

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview With  
Hayden Earl Reynolds  
Arlington, TX  
August 6, 2020  
U.S. Marine Corps  
Company C  
4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division

My name is Richard Misenhimer: Today is August 6, 2020. I am interviewing Mr. Hayden Earl Reynolds by telephone. His phone number is 817-653-4302. His cell phone number is 806-679-9952. His address is 2500 Woodside Dr., Apt. 1110, Arlington, TX 76016. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Nimitz Education and Research Center for the preservation of historical information related to World War II. His alternative contact is his daughter, Susan McKissick. Her phone number is 806-674-2100.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Earl, 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.

Now, the first thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the museum to make sure this is OK with you. (agreement read) Is that OK with you?

Mr. Reynolds:

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, what is your birthdate?

Mr. Reynolds:

March 29, 1926.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where were you born?

Mr. Reynolds:

At Bells, Texas. That's in Grayson County up on the Oklahoma line.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have brothers and sister?

Mr. Reynolds:

There were six boys and four girls in my family and there's only two of us left now; myself and one 90-year-old brother that lives in Houston.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were any of your brothers in World War II?

Mr. Reynolds:

My oldest brother was terrible wounded in North Africa. He was in the Army from about 1936 I believe and he had shrapnel in his heart. Even when he passed away at 80-some years old. I had another brother that was in the Army before World War II. He was in the medical corps and then my brother just older than me went in to the Army and when I joined up I wanted to go in the Navy and they accepted me and said we need six volunteers to go in the Marine Corps and they pointed at me and said, "You're one of them." So after all, all of our brothers were in the military during and a little after World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Reynolds:

My father's name was Rufus Robert Reynolds and my mother's name was Carrie Mae Ford Reynolds.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now, you grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, it was terrible. We were farmers and none of us had the opportunity or at least we didn't

get to go to college. Things were pretty... We didn't have any electric lights or running water or any of the conveniences. No radios, no telephones.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What was your father's occupation?

Mr. Reynolds:

Farmer.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You have plenty to eat then?

Mr. Reynolds:

We had plenty to eat. We had cows and we raised pigs and worked horses of course.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have dairy cattle?

Mr. Reynolds:

We had anywhere from six to 12 milk cows and we sold cream and had a little bit of income for my mother.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Where did you go to high school?

Mr. Reynolds:

At Bells, Texas.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What year did you finish there?

Mr. Reynolds:

1944 I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Reynolds:

Oh, yes. I had my next to oldest brother was home on leave from Ft. Sam Houston and we, at that time, we had a radio in the car and we heard it, you know where the Dennison Dam is, up on the Red River?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes.

Mr. Reynolds:

We had gone over there to see the construction going on the Dennison Dam and we heard on December 7, 1941 that the Japanese had invaded Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, it was such news that we hadn't planned for it. My brother who was home on leave they were telling all of the people that were on leave to get back to their home base immediately. So he hitched a ride and started back to San Antonio. You know in those days people would pick up soldiers in particular. So it affected me from that day on until I went into the Marine Corps myself.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What date did you go into the Marines?

Mr. Reynolds:

On January 13, 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you volunteer or were you drafted?

Mr. Reynolds:

I was drafted but they talked me into volunteering for four years. Well, I did but after a while they gave us an opportunity to get out if we wanted to so I got out of the Marine Corps on April 6, 1947.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were drafted but sort of volunteered. Is that correct?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, they called it a selective service volunteer is what they said I was.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then where did you go for your boot camp?

Mr. Reynolds:

To Parris Island, South Carolina.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Tell me about that.

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, we took basic training. It was rough and tough and our drilling instructor, my drill instructor, had been in Guadalcanal in the Marine Corps and it was tough.

Mr. Misenhimer:

This was Marine training, right?

Mr. Reynolds:

Marine training and then after the Marine training on Parris Island, I was sent up to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina for infantry training. From infantry training, we went to Camp Pendleton, California and had a little bit of training there and from there we went to Maui, Hawaii which was the home base for the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Let me ask you some questions on just basic training. Were your drill instructors pretty tough on you?

Mr. Reynolds:

Absolutely. We could have shot them going through training but after the fact, as we looked back and we were thankful for the discipline that they instilled in us.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything in particular that stands out from your boot camp?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, not really. We didn't know what to expect next and we'd wake up in the middle of the night to go on a march. You know, it was just disciplinary training. But I was just like everybody else. They didn't have any favorites.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have rifle training, weapons training?

Mr. Reynolds:

Nothing more than drilling. In Camp Lejeune we had rifle training and target shooting and things like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Then after boot camp, where did you go?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I went from boot camp I went to North Carolina for the infantry training. Then went to California and assembled there and then they sent me to Maui to go into the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division after they'd... The 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division had just gotten back to Maui from Iwo Jima.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So about when did you leave California to go overseas?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I left California...my memory doesn't come back real good.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you left California you went straight to Maui, right?

Mr. Reynolds:

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you know when you got on Maui?

Mr. Reynolds:

I got to Maui I believe it was...got some of this stuff written down. I think I got there about April of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You went in the first of January, so four months later. So what did you do on Maui?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, on Maui instead of infantry training, we didn't know why but most of our training was squads of four men going from house to house to find out who was there. We couldn't make any sense of that because all of our training had been amphibious landing training but after the war



was over, they told us that we were training if the war had gone on we were training to go in on the home island of Japan and Tokyo and go house to house, figuring out where soldiers were. They told us that we might be facing old men and old women with pitchforks and little children but we didn't know for what reason we were taking that training until after the war was over.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you got to Maui, what did you do there?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, we took that training for house to house.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You took the training for that. Then what happened?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, on August 6 they attacked Hiroshima.

Mr. Misenhimer:

First atomic bomb, right.

Mr. Reynolds:

Then on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August they attacked Nagasaki. That's when the Japanese surrendered.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Before that, you stayed on Maui the whole time?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, yes, I was on Maui when the war ended and then they sent me from there and went to Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you were there when the atomic bombs were dropped.

Mr. Reynolds:

Yes I was on Maui, right.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you heard about that, what did you think?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, we were relieved of course but we didn't know what to expect from it, coming afterwards.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But when you heard it was an atomic bomb, what did you think about an atomic bomb?

Mr. Reynolds:

We were shocked. We didn't know what an atomic bomb was. We'd never heard of it and nobody else had. In fact, I'm maybe getting ahead a little here, but when Roosevelt died, you know, Harry Truman didn't even know about the atomic bomb. It was so secret that nobody knew anything about it except the ones involved in preparation for it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Right. Very secret. I think the Russians knew a fair amount about it. What else happened?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, on Guam before Guam and Saipan and Tinian had been liberated from the Japanese, the Marines had been on Guam, I don't know what they were doing on Guam before the war started, when the Japanese originally took over Saipan, Tinian and Gaum, there were some Marines there and they took those guys prisoners until Guam was liberated when the bomb...you know the campaign for Saipan, Tinian and those islands over there Guam was liberated at the same time as Saipan and Tinian.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The fighting on Guam started on July 21 of 1944.

Mr. Reynolds:

Yes. That's when we took Guam back from the Japanese.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's right. You went to Guam. How did you travel to Guam? What kind of ship?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I went on the Bonhomme Richard carrier. Because the Marines had been there before the war started, they decided the Marines would be in charge of the island policing. So I went into what would amount to the highway patrolmen for Guam and I enforced the traffic laws. I was a highway patrolman was what it amounted to.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So about when did you arrive on Guam?

Mr. Reynolds:

Late 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

After the war was over?

Mr. Reynolds:

After the war had ended.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You mentioned the Bonhomme Richard. What's the story on the Bonhomme Richard?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, the Bonhomme Richard was the John Paul Jones ship in the Revolutionary War. There

were three different Bonhomme Richards. It was spelled Bonhomme Richard. I was on the carrier that was the second Bonhomme Richard that carried me from Hawaii to Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were just passenger on the ship?

Mr. Reynolds:

That's right. When I got to Guam I went into the highway patrol. They called it the Island Command.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So what did you do there?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, just acted as a highway patrolman.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Police patrol.

Mr. Reynolds:

They had naval and army bases there and the sailors and soldiers would get out and get tight on booze and we had to make some arrests once in a while.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Admiral Nimitz, he had his headquarters on Guam.

Mr. Reynolds:

Agana was the capital of Guam. Marine base was right there close to Agana.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What did you live in on Guam?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, on Guam. When I first got there they had a typhoon and I had to live in a foxhole up on the side of a mountain. Just a week after we'd gotten there. But we went to Quonset huts after that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Were you still in the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division?

Mr. Reynolds:

The 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things that happened?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I had partners of course and there'd be two of us in a Jeep with a radio and all that, two-way radios. We would patrol, in fact, we went up in Inajaaran. That's where Admiral Nimitz had his headquarters. He had moved to Guam from Pearl Harbor in January of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What's some other things that happened?

Mr. Reynolds:

There weren't any spectacular events. We had visitors, high ranked individuals would come for visits to Guam. Admiral Nimitz was in charge of all the different functions of the Navy and the Marine Corps.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were on Guam, were there still any Japanese left there?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, there were some Japanese prisoners there, yes. In fact they bypassed the island of Truk going through the islands over there. I can remember that there was a lot of soldiers on Truk and

when they brought them from Truk up to Guam, they had their rifles with them. They didn't have any ammunition but the rifles they had they brought with them and they had been taken prisoners on Truk but they brought them to Guam. From Guam they finally sent all of them back to Japan, I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

I understand there were some Japanese on Guam that still were fighting. The last one they found was in 1974.

Mr. Reynolds:

There were some Japanese soldier that hung out on the jungle or whatever it was after the war was over. They finally found him though. But maybe I don't know whether he surrendered or whether somebody found him.

Mr. Misenhimer:

But when you were there you had no experience with any of the Japanese on the island?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, other than I guarded some of them for work details.

Mr. Misenhimer:

No, I mean the ones that were still loose on the island.

Mr. Reynolds:

No, no. There was no war activity on Guam after I went there.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When you were on Guam, did you ever see Admiral Nimitz?

Mr. Reynolds:

At a distance. He would come and go from his island command in Inaraajan. It was up on the

side of a mountain at about 1300 feet high. Dignitaries would come and go and they didn't ask me to attend any of the functions. I did see Nimitz maybe two or three times but I never had a conversation with him.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there any time you felt scared or threatened while you were in the Navy?

Mr. Reynolds:

Not really after the war ended.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You didn't go overseas until the war was over. Is that correct?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I had gone to Maui.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yeah, right.

Mr. Reynolds:

We didn't know what we were gonna face when we got to wherever we would go in.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About what date did you get to Maui? What month?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I went to Guam from Maui in late 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When the war got over in August 1945, where were you at that point?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well when the war was ended, I was on Maui.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were on Maui. OK.

Mr. Reynolds:

Then went from there to Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So in August of 1945 you were on Maui.

Mr. Reynolds:

I think it was about maybe December to Guam.

Of 1945.

Mr. Misenhimer:

The war got over in August. So you were there before the war was over, right? Were you in Maui before the war was over?

Mr. Reynolds:

I was in Maui before the war was over. After the war ended, I went to Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So you went to Guam after the war was over.

Mr. Reynolds:

After the war ended in September, I went to Guam.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Was there ever a time that you felt threatened or scared?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, not really. We knew that if we faced the enemy that we'd have to kill or be killed. You



know the Marines were pretty tough on their conditioning of us for what might happen. We didn't look forward to it but we were taught how to handle it.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What would you consider your roughest time?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I guess boot camp. The first thing they did, I had my hair like all kids did, you know, combed and all that and they just scalped us. They take all of your dignity away from you so that you just yield to whatever they tell you to do.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How many different ships were you on?

Mr. Reynolds:

I went from California to Maui on the Breton Breeze (editor's note: U.S.S. Breton, CVE-23) which was a Jeep carrier. Then when I left Maui I went from there on the Bonhomme Richard which was another big carrier and then when I left Guam to come home I was on the U.S.S. Anderson. It was a troop ship.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That was from Guam to home.

Mr. Reynolds:

Guam to California, San Francisco.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Now when you were on these ships, was there a time when you were in a storm or anything?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, no typhoons. We had rough days you know. The sea would be, the ships would kind of

wallow along, you know. But I was not in a real storm on the ships.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About how many days total did you spend on these ships?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, from Guam back to California it took about I think about 15 days. I don't remember...

Mr. Misenhimer:

How about when you went to Maui?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, that was about six days I think.

Mr. Misenhimer:

From Maui to Guam?

Mr. R :

When I went from Maui to Guam I think it was something like 12 days. We're talking about 75 years ago and I don't have a real vivid memory of all that stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You don't have any notes of any kind on this sort of thing?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I made a few notes but some of these things I didn't write down I guess.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Do you have a copy of your discharge?

Mr. Reynolds:

Yes, I do have.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have it with you there? What was the highest rank you got to?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, when I was discharged I was Corporal. I enlisted in Dallas on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of January 1945.

I had indicated that I would serve four years. Then in my weapons training I was a sharpshooter.

Then I had a rank on Guam that I was a military policeman. I served in the Asiatic-Pacific area from August 7, 1945 to January 22, 1947.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Does that show what date you were discharged?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I was discharged on April 6, 1947.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else from that discharge I need to know?

Mr. Reynolds:

No offenses. (laugh) Didn't get in trouble. I mean official trouble anyway. I was discharged at Corpus Christi.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Discharged at Corpus Christi, Texas

Mr. Reynolds:

Yes. That's the naval air base I believe it is.

Mr. Misenhimer:

That's 40 miles from me.

Mr. Reynolds:

Really?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yep. That's where I'm sitting right now. That's 40 miles. Did you get home from World War II with any souvenirs?

Mr. Reynolds:

Not really.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever see any U.S.O. shows anywhere?

Mr. Reynolds:

No. Well, in Hawaii we had groups that would come and entertain.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Reynolds:

No. I didn't. I didn't have any serious injuries or anything like that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was the morale in your outfit?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, it was good. Looking back on it, it was good. I had a Colonel one time that took over the unit I was in and he said he was worried because he didn't hear any bitching. He said where he'd been the Marines would be bitching about something. The morale was good everywhere I went. I think it was a matter that I knew that I was there to do whatever I was supposed to do. I grew up

in a family with severe discipline. I don't mean abusive or anything but we were taught to obey the rules.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You mentioned when Roosevelt died. What kind of reaction did people have when Roosevelt died?

Mr. Reynolds:

They were just shocked. I guess we all knew that he was not too well but when Truman came to be President, as I mentioned before, he didn't even know that the atomic bomb was being developed.

Mr. Misenhimer:

In May 1945 when Germany surrendered, did you all hear about that?

Mr. Reynolds:

Oh, yes. I had a brother that was in the Army. He was in England in the medical corps. But we were all aware of when the war ended in Europe. We were all delighted about that of course.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any kind of celebration?

Mr. Reynolds:

It was a celebrating time, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever cross the equator?

Mr. Reynolds:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You crossed the international date line though?

Mr. Reynolds:

Oh, yes.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Any kind of celebration or ceremony when you did that?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, it was acknowledged but we didn't have any whoop-te-doo celebration.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you get a card or anything showing you'd been across there?

Mr. Reynolds:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Reynolds:

Not really.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Did you hear of her?

Mr. Reynolds:

We didn't hear much of that.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You were in the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division. What company and that sort of thing?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I believe it was Company C.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Company C and what regiment?

Mr. Reynolds:

I don't remember what strength it was at that time. I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division.

Mr. Misenhimer:

What regiment?

Mr. Reynolds:

I don't remember. Asiatic-Pacific from the 7<sup>th</sup> of August 1945 to the 22<sup>nd</sup> of January 1947.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you had any reunions of your outfit since you've been out?

Mr. Reynolds:

No.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Have you kept up with anybody you were in the service with?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, not recently. A few years after we got out, I called a guy in Minnesota or somewhere but I didn't have any contact after a while.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Reynolds:

No, I didn't go on any G.I. Bill.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You didn't go to school or anything like that?

Mr. Reynolds:

I didn't go to school.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I went to work for the Texas Department of Public Safety. I worked for them for six years.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How soon after you got a discharge did you go to work for them?

Mr. Reynolds:

I got out in April and I went to work for them in September.

Mr. Misenhimer:

So what did you do from April to September?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, I was a law enforcement patrolman for the Department of Public Safety.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Only for a short while?

Mr. Reynolds:

For six years. During that period I got married in 1950 and I had taken tests for promotion and I



had been scheduled to advance to Sergeant in the patrol and my wife and I decided we didn't want to leave Amarillo so I got into sales work. Sold steel for 55 years.

Mr. Misenhimer:

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

Mr. Reynolds:

Yes, I have.

Mr. Misenhimer:

How was that?

Mr. Reynolds:

That was great. My daughter and I went on that flight and we had a real good time.

Mr. Misenhimer:

When was that?

Mr. Reynolds:

I believe it was it was about 2014.

Mr. Misenhimer:

About five or six years ago.

Mr. Reynolds:

It might have been 2015. I'm not quite sure.

Mr. Misenhimer:

It was a good flight.

Mr. Reynolds:

It was a great time, yes. They treated us royally.

Mr. Misenhimer:

Anything else you recall from your time in the service?

Mr. Reynolds:

Well, not significant. Were you in the service?

Mr. Misenhimer:

Yes, I was in during the Korean from 1952-1954. So you're saying all six of you boys were in the service at one time or another.

Mr. Reynolds:

This brother, he was a First Sergeant in a company in North Africa and he was severely wounded but they patched him up and they took him from North Africa to England on a plane. He had shrapnel in his heart and his body and from that day on he would never fly on another plane. He said that was the most trying time he ever had, riding on a plane, bumping along.

Mr. Misenhimer:

You're number 1,085 I think of these interviews that I've done. It's been nice to talk to you, too. Thanks for your time today and we'll keep in touch. Thank you for your service to our country.

Mr. Reynolds:

Good. And I enjoyed the visit.