far as I'm concerned, when I was a young boy, I became very much interested in radio, and I began building radios, and as a result of that learning I could always get a job because radio was just beginning to bloom and people with knowledge of radio were very much in demand. So, I was never out of work more than one week.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Kayhart:

I went to Boonton High School, in Boonton, New Jersey.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What year did you graduate there?

Mr. Kayhart:

Let's see, it was 1929.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you do when you finished high school?

Mr. Kayhart:

When I finished high school, my most important thought was I need to get a job. So, I saw that the AT&T were looking for young men, so I responded to their ad when I went in there, they gave me a piece of wire, a battery, and a buzzer. They said "Make this buzzer work". It was duck soup for me because I'd been building radios since I was a youngster. I had no difficulty, and I got the job.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yes, I do. I was on my way to visit my parents at that time. I was a radio amateur at that time, I heard a guy saying that the Japanese were bombing Pearl Harbor, and I thought that guy ought to lose his license for talking like that. But it wasn't long before I learned that it was an actuality the Japanese were really bombing Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Kayhart:

At the time, I didn't have any notice that it affected me too much, except I knew it affected our entire country. That's about as far as it got. I was pretty young yet.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How old were you then?

Mr. Kayhart:

Let's see, that was December 1941, so I was 31, almost, not quite, but getting close to it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When did you go into the service?

Mr. Kayhart:

I went in in December of 1942. December 20, 1942.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you drafted, or did you volunteer?

Mr. Kayhart:

I went in and got a direct commission. I had communicated with the Signal Corp and they wanted me to join the military in an organization called Electronics Training Group. I thought that was pretty good. At that time, I was working in a company making aircraft instruments. And I felt since I was spending long hours with no product coming through, I was testing and inspecting aircraft instruments, but the production was so slow, I'd be sitting for hours and hours with no product coming through. So, my mind began to work, I thought that the military could use my experience a lot more than what I was doing at the time. So, I got in touch with the military and found that they would like to have me join the Electronics Training Group, and if you desire, go into the New York office and you'll get a direct commission, which I did. When a Major came out, he had looked at all of my records, and the Major said "I can make you a Major right now." I said, "Hold on

Major, I am promised to the Electronics Training Group, and I don't think I should change that." He said "Wait a minute, I'll talk to my boss." He went inside the boss said, that's right, we can't touch him. The later work that I did warranted my becoming a Major at that time, but it didn't happen, but that didn't bother me. I did get into the Military then in the Signal Corps, and I went through the basic training in Fort Monmouth, New Jersey. Then I got orders to report to Cambridge, Massachusetts at the University there. I spent four months at Harvard studying radio engineering. I don't know that did me much good because I knew all that stuff, since I was a kid, I laid on my belly studying everything and all the information I could on radio, and it really paid off. After the four months at Harvard, they sent me to MIT to learn radar.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got your direct commission, as a what, a Lieutenant or what?

Mr. Kayhart:

I was Lieutenant.

Mr. Misenhimer:

1st Lieutenant?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yeah. One thing about it, once you get a direct commission, and the war is on, you cannot get a promotion until the war is over. So, I remained a Lieutenant all through the war. When I left the Military, they made me a Captain.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What branch were you in?

Mr. Kayhart:

I was in the Army Signal Corps, and my headquarters were in Hawaii.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Back to your basic training, you were an officer during basic training, right?

Mr. Kayhart:

Oh, yes, well, whether you were an officer or what, you had to go through basic training.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went through the same training that a Private did.

Mr. Kayhart:

Yeah, right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you with a group of other officers, or with enlisted men?

Mr. Kayhart:

I don't recall, that's sort of vague, there were a lot of other officers and ones that I remember were camera men who were going into the Army, and they were Hollywood camera men and their job was to take photographs of the Military in action. And I remember that, so most of the people were officers that I trained with.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then what happened?

Mr. Kayhart:

After I got through MIT, I went out in the field and I did radar work, and I found that very interesting because radar is nothing more than an extension of radio, and I was well versed in all of that, and I enjoyed it thoroughly. My wife, I talked this whole thing over with my wife, and when she found out that I figured I'd stay in the country, and wherever I went she was able to accompany me. And so, she was for it. It so happens that after I

worked in the field for some time doing radar work, a guy came running out of the signal office, I was going home on leave because I hadn't had any leave yet, and the Sergeant came running out of the signal office. I had my wife, and I had a baby at that time, a little over a year old, and everything was packed in the car and I was going back to New Jersey. My wife's mother and she had four sisters there, and I figured she'd be well taken care of, but the Sergeant says hold on, we just heard from Washington, you are going to the West Coast. So that changed my plans quite a bit, and I did go to the West Coast. I got transferred, I went on a troop train, I got to San Francisco on the troop train, then they sent me up North to Seattle, and I said "Oh, this looks like I'm going overseas." Sure, enough when I got there, the orders said that I was going overseas. However, our ship was in dry dock for a month. They had supplied a huge, what do you call those military buildings that they made, Quonset hut. There were doctors there, dentists there, all casuals waiting to go overseas like I was. So, we got to be very good friends, and we decided since we had sent all our money back with our wives, we didn't have money to spend out there. We'd need to buy a little whiskey once in a while and other things, you know, so we got together and talked about what kind of a job did we want to get. We were allowed to get a job in private enterprise even though we were in the Military because the country needed all the help they could get, so there's no problem, it was legal. We found out that the longshoreman was the best that paid the most money, but you had to join the longshoreman's union, no problem. The doctors and dentists and my other friends there, we all joined the union and our job was rolling empty 50 gallon drums down a causeway. They would return from overseas empty and they would be refilled down below, and sent back overseas with gasoline, oil, things of that nature. So eventually the dry dock released our ship and we got aboard. We didn't know where we were going because it was always a secret when you were going overseas that you're not allowed to tell anybody where you're going, and you didn't know yourself where you were going. However, once we were on the ship, we knew we were going West, so it was not much of a secret, we were going out into the Pacific someplace. And we did. One day I looked up and saw a big body of mountain, it looked a little familiar, but as we

went along, I said "Look, that's Diamond Head, we're going to Hawaii." And sure, enough we did, we docked in Hawaii. I reported into the headquarters of the outfit, the Signal Corps, and I found out that I had become a member of the 3116th Signal Service Battalion, and that was my outfit until I left the military. They said when I got there, take two weeks off, get to know about the island here and enjoy yourself, and after two weeks we'll be in touch with you. I thought that was pretty nice. So, I did, I enjoyed exploring the island of Oahu, and all of the things Hawaii are noted for. But it was a pretty dirty place at that time, the city was awfully, awfully dirty, and not a very pleasant place if you were going on vacation. Anyway, after two weeks I was called into the Signal Corps office, and a General sat me down and he says "I know why you got into the military, and I don't want to change that unless you are willing." Pretty nice of the General I thought. But he said "I have some important work that I know you can do." He evidently had made a study of me before I even got out there. I said "Well General, if you have work for me to do, I'm for it. I'm tired of sitting on my rear end, that's not why I joined the military." He says "Fine, what I want you to do then is to go out to our radio station, the other end of the Island of Oahu, and get to know everybody, get to know all of the equipment, and I'll be in touch with you." After about a month and a half, I heard from the general. He called me in, and he said "We've been concerned and worried about our radio station being all above ground, we know what happened in Pearl Harbor, and we had no reason to think the Japanese might come here and abolish all of our equipment here and the radio station. I want you to get all acquainted out there." I did that for a month and a half, got to know everybody, got to know the equipment. He called me in and he said "Because we're worried about our station being above ground, we have dug a tunnel in the mountain here, and I want you to go in there and install all of our transmitters in that tunnel." I said "OK, General." I went to work and I ran all of the cabling and connected up all of the transmitters, unpacked them from their boxes and tuned everything up, and got everything finished in good shape. General called me back in. He said "Do you see that map on the wall?" I said "Yes, General." He says "Do you know what it is?" I said "No, it looks like an Island." He says "It is an Island. That's an

Island called Iwo Jima. The problem is that our B-29's are taking off from Kwajalein and Saipan and that's a thousand miles round trip for our B-29 bombers." The B-29's were an Army operation, and he said "The men are getting tired out, the equipment is wearing out, so we need to take this Island of Iwo Jima which is 750 miles South of Tokyo. Your job is going to be building a radio station for the Army. The Army's spread out all over the Orient, and they don't have any direct communication with the Pentagon in Washington, or any other place, so they need this radio station to be able to contact their headquarters in Washington, DC, San Francisco, and all of the Orient." So that became my job. The General said "Choose your own men, you know the men who were at the time you spent out at the radio station, you know all the men there, you can choose your own crew to go with you on this project. You all should get all of the equipment you need to build this radio station. Wire, rope, and everything else you need to build the radio station." So, we did that, we got it all packed, and eventually we took off headed for Iwo Jima. Well, we didn't go directly to Iwo Jima because the fighting was too heavy, and we didn't want to risk our crew and our men because our job was to build a radio station. So, about two days we were on a small volcanic Island and we got word to take off, we landed, we didn't land, there were no docks around Iwo Jima, we hove to off the shore of Iwo Jima at night, and we looked at the hell that was going on there, flame throwers, rifles, bombs, everything, dust filled the air, it was really, really a scary thing. So, I asked the Captain, "Are we going in there tomorrow?" and he says "Yes, you are, you're going in tomorrow morning." Now mind, all of my men got sea sick, I did not, and I used to visit the ones on the top deck, and they looked like they were colored in green, they were so sick, but they recovered in a hurry and the next morning, after we arrived off the coast there, we got on a landing craft and landed on the Island of Iwo Jima. It was a tough job getting on the landing craft because the ship was swaying in one direction, and the landing craft was rolling in a different direction. I was the first one down the rope ladder, and I studied the thing for a little bit and waited until the two were in phase and sort of a flat landing with all of this rolling, I managed pretty good, I stumbled around a bit, but I got on there, my men came down, I helped them, they were

staggering around, and they recovered from their sea sickness in a hurry, believe me. Anyway, we got in the landing craft, we were all loaded down with a heavy pack on our back, a rifle on our shoulder, and the landing craft was loaded with Marines and other people. Probably the most tired I was in my whole life was the hour we spent on that landing craft, just all jammed in there with the heavy packs and the rifles, it was very, very tiring. So, we finally landed and I had the men and me go out and dig fox holes. The flag had been raised on the high ground on the Island two days before we landed there, and that was a good indication because the high ground, this was a volcanic Island, and where the lava had spewed out, it had formed a small mountain, maybe 200 feet tall, not very tall, but it was the only high ground on the Island, and the Japanese were on that high ground, and they would just shoot down and just mow down our Marines, it was very horrible the way that the Marines had no defense against these guys, but when the flag was raised, that meant the mountain was ours and it was a lot easier for us to battle the Japanese. The Island was 1/3 taken when the flag was raised and the flag was raised on a very important surface of the Island. The fighting continued furiously however on the ground, the Japanese were all holed in underground caves, and we hardly knew where the Japanese were. After a while they found out that the Japanese had covers on the entrance to these underground caves and it was tough on the Marines finding out where the Japanese were. They finally found out, and once they did that, life was much easier. So, we went out to the area where we were to build our radio station, first we had to go out on shore, take a big 6 x 6 truck, load all of our stuff, transmitters, wires, cables, everything needed to build a radio station. We found out that the Seabees had built a very nice Quonset hut for my transmitters, and right outside was a very good electric generator that would supply all the power we needed for the transmitters. The men were basically men who had worked in civilian life for the telephone company, power company, and they were very familiar with putting poles in the ground, and climbing them and mounting cable on it. So, that was their job, mostly running the feed lines from the transmitter to the antennas. Now, the towers for the antennas were constructed by the Seabees, we didn't have to do that. And I have to give a lot of admiration to the Seabees

because they did a beautiful job, and they knew exactly what they were doing. They were all construction people, they belonged to the Navy, but believe me, I certainly admire how much help they were to me in building this transmitter. Because building the towers would have been insurmountable for the small crew I had. Anyway, I began working unpacking the transmitters, running the cables. I was the only radio man in the bunch, the other guys were construction, and they knew how to run the cables, the feed lines, because that's what they were in Hawaii. So, after about 4 months, I had finished completion of the radio station. We mounted the antennas on the towers, the towers were built so the antenna on them would be quite directional. One of them was directed right towards the Pentagon, another one to San Francisco, and the third one to the Orient where most of our allies was very active. First, they were fighting the Japanese in China, and then they were fighting the communists that took over China, and so the Army was distributed all over the place there, but they had no direct communication with the Pentagon, that's why my job was to build this transmitter station. And that we did. Have I given you too much?

Mr. Misenhimer:

No, keep going, you're doing fine.

Mr. Kayhart:

Well, let's see now, after about four months I had the radio station all mounted, the antennas were up, and I was making tests on the transmitters and everything, and they were quite good, I was very happy with that. After about four months, it was beautiful to see the B-29's coming in and landing on Iwo Jima. All lined up, and they were taking off for Tokyo, which was only 700 miles away, and believe me, it was a great help. The B-29's all by themselves, I think won the war for us. They carried the devil bomb loads and they were a good airplane. So, that was a beautiful thing to see that made all of us very proud. And finally, they finished their work and they went back to Hawaii and they went home. I stayed on in Iwo Jima for a few months to make sure that everything worked

good, and it did, and seeing the B-29's out there was good reward for all work that we did. Let's see, what happened after that, I finally got orders to come back to Hawaii by escort. I was to come back in a small Marine Aircraft, single pilot, and I was going to land in Guam, but before I could get on the plane to take me to Guam, we had an Air Raid warning. I said "My goodness, and Air Raid warning, what's going on here?" Well, finally when the plane didn't have any IFF, Information Friend or Foe, operating, so we didn't know what it was. So finally, it was a clear day and they emerged up there, this airplane emerged, we found out it was a single B-29, and it wasn't headed to land in Iwo Jima, it was going straight towards Tokyo. I figured this was very strange, why would he be doing that? He's supposed to land here in Iwo Jima, but he kept on going. It turned out later when I got to Guam, I heard a lot of noise outside, it woke me up. I asked "What was all the racket about?" and they said, "Well, we just dropped an Atomic Bomb on the Japanese." And I said "Oh my gosh, they finally cracked the atom." I found out later that the plane that I saw headed straight for Japan was our plane, the Enola Gay. That was rather interesting. So, that's the end of my story there in Iwo Jima. After a while I got orders saying I was on my way home, after seeing the Enola Gay.

Then I heard the first Atom Bomb was dropped. The Atom Bombs were dropped in two different cities, and those cities were 75 or 80 miles from Tokyo. That was hard to understand. They murdered thousands and thousands of civilians when they dropped those bombs and they didn't touch anything that had any military consequence. I thought that was rather strange, but that wasn't for me to say anyway, I just thought it was a terrible thing to kill all those civilian Japanese and not drop the bombs on Tokyo, that's where they needed to drop them. But that wasn't for me to say. I finally got down to Hawaii, my headquarters, and they insisted I take two weeks off at a resort on the big Island, I said "I don't want to go there, I've been out of civilization for about 4 months, five months now all together, and I don't want to go out there." They said "It will do you good to go." I guess they were right, anyway I went there, there was a small country club, and that's where I lived but I didn't play golf at that time, so I used to wander

around that part of the big Island and I was surprised in one area all of the big holes in the ground, and I decided this was once an active volcano a long time ago. And it was. And later on, after the war was over, I was a radio amateur, I talked to a radio amateur, and I talked to him about that volcano thing, and he said "Well, that's no longer a dead volcano, it's erupting again and we have lava flowing all over that part of the Big Island, and it's causing a lot of trouble to the people who live there." That's just an aside, anyway, have you heard enough?

Mr. Misenhimer:

No, keep going, you're doing fine.

Mr. Kayhart:

Ok, when I got back to Hawaii, after I got through with the little rest period I had, they gave me a job of managing and being the commander of inter-Island radio station. They'd had no cables under the ocean or anything, so all the communication between all the islands in the Hawaiian group were by this one radio station. And my job was to maintain that radio station and take care of the people that were handling all of the paper work and stuff for everybody that needed to use the telephone to communicate with the military and various parts of the other islands. I enjoyed it, I had a house on top of a 5,000-foot mountain, nice house, and I enjoyed the work because radio was the thing, I had spent most of my life with. I did that for several months. One day Major came up on the mountain, and he said "Lieutenant, your number is up and you can go home if you wish." He said "We'd like to have you stay on here, we'd like you to be a part of a signal Corp here." I said "Well, Major, I am a civilian at heart, and I think I better go back home because there are many things I want to do back home." So, he said "Ok". And I did, I took off and went home. I went to Fort Dixon, that's where I was released from the military. And I went home to my wife and baby. That's about the end of my story in the military, I did stay in the reserves for a while, but evidently I wasn't active enough, I had too many things to do, and I got a job with a very fine company that made loud speakers

and radio phonographs, and I finally got a job with them, and they made me their first Field Engineer. And I enjoyed that work very much. However, I don't think I want to go any further. My son who was about 7 years old, he developed leukemia, and I had several well-known doctors trying to solve his problem, but the information was not available. It has since become rather common that these youngsters can live once they've caught leukemia, which is a blessing indeed. So I retired, I resigned from the Magnavox Company, that's the outfit that I was working for, and it so happens that one of the people that I used to visit in my tour as a field Engineer, they were a Magnavox dealer in a furniture store, and the son, he was trying to operate the service department, and he was an ex-marine pilot, he didn't know much about it, so he wanted to hire me. I said "Look, can you afford me, Magnavox paid me good money, can you meet that good money? It's a thousand a year." So, he hired me to help get his service department going, which I did, I trained the men and we had a good service department there. With my radio information, it wasn't too difficult a job. One thing, the salesman for the Magnavox Company, the company that I resigned from, used to visit me in the service department, and he'd say "Chris, come back with me you don't belong here, come back and work for us at Magnavox Company." I said "No, not yet, not yet." Eventually I got a telephone call from my old boss at the Magnavox Company, and he said "I'm going to meet you, I would like to have you and your wife meet me at the Blackhawk restaurant in New York City, on this date at this time, I'd be happy if you'd come and meet me there because I want to talk to you." I said "Fine Ray, we'll be there." So we were, and Ray, he was a good man, he was the National Service Manager for the Magnavox Company, and I had worked with him quite a bit, and I knew him and I knew the company was a wonderful company. So, he began to talk about me coming back to work for Magnavox. I said "Well, well, I'll tell you Ray, I've been talking with a company here that hires people for specific jobs, and they have a job that they know I can fill as a radar instructor at the Naval Academy," and I said "Well, I'll listen, what's the pay?" He said "\$2,000." Well, that was twice what Magnavox paid for me. So, I told Ray, the Magnavox man that came to talk to me about that much money, and he said "That's OK," he called me Charlie,

“We can handle that.” I said “Will Mr. Frank Friman,” he was the President, “Will he approve that?” He said “Yes, it will be no problem.” So, I got my pay doubled for coming back, and I became the first Field Engineer. So, I went back, and they hired me to come back to the headquarters in Fort Wayne, Indiana. I was there for some time, then they built plants down in Greenville, Tennessee. Factories to build, because television was on the horizon, and everybody was getting prepared for television.

(End of side one of tape.)

(Beginning of side two of tape.)

Mr. Misenhimer:

OK, now, I've got some questions for you. What date were you released from the service?

Mr. Kayhart:

March 6, 1946.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you arrived in Hawaii the first time, was there still much damage around there from the bombing?

Mr. Kayhart:

Not where I was, no. That was in the harbor there where all of the ships were located, I'd say that was about a mile and a half from my headquarters there with the signal Corp, I could see the bullet holes in the walls of the buildings, but they worked hard and got the place back in shape. Fortunately, the aircraft carriers were out to sea, and they were not hurt by the Japanese. That served in the Battle of Midway the Japanese didn't know that, and we really clobbered them in the Battle of Midway, we sunk a few carriers, and ruined their fleet, that's because the Japanese didn't know our carriers were intact or they

wouldn't have tried this Midway thing. That was the turning point of our Naval battles in WWII.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were overseas, did you ever hear of Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Kayhart:

Tokyo Rose, yes, I did. I had a radio on Iwo Jima, and I used to tune into Japanese radio stations, and I tell you (*laughter*) that sort of made me mad listening to that. Only things I could listen to were Japanese radio. It was sort of scary too, I was sleeping in a tent by myself, I had a big pyramidal tent for my crew of men, and so they had company, but I would be all by myself there, it got a little scary.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever cross the Equator?

Mr. Kayhart:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you in any typhoons when you were overseas?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yeah, we had quite a wind one time, a buddy of mine who had a radar station on top of high ground on Iwo Jima, we had this very, very high wind, and he had his crew up on top of a mountain and they had a pile of lumber, they were going to build better quarters for their radar station. So, we went up there the next day, I had a Jeep, I was fortunate to have them issue me a Jeep for my use on Iwo Jima, so I drove up to the top of the mountain there, and all the lumber had blown away, and all the radar crew, they were standing around with nothing at all, they didn't have any tents. Everything had blown

away, except the radar stuff. *(laughter)* So, we got them straightened out. I drove the Jeep back down.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On April 12, of '45, President Roosevelt died, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yeah, we were aware of that, we knew it had happened.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What reaction did people have?

Mr. Kayhart:

Well, I'm never happy when somebody dies, but I was not a great favorite of Franklin Roosevelt, because he was too much socially inclined. He did some good things, but he did some things I did not like, he tried to pack the Supreme Court so that all of his socialist ideas would be accepted and all that sort of thing, and that was not my cup of tea. I was more of an Abe Lincoln type supporter.

Mr. Misenhimer:

On May 8th of '45 Germany surrendered, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Kayhart:

Well, yeah, sure, we heard about that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any kind of celebration?

Mr. Kayhart:

Oh, I don't know as we did any celebration. We weren't in any mood to celebrate, I guess. Actually, that was not our war, so it was not too important to us at that time. We had our own war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

August 6th when they dropped the first Atomic Bomb, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Kayhart:

I saw the Enola Gay on their way out to drop that bomb, and that did not end the war, it just ruined millions of people in two cities, killed them off, made them sick for life with all of the radiation stuff. And that was the sad thing, because it didn't stop the war. The war was finally stopped, you might not find this in history, they tried to cover it up, the war was not stopped by the Atomic Bomb, it had no effect at all, because the war lords there, they felt pretty safe, Japanese War lords, but the Navy got pretty mad, so they took some battle ships into Tokyo harbor, and they just shelled the devil out of Tokyo. Finally, the empire said "Enough, enough." They surrendered; it was the end of the war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then on August the 14th when Japan surrendered, did you all have any kind of a celebration or party then?

Mr. Kayhart:

No, I don't remember any celebrations. Any specific celebrations.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the morale in your outfit?

Mr. Kayhart:

The morale was always good, was always good. They did the work that they were familiar with, they did it well. One thing, you know, the military is a funny thing.

Everybody wants to give somebody else advice. I was only a lieutenant, but I remember one Major, there were others, he said "You know, your radio is blasting out my Loran station. I can't operate my Loran station, your signal is just so strong. I want you transpose your transmission line." He was a Major, and I was just a Lieutenant. I said "Major, what you're suggesting may work on your telephones, you have this twisted pair, but that isn't going to stop my signal from hurting your Loran, the only thing to do is to change the crystal, one of the crystals in the transmitters here." He said "That will take til the end of the war." I said "No, it won't." We can get a crystal in no time at all. So, that sort of thing happens. And I told the Major, I said "Major, you don't know what you're talking about, so don't try to give me any advice on my job here." I didn't worry at all about telling people off if they were wrong, and here I was only a Lieutenant. Nothing ever happened, I remember one time, we ran short of copper wire because our antennas had been put in a different location than we thought they were going to be. So, I called up my Sergeant at the radio station in Hawaii, there where I spent a lot of time and told him we need this many feet of this wire, and within a few days I had the wire. The sergeant came running out from headquarters, still on Iwo Jima, saying you should have ordered that from us, you had no right to order that stuff the way you did. I said "Look, I would have waited til the end of the war if I had counted on you guys to get me this copper wire." And I never heard from him again. One time I dropped a big powerful radio tool, broke it on the cement, I wrote a letter to the same Sergeant, and in a few days, I had a brand-new radio tool. He didn't come out to bother me that time. You gotta stick by what you figure is the best thing towards winning the war.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were overseas, what would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Kayhart:

There was one time, the first mate, my crew and myself, were on shore I had them all dig their foxholes, and around 3:00 in the morning I heard some pattering feet around very

close to where I was, and I said "That's strange", everybody in the village area is warned, don't travel around in the dark because you'll be shot by one of your own men. So, none of my men were doing that, then all of a sudden, I heard a carbine rifle go off about four feet from my ear. I jumped out of my foxhole, here is my Sergeant, he had just shot a Japanese. I wondered about that, why would the Japanese be traveling around. The Japanese had a hand grenade in one hand, and one in his pocket. But why would he be wandering around like that, he would certainly be killed all by himself, maybe even get one or two of us. But I decided later, he was looking for water. There was no fresh water on Iwo Jima. Our military we had distilleries, we would take the salt water out of the sea and distill it and that gave us fresh water. The Japanese, they had no means of doing that, and they were running out of water. That was another thing that made a difference.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I've got another question for you here, when you got out, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Kayhart:

Not a bit, because I was always a civilian at heart, even when I was in the military. And I acted like a civilian, I didn't act like a militarist, of course, I gave orders to the men, but they were not quite orders, they were suggestions and training, telling them what to do. So, I was not a great militarist in spite of all that, but I figured all of my work was very worthwhile, and I was proud to do it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get home with any souvenirs from WWII?

Mr. Kayhart:

I did something back to my wife. I think it was some sort of a canteen or something that I found out there, and I mailed it to her. She didn't care too much for it, but no, I didn't. That's one thing that you mentioned, so many of the soldiers out there, they would collect

shells that were not exploded and they would try to take them apart and make lamps out of them, and we lost quite a few men from doing things like that. I didn't get involved in that. You know, another thing that happened, the Navy, before we took the Island, the Navy shelled it for several days, shelled Iwo Jima, but I practically, no offense, the Japs were all in the underground caves and they were quite safe from these shells. Another thing, the soil there was mostly volcanic ash, and these shells would hit the ground and not explode. So, when we came there and there were shells all over the place that were not exploded, so there was a crew that went around collecting all these shells. I don't think anyone ever got harmed from them, the smaller weapons that were used, too many soldiers were trying to make souvenirs out of them, and they got wounded from them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see any USO shows anywhere?

Mr. Kayhart:

Just one time, an orchestra came up there, I forget whose it was, it was one of the big bands, that came and gave us some nice entertainment. It was wonderful to hear, and that was the only time. Iwo Jima was sort of an out of the way place. I guess nobody liked to come out there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Kayhart:

No, I never did, but I do know that all of our dead bodies, our soldiers, were very, very carefully taken care of. They had built platforms on the Jeeps, and they would load the dead soldiers on that and take them out to our cemetery. We had quite a large cemetery eventually on Iwo Jima. I had some pictures of that, but I don't know what happened to it. We had coffins that were supplied, the soldiers were buried in coffins in the cemetery

and the cemeteries were well marked with who they were and so on, and so forth. But they took good care of all of our dead soldiers, no question about it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What ribbons and medals did you get?

Mr. Kayhart:

I just got an overseas badge, and Victory Badge, and a Sharp Shooter, you know, I had never shot a pistol before in my life, when I was in one of the camps back in Southern Georgia, we had to take training on a pistol, so, I studied what you were supposed to do. There were about thirty officers all getting lessons in pistol shooting, and we each had a partner, and the only people who got Marksman were my partner, and myself. I trained my partner, and I would just make a figure 8 around the bullseye, and just put a very light pressure on the trigger and sooner or later the pistol would go off. So., I became one of the two Marksman in that whole group.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you had any reunions of your outfit?

Mr. Kayhart:

Oh, no, no, you know this is the thing I really felt sorry of, I never took any of the names and addresses of the men who accompanied me to Iwo Jima, I didn't, I should have, but I didn't. And I could have gotten that information back at headquarters.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got out, did you use your GI bill for anything?

Mr. Kayhart:

No, no, nothing. The State of New Jersey, they wanted to issue a bonus to all of the soldiers, and it was voted down, and I voted it down, I didn't think it was right to get paid for that, not a bit.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you been on the Honor Flight to Washington DC?

Mr. Kayhart:

Yes, I was on that flight, my daughter was there with me, it was a wonderful thing, and I had to give the people who organized that all the credit in the world. I enjoyed that so thoroughly, and so did all the old soldiers. They were all much younger than I was, most of them.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So, you didn't have any experience with the Red Cross then.

Mr. Kayhart:

No, no.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else you recall from your time in WWII?

Mr. Kayhart:

Let's see, I'd say nothing important really. There's one thing that happened in my civilian life, I became a radio amateur early in my age, and it was a good hobby, and I worked a guy in the big Island of Hawaii with my HAM radio, I was telling him about all the holes when I was on vacation, two weeks leave there, and he said "Well, that's an active volcano now, and lava is flowing all over the place, chasing people out of their home, and so on, and that's there going on right now." That was something rather interesting.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were in the reserves?

Mr. Kayhart:

When the Korean War happened, they called me in, I went through all the physical examinations, all the doctors, and I said "Oh my God, here I'm working for the Magnavox Company, and I don't want to leave them." Finally, got down to my left leg, I had a bad case of psoriasis, and I'd been to doctors, and all kinds of treatment, there was no cure for it. So, one of the Doctors looked at that and said "I can't send you with that." So, I was spared from the Korean War.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Well, Chris, thanks again for your service to the country, and thank you for your time today.

Mr. Kayhart:

You're very welcome for both things. I'm happy that you called me, it's been very interesting, and you're doing a good job, you're a man of experience with all of these questions and things. I know you've been doing it for quite some time haven't you.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right.

(End of interview.)

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