

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Donald J. Bishop

Date of Interview: September 25, 2020

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 25th of September, 2020. I am interviewing Mr. Donald J. Bishop at his residence in Bulverde, Texas. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

So, Don, thank you for spending with us today so that we can hear your experiences from the war. I'd like to start by having you introduce yourself, so I need name, where you were born and when you were born, please sir.

Mr. Bishop: Well, my name is Donald J. Bishop. I'm ninety-five years old and I was born in Presque Isle, Maine and oh, what else can I tell you?

Ed Metzler: December the 3rd?

Mr. Bishop: Third.

Ed Metzler: Of 19 ...

Mr. Bishop: December.

Ed Metzler: ... 25.

Mr. Bishop: '24.

Ed Metzler: '24. Missed it by a year. So, you're coming up on ninety-six here soon!

Mr. Bishop: Right.

Ed Metzler: Congratulations! So, Presque Isle, Maine?

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: Tell me where Presque Isle is.

Mr. Bishop: Presque Isle ...

Ed Metzler: It must be along the ... on the coast, I bet.

Mr. Bishop: (Chuckles), Presque Isle, Maine is not the most northern point in Maine, but if you went out my back yard and crossed the river, you would be in Canada.

Ed Metzler: So, that's almost to ... what is it? Calais is up the ...

Mr. Bishop: Right.

Ed Metzler: ... on the river.

Mr. Bishop: Right, right near Calais and Mars Hill and (unintelligible), yep.

Ed Metzler: You notice I didn't call it Calais?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: That counts because that's what they call it up there.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: I found that out the hard way. Okay, so were you the only child? Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Bishop: No, I had four other, uh, two sisters and two brothers.

Ed Metzler: Five children. Were you the eldest?

Mr. Bishop: Uh no, my brother, Bob, is the oldest and he's retired top Chief in the Navy in World War II, and my daughter you met here.

Ed Metzler: Rosanne, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Rosanne. And then there was uhm, uh, Danny and Danny lives in California now, and he has two surveying companies. And oh, the oldest one is Chris, I'm sorry, and he is ... has a master's in uh, oh, science you might as well say.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Now, these are your children?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Let's talk about your brothers and sisters.

Mr. Bishop: Oh, that's right, too, yeah. See, I (unintelligible) what'd I tell you? I'm getting ... wandering off here and ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: I'm used to it.

Mr. Bishop: So, and my ...

Ed Metzler: So, you had ...

Mr. Bishop: ... my brother, Allen (sp?) went in the Fifth Marines and ...

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. Bishop: ... he didn't fare too well in the Marine Corps. He ... they couldn't keep him in the Marine Corps. He was ... went home ... went home quite often.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Bishop: And ... and ...

Ed Metzler: So, what did your dad do for a living?

Mr. Bishop: Dad was medic in World War I with his twin brother, and when they got out they wanted to extend that and go in as ... study as doctors. And they couldn't do that because they both of them had asthma, and the smell of medicine, strong medicine would ...

Ed Metzler: Got them.

Mr. Bishop: ... would choke them.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: So, Dad went into metal work, and he was a sheet metal man.

Ed Metzler: Hum!

Mr. Bishop: And he worked in the Portsmouth Navy Yard building submarines during World War II.

Ed Metzler: Oh! That's a ... I bet that was an interesting ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. I've got pictures of him somewhere presenting a ... a plaque to a submarine commander in (unintelligible). He was a foreman in a shop.

Ed Metzler: And your mother was a homemaker or did she work as ...

Mr. Bishop: Yes, Mother died when I was seven.

Ed Metzler: Oh.

Mr. Bishop: So, I never knew her very well.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: But after about three or four years, Dad remarried a woman. My stepmother was just loved to death. Yep.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you never when ... when that happens, and this one worked out great, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yep, yeah, and she had three boys that were quite a little bit older than the rest of us. And the youngest one was my science teacher in high school.

Ed Metzler: My word (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: (Chuckle), Ted. And ...

Ed Metzler: So, you ... you were raised in town then, is that right? Now, you weren't out in the country?

Mr. Bishop: Well, no, my uh, when Mother died, you didn't have any uh, way of taking care of, you know, working and taking care of kids at the same time, so, you know, relatives stepped in and took to us. My uncle took my brother and my oldest brother and I, and we lived in uh, fourteen square miles of woods in a roadhouse on Route 1 in Maine. And we had a cub bear and cocker spaniel for pets.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Bishop: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, you went to the local schools there and ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: ... elementary school and ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: ... the high school?

Mr. Bishop: And the ... the schoolhouse was about four miles south in the little town of Mattawankeag.

Ed Metzler: Can you spell that?

Mr. Bishop: M-a-t-t-a-w-a-n-k-e-a-g (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Good! Just testing!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Bishop: And the school bus was ... one of the farmers had a ... a horse and was oh, what do they call it, a Morgan, was a big horse like a Clydesdale.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, (unintelligible) draft horse type thing.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And he had box on runners in the wintertime, and the box had a window in the front and a window on the back door and a stove on the inside, and on the back there were hooks. And when he came by the house, you would run out

with your sled, hook it on the back and get inside where it was warm, and he'd haul you maybe three miles.

Ed Metzler: To school?

Mr. Bishop: Down, yeah, well, to the top of the hill. School was at the bottom of the hill.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?

Mr. Bishop: And the horse couldn't go down the hill, I guess, but he couldn't get back up over, too steep, and too dangerous, too slippery. So, we'd get on our sleds and slide down over this hill, and we'd get going so damned fast, you'd go right by the schoolhouse.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). "Oh, I tried to stop, but I just kept going!" (laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Now, that's the first time I've ever heard of anybody sledding downhill to school.

Mr. Bishop: Yep! Oh boy, we really went fast and we really went by that schoolhouse!

Ed Metzler: Now, that was what, your elementary school?

Mr. Bishop: Uh yeah. I was, I think, about the seventh or eighth grade.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: Something like that. And it was a lot of fun actually because the math teacher, Mr. Mann (sp?) was also the music teacher and he taught everybody how to play the harmonica and the fife, you know, the little six-hole fife.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Bishop: And we used to raise the roof on that schoolhouse.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And there was three grades in one room, yep.

Ed Metzler: That's ... that's crazy!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, it was an experience!

Ed Metzler: And so, high school, did you go to a larger school for high school?

Mr. Bishop: Yes, in Auburn, Maine my dad had got a good job and he had remarried, and we moved to Auburn, Maine, and I went to Edward Little High School.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you must have been about seventeen when we were attacked by the Japanese in 1941.

Mr. Bishop: Uh no, I was ... I was sixteen.

Ed Metzler: Okay, you were born in '24.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, twenty-four and sixteen is forty, so that would have made you just ... maybe just coming up on seventeen. But anyhow ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... you were sixteen, so you must have been like a sophomore or a junior in high school?

Mr. Bishop: I'm a jun ... junior in ... in high school, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Bishop: And when the war started ... like that and they bombed Pearl Harbor, that school *emptied out* with all the seniors and the juniors. Just emptied out and everybody went over and joined the Marine Corps.

Ed Metzler: All of the Marines!

Mr. Bishop: All the Marines or the Navy or ...

Ed Metzler: Or whatever yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And there was no running to ... to Canada and stuff like that. It was a rally round the flag, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, real patriotism.

Mr. Bishop: Yep! Yep!

Ed Metzler: What do you remember about that Sunday when we were attacked? Were you doing anything in particular that you can remember?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, no. My main thought, I think, was getting in and getting the training and going over there and showing them what ... what for!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (chuckle). Yep.

Ed Metzler: So, did you leave school immediately?

Mr. Bishop: Yep, we ... there was eight of us went over to the Marine Corps barracks in Portsmouth, New Hampshire. And I asked the sergeant behind the desk, I says,

“We all quit school; we don’t want to be hanging around town, and how soon can we leave if we sign up now?” He says, “Shift that suitcase over to your left hand, *but don’t set it down!*”

Ed Metzler: (Laughter) Yeah, they were ... they were ready to take you!

Mr. Bishop: Ah boy, well, we ... we took off.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: So, you did literally depart for boot camp almost immediately?

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: No extra time at home to say goodbye?

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah, we had maybe a couple of days, something like that.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: That quickly!

Mr. Bishop: And that was ... that was it, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, this is within weeks of Pearl Harbor, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: And ...

Mr. Bishop: (Unintelligible) in there, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Weren’t you young enough that your parents had to sign for you to go in?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, I just turned seventeen, and I think that was it. I don’t think Dad signed anything. I got a ...

Ed Metzler: Well, what did your dad think about you going in that quick?

Mr. Bishop: Oh, he understood, I think, that it was necessary that we go. And now I’m going to get some dates for ... for you.

Ed Metzler: Now, you were ... you had an elder brother?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, Bob joined the Navy, oh, long before the ... they bombed Pearl Harbor.

Ed Metzler: Oh! So, he was in the old Navy even before the war started?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yep. Yep.

Ed Metzler: Now, was he overseas?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, Trinidad, I think I ... (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Down in the Caribbean, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And I always kidded him that that I had a more ... I ... rung more salt water out of my socks than he's been over, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle)

Mr. Bishop: And he was in aircraft. He was a ... he was a smarty.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: My brother, Bob.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. (Looking through his documents) well, that's my first discharge. I got another ... I got two of them.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you've got a nice, tidy notebook there with all the information!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, I (unintelligible). That's the first one.

Ed Metzler: Well, this is ... this is when you mustered out.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: 22nd of January, '46.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And I shipped over for three more years.

Ed Metzler: And you stayed for three more.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you were a cap, oh no, that's the captain that signed.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. No, I was a corporal. Well, when I got out, I was a sergeant.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And that was kind of harrowing because it took them all that time to make sergeant because I was getting out, and when I did, I got sergeant of the guard putting the colors up in the morning. And we went over there, everybody knew how to do it, you know, and the guard mount was around, and they hook their colors on the thing and they just started to pull it up a little ways, and I saw the red was going up first and I yelled, and the bugler had already started playing.

Ed Metzler: Oh no.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. So, everybody looked, and that flag went about that far upside down.

Ed Metzler: Oh no (laughter)!

Mr. Bishop: Uh, so they got a ritual they go through. You put their colors back down, everything stops dead, they have somebody comes in and grabs the colors, takes them down to the incinerator and burns them, get the new flag. The guard mount gets locked up in the brig and the sergeant loses a stripe.

Ed Metzler: Holy mackerel!

Mr. Bishop: I ... I held it for about a day (chuckles), (unintelligible) and they did ... they get a new guard mount and they put the colors up and after it's over, they go down and take the guys out of the brig and ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: ... take them over to the guardhouse, you go back on guard duty again, yeah.

Ed Metzler: But that does focus the mind (unintelligible)? (laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Oh man! (laughter) That's really something how they do that.

Ed Metzler: So, you went in, you went ... where did you do basic? On ... at Pendleton or where?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, on New River.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so where is that exactly?

Mr. Bishop: And that ... what's the boot camp? I can't think of it right now.

Ed Metzler: Well, basic training.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, basic, uhm, oh, anyway before you form a company, it's all a mixture of guys ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: ... in there. And on one occasion, they're trying to ... they continually tried to separate the men from the boys. And they put you some of this, almost impossible to withstand.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And these are all seventeen, eighteen-year-old kids, you know? And they ... they kept impressing on you that *you're not going to make it in the Marine Corps; you just don't have the stuff and you're not going to make it!* And this would instill in you a determination. Do you (unintelligible) very psychology, and ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: And ...

Ed Metzler: And it works!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And one day in August they had us fall out, winter uniforms, boots, winter socks, winter uniforms, overcoats, full pack, helmet hanging on the back, and an 03 rifle with a bayonet on the end of it, and they hiked us three miles to the uh, rifle range. And they had trucks there waiting to bring us back. Nobody dropped out! And they ... they turned us around, and they marched us back. One guy was being held up by two of his buddies.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Bishop: Yep! And that's the only guy. And they lined us up on the beach, and he says, "At ease." And I go, "Whoa!" And I put the hat on the back of my head and sweat pouring off of me, and the DI comes running over there all excited, "Who told you to put that hat on the back of your head?!" And I said, "Sir, nobody said ... ," and he hooked his (unintelligible) onto my nose and jerked it back, and when he did, uh, I was trying to keep my balance and I stepped back and I pushed the rifle out in front of me, had the bayonet on it and tore his shirt.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my goodness!

Mr. Bishop: Didn't ... didn't cut him, but it tore his shirt. And he says, "You watch that gun boy!" And they could call it a (unintelligible) gun or anything they wanted to, but you didn't! And he looked down to me and he says, "What's your name, boy?" And I says, "Bishop, sir." And he says, "From now on, you ain't nothing but a deacon!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And they got me!

Ed Metzler: So, you got a demotion right on the spot!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: So ...

Ed Metzler: That's a great story (laughter)!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and he says, "You know what we're going to do with you?" And I said, "Sir, no sir!" And he said, "We're going to buy you a nice little blue uniform, take you up to Yamerica (sp?) and put you on a train and kiss your ass goodbye!" You know? And ... and what I wanted to say but didn't ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle)

Mr. Bishop: ... was, "I signed a paper in the Portsmouth Navy Yard that said I was in the Marine Corps; I don't think you can do that sergeant and wash me out, but I do like the part where you're going to kiss my ass!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), you didn't say that?

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter), I didn't say that.

Ed Metzler: But you thought it! (laughter)

Mr. Bishop: I said that at one of the reunions.

Ed Metzler: Did you really?!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: At one of the Dis.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: So, you survived basic training, but it wasn't easy?

Mr. Bishop: It was rough. I mean, it was a ... changing from childhood into a man, and it went fast.

Ed Metzler: Quickly!

Mr. Bishop: And, yep. And we had one guy that washed out, and he had no coordination. He couldn't march. Something was wrong with him. And later on, we found out they made him the captain's jeep driver (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Well, I hope they didn't need coordination for that!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! Yep, so that turned out pretty good for him. But then they formed a company and ... and it was competition with other companies from then on hikes and stuff like that and ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: ... and ...

Ed Metzler: So, what company did they form you into?

Mr. Bishop: K Company, Third Battalion, First Marines. And the battalion was called the Milk Battalion 'cause the companies were M-I-L and K. Yep.

Ed Metzler: Okay, I want to write this down. K company, okay. Also known as the MILK company.

Mr. Bishop: No, battalion.

Ed Metzler: No, battalion, right.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and ...

Ed Metzler: So, they formed you up, but the ... was that when they first formed up the First Marines?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, ...

Ed Metzler: Or had it already been formed?

Mr. Bishop: Well, it was formed in 1934.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Bishop: In a gin mill in Philadelphia (chuckle).

Ed Metzler: You're pulling my leg now.

Mr. Bishop: Now, you have to, yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), even I got that!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And so, what was I going to say? There you go, see? I'll be talking along and words just won't come to me.

Ed Metzler: No, I understand that.

Mr. Bishop: (Unintelligible). But ...

Ed Metzler: So, you had your own battalion, and uhm, where did you go when you got out of basic?

Mr. Bishop: We had four months training, and we went to the west coast and we got on a captured German cruise ship which happened to be at that port in San Francisco when the war started. Now, the war in German and Europe was still going on.

Ed Metzler: But we were not at war with that.

Mr. Bishop: No. So, they confiscated the ship. The First Marine Division went on the thing, and we were going to New Zealand to get four more months of training with the Maoris. They're those guys ... those with the tattooed faces and all that kind of stuff (unintelligible) a bunch of ...

Ed Metzler: Mean looking guys (laughter)!

Mr. Bishop: ... yeah, they was a bunch of tough hombres!

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: So, we went down there and we were there in the dock and three days in Wellington, New Zealand, and Australian coast watcher from Guadalcanal got the word or he came over, I guess he got over there some way, and said if we were going to Guadalcanal, now would be the time to go because they'd just left. They took ... took a shipload of the men that they had on and went somewheres else. So, "If you're going, now's the time to go." So, we went.

Ed Metzler: So, when you were on this captured German cruise liner, did ... and you went to New Zealand, where did you sail out of?

Mr. Bishop: San Francisco.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you went under the Golden Gate and out into the real world?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yep! Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you get ... did you get sea sick on that first trip?

Mr. Bishop: I couldn't get sea sick.

Ed Metzler: Why?

Mr. Bishop: Mainly because I felt bad, I'd played a harmonica (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), well, maybe if everybody had harmonicas, nobody would have gotten sea sick.

Mr. Bishop: I did that in every (unintelligible) landing that we made. I'd get up in the bow, sit down on my haunches and play the harmonica.

Ed Metzler: And you learned that from your science teacher (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: No.

Ed Metzler: No, which teacher?

Mr. Bishop: Math teacher.

Ed Metzler: Math teacher, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, that was a long trip down to New Zealand; that must have lasted forever!

Mr. Bishop: Uhm.

Ed Metzler: Or seemed like it.

Mr. Bishop: It was crazy! We kept going zigzag, back and forth like this, over the international date line; you never knew what day it was!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: You go to bed on a Wednesday night and get up on a Tuesday!

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter). But then it turned to Wednesday again.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: Oh my! So, you crossed the equator for the first time, too.

Mr. Bishop: And I became a shellback.

Ed Metzler: A shellback, of course!

Mr. Bishop: Instead of a pollywog.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you grew up and ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: And what did they do to you on your ... ceremony.

Mr. Bishop: Well, first I had to kneel and kiss a gunny sergeant's foot; he was King Neptune.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle)

Mr. Bishop: And they put me in a wooden chair that had hinges on ... would tip over backwards, put me in there, gave me a mohawk haircut and died it pink. Tipped me over into a big tub of garbage. I come out of there and there were two guys standing there with *cattle probes*! Electric! And they would touch you. You're standing on a steel deck and you're wet, and you get hit with a cattle probe, well, you go right up in the air. And then you run a gauntlet with guys with all wet towels.

Ed Metzler: And they'd pop you?

Mr. Bishop: Not ... not (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: But ... then ... then it got so that there were ... there were so many Marines on the boat, and there weren't enough of the Navy guys to punish us, so the tides kind of turned (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), there is strength in numbers.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). So, the ship must have been sailing alone because she's zigzagging and they're trying ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: ... to avoid, of course, submarines tracking them.

Mr. Bishop: Yep, yep. That's what it was for.

Ed Metzler: And that's a *long* run from San Francisco to New Zealand ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: You didn't go via Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Bishop: No, no.

Ed Metzler: Straight shot.

Mr. Bishop: Went ... went by it. I know that we went by the islands, but that's one place I've never been, to Hawaii.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me about New Zealand.

Mr. Bishop: New Zealand ... uh, Wellington, New Zealand is a place where nobody carries an umbrella. Why? Because the wind is continually going through North Island and South Island carrying a very rough sea with it, and blows right up that thing. And most of the New Zealanders will walk backwards if they're going ... walking up hill. And if you had an umbrella, if it didn't fold up on you, it would probably take your right off the ground like a parachute.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah. My goodness. So, how long were you in New Zealand?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, as I recall, about three days.

Ed Metzler: Oh! It was quick!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And we were supposed to have been ... get ... four more months of training, but the coast watcher from Guadalcanal came off and says, "If you're going, go now." So, we had four months of training (unintelligible) before we got into combat, yep. And when they ... when we finally got ... we changed

over to another ship called [USS] the McCawley and it was a smaller ship. And we went down there and went over the ... over the mantle, down a rope ladder in the Higgins boat, wooden Higgins boats.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: These go *way* back!

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And when we got ... when we got down, I was ... maybe a couple of guys got down there before me, but I ... when I got down in the Higgins boat, I spotted a Lewis gun in the bow. And I said Oh man, I'm going to get on that thing." So, I ran up in the bow and ducked under the gunnel, come up and there was the Lewis gun ... was a World War I aviation ... they had on fighter planes with a fifty-round drum in the top, two handles and a button that you push. And I said, "Oh boy, I'm going to rake that beach when we get in there, yeah." So the boat loaded and I'm waiting and I'm waiting and I'm waiting and finally the boat hits ... hits the beach, everybody gets up, *you could hear a pin drop!* We were unopposed! When I went over the gunnel on that Higgins boat, I stood up on the ... on the rail and waited for the water to recede back so it wouldn't get my feet wet. This a big thing in the Marine Corps, "Don't get your feet wet!" 'Cause you ... catch jungle rot and all that stuff.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, among other things.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and ...

Ed Metzler: So, was this one of the first landings on Guadalcanal?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yep, yeah. The first one. And we in inland, and ... and the separate companies all got together on the beach. Oh, we were milling around on the beach and everything, you know? It was ... wasn't ... yelling and screaming and bayonet charging up the beach; it wasn't ... wasn't that at all. And they had two big columns going down these coconut palm trees which, by the way, belonged to Proctor and Gamble, yep. And they got paid for every one that got knocked down.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter). From what I understand. And formed companies in different areas. And then we dug in. The next day four or five men would go out in the front, oh maybe, fifty ... fifty yards or something like that and look around and give you a field of fire and what not. And then the next day a little bit further, and the next day a little bit further. And when it ended up the first ... the first one I was on, was a thirty-man patrol, and we were looking for trouble.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Bishop: And we (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: No contact with the enemy yet?

Mr. Bishop: And ... and we were going overnight and coming back the next day. So, we camped out and most of the guys made the mistake of sleeping on jungle floor. And you get in the morning soaking wet, yep. And ...

Ed Metzler: What did you do?

Mr. Bishop: I had a ... I was sleeping on a banana leaf with a banana leaf over me, and I stayed pretty dry (laughter).

Ed Metzler: I wish we had a picture of that!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, so ...

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible) mosquitoes?

Mr. Bishop: Well, that's the thing, later on there those little buggers gave me malaria four different time, yeah. So, we ended up on that patrol, and we spotted a ... a little native village up on the high ground, and they built that place up on high ground. They *know* what living in the jungle is all about. And we went up there and we bivouacked in the area they had cleared out for the village. And the next morning we get up and we're lined up against a trail that they had, and they're in their bare feet all the time, and they're walking these trails and they're smooth as silk, but in the morning they're like ice, slippery as all get out! And we're waiting on each side of the trail, waiting for the lieutenant to come down with his walkie-talkie and trying to get in contact with the company and tell them where they were and what not. So, Dick Weber (sp?) yells over to me; he says, "Hey, Deacon, look at this!" And I went down and he's looking, he's down at the bottom of the hill, here come a little girl maybe fourteen, fifteen

years old, baby slung in the ... in the front, a great big basket on her head with all the sleeping rolls that they sleep on ... 'cause when they see you coming, they ... they vacate and they go somewheres else. So, he says, "Take the basket off her head, and I'll help her up there so she don't fall on the trail and hurt the baby," you know? So, I just went down and I grabbed the basket like this, and boy, she hung on to it. And she finally ... and I just give it a yank and got it off her head. She gave me a look, if looks could kill, I'd of been dead on the spot! And Dick took her around aways, and he's grabbing bushes on the ... on the side of the trail helping her up there, and I'm having quite a time getting up with that basket, too. And I hear Weber say, "Hey, Deacon, give her the basket back." I says, "Why?!" And I looked up and there's the chief and the tribe standing at the top of the hill with a little four-year-old son with a spear pointed at ... at Weber. And just as loud as I could yell, said, "Somebody shoot that son of a bitch!" And ... and the lieutenant come back ... was coming back down the hill and he heard the rumpus, and he wanted to know what was going on, and they told him, yeah. And he says, "You guys have pamphlets on how to treat these natives! You don't do that!" ... you know? And so, I gave her the basket back and Dick let her go, you know, and they were almost at the top. And we learned later on that you don't help natives do anything. From birth they're taught that if they go near the fire, they're going to get burned, and they really do, they teach them that way. And they know what they can eat in the jungle, they know how to fish and they know what avocados are and stuff like that. And ... and money is non-existent, but we used to barter with cigarettes with them, and they loved the cigarettes.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: But, in that respect, if you try to help one of them, you're saying that he *can't* do his job and he *needs* help. And you ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I guess it's humiliating.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! *Very* humiliating.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And ...

Ed Metzler: That's interesting.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And I used to tell our kids when we go to grade schools, uh, there were five of us that used to go to uh, universities and high schools and grade schools and talk to history classes on World War II.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And I would tell the kids, I said, "In our society it's a little bit different," yeah. And I says, "If you have a friend that needs you ... she ... he needs help, you go over and give him a helping hand and when you get to the top of that hill, you're not going to find a man standing there with a spear, you're going to find a teacher with a bright smile on her face, and you're doing good in that respect."

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Bishop: And I was talking to a group and ... and ... in one of the grade schools, and when it was over ... they were starting the civil war, when it was over, a cute little Spanish girl comes up to me, she says, "Thank you for your service, Mr. Bishop, and thank you for freeing the slaves." I says, "No, I ... I'm ninety-five years old, but I don't go back that far!" ... you know?

Ed Metzler: I'm old, but I'm not that old (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and another little guy come ... come up to me one time, and he says, "Mr. Bishop, were you really sad when Abraham Lincoln got shot?" I says, "Yeah, we all busted up."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah, that was horrible when (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), well, you know, out of the mouths of babes!

Mr. Bishop: Yep, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, when did you actually first interact with the Japanese?

Mr. Bishop: (Pause), if would have lost that battle, the outcome in the South Pacific would have been altogether different.

Ed Metzler: So, you just handed me the book, Battle at the Overland Trail, One Night of Combat on Guadalcanal. So, this was a really key ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... battle then.

Mr. Bishop: I'm on your right (showing a picture of himself in the book).

Ed Metzler: By golly, you're on the cover! The back cover of it! Private Don Bishop, Rifleman, Third Platoon, Third Battalion, First Marine Division! My golly!

Mr. Bishop: Page 22 tells you how I won the whole war in the South Pacific.

Ed Metzler: Single-handedly, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Right!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), page 22 (referring to the book). (Pause), well, I'm on page 22 and there is a *huge* picture of you!

Mr. Bishop: Uhm.

Ed Metzler: (Pause), so I ... I can read this book, but I'd like to hear you retell the tale again. Would you tell me what happened?

Mr. Bishop: Yep. Well, this was on, oh, on this particular battle, we were blocking the road that went down to the airport where all the generals and the colonels and everybody was billeted. We knew they were going to try to get this, and we had a little field out in front of us booby-trapped with hand grenades and anything we could go, and we had two double barbwire (unintelligible) fences in front of it. And we thought that they were going to hit us in a skirmish line, a whole bunch, right? But they didn't, they hit us six-abreast right at this entrance to this road. And well, a few of them got through the barbwire and the ... and the thing. There were five hundred and fifty of them, history tells us that made that battle. We had a Marine here, a Marine here, a Marine here, a Marine, staggered on both sides of this trail, and we were told not to get out of the hole and fight ... fight with bayonets if they got through the barbwire. Well, it was so many of them that they did get through the barbwire.

Ed Metzler: You were dug in?

Mr. Bishop: And we were dug in, and we were shooting up. They say, "If you get in a bayonet fight, you're ... you're going to pull that trigger and you're going to shoot your own men, so don't get out of the hole." So, when they went by us, I'm ... I'm on my knees in a hole shooting up like this, and you'd have to make ... I had a ... five rounds of uh, shells in my pack strap, another one in my mouth and I could work that bullet mighty fast (laughter)

Ed Metzler: You could do it fast, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And ... but I was shooting like this (showing his stance). You didn't have to aim, they were right here! And ...

Ed Metzler: So, this was not marksmanship day, this was ...

Mr. Bishop: Right, right.

Ed Metzler: ... mow them down day.

Mr. Bishop: So, it ended up, they went down to this bridge here, regrouped and came right back through. And this time, I'm laying on my back shooting up in the hole, and they're going right by me. And they was throwing hand grenades in the holes. And ...

Ed Metzler: How's your ammunition holding out?

Mr. Bishop: Oh, I had a cartridge about ... full of, yeah, I had plenty (chuckles), plenty. And we were, in fact, we were very well equipped as far as ammunition is concerned. And the Japanese had this Bushido that said ... and ... in order to be a ... an honorable man they had to die in combat and they did just that. They had this bad habit of showing up at a gunfight with a knife.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Bishop: And that's kind of stupid.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah (chuckles).

Mr. Bishop: And so ...

Ed Metzler: But they're determined fighters, wouldn't you say?

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah! They were good little fighters. And they had two socks hanging off their belt. One was ... had rice in it, and the other one had lima beans in it. And if they didn't have ... have a chance to stop and cook that, they wouldn't eat. They were a good little soldier. And ...

Ed Metzler: So, how did you know to dig in ahead of time? You knew the Japanese would be coming along?

Mr. Bishop: Patrols, patrols going out.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Bishop: We knew just about where they are. And on one of these patrols, it was a thirty-man patrol, we followed the roads from the entrance of the jungle, we followed

across the field and into the jungle on the other side. And about (unintelligible) I was moving up there and we just got a new company commander, and he wanted to know what ... what was out in front of us. And so, we went out there and we got to the part where the road went in the jungle again, and we stopped, and sent Jaybow (sp?), one of the guys ..., "Go back and tell the company that the patrol is coming back and not to shoot," because you had to go through tall, coonan (sp?) grass, you know, and I saw that grass move, the machine guns would usually mow a little bit of it. And so, we're sitting each side of the little road and waiting for Jaybow to get back ... it was alright to come back. And we're sitting there and we hear this rattling and jabbering and ruckus, and "What is going on?!" And the road made a turn. And they come out of the jungle, you come in a company ... a company of Japanese walking down the road, four abreast, shooting the breeze, all their equipment rattling and everything, you know? And our new company commander ... well, it was getting near dusk, yeah, and ... and he rears up and he says, "Who goes there?" And geez, was that ... all the guys that had been in combat before jumped up on the ... on the road and were spraying them with the Thompson subs and BARs and ... and so, you couldn't shoot too much 'cause there were men in fire (unintelligible), yeah. And so, then Jaybow come back and he says, "They know you're out and they know you're coming back." We took off and we scattered that company of Japanese all through the woods. And we came back and the captain says, "Okay, everybody was ... that was on the patrol, meet in my tent." So, we went on and met in his tent and he says, "Where's Reardon (sp?)?" And he says, "He's ... he's madder than hell, kept ... he went to ... he's not coming." "Somebody go get him." So, they went and got him, and they brought him back. And he comes storming in the (unintelligible), "God damn it, skipper, why'd you send Rear up like that and say, 'Who goes there?'" And he says, "Well hell, I want to give everybody a chance." He says, "Never mind giving them damned Japanese a chance; give me a chance!" And he says, "And the next time you want a mounted patrol, go down to M Company; they ain't been kissed yet!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: So, he says ... so, he left, and the old man says ... says, "I love y'all, I love y'all." Yep.

Ed Metzler: How long were you on Guadalcanal? I mean ...

Mr. Bishop: Five months.

Ed Metzler: Five months?!

Mr. Bishop: Yep. Yeah, we had the Army come down and relieve us when we were going to Australia, and they wanted us to mount a patrol to show them where the Japanese were. I said, "Are you out of your mind?! Go that way. We're going to Australia! You go that way, you'll find them!"

Ed Metzler: They're out there!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: They'll find them.

Ed Metzler: Man!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, that whole five months you're in a tent?

Mr. Bishop: Nope.

Ed Metzler: You're out on the ground?

Mr. Bishop: On the ground, on the ground.

Ed Metzler: Golly!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. I ... I prided myself in being one of the finest foxhole diggers in the Marine Corps!

Ed Metzler: Is that right? You had to (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: Oh, I could dig a hole with my helmet, with my soup spoon, with my mess gear, anything! Fingers (chuckle).

Ed Metzler: But you didn't take your atabrine.

Mr. Bishop: Uh yeah, you had to, yeah.

Ed Metzler: If you did take it, you wouldn't have gotten malaria.

Mr. Bishop: Uh yeah, I got it anyway, and I took it.

Ed Metzler: Or so the story goes.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. Yeah, we were up on the ridges (coughs), Basilone, did you ever hear of Bas ... Basilone from New Jersey? His outfit was on ... down by where the Matanikau River came into the ocean, and we were up the river in the ridges, and Japanese ... they loved to flank you, they come in ... never come in head on, and they'd try to flank you and do something different. And we had ... we had all three rifles and we would shoot with those damned things. A belt (?) of flame would come out the barrel about four or five inches.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and if you were firing at night, they could pinpoint you by that.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: So, everybody had hand grenades. I know I had two cases of them damned things. Somebody shot up a flare at night, and we looked down at the river and it looked like the whole damned Japanese army was (laughing) coming down ...

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Bishop: ... down that river on both sides of the river, and nobody would shoot, and pull the pin on the hand grenade and look up (unintelligible) and then you got uh, five to seven seconds to get rid of it. That's a (unintelligible) fire, set it on the side of the hole, just flick it like that, and it would roll down the ridge and that way they wouldn't get a chance to toss it back at you, yeah.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause they would otherwise, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah, they ... but it was dark! Well, as far as the flares would show, but they didn't last too long, yeah. And when it come morning, there were a few Japanese down at the bottom that they didn't pull out, but there were none of them in there, and we won that whole damned battle with hand grenades! Yep!

Ed Metzler: So, you got sick several times, huh?

Mr. Bishop: I had malaria thirteen times.

Ed Metzler: Thirteen times!

Mr. Bishop: Four times, I got it from mosquitos, uh, the next times I got it ... another guy and I volunteered to go in a hospital to see if they could cure it. They ... we ... we had what they called a sixty-forty; you had a sixty percent chance of surviving it, and we were in that hospital. And one time they sent us to a party down in

Warner Brothers in New York City, they had a party, we drank only whiskey, eleven days later, bingo, we got malaria. Okay, and you do the whole thing all over again. Next time they sent us to a ... a Polish wedding and only beer, eleven days later, get it again. And they would ... oh, we got about six shots a day in the butt, ah geez (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Now, where is all of this going on? This hospital?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, Saint Albans Naval Hospital in Long Island.

Ed Metzler: And this is after you came back?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you were a ...

Mr. Bishop: And ...

Ed Metzler: ... a guinea pig then, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! That's exactly. And when we would go on liberty, if you drank too many beers and you would lower your resistance, they would ... eleven days later, bingo! You get it; you had an eleven-day gestation period.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And it was right on the button all the time.

Ed Metzler: My golly! Did you ever get dingy fever? Have you ever heard of that? It's like a bone break fever where your bones hurt, and apparently, it's something that people got in the tropics also.

Mr. Bishop: No. No. But malaria I had ... when I first got it, uh, they had us down in the hospital area, and when the Japanese would come down, iron-bound (?) section between Tulagi and Guadalcanal, and they'd shell us (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So, how long were you hospitalized with malaria?

Mr. Bishop: It varied, I don't remember. It was so miserable. When they would bomb us, they'd come down there and shell us, the corpsmen would come out and get the malaria patients and get them back, throw them in a hole 'cause you'd get ... wandering up and down there and you'd feel, "Oh Jesus, maybe I'll get lucky and they'll get me this time."

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Bishop: It was so miserable!

Ed Metzler: Put me out of my misery, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Oh god! Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, did the Japanese use air attacks very often?

Mr. Bishop: We had uh, one guy that had a little float plane, and this thing was so ancient that it didn't have a carburetor on it. In World War I, you had full speed or you had ... the motor would shut off, and that's why the plane would go (*blur-uuuhmmmm-blur* sound) and you go like that.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Bishop: And this damned little airplane would come over the (cough) the area where you could see something, drop hand grenades, mortar shells, anything you happened to have, you'd drop out. And you knew when he was coming 'cause you could hear this damned thing go (*blur-uuuhmmmm-blur* sound) and come fly over. And guys would shoot at them, but I don't think anybody ...

Ed Metzler: Ever hit him.

Mr. Bishop: ... wanted to hit him 'cause he was a lot of fun (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Its cheap entertainment, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And Washing Machine Charlie, they used to call him.

Ed Metzler: I've heard that term before.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. And he was a lot of fun.

Ed Metzler: So, what your closest escape when you were on Guadalcanal? Was there ... when you were defending the foxhole there on the Overland Trail?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, yeah. I think so.

Ed Metzler: It doesn't get any edgier than that, wow!

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah! Got a lot!

Ed Metzler: Going to get better ... or worse (laughter)? But right now, we're focusing on Guadalcanal. So, did you guys ever get any breaks in the action? I mean, were you ...

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah! Wasn't always fighting.

Ed Metzler: But I mean, you just non-stop there for five months. I mean, what do you do for ...

Mr. Bishop: Take care of equipment.

Ed Metzler: ... R&R?

Mr. Bishop: Well, when we first landed the Japanese uh, ship-wise, had that area pretty well closed in. And when we landed there, all our supply ships came in and landed there, and they came down Iron Bottom [s/b Iron Bottom Sound?] there and ... and shelled us. And all the supply ships had to leave, they didn't have any armament and stuff like that. So, they left.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And we had captured a ... a Japanese warehouse. I say a warehouse, wasn't as big as this house. And it had rice wine and sake and sacks full of fish heads and ... and rice dried and put in like a big potato sack. And we couldn't get anything to eat because our supply ships hadn't uh, completely unloaded, so we were eating fish heads and rice.

Ed Metzler: Fish heads looked pretty good, huh?!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, well, you were hungry; it's a gourmet meal!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And you would dump it in your mess kit and put hot water on it, and it would turn milky white and these little black bugs all through it, all over the damned fish, little black bugs. And the ... the story was when you would look over at another guy's food and say, "What's that bug doing on my chow?" And the comment was, "I think it's a back stroke!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: And the doctor came down and he said, "Do not pick the bugs out of your chow!" You couldn't ... too many of them anyway, and he said, "That's the only vitamin A you're going to get!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And so, we just left them in and didn't pay any attention to them.

Ed Metzler: Oh.

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: So, you ate (throat clearing) just K-rations, C-rations and you didn't

Mr. Bishop: No, we didn't get K-rations until quite a ... quite a while later. Yeah, they come in like a Crack Jacks box, and like that. And the ... the box was covered and sealed with ... with candle wax.

Ed Metzler: Kind of a wax, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, wax (unintelligible). And the people who ... the woman that packed them would scratch their names and their addresses inside of the box; guys would write to them and (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So, if you ever got back to the States, you could look them up, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Actually, you're probably writing to somebody's mother.

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing), could be.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: But it made you feel better!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: So, when you survive Guadalcanal, you went with your unit back to Australia?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, Brisbane.

Ed Metzler: Brisbane?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. We went into a nun's convent. And the nuns moved out. And we went in this nun's convent and they had rooms in there. And they ... when we went in there, uh, they had put two of us in these rooms that the nuns had, and a guy was in there before me.

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing)

Mr. Bishop: He says, "Watch the nurse when she comes in in the morning; she'll grab your feet and tickle your feet." And I says, "Oh Jesus, tell her you wake me up, tell her not to touch me," yeah. 'Cause when you did that, when you woke somebody up for (unintelligible), you poke them with your rifle or a stick or something and get the hell out of the way because he's coming up with a knife in his hand. And so, I ... I told him, I said, "Jesus, tell her don't touch me; you wake me up." He says, "Yeah, I know what you mean!"

Ed Metzler: You were that jumpy, huh?

Mr. Bishop: She come in ... yeah! Oh, for quite some time. And she come in the morning and she woke me up first, and my feet were sticking out at the bottom of the bed, and she grabbed me by the ankle, and that's as far as she got. I come up out of there on my knees and I, oh, I hit that woman across the jaw with a backhand.

Ed Metzler: Oh no!

Mr. Bishop: Well, my hands are going all over the damned place, you know? And she went down and she crawled in a knee-hole desk (?), you know, and I started to get squared away a little bit and found out where I was, and she come out and I tried to grab her to say I'm sorry, I'm sorry, you know? And she was screaming and hollering and she went out the door. I chased her down the hallway a little ways and she was screaming, so I said "Oh hell, I ... I ..."

Ed Metzler: She was (unintelligible)?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Uh, no, it was an Army probably.

Ed Metzler: Oh, it was ... okay.

Mr. Bishop: Probably, yeah, and she ... she was so upset that I ... I went back to the room and I sat down and I says, "Oh Christ, what am I going to do now?" ... you know? And the guy said, "Well, it wasn't your fault!" And here come two great big guys down there, and they got a canvas, too, with all the buckles on it and everything.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: And ... and they sat down, one on each side of me on the bed, said, "Do we need this?" Said, "No, you don't need that," I said ... (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, was it like a straitjacket?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: They were going to strap you up?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Bishop: And I says, "No, you don't need that." And the guy that was standing in the room with me explained it to them, and he says, "Yeah," he says, "okay." He said, "We're going to give you a transfer for a little while." And so, they did. They transferred me down to Ward Eight, and I didn't know what Ward Eight was all about until I got down there, and I saw the entrance. There was a big cage out in front of the door. You went through that cage and you lock that door, and then you went through the door to the ward. And I went in there and some guy is doing these crazy card tricks, another guy is sitting down in the wall and pulling the cover off of a vacuum cleaner vent singing, you know? They plug a vacuum in, and ... I'm looking around at the guys and one guy is dancing around. "Now, what the hell is this?" So, I go up, I went (unintelligible) house through the door and I'm rattling that cage, you know? (Chuckles), and there's a nurse, and I said, "What's going on here?!" And she says, "Don't mind, your time will come here," you know? "You're going down to see a doctor." I said "Well, make it soon; there's a bunch of knit-wits in here!"

Ed Metzler: Crazy people in here, yeah (chuckles).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And so, she did.

Ed Metzler: So, what ...

Mr. Bishop: She got me down to the doctor and he dumps a bunch of colored blocks out on a table and different shapes; he says, "Put them back in the box." And I put them back in the box. He dumped another one out, "Put them back in the box," and I put them back in the box. And he said, "There ain't nothing wrong with you." And I said "I've been trying to tell you guys that same thing!" I told him what happened, you know, and he says, "Well, get down in leathercraft. They've got a place down there for hobbies for you guys to calm you down," you know?

And I says, “Okay.” I go down, I’m walking down the hallway and I look in this hallway and here’s bunch of guys in there – pallets and paintbrushes and easels and everybody’s painting. And I’m watching them a while, and a lady come over to me with a pallet full of paint and brushes and she says ... she hands them to me, she says, “Take that seat right over by the window.” I said, “I don’t know how to paint!” She says, “Neither does anybody else! Sit down!”

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter), yep!

Ed Metzler: You’ll learn!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Bishop: So, that was my first lesson in painting, and I painted two pictures, and Life magazine bought them both; gave me five bucks a piece for them, and photographed them and gave them back to me. And that was a lot of money, five bucks for a painting.

Ed Metzler: How did Life find out about it?

Mr. Bishop: My company commander was the editor of Life magazine for a long time. He was connected with them. I think ... I think that’s how they got it.

Ed Metzler: What ... what was your company commander’s name?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, Hunt, George P. Hunt, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, I’ll be darned!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, he was ...

Ed Metzler: I notice (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: ... I got ... I got all of his pictures in there.

Ed Metzler: Okay. I notice you’re still painting.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: To this day!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, I used to paint a lot, and now I stopped about thirty years. I went into woodwork making toys for kids, and I ... I’ll show you some pictures later. I built big toys that kids can get in.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And I built about eight trolley cars for children's museums that they could get a lot of people in those! And different little toys. (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, it all started in Australia ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep!

Ed Metzler: ... while you were recovering from your experience in Guadalcanal.

Mr. Bishop: Yep, yeah.

Ed Metzler: How long were you in Australia?

Mr. Bishop: Five months, yep.

Ed Metzler: And were you there almost the whole time in that therapy area or ...

Mr. Bishop: Uhm, no, you shifted around. If you ... we used to do a lot of patrols, and you find out where the Japanese were and these (unintelligible) guys, the generals and everything, and they were pretty good. They could tell you just where they were going to hit by the way they were rowling (?) here or that or the other thing, you know? And they could tell pretty close where you could go, and they would move us from one place to another.

Ed Metzler: Move you around in ... while you were in Australia?

Mr. Bishop: Uh no, in ... on Guadalcanal.

Ed Metzler: On Guadalcanal?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, to meet the ... the onslaught. And we ...

Ed Metzler: And you got to thinking like the Japanese thought.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you could anticipate.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. We had two really good, knockdown, drag out, three knockdown, drag out battles with the Japanese, and the rest of them were skirmishes, yeah. They would see us, and they would try us out, and they would hit and then go, you know? Bonsai rushes they called them, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, you were in the same spot in Australia or they move you around, did you (unintelligible)?

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah, we were in Brisbane a very short while, maybe a month or so, and they put us on the USS America with an American cruise ship, and they took us to Melbourne. And we were billeted in the uh, cricket grounds in Melbourne.

Ed Metzler: Like what grounds?

Mr. Bishop: Cricket grounds for ...

Ed Metzler: Oh, cricket, yeah!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, it was like a football field.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: And the bunk was sawed off, the legs sawed off short on one side, so the bunk would set on the bleachers on the benches, and the whole division was in there, and that was nice. And the Australian people, all their sons were fighting over in North Africa, and they Australian people, oh boy, just thinking about those people. They took us in like their long-lost sons, and that (tears) yeah, they looked after us like a mother hen.

Ed Metzler: So, did you actually go to some of the homes of Australians?

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah, they took us in when ... when the convalescent shut ... too full. Another guy and I from I Company went to a ... a sheep ranch in Dandenong (sp?) and we were in there about a week and met this Bamford's (sp?) farm and the next week, she gets out on the front porch and she rings this bell they had to call people in for lunch and all that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, the dinner bell.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And she says, "Okay, you guys, the vacation is over, down in the sheep shed!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: So, we all get down in the sheep shed picking up big bundles of wool and putting them in this bin, and stink! Oh god! That stuff stinks. And we had a surrey and a bay horse and weekends we down into Dandenong. And before you get to town, the Australians would see you coming (unintelligible) and says, "Good (under!)" (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: “Come on down!” They’d tell you where they lived and everything. And, “Come on down and bring in the laundry!” They’d bring in the laundry, they’d want to do everything for you, yep.

Ed Metzler: I’ve heard stories about the Yanks ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... being too close with the Australian girls.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Well, we were very well paid in conjunction with them, yeah, and that meant a lot.

Ed Metzler: Lots of cigarettes, lots of chocolates.

Mr. Bishop: Yep, yep. I got three days bread and water in the brig for ... for uh, what was her name? Uh, Vida (pause), isn’t that something. Now, I can’t remember her name ... Woods! Pretty little girl, and missed the train coming back, and I missed uh, when they check you off in the morning uhm, see, it’s there.

Ed Metzler: And you weren’t ...

Mr. Bishop: Muster! Muster!

Ed Metzler: Muster, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: I missed ... I missed the muster, and I got three days bread and water in the brig.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Bishop: (Chuckle), and that was a laugh! Your buddy would find out you got put in the brig and he’d go down and volunteer for mess duty. And when the guards would come down to get the bread to give to you, he would grab a loaf of bread and they had toothpicks holding some of the bread on, inside was hollow, and there was candy and cigarettes and sandwiches and you name it inside that.

Ed Metzler: Inside the bread?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and there were three of us in the brig, and (chuckle) and ...

Ed Metzler: That was the best bread you’ve ever had! (laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And then, that happened to a couple of guys later on. And then they found out that the company clerk would let the guys know that there was a “See More Hike” (?) coming on. That was sixty-three miles, that hike was, and it was thirty-one or two up and that far back, it made up the sixty-three miles.

And they'd know the hike was coming up at a certain date, show up late for muster, you're three days in the brig!

Ed Metzler: It's a lot easier than sixty-(unintelligible)!

Mr. Bishop: Damned right (laughter)!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: 'Cause they were living good in the brig. And so, they ... they now had a (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: No more brig.

Ed Metzler: So, you had good memories then about Australia? I mean ...

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah! They had a ... they had a get together down there one time. It was Bob Hope, Phyllis Brooks, a lot of those dignitaries that were up in Hollywood.

Ed Metzler: The USO type thing?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and they were going to put on a show in the cricket grounds. They chased every enlisted man out of the cricket grounds. "Your ticket back in is an Australian soldier because at one time the Fifth Colonists got in Melbourne and they said that the North Africa Australians and there better not be any Marines in town," yeah. I says, "Oh boy! Here we go with another Donnybrook!"

Ed Metzler: Yep!

Mr. Bishop: Everybody at that (unintelligible) had belts on, yeah, and go downtown. Nobody! No Australian soldiers down there at all. And come to find out, there was Fifth Colonist trying to get us to fight, so when they had that thing at the cricket grounds, and they chased us all out, we all ... well, I knew where there was a bunch of them billeted near Dandenong and I took off and I went up there and I got a couple of them and told them what was happening, yeah. You didn't know who was who when you got down there! We had each other's hats on, you know? They're bent up on the sides?

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Bishop: (Chuckles), and you never knew who was who. And the guys, they couldn't find any, "Come on, you got two! Give me one!" And ... and this is that way, we had a great time then.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Bishop: And when you were ... a funny thing happened. When you were waiting for your girlfriend to come downtown, there was a big ... the Melbourne train station was right in town, right across the street was a gin mill called "Yougman Jackson's," (sp?) and they had a big, bigger than lifestyle picture of a nude and it was Chloe, her name was Chloe, and Chloe fell in love with her photographer and he married her sister, and Chloe committed suicide. And you're sitting in (unintelligible) wait ... waiting for your girlfriend, and you have this great big picture in front of you, yeah, and you sit there and (unintelligible) at you and the barmaid would come down and say, "Come on, Yank, I wish you wouldn't look at Mother that way!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: So, everybody ... all the Marines in the First Marine Division have got a picture Chloe; I got one somewheres.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter) So, you survived Australia somehow!

Mr. Bishop: Yep!

Ed Metzler: What did they do with you then?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, shipped us to uh, a little island that was afraid there was too many of us it was going to sink; it's called Goodenough Island.

Ed Metzler: Goodenough?

Mr. Bishop: Yep. And we were waiting there for the other outfit to form up, and then we'd all go together to Cape Gloucester. And on one end of the New Britain Island was Cape Gloucester and the other side was Rabaul ... Rabaul.

Ed Metzler: Rabaul.

Mr. Bishop: Japanese ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: ... stronghold. So, that's why this thing happened to me (unintelligible). (Pause), I think you read in the paper about the ... the Japanese attacking us.

Ed Metzler: So, Cape Gloucester, was that a ... was that an easy one or a ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! It was only three to one. And we used to get a kick out of it. They said, “Geez, how are you just pop three of them little buggers and we can go for coffee!” (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And this one (showing pictures), the kids loved that’s an original copy; it has bullet holes in it.

Ed Metzler: Holy mackerel! What have we got here (looking at pictures and/or documents)?

Mr. Bishop: And this is ... this is the other part. You see the bullet holes in this one.

Ed Metzler: My golly! What ... what am I looking at? What is this document?

Mr. Bishop: It’s ... we were carrying a wounded man down a trail and we were going through the limbs on this big monstrous tree went down, crawling over the limbs ‘cause it went right across the trail, and when it went down, it pulled up the root system and there were five Japanese hiding in that hole.

Ed Metzler: In ...

Mr. Bishop: And ... and they come running out screaming and hollering, and uh, I yelled at Knight (sp?), I says, “Stay here! Protect the man on the stretcher,” you know? And I ran down, there was one of them running right towards me and he ran up to this limb, he could have ducked under that limb and give me a little problem, but he didn’t! He climbed up on the limb! And I got down there to that ... down ... and he made a dive and I caught him right in mid-air and shot him. But he hit me, and then we ... first ... both of us went down, and I’m trying to get out from under him, three of them run right past me. And two of them ran up to the stretcher, well, three of them ran after the stretcher and Knight shot those two. The other one laid ... laid down beside Begay (sp?) on the stretcher and was banging a hanger [s/b hand grenade?] at ... on his helmet. That’s how they set them off, you know? And I didn’t hear the hand grenade pop, so I just ran up and stepped on his wrist, took the hand grenade out of his hand and toss it over in the underbrush and shot him ... shot this guy. And ... and Knight says, “There was five of them!” He says ... I says, “Yeah, where the hell did he go?!” He says, “I don’t know.” He ... I said, “Maybe he went in that big (unintelligible)

in that big mahogany tree.” And you know, had a big black and (unintelligible) that come down like this ... and lots of hiding space in there!

Ed Metzler: Lots of hiding places, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. So, he ... he says, “You go down that way, I’ll go around this way,” and I says, “I’ll throw a grenade in there.” And I let the spoon fly off and I counted to two, so when you’re back, you know, and just flipped it over and the thing ... and when it went off, we both rushed it, and he wasn’t in there. And I says, “Now, how in the hell did he get me?” And ... and Knight yelled at me, he said, “Behind you, Deke!” And I turned around and here’s this son of a gun right over me with a samurai sword.

Ed Metzler: Getting ready to nail you with his sword!

Mr. Bishop: And ... yep.

Ed Metzler: And? What happened?

Mr. Bishop: I just turned around and caught him in the rib cage with my bayonet and pulled the trigger at the same time. But to this day, Ed, I think he hesitated.

Ed Metzler: You think?

Mr. Bishop: I think he hesitated ... with the sword.

Ed Metzler: Really?! Why?

Mr. Bishop: I think he hesitate ... I think he was ... his sword was bent and his pistol was hit by shrapnel and I think he was hurt pretty bad, but I don’t know for sure. And ... but anyway, he ... he (unintelligible) exist. And I took a paper out of his shirt pocket, turned it in to G-3 and it was part English and part Japanese and it was about their invasion of the Aleutian Islands.

Ed Metzler: Oh!?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, before it happened, yep.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Bishop: So, I turned that in to skipper, and he told me about it. And I said, “I’ll be damned!”

Ed Metzler: So, I’m looking ...

Mr. Bishop: So ... so when we got done with that, we took Bagay down and put him on a ... ship and we went very ... and there were two guys laying there with their head,

elbows (unintelligible) pants are pulled down, they got a compress bandage right across their ass, two of them, you know? And when we went ashore there, we told the ... the company cook and his helper, you know, "They're lined up at the rail going on ... aboard the ship," and he says, "Come on, guys, you're going to get your ass shot off!" "No, no, my boys they ain't going to eat no ration; I'm setting up my kitchen right on the beach!" We go down and there's these two guys, everybody had grease paint on, you couldn't recognize your own mother, and these two guys are laying there and we're loading ammunition on to the stretcher and (unintelligible), and I kept looking at those guys and I pick up this pack, everybody's got their name on the back, yeah, like in the Civil War, they'd do the same thing, and put on a pack. I said, "Sergeant (unintelligible), is that you?!" (laughter), and he just looked at me and he says, "Shut up!" And I said, "What the hell, they told you!" ... you know. And ... and he says, "I suppose you're to go up and tell the old man that me and Foster got shot in the ass!" I said, "You can depend on it!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: So, how did they get shot in the butt? I ... I'm confused.

Mr. Bishop: Somebody just lined them up outside, yeah, bullet right across the butt right on the beach!

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Bishop: And so, we start up the trail again, and a runner came down and he says, "Hey, the skipper wants to see you guys." I said, "Oh god! (Unintelligible)?" He says, "No, he talking to some guy about where that big tree went down." And I says, "Yeah, I know where that is!" So, we went up there. I said, "You wanted to see us skipper?" And he says, "Yeah, I understand you guys had a little confrontation with five Japanese?" "Gee, (unintelligible) there; we were standing over there and right here," and he was damned near stepping on one of them. And I said, "This just happened! How'd you find that out?!" He said, "This man was standing behind the tree and saw the whole thing." And I looked at this guy and says, "Come on, man! You're carrying a forty-five, why

didn't you get in the fight? Them guys were all over us!" And the skipper says, "Never mind, Bishop," he says, "he's a war correspondent; he's not trained to fight." I said, "How much training does it take to pull the trigger on a forty-five?!" And ... and the skipper got kind of peeved, and he said, "That's enough, Bishop, don't say no more." And then Knight piped up, he was the guy that was with me, and he says, "I don't know what he's bitching about, skipper, we had them on the ... on the ..."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: ... there was only five of them."

Ed Metzler: Five to two (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, then if we'd of had one more man, there would have been a fair fight!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's right (chuckles)! So, that's the background behind this ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... document that you're showing me ...

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... which reads that, "this is a commendation from the commanding general to you," and I guess there was one that went to your buddy as well?

Mr. Bishop: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: And this is signed by W. H. Ruberitus (sp?). Now, that's a name that people have heard (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: Yep! Yeah, the old man.

Ed Metzler: That's the old man. "for metor ... meritorious service on the 28th of December, '43."

Mr. Bishop: The other names are on the other part of it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum! Well, I guess you're proud of this.

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: You should be.

Mr. Bishop: Yep (cough). And ...

Ed Metzler: And that is what I would call a close call.

Mr. Bishop: That was kind of close, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Kind of close.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. And I ... the guy that was with me got killed that afternoon; he got a Silver Star and a Purple Heart.

Ed Metzler: What did you get?

Mr. Bishop: This. And I went to a reunion once; well, I heard ... I read that ... that he did this. I don't know whether he did or not; I read that he got a Silver Star. And ... and I went to a reunion and Captain Hunt was there and I told him about this, and he says, "Yeah." I showed him what I read, and so he signed one ... well, this one here (looking at document) uh, commendation. He ... yeah, here it is. That's George Hunt's signature there. But the other two guys you couldn't get 'cause they died, and I ... I took a hold of this thing too late!

Ed Metzler: Yeah, this says, George P. Hunt here, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. And he says, "I doubt if you can get it because ... the Marine Corps has a saying, "To err is human, to forgive is divine; neither of which is Marine Corps policy."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), neither of which is ... yeah (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you never got any sort of a commendation other than this?

Mr. Bishop: Well, I ... I ... that's what this is all about. This is a letter from him. He ... remember I ... in Life magazine he started to lean on the mafia?

Ed Metzler: No.

Mr. Bishop: Well, we told him at the reunion, we told him, "Come on, skipper! Don't mess with these guys; they don't play fair." ... you know? And they didn't ... he didn't come to the next reunion and come to find out, they ran him into an abutment and damned near killed him. And I got this letter from him ... if you can hardly read that.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! This is from George P. Hunt.

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: In Florida.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and this is my second, no, that's my first one. Where the hell's the second one? Ah, it must be up in New Jersey. That's George (looking at documents/photos), and this was George when he was ...

Ed Metzler: So, he was a Big Wig at Life, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: Life magazine.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, his signa ... signature is in there.

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Bishop: I ... I got his signature and stuff like that so that (pause) oh, this is all malaria patients (looking at other photo) in ...

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: ... (unintelligible) Naval Hospital, and George; I'm right there.

Ed Metzler: Is this back when you're being the guinea pig?

Mr. Bishop: Yep! And we all had signs on ... wore signs, "If found, this man is not intoxicated; if found, call (unintelligible) number," and the ambulance would come and get us.

Ed Metzler: I'll be danged.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And we had schools. We had little schools on weapons. We could tear any weapon apart and put it together blindfolded. Oh! On this here, it's one of the big USOs in New York City, not this picture of ...

Ed Metzler: This is after your battle?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. I was with this young lady here (looking at photo).

Ed Metzler: Is that you?!

Mr. Bishop: Well, one of these I went to, I danced with Shirley Temple.

Ed Metzler: You did?!

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter), yeah, about twenty seconds!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Everybody was cutting.

Ed Metzler: Somebody always cutting in, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you really had a very close call in the Cape Gloucester Campaign.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you ...

Mr. Bishop: Oh ... that's a picture I gave them the last time I went to a museum.

Ed Metzler: Bloody Nose Ridge, yeah. I've read about that.

Mr. Bishop: Evidently, the man that took this picture had a notebook, and they got a hold of that and they got three names of McDermott, Bishop and Henderson, and ... and my brother was down at the PX and he heard them, and he said, "That's my brother!" And they called me down there and he ... he ID'd him; I'm right in there with just my face sticking up (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Well, we want to talk about Peleliu because we haven't gotten to this yet.

Mr. Bishop: Oh! Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And so, you survived Cape Gloucester. Where did you go? Did you go back to Australia before you went to Peleliu?

Mr. Bishop: No. At one time on Cape Gloucester, we had a patrol, a combat patrol, going up over a hill and up over a volcano. And ... and we were supposed to go out there and come back in four days, and we came ... we did it in eight days. It had a Piper Cub drop in Melbourne ... mail socks, big canvas mail sacks full of rations, and we stayed out.

Ed Metzler: Full of? Full of what?

Mr. Bishop: Rations.

Ed Metzler: Rations, got it!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: To keep you alive.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. And we were going down a trail and we got ambushed once, and we lost uh, Sizzle (sp?) and Livertore (sp?), got shot. They ambushed us then they took off again. And then we went on a little further and we came to this big river and was going down through, and ... and we stopped there and sent one guy upstream, and one guy downstream, you know, for ... an occasion anybody sneaking up the river, you know? And we're sitting there, a Jap came down on the other side of the river, he had a clutch made out of a tree limb and he was

sitting down on the beach in this black sand, and he's catching these little sand crabs that come back and forth, and he's eating them. And ...

Ed Metzler: He's hungry.

Mr. Bishop: And the guy, yeah, and the guy that went upstream spotted a ... kind of a makeshift hospital, and that was the hospital in there. And ... and he came around, back down, he says, "Don't fill your canteens!" "Why?" "They damned up the river where the ... with the dead."

Ed Metzler: They damned up the river and ...?

Mr. Bishop: And ruined the water. You couldn't ... well, I guess you could drink it.

Ed Metzler: Really!

Mr. Bishop: Polluted it.

Ed Metzler: Polluted it.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Poisoned it!

Mr. Bishop: Yep. And every once in a while, you'd hear *Bang*, yeah, waited a little while, *Bang*. And the skipper (chuckles) says, "One of you guys go up there and get that ... Begay and bring him," not Begay, uh, I forget what his name is, a little Japanese kid, "and bring him back here. Tell him," he says, "don't drop ... don't shoot those guys along ... alongside of the hospital trail," you know, "we need some information, find out where Mosuta (sp?) ... how far ahead of us he is so we don't run into anymore ambushes." So, *Bang*, again ... finally, after about the fourth (unintelligible), the old man said, "Somebody go up there and get that god damned Indian and bring him back here!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And he says, he says, "God damn it, I joined this outfit to shot them bandy-legged, legged little bastards!" He says, "Now you tell me not ... not to shoot them!" And he says, "Well, we need some information." So, Weber and I, about four or five went on ahead in case you run into anymore of those little tricks that the Japanese had planned. Came on a little village and you could tell they wasn't native 'cause it was too well done, the little bamboo huts and what not.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: Found a little warehouse about as big as this room, and it was full of mosquito nets. Man! Did we sleep that night! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Under a mosquito net.

Ed Metzler: No mosquitos for a while.

Mr. Bishop: Yep! You get in the morning and I'm walking around this little village, and I see it's a little (unintelligible) and I checked it out for booby traps and there's a little ladder going up to the front, and I climbed up there and checked the door for booby traps – nothing. The Japanese didn't do that, you know? But we checked it out anyway. And I went in and there was a funny-looking chair in there made out of wood. And I'm looking around, and I see this teakwood box over there, very nice built box, and I checked it out underneath to see if there was any, you know, if I lifted it up, was I going to set off a grenade? Nothing under there. So, I opened up the lid, and it was all uh, dentists' tools, made in Finland. Really nice, you know, in this teakwood box. And so, I just grabbed it and put it in my pack, brought it back. And the next ship we was on, I gave it to the ... one of the doctors on the ship, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Hum! I'll be darned!

Mr. Bishop: He did ... did a lot of stuff on my ears, yep, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, how'd you get to Peleliu?

Mr. Bishop: This time, well, on Gloucester, we went in and we came on a big uh, ship, what do they call it – an LST where the big ramp went down in front.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Big landing ship.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And we went up and we stepped off the end of that thing, and you sink over my head (unintelligible). Shit! You were over your chin in water (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: You were (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: They went as fast as they could 'cause they got hit, and it was (unintelligible) and they were going to ram it into the beach instead of having us get in boats, and they did that, and land on that. And we were going to Peleliu ... oh! Oh, one time on Gloucester, the doctor came down after we got off that long patrol, and it was just after Christmas, and the mortarmen which don't go on patrols, because you can't shoot mortars in the jungle ...

Ed Metzler: That's right.

Mr. Bishop: ... so, uh, they stayed. And they had all our Christmas gifts laid out on our bunks, you know? So, we go in there, and my step-mother had sent me a little box with a bottle of toilet water and a bottle of perfume, and some little embroidered handkerchiefs to send my ... to my girlfriend (hiccup sounds) ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: ... in Australia, and so, Vy (sp?) and I had kind of broken off before I left, you know? So, (unintelligible) and I says, "You couldn't ... (unintelligible), "Quinn," I says, "stand over here, bring your canteen cup." Put some toilet water in his canteen cup, put some can ... uh, perfume in mine, and then another guy standing back here put a handful of those little embroidered handkerchiefs ... and one ... one of the guys yelled, "Hey skipper, come on over here and see what we got for Christmas!" (laughter) And he (unintelligible) (laughter) with that perfume and that toilet water ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: ... the guy ran up and put this little embroidered handkerchief in his pocket, you know, and ... and he got a hold of Quinn; I don't know what the hell he did with him, and I went out through the back of the tent.

Ed Metzler: So, he smelled pretty?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! The rest of the day everybody was whistling at him (laughter). And they had ... they had one of the ministers come down, and he was saying ... he says, "Ah, you guys are back." He says, "I got to tell you something," he says, "the language you use amongst each other is atrocious!" And he said, "Can't you clean it up a little bit?" And said, "I also heard that you guys were on patrol up around a volcano (unintelligible) gold out of the Japanese that died up there."

Yeah? And he says, "That's really bad!" He said, "Hey, get that skull off of that jeep!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: (Chuckles), he says, "Calm it down." From then on, it was fun, and the company would say, "Oh darn, I got ... I got to go on duty again tonight, so, goodness me!" ... you know. (Laughter) So, "Don't use any bad language!"

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: Yep!

Ed Metzler: So, were you in the first wave going into Peleliu?

Mr. Bishop: No, you tried to stay off of that. The first wave, the Japanese would let in; they figured they could take care of them. The second wave they would zero in on. The third wave really caught hell, they caught ... and we went in to Peleliu on a tracked vehicle with a ramp in the back. And we just hit the coral reef and the point came out and we were going past the point, and a shell that ... we just hit the ... the shell, and the machine went up like that and down, and when it went down, a shell (unintelligible) on the port side, and it turned an Allison (sp?) engine right around inside and so ... and we sunk like a rock! And it's a good thing we were on the coral shelf 'cause right in back of us was ninety feet of water! Yeah? So, nobody got hurt, so we're barreling over the side. And I go over the side, and McGruen (sp?) with a machine gun, he says, "Catch my gun, Bish," and he throws the (unintelligible) over the side, and he comes barreling over the side. "Where's the gun?" "Right down there where you threw it! You didn't even give me a chance!" He says, "Well, duck under there and get it." I says, "You duck under and get it!"

Ed Metzler: Your turn (laughter).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And the water is clear as a bell. Anywheres you go in the Pacific islands; it's like spring water, you can see forever. And so, we ... we get ... we got over, and then we ... a couple of us fixed bayonets, and we put them down in the water and we stood the gun up, and made (unintelligible) grabbed it and dumped the water out of it. And ...

Ed Metzler: But when it's in the water, isn't it ruined?

Mr. Bishop: Oh no. Your rifle and everything? No, the (unintelligible) you had, all you had to do was shake them, something like that, and ...

Ed Metzler: Especially if you'd oiled them up good, I guess.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And then we got ...

Ed Metzler: So, that's a (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: ... if you had an 03, it might bother it, it might hold a little water, but we didn't have those. We had Garands, eight rounds in those things. And so, we kept down in the water, and they were kind of picking at us going in with the boat, the machine (?) protected us while we were there, but when we went on, then they started shooting at us from ... from the point. And our job was ... every Marine knew exactly what he was supposed to do when we'd go into those islands. So, when we were late getting in, we had to wade in the water from here up to the street ... to the street, and we keep low in the water, and oh, one time I forgot, was when McDermott told me, "Duck under and get it." I says, "*You* duck under and get it! I got steak sandwiches in my pack," and says, "the Navy gave us two! I ain't getting them wet!" And they had them wrapped in heavy foil so they wouldn't get wet, you know? And so, we used our bayonets to (unintelligible). And then when we were going in, we were supposed to go in, turn left, and go out on the point and get those guys, you know? Well, we figured well the company is ahead of us, you know? So, we go in there and we come to this big tank trap, a big ditch that the Japanese had built right across that point area.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And the company was in there; the Japanese had it covered with machine guns on both ends.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: Heavy machinery, lots! Most of the companies lost where we didn't have tanks at.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: And when we turned left, we turned ... went by the end of it, this tank trap, and we saw so many Japanese running around all over the damned placed. I said, "Oh boy, there's only eight of us, and we ain't taking these guys on!" So, we turned left again, and went down in the water, stayed down low underneath the foliage that grows over the water anyhow, and came to our area. This time we went straight ahead, and I asked one of the guys that I came to, I says, "What outfit is this?" He says, "I Company," I said, "Well, you just got eight more men."

Ed Metzler: So, you're losing them right and left, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. So, the next morning, we found out about this tank trap, how we lost most of the men, and they told us where our K Company was, so we went over and joined our company again. And that night we had moved out onto the point quite a ways, and the Japanese were going out in the water and trying to swim to another little island ... later on. And at night they would try to ... if they didn't make it, they would try to get back in. And Joe Henley (sp?) wasn't too far from me, and he's telling at one of the reunions, he says, "I'm in that damned hole, and then ... the word is if you stand up at night, you're a Japanese, you're going to get shot!" And so, the guy uh, Joe, said, "I'm standing there and this guy come up and he's crawling right over me," you know? And I says, "Come on, man! Don't be crawling around at night, you're going to get shot!" And he says, "Oh, sorry, Joe." And he gets up and he starts to run; somebody shot it! And when it come daybreak, here come Joe ... wake up, and here's a dead Jap right at his feet, you know? He says, "God damn it, I thought it was one of you guys, he knew my name!" He said, "For god's sake," he said, "he had to call everybody Joe!"

Ed Metzler: Yeh.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (laughter) ... (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, it was a Japanese?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, it was a Jap.

Ed Metzler: Crawling over you?!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: That's crazy!

Mr. Bishop: Crawling over Joe. And at the reunion I see Joe, sidling up to him and bump him, "Oh sorry, Joe!" "Are you guys going to do that?!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah, and they were all over the place.

Ed Metzler: So, Peleliu lasted quite a while before the island was secure, right?

Mr. Bishop: Well, I don't know because I found ...

Other Person: (Speaking from other location loudly.)

Mr. Bishop: uh, stretcher bearer on there, and then you don't last very long. You got to stand up, and walk and you're a target when you do that. I volunteered for that. They knocked out most of the company and so they took us off of the line, what was left of us, and put us with demolitions. Ever see ... ever hear of C-4?

Ed Metzler: It's an explosive, isn't it?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And it's what ... once and a half stronger than dynamite.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: We each had a sack of ... of maybe twelve sticks of that (unintelligible) in a sack, and we would go up to a hole and yell in the hole, "Te o agete detekuru." It means, "Come out with your hands up." And then we would put the C-4, a couple of sticks in there, bring the wire back to the guys and they would hook on this little thing. You set that stuff off by electric only, and (unintelligible) do that, and ... and when they did this one, we went around this little ridge, and there's another great, big ... sandbags on the front of it, everything, so we made our way up to that one, and there was nobody around. And I took a concussion grenade and Davy Shanders (sp?) was standing on the sand on ... on the uh, what do you call them, a sack full of sand?

Ed Metzler: Sandbags.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And I just looked inside the cave like that and got ready to throw a ... a concussion grenade in and I threw it in there. At the same time, they blew this one back here, we were just there, and we were standing at the backdoor and I didn't even know it, and that blast went through that tunnel and knocked Davy

off the sandbags onto the poison coral. It was ... it wasn't poisoned, it wouldn't kill you, but it would sting like mad, if you got cut with it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and get infected, too.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Bishop: And I ended up, you know, (*bbblllllwww* sounds), I didn't know which end was up. From then on ...

Ed Metzler: So, the concussion really stunned you then?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! From then on, I remember ... I remember capturing a pig out of a little compound that we got. I remember ... I remember Doberman dogs trying to get at that pig. What else? I don't remember; very little after that. I don't remember coming off the island. And then I remember I was back at the Russell Islands, and that was our ... our rest island. I remember boxing 'cause every man had to box.

Ed Metzler: And what was ... what was the island you went to?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, the Russell Islands in ...

Ed Metzler: Russell?

Mr. Bishop: Russell Islands, yeah. They were two islands close together. One of them had little scrub ponies on it, little horses, yep, but we weren't on that one. Yep.

Ed Metzler: So, you've got really hazy memory about the backend of Peleliu.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. And when we went on a ship, a small ship, from there that had been to the Philippines and took all the women and kids off that, you know, married guys on there, and in the morning the guys would get up early and go and sit in the hallways where they knew where the women were with the kids waiting ... waiting for them to get up so they could (unintelligible) the little kids and show them around the ship.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: And what ship was this?

Mr. Bishop: Don't know.

Ed Metzler: Just a transport ship?

Mr. Bishop: Yep. I know when they got into San Diego that it was listing so bad when it was trying to dock and the ships were listing so bad 'cause everybody was on the port side waving at the people ...

Ed Metzler: Oh ho, ho!

Mr. Bishop: ... you know, on the dock?

Ed Metzler: Got too many people on one side!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And they'd come out they'd say ... over the loudspeakers, "Please go down into your compartment and get your gear to bring the ship aright so we can tie up," you know? And then the guys started going over the side, swimming to the dock.

Ed Metzler: Really?! That's desperate to get home!

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: What did you do?

Mr. Bishop: I thought, I'll probably get killed walking down that dock, but I'm going down to the dock!

Ed Metzler: I'm going ... I'm going in dry! (laughter)

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter), yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, when you were shell shocked, I'll use that term, from that whole event, and your memory is hazy, didn't somebody notice that ... that you needed ...

Mr. Bishop: Well, I would come to it seemed like. I would ... I would get ... remember things ... remember, it was just my memory. I think I was operating just normally.

Ed Metzler: So, you kind of went in and out?

Mr. Bishop: I was woozy, yeah! Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you were just in ... in and out enough to where people thought, "Yeah, you're probably alright."

Mr. Bishop: Yep, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, you're back in the U.S. now, is that right?

Mr. Bishop: Oh, back on our ship when we ... when we went to San Diego, yeah. And then from there to Pendleton.

Ed Metzler: Okay, down to Pendleton.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And what did you do then?

Mr. Bishop: (Pause), we had a few little uh ...

Ed Metzler: Because the war is not over yet, right?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Some little things for spectators, they had a big uh, area where they were grandstands somewhere.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And I remember once we put on a show for them, showed them (unintelligible), and they had a ... a tank crew show, and to kind of emphasize it a little bit, a tank set off a round.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: It hit a rock or something, and it sounded ...

Ed Metzler: A live round?!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And somebody in the spectators got hit; I remember that.

Ed Metzler: That's not good!

Mr. Bishop: Not bad, but somebody got hit or some woman got hit with shrapnel.

Ed Metzler: She'll remember that for a while (laughter)!

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter), yeah,

Ed Metzler: So, I guess when you're back after Peleliu, that's going to be late 1944.

Mr. Bishop: Yep. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, did you go back into the Pacific or were you ...

Mr. Bishop: No.

Ed Metzler: ... (unintelligible) for good now?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, I'm home for ... I'm home for good. They used me a lot of times as a referee. When ... in Virginia Beach was a training area for uh, people graduating from West Point and Annapolis and teaching young officers about beach landings, and I was a referee in one of those.

Ed Metzler: And when you say referee, you (unintelligible) how well they were doing?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. We'd tell them.

Ed Metzler: Well, you ought to know 'cause you've been in a few beach landings!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: You ... first-hand knowledge!

Mr. Bishop: Yep. On one of them, we had Higgins boats where the ramp went down the front, we had those. We'd get a bunch of pretty officers in that boat, and one of them ... each one would have a captain, a guy who was a little smarter than everybody else, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Bishop: So, I ... I'd get him on the side up in the bow and I says, "When we hit the beach and that ramp goes down, you turn around like this and wave your arm and, 'Let's go!' and everybody goes." What I didn't tell him was there was a sandbar before he got to the beach. And it would (unintelligible) and I said, "Now do it right!" We'd hit that sand beach and I was in cahoots with the Coxswain, and he'd hit that switch and the ramp would go down, the beach would be from here to the front door.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, maybe (unintelligible).

Mr. Bishop: And there's be about nine feet of water in between (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Bishop: And he'd turn around, "Let's go!" All you'd see was his helmet floating on the water (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Well, when you came stateside, how did you get from the west coast to Virginia Beach which is in Norfolk area? Did they put you on a ship through or did you go by train?

Mr. Bishop: Train, yep.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, and I went to Puerto Rico as a (pause) as a referee, and boy, that was *hard* country to train on! It was either *this* or *this*! Boy, it was hard to train!
(Pause)

Ed Metzler: Did you get leave? Were you able to go home at all?

Mr. Bishop: Oh yeah! I was home for ninety days ...

Ed Metzler: Ninety days!

Mr. Bishop: ... when I shipped over, yeah. And then I (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: When you came back?

Mr. Bishop: Right, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, was that a little bit of R&R for you to try and get your head cleared?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: How was it?

Mr. Bishop: R&R ... alright. I ... I'd be, you know, we got ...

Ed Metzler: Was it good to be home?

Mr. Bishop: Oh god! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: That helps the healing process.

Mr. Bishop: I didn't tell mother and dad that I was back in the States. I wanted to surprise them (tears and laughter).

Ed Metzler: You did!

Mr. Bishop: Jesus, I got out of the taxi and the driver got out and opened up the trunk and he grabbed my sea bag, my step-mother opened (tears) up ... (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: That's alright.

Mr. Bishop: She opened the front door, and says, "Is that you Don?" "Yep!"

Ed Metzler: That was you!

Mr. Bishop: Yep (tears).

Ed Metzler: That feels good, I bet.

Mr. Bishop: Oh boy! And my brothers were home; we were all in the service. We used to argue with who ... who got to take my mother out (tears) for dinner 'cause she was so nice.

Ed Metzler: Mothers are that way.

Mr. Bishop: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles)

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: What do you think about the Japanese after all these years?

Mr. Bishop: The way they're brought up is amazing. They ... they're brought up to give ... give their life to *one man!* To do otherwise, is ... nothing. And ... and when I

went back, I joined the Second Marine Division, and we ... the reason being, we heard that the Second Marine was going to make a Med cruise, and the war in Europe was over. And so, everybody joined the Second Marines. They put us through Jump School, and we were going to be glider troops going into southern Japan. And at one of the reunions, the question ... got up and he said, "What would you do if you got off that glider?" We were going into southern Japan to get some prisoners out, "What would you do if you got off that glider and you saw a whole bunch of women and kids coming after you with pointed bamboo sticks?" And I said, "I know *exactly* what I would do." And they all agreed that if you got off the plane and you saw a woman and kids and an old man coming after you, you'd get off and you'd go in front of the vehicle, you would stop, you would put your rifle, uh, put your bayonet on your rifle, turn your rifle upside down and jam it in the ground, take your helmet off, put it on the butt of your rifle, get down on one knee and wave your white handkerchief." And everybody agreed; I think I would do that.

Ed Metzler: Just wouldn't kill him?

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: Is that ... is that the way you felt?

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: Still feel that way?

Mr. Bishop: Just hoping that the Japanese would *know* what we were doing.

Ed Metzler: Nobody would die then.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: Hopefully.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. *But*, knowing those people, I kind of think they'd keep on coming.

Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible) life.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Do you think you would have ended up in the invasion of the Japanese islands?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, yeah, but they said it would have been the end of the Second Marine Division; we were going in their homeland, and that would have been the end of us. There weren't enough of us.

Ed Metzler: Weren't enough of you?!

Mr. Bishop: The whole Division, hell, you'd have everybody in Japan after us, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Do you ever dream about what happened to you in the war?

Mr. Bishop: Oh god, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yes?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Still?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, no. My ...

Ed Metzler: But you did (unintelligible) for a while?

Mr. Bishop: ... my ... my uncle that was on the Bataan ... Bataan Death March ...

Ed Metzler: Was he?!

Mr. Bishop: ... his wife, Mary, she'd talk to me, she'd say, "God, I can't sleep with him, you know? He grabs me by the hair and he shakes me. And you know, he raises, he hits me and everything else, and he's sound asleep." It took him a long time to get out of it.

Ed Metzler: Did you do the same thing?

Mr. Bishop: Nah, I don't remember a lot of it. Yeah, I figure I'm going to have them, just put up with it. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, you've had some *really* close calls!

Mr. Bishop: Yep. A close, a really one I had was on Gloucester when we were on that patrol. Everybody had to carry machine gun ammunition, and each man that had a rifle had one ... one block that were made out of wood then, one block of machine gun ammunition, and one hooked onto a strap here. And so, we're going up this trail, and something hit. And I thought, "What the hell was that?" ... you know? And I just kind of moved a little bit, and I looked down and there's smoke coming out of my ... my cartridge belt. And I said, "What the hell this is?" (hiccup sounds) And I looked down, and I put my hands in my cartridge belt like this, you know, and it's burning the hell out of my fingers,

and I say, “God damn!” So, then I took this thing off on the front, dropped the two uh, cases of ammo and ... and went down and buckled ... unbuckled my belt, and went down on one knee and I says, “Oh shit! Four days out on a patrol and I got shot, and how are you going to make it?!” So, I just accepted it, and a corpsman come over and stood me up against a rock, and its smoking like mad around my belt. And he unhooked my cartridge belt, and he reached in and he gets this uh, tracer shell. Somehow, I hit that canister and I set off a tracer belt ... uh, a tracer bullet and went in my cartridge belt and was still burn ... burning, yeah, and that’s why I burned my fingers when I got down there. And he seen that bullet in there and he picked it up and he’s tossing it up and down to the ground. He said, “You ain’t hit, Bishop!” He said, “That tracer bullet went through your box,” and ... and didn’t touch me ... didn’t touch me a bit (unintelligible). And can you imagine what a feeling you get when you think you’re hit, and somebody turns around, “Oh, you ain’t hit.” (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the only guy I’ve ever heard that had a tracer bullet going off on his stomach!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: Whoa!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. But we had a lot of guys that got hit like that, got hit in the arm or something like that, and they wouldn’t ... they wouldn’t leave, they wouldn’t go back to the ship or out to the hospital ship or anything. Get the corpsmen to patch them up.

Ed Metzler: Patch them up and send them back.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, or leave them.

Ed Metzler: Or leave them.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, they were, yeah. And once (chuckles) they used to do with ... the guys would go down to the sick bay and get compress bandages and tie one across the middle and one across each leg. And when we went in there on Peleliu, I told you we waded in quite a ways (chuckles), there was a couple of guys sitting on the beach tearing those bandages off ‘cause whoever got hit, you’d turn one of those salt water bandages around the cut and put (unintelligible) in orbit.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: But it ...

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Bishop: Did you ever hear uh, Tom Fox (sp?); he knew him up there. He asked me if I knew Tom Fox. I got his ... one of his letters right here somewheres, and he was sitting out on the point shooting guys out in the water trying to swim to another island, and ... and two Japanese ran out from the jungle and bayoneted him in the back, and he, more or less, saw them coming, and he dove, and he dove down over a bank, and he was half in salt water and half out. And the corpsman, Jenkin, come around and he's taking all the dog tags of the guys that got killed, and he spots Fox there laying on the beach down there, face down, and he jumps on over the bank, and he's telling me this later. And he says I turn ... I'm rolling him over, and I'm just about to grab his ... his dog tags, and he wakes, and says, "Jesus Christ, Doc, you got any water?!" And he says, "And when I turned over, the salt water got in those bayonet wounds that he had in the back," and he says, "man, did I get ... I ... I didn't know I could move that fast!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: Whoa!

Mr. Bishop: And he got ... and another that happened to him, he wrote a short book on a Japanese nurse that wanted to fight the Marines on one of the islands. And they wouldn't let her go, and one of the guys died in the hospital. She took his uniform and his rifle and went out and was sniping at Marines, and they just went all around her. She was, you know, all alone, you could spot her pretty easy. They come up in back of her and they shot her, and they didn't know it was a woman. And ... and Fox did a little research on that particular thing, and he found out and he wrote this little book ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Bishop: ... about that.

Ed Metzler: You mentioned several times about reunions. Did you go to many of the reunions of the First Marines?

Mr. Bishop: I went to all of them.

Ed Metzler: You went to all of them (laughter)!

Mr. Bishop: I went to all of them except when it got so damned expensive.

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Bishop: When it got to be two hundred dollars for a night for a room or something like that.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: That's enough.

Ed Metzler: How long ago was that?

Mr. Bishop: Oh god!

Ed Metzler: So, you went for years and years, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. They had one ... they had one on the east coast and they had one on the west coast. And the one on the west coast was mostly Indians, and they were dirt poor, so they reorganized it and went uh, made it one, first would go to the west coast and then the east coast.

Ed Metzler: Hum, alternate, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: So, everybody could ... could go.

Ed Metzler: So, you said most of them were Indians?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Hope ... Hope Indians.

Ed Metzler: Really?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Why were they concentrated in your outfit I wonder?

Mr. Bishop: I don't know whether they were concentrated, but we did have three of them - Begay and Knight and oh, what was that kid's name? Geez, I don't (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: They weren't part of what they called the Code Talkers, were they?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, no, no they weren't Code Talkers. No. (Pause) And ... but they were ... I was telling about all Marines had to box. Uh, McComis (sp?) and I used to box Knight, one of the Hope Indians.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: Why won't ... (sounds in the room) ...

Ed Metzler: They going to come out this way maybe? Are you trying to pull it (unintelligible)?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah. (Going through documents), (unintelligible) in here. What'd I do wrong?! I had Fox ... Fox's letter (looking for letter) (unintelligible), yeah, I haven't changed a bit, have it?

Ed Metzler: No!

Mr. Bishop: (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: Perfect resemblance!

Mr. Bishop: That's when I got back; I was nineteen then.

Ed Metzler: Let me have a look at that picture again. Nineteen years old, and a veteran of a *lot* of action!

Mr. Bishop: Killer written all over it!

Ed Metzler: I tell you what ...

Mr. Bishop: (Chuckles)

Ed Metzler: ... tough dude!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, what other stories do you want to tell me?

Mr. Bishop: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: I bet you got some.

Mr. Bishop: No, with the exception, I used to love going ... talking to the kids.

Ed Metzler: Sure!

Mr. Bishop: They always had a comment, and you know I was saying I didn't talk a lot about the blood and guts end of it.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Bishop: I talked a lot about how we got along with the natives and what we did with them. And (pause), oh, this is an original copy ... they're trying to make it into a movie.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so this is a ring-binder, Battle at the Overland Trail, an untold story of heroism on Guadalcanal.

Mr. Bishop: (Showing pictures and documents) This is my company commander, I mean, my lieutenant of the ...

Ed Metzler: Looks like ...

Mr. Bishop: ... squad, not a squad, uh, platoon leader, and this is one of the other, and him and I.

Ed Metzler: And there you are.

Mr. Bishop: Gave his son all this information, and you ...

Ed Metzler: How do you pronounce that?

Mr. Bishop: Abady.

Ed Metzler: Abady? Jason.

Mr. Bishop: Well, they're Jewish guys, yeah.

Ed Metzler: And so, this is basically like a script for a movie?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah. Look at the size of the print.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah!

Mr. Bishop: Easy to read.

Ed Metzler: But they never made the movie, huh?

Mr. Bishop: I don't know; I don't think so. He never called me or anything.

Ed Metzler: They never asked you to be in the movie, huh?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, well I told them one time when you call me and I says, "How are you going to make a movie?! John Wayne; who are you going to get to play me!"
(laughter)

Ed Metzler: Yeah, right (laughter), he's better than you!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). Well, I appreciate your spending the time with me. I ... I am impressed with all the close calls that you had.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, I had some close ones.

Ed Metzler: You feel lucky or smart?

Mr. Bishop: Fortunate.

Ed Metzler: Fortunate.

Mr. Bishop: Very fortunate. (Pause)

Ed Metzler: I would say you're right!

Mr. Bishop: Well, I'm wasn't alone in that category.

Ed Metzler: No.

Mr. Bishop: And my ... my corpsman wrote this (showing another document), and he put his Silver Star in ...

Ed Metzler: This is the recommendation for a Silver Star?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: You never got it?

Mr. Bishop: No.

Ed Metzler: Why?

Mr. Bishop: Uh, the state senator that was going to put it through, it's all in here, uh, two days before he put this through he died.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Bishop: And the lady that I was going with was also connected with him, and she died.

Ed Metzler: Goodness!

Mr. Bishop: And I says, "Well, that's it, I'll be happy with what I got." I couldn't push it any further.

Ed Metzler: So, this is when you were carrying the wounded man? This is the ...

Mr. Bishop: Yep.

Ed Metzler: ... on Cape Gloucester.

Mr. Bishop: Oh, we had ... when we come back after carrying that wounded man down, uh, the captain of I Company was walking down the trail with his hands like this, you know, and he ...

Ed Metzler: Hands to his chest and his stomach.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, his chest and his stomach, and he was blood from head to foot. We says, "Come on skipper, get on the stretcher, we'll take you down to the beach." And he said, "No, I'm too big, you guys can't ... can't carry me." You know? He was ... was a big man.

Ed Metzler: Big guy, yeah.

Mr. Bishop: "Hell, we can't, get on the stretcher!" He says, "No." And my assistant and I says, "Well, he's headed in the right direction." Usually when ... when you got hit, you'd get up and walk straight ahead, you know?

Ed Metzler: Into it?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah! And I says, “He’s ... he’s walking in the right direction.” And so, we just went and got another man. And at one of the reunions, one of the guys says, he says, “Captain Berry (sp?) is here!” I says, “Not the Captain Berry I know.” I said, “He got shot,” and he says, “No! Captain Berry from I Company.” Right away I dropped everything and go find this guy, and I find him. And I ... and he’s with his wife, you know? I says, “The last time seen you, you were coming down the trail with your hands like this.” I says, “Why?” He says, “A machine gun, Thompson sub exploded right in my hands, I got hit so bad, and I had ... I had superficial wounds all over me. And I was running out of fingers trying to ...”

Ed Metzler: Plug holes up (chuckles).

Mr. Bishop: ... “plug up there ... up the holes!”

Ed Metzler: (Laughter)

Mr. Bishop: And ... and I said, “We tried to get you on the stretcher and you wouldn’t go.” He says, “Wait a minute, come with me to the ...,” up to his room. He said, “Tell that to my wife.”

Ed Metzler: So, I see here ...

Mr. Bishop: Oh, he ... he was saying ..., “Before I got to the beach, one of the corpsmen saw me, and he was (unintelligible) and I got arm around his neck and we come to the beach, and the beach is slanted pretty much,” and he said, “I stumbled and I rolled down the beach right into the salt water (laughter), and I remember (unintelligible) ...,” he said, “I walked over to the beach, no problem!”

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, here it says, “World War II Marine, eighty-seven, seeks Silver Star after sixty-nine years, but never got it.”

Mr. Bishop: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: It’s got your picture with your sword.

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, ah yeah. I ... I wasn’t going to try to push it, but when I found out that the guy that was with me got one, but he got his posthumously.

Ed Metzler: Maybe it’s better not to get one and still be alive (chuckles).

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Fascinating!

Mr. Bishop: (Showing more documents), this is a bunch of guys, we used to go to ...

Ed Metzler: Oh, at one of the reunions?

Mr. Bishop: Yeah, yeah, we had a lot of them, reunion pictures. And one of the ladies, I think it's the one that's sitting down here was in the London Blitz.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Bishop: And she was one of ... and one ... one other guy, I don't think he's in there, was uh, a yellowtail (?).

Ed Metzler: Red Tail.

Mr. Bishop: Red Tail!

Ed Metzler: Tuskegee.

Mr. Bishop: Tuskegee Indian, and he just died maybe a year and a half ago; it was just ... just before his hundredth birthday! Yeah. And ... and this lady was ... town she was in the London Blitz, and she says they sent the little children to the countryside and people out there would take care of them; they actually know them or anything. They just would take care of them so they wouldn't be in a bombing. And she says, "One day one of the ladies called up the sheriff, and says, 'Sheriff, there's one other little London girls down here and she ... was in a (unintelligible) of children,'" says "could you come down and talk to her?" And he says, "Yeah, I'll come down." So, he comes down, she points out the little girl, and he goes over and he says, "I understand you've been using some pretty bad language amongst the other children." She says, "I am not! Who told you that?!" He says, "Oh, a little birdie told me." She said, "What (unintelligible) gratitude, and I've been feeding the little sons of bitches!"

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). On that line, I'm going to end this. Thank you for spending the time with me.

FINAL copy
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