

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

PRESENTS

AN ORAL HISTORY BY

HENRY "HANK" KALINOFSKY

TAPE #48

TAPE # 48

HENRY "HANK" KALINOFSKY

SIDE ONE

TODAY IS FEBRUARY 17, 2001. MY NAME IS FLOYD COX. I AM A VOLUNTEER HERE AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR IN FREDERICKSBURG, TEXAS.

TODAY, WE ARE INTERVIEWING MR. HENRY KALINOFSKY OF ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND CONCERNING HIS EXPERIENCES DURING WORLD WAR II. AS WE SAID, WE ARE INTERVIEWING HANK TODAY CONCERNING HIS EXPERIENCES DURING WORLD WAR II. TO BEGIN WITH HANK, COULD YOU GIVE ME A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND,, WHEN YOUR WERE BORN, WHERE YOU WERE BORN AND A LITTLE BIT OF YOUR SCHOOLING AND WE'LL TAKE IT FROM THERE.

HANK

OK. I WAS BORN JANUARY 5, 1921 UP IN EDWARDSVILLE, PA. IT IS MAINLY A COAL MINING AREA UP THERE. I WENT TO SCHOOL UP IN PENNSYLVANIA ALL THROUGH MY SCHOOL YEARS WERE UP IN EDWARDSVILLE, PA. I WENT FIRST 3 YEARS IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM, THEN 4TH, 5TH AND 6TH GRADES I WENT TO THE PAROCHIAL SCHOOL, RECEIVED FIRST HOLY COMMUNION THERE, THEN WENT BACK INTO THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM FROM WHICH I GRADUATED UP IN EDWARDSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL. I WAS ACTIVE IN SPORTS UP THERE, PLAYED BASKETBALL AND FOOTBALL. AFTER I GRADUTED FROM HIGH SCHOOL, THESE WERE DEPRESSION YEARSAND THERE WASN'T MUCH WORK TO BE FOUND, I JOINED THE CCC CAMPS. FROM THE CCC CAMPS, I WENT INTO WORK FOR THE SUNSHIP BUIDING AND DRYDOCK COMPANY OUTSIDE OF PHILADELPHIA IN CHESTER PA. ACTUALLY. I WAS INTERESTED IN SHIPS BECAUSE OF WORKING AROUND THEM. I WAS A SHIPFITTER IN THE SHIPYARDS AND WAS EARNING PRETTY GOOD MONEY BUT THEN THE WAR BROKE OUT AND THINGS STARTING GETTING HOT AND THE FACT THAT I WAS BORN IN 1921, THE WAR BROKE OUT IN 1941, I FELT I WAS RIPE FOR THE WAR. I DECIDED RATHER THAN GO INTO THE ARMY, I'D GO INTO THE NAVY. LIKE I SAID, I FELT IN THE NAVY, IF I'M GOING TO HAVE TO DIE, I'LL DIE IN A CLEAN BED WITH A BELLY FULL OF GOOD FOOD. THAT WAS ABOUT THE SIZE OF IT.

FLOYD

WHEN YOU INDUCTED IN THE NAVY, WHAT TOWN WERE YOU IN WHEN YOU WENT INTO THE NAVY?

HANK

WILKES BARRE, PA.

FLOYD

AND THEN, WHAT DID THEY DO, PUT YOU ON A TROOP TRAIN TO TAKE YOU?

HANK

YES. THEY TOOK US IN A TRAIN FROM WILKES BARRE UP TO NEW YORK AT THE FINGER LAKES. I THINK IT WAS LAKE SENECA WHERE THE CAMP WAS. I WAS THERE FOR 3 MONTHS BASIC TRAINING, THEN FROM THERE, I CAME HOME JUST LONG ENOUGH TO SEE THE FAMILY I GUESS, FOR A WEEK AND THEN WAS PUT ON A TRAIN. WHERE DID I GO FROM THERE? I WENT UP TO NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND WHERE I WENT INTO GUNNER'S MATE SCHOOL AT RHODE ISLAND, HYDROLIC SCHOOL, ALL THAT.

FLOYD

LET ME ASK YOU A LITTLE BIT ABOUT GUNNERY SCHOOL. WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN GUNNERY SCHOOL? WHAT DID THEY TEACH YOU? DIFFERENT GUNS?

HANK

UP AT NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, THAT'S A WAR COLLEGE UP THERE AND THEY HAVE THE BEST SYSTEM YOU'D EVER SEEN OF TEACHING UP THERE. THEY TEACH YOU EVERYTHING FROM THE 22 CALIBER GUN UP TO THE 16 INCH GUN. IT IS THROUGH THE SMALL ARMS AND UP TO 40mm AND THE 5 INCH 38, WE WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE THESE GUNS APART AND PUT THEM BACK TOGETHER AS IF WE WERE BLINDFOLDED. IN OTHER WORDS LIKE IF IT WERE NIGHT TIME WHERE YOUR GUN FAILS, WHY YOU HAVE TO LEARN TO PUT IT BACK TOGETHER AGAIN WITHOUT ANY LIGHT. IT WAS A VERY GOOD SCHOOL AND FROM THERE, I WENT OUT TO THE FARRAGUT BARRACKS UP IN BOSTON AND PICKED UP A DESTROYER ESCORT IN CHELSEA, MASS. FROM THERE, IT WAS A CONVOY DUTY BACK AND FORTH IN THE ATLANTIC, SUBMARINE CHASING. CHASING SUBS AROUND THE MEDITERREAN, PLACES LIKE THAT.

FLOYD

IF WE CAN BACK UP, WHAT WAS THIS FIRST SHIP YOU WERE ON?

HANK

DE 581. *USS MCNULTY*.

FLOYD

WERE YOU A PLANK OWNER?

HANK
YES.

FLOYD
FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE READER, A PLANK OWNER IS THE FIRST CREW ASSIGNED TO A SHIP. IT'S A THING OF PRIDE, ISN'T IT?

HANK
THAT'S RIGHT.

FLOYD
SO YOU WENT ON THE SHIP AND YOU STARTED CONVOY DUTY RIGHT AWAY?

HANK
FIRST WE WENT DOWN TO NEW LONDON, CONN. TO GET DEGAUZED. THAT WAS AN INTERESTING TRIP GOING THROUGH THE CAPE COD CANAL ON A DESTROYER ESCORT WHERE YOU COULD ALMOST REACH OVER THE SIDE AND PICK UP GRASS. IT WAS VERY INTERESTING. THEN WE WENT INTO CONNECTICUT TO GET DEGAUZED, THEN DOWN INTO BERMUDA FOR A SHAKEDOWN.

FLOYD
NOW, YOU SAID DEGAUZED. EXACTLY WHAT IS DEGAUZED?

HANK
THAT IS DEMAGETIZED. I DON'T KNOW WHETHER I PRONOUNCED IT RIGHT OR NOT.

FLOYD
NOW, WHAT DOES THIS DO TO A SHIP WHEN YOU DO THAT? WHAT IS DEMAGNETIZE?

HANK
YOU DEMAGNETIZE THE SHIP SO THAT I CASE YOU ARE ANYWHERE NEAR THE MINES, THEY WOULDN'T BE ATTRACTED TO THE SHIP. THAT WAS THE MAIN PURPOSE OF THAT.

FLOYD
THE AFTER YOU WERE DEGAUZED, YOU PUT TO SEA?

HANK

WE WENT DOWN TO BERMUDA. AFTER THE SHAKEDOWN FROM BERMUDA, WE WENT INTO NEW YORK CITY IN THE BROOKLYN NAVY YARD AND PICKED UP A CONVOY OUTSIDE OF BROOKLYN AND THEN IT WAS A CONTINUOUS THING. I THINK WE TOOK THREE CONVOYS OVER THERE. THE FIRST ONE WAS UP THROUGH THE MEDITERRANEAN INTO BIZERTE.

FLOYD

WHAT YEAR WAS THIS HANK?

HANK

THAT WAS 1943. EARLY PART OF 1943. FROM BIZERTE, WE WENT INTO SICILY AND OVER INTO NAPLES AND THEN BACK OUT. OF COURSE, TOOK CONVOYS IN FOR THE INVASION OF NORMANDY. DURING NORMANDY, WE HAD NO PARTS IN IT. TOOK THE CONVOY IN THERE AND THEN BACK OUT BECAUSE THERE WAS NO USE FOR US ANY LONGER THERE.

FLOYD

AS OF BEING ON A DE, AND ESCORTING THESE CONVOYS, DID YOU SEE ANY ACTION AT THAT TIME?

HANK

YES, CERTAINLY.

FLOYD

TELL US ABOUT SOME OF YOUR EXPERIENCES.

HANK

WELL, IN THE MEDITERRANEAN WE WERE ATTACKED BY SOME JU-88's. THOSE ARE THOSE GERMAN JUNKER 88 PLANES. THEY WOULD COME DOWN STRAFING THE DECKS AND SUCH AS THAT. LUCKILY, NOBODY WAS INJURED OR KILLED. I HAD PUNCTURED EAR DRUM FROM RUNNING UNDERNEATH THE 5 INCH 38 WHILE IT'S FIRING AT THE PLANE. 'TIL THIS DAY, I WAS JUST TELLING MY SON-IN-LAW GENE, THAT WHEN I GO UP IN A PLANE, 'TIL THIS DAY, IT STILL BLEEDS EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE. OF COURSE, I DON'T THINK THE GOVERNMENT OR THE NAVY CARES ABOUT THAT BECAUSE I NEVER REPORTED IT AT THAT TIME.

FLOYD

LET ME ASK YOU. AT THE TIME OF ACTION, WHAT TYPE OF GUN, YOU WERE ON A GUN CREW? WHAT SIZE OF GUN?

HANK

I WAS A CAPTAIN ON A TWIN MOUNT 40mm.

FLOYD

HOW DID YOU FEEL THE FIRST TIME YOU WERE EVER UNDER ATTACK? CAN YOU DESCRIBE EXACTLY?

HANK

IT'S A FUNNY FEELING. YOUR'E NOT AFRAID. YOU FEEL LIKE, I'M HERE TO GET YOU AND YOU ARE NOT GOING TO GET ME.

FLOYD

BUSINESS IS BUSINESS, RIGHT?

HANK

YEAH, RIGHT. THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT IT WAS. AND NO QAULMS ABOUT, IF I GET YOU, THAT'S FINE BECAUSE YOU ARE TRYING TO GET ME. A FUNNY THING LATER ON. I WAS TELLING MY SON-IN-LAW AT A CHURCH REUNION THE OTHER DAY ABOUT SOME FELLOWS THAT WERE UP---SOME GERMAN WAR PRISONERS---THIS IS UP IN BEZERTE THE FIRST TIME WE WERE OVER THERE, I WENT UP INTO TUNIS AND THERE WAS STILL SOME FIGHTING GOING ON THERE. I COULD HARDLY GET BACK TO THE SHIP. IN ORDER TO GET BACK TO THE SHIP, I HITCHHIKED A RIDE AND THE ARMY TRUCK WAS COMING DOWN WITH A PILE OF SOLDIERS, GERMAN PRISONERS. THEY HAD NO ROOM IN THE CAB FOR ME SO THEY PUT ME BACK WITH THE PRISONERS IN THE BACK OF THE TRUCK. I'M SMOKING A CIGARETTE AND THESE POOR OLD GERMAN FELLOWS ARE STANDING BACK THERE LOOKING AT ME. I FELT SORRY FOR THEM. I PASSED THE CIGARETTES OUT, HANDING ONE TO EVERYBODY. AT THAT TIME, YOU KNOW, A NICKEL A PACK IN THE NAVY DIDN'T COST THAT MUCH. ALL THE ARMY GUYS, I GUESS THEY DIDN'T APPRECIATE IT TOO MUCH. THEY WERE GRUNTING AND GROANING. I FELT, MY PARENTS COME FROM THAT PART OF THE WORLD AND I DON'T KNOW WHETHER THEY ARE COUSINS, BROTHERS, SISTERS OVER HERE.

FLOYD

AND THEY WERE PROBABLY ABOUT YOUR SAME AGE.

HANK

YEAH, THEY WERE ABOUT MY AGE. THEY ARE YOUNG FELLOWS AND THEY ARE JUST LIKE ME. THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON IN THIS WORLD. THEY ARE TOLD TO GO IN

THERE AND FIGHT AND THEY ARE GOING TO GO IN THERE AND FIGHT. SO, I'VE GOT AN ENEMY THAT I NEVER MADE MY OWN SELF, A MAN MADE ENEMY THAT I HAD TO FIGHT AGAINST. SO, I TRIED TO TREAT THEM AS BEST I COULD.

FLOYD

DID YOU HAVE ANY CONVERSATION?

HANK

IT WASN'T MUCH OF A CONVERSATION. THEY SPOKE GERMAN AND I SPOKE ENGLISH. IT'S NOT LIKE TODAY WHEN YOU ARE OVER THERE, YOU GO TO EUROPE AND THEY SPEAK A LOT OF GERMAN AND ENGLISH. AT THAT TIME IT WAS MORE OR LESS JUST BY HAND GESTURES. I TRIED TO FIND OUT WHERE THESE PEOPLE WERE PICKED UP AND WHY THEY WERE PICKED UP AND THIS AND THAT. THE INDICATION I GOT FROM THAT WAS THAT THEY WERE GLAD TO BE PICKED UP AS PRISONERS BECAUSE THEIR FOOD SUPPLIES WERE PRETTY NIL OVER THERE ALREADY. NOT MUCH FOOD AND OF COURSE, THE SOLDIERS WERE GETTING THE BEST OF IT. YOU CAN SEE IF THEY HAD THE BEST OF IT, THEY DIDN'T HAVE MUCH WHERE THE REST OF THE COUNTRY DIDN'T HAVE MUCH AT ALL EITHER. THAT WAS ABOUT IT.

FLOYD

DID YOU HAVE COMBAT ON ANY OTHE OTHER ESCORT MISSIONS?

HANK

WE HAD A LOT OF CONTACT WITH SUBMARINES BUT NEVER DROPPED ANY OF THEM. OF COURSE, WE NEVER GOT CREDIT FOR DROPPING ANY OF THEM ALTHOUGH THEY DID GET HIT, SO THE SUBMARINES DID GET HIT.

FLOYD

SO YOU HAD DEPTH CHARGES ON THE DE?

HANK

YEAH. WE HAD DEPTH CHARGES AND ALSO WHAT THEY CALLED HEDGEHOGS. WE USED TO SHOOT EITHER HEDGEHOGS OR DEPTH CHARGES AND OCCASIONLY SOME OF THOSE DEPTH CHARGES WOULD BE A LITTLE TOO CLOSE TO THE SHIP AND BROOOOM. YOU WONDERED WHETHER YOUR'E GOING OR NOT.

FLOYD

BASICALLY, YOU JUST REALLY HAD COMBAT THAT YOU KNOW ABOUT IS WHEN THE GERMAN BOMBERS COME OVER? DID YOU HIT ANY OF THEM?

HANK

YES, ONE. ONE WENT DOWN.

FLOYD

HOW DID YOU GUYS FEEL WHEN YOU SHOT ONE DOWN?

HANK

JUST HAPPY I GUESS.

FLOYD

MOST GUYS SAY WHEN YOUR'E YOUNG, YOU KNOW THAT'S WHAT YOUR'E THERE FOR AND YOUR ARE ELATED BECAUSE YOU ARE DOING WHAT YOU WERE BEING PAID FOR AND THAT IS TO KILL THE ENEMY.

WHAT DID YOU DO? DID YOU MAKE 3 OR 4 MISSIONS?

HANK

YEAH. THREE MISSIONS ACROSS AND LIKE I SAID, AFTER THE INVASION OF NORMANDY, MOST OF THE U-BOATS WERE ALREADY SUNK. IT WAS VERY LITTLE NEED FOR DESTROYER ESCCORT OVER THERE SO THEY SHIPPED MOST OF YOUR DESTROYER ESCORTS OVER TO THE PACIFIC IF THEY NEED THEM OVER THERE. ONE OF THE GUNNERS MATES, TORPEDO MEN, RIGHT ARM RATINGS, THEY WERE TAKING THEM OFF THE SHIP AND PUTTING THEM INTO THE AMPHIBIOUS FORCES WHICH I WAS ONE OF THEM. WE WENT INTO THE AMPHIBIOUS FORCES DOWN IN LITTLE CREEK, VIRGINIA FOR AMPHIBIOUS TRAINING AND THEN WE PICKED UP THESE ROCKET SHIPS DOWN IN NORTH CAROLINA OR CHARLSTON, SOUTH CAROLINA. THERE WERE 12 ROCKET SHIPS THAT WERE BUILT SPECIFICALLY FOR JAPAN, IWO JIMA AND OKINOWA. IWO JIMA, THEY FELT THESE ROCKETS IN ORDER ---- YOUR'E FAMILIAR WITH THEM I'M SURE THAT IN ORDER FOR YOU TO FIRE YOUR ROCKETS AND GET A GOOD HIT, YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE A BALANCED SEA. IF THE SEA IS ROUGH, YOUR SHIP IS WAVING UP AND DOWN AND SO THEY FELT THAT THE FACT THAT IWO JIMA WAS NARROW, WE MIGHT JUST OVERSHOOT THE ISLAND AND WASTE THE ROCKETS.

FLOYD

LET ME BACK UP A LITTLE BIT. YOU WERE ON THE ROCKET SHIP. DID IT HAV A NAME?

HANK

YES. THE USS LSM(R) 198. YOU SEE THAT QUITE A BIT ON PUBLIC TELEVISION WHERE THEY HAVE THIS NAVY AND WAR STORIES. YOU SEE THE USS 198 ON HER QUITE OFTEN.

FLOYD

NOW WHAT WAS YOUR JOB ON THE 198?

HANK

IT WAS THE SAME THING RIGHT THERE. I WAS IN CHARGE OF THE 40mm TWIN MOUNT BUT ALSO IN CHARGE OF LOADING AND UNLOADING ROCKETS. I HAD A CREW. I WAS A GUNNERS MATE 3RD CLASS. I HAD A CREW OF MEN THAT WERE HANDLERS. THEY WOULD HANDLE THE AMMUNITION. THE LSM, I'LL EXPLAIN THAT, HAD A WELL DECK WHICH WAS WELDED OVER AND TOP OF THE WELL DECK, WE HAD ROCKETS. THERE WERE 110 ROCKETS IN EACH ONE OF THE ROCKET LAUNCHERS THAT IS. EACH ONE OF THE ROCKET LAUNCHERS HAD 10 ROCKETS IN IT. THE ROCKETS WERE A 5 INCH PROJECTILE WITH A POWDER CASE WHICH LOOKED PRETTY MUCH LIKE A 5 INCH 38 FROM A GUN. WE USED TO ASSEMBLE THESE TOGETHER AND OF COURSE, ME BEING IN CHARGE OF THE GUN CREW, THE ROCKET CREW, I WOULD HAVE TO GO AROUND AND SET THE FUSE ON THEM. THE FUSE SETTING WAS FOR ---- THEY WERE MAINLY ANTI-PERSONNEL I WOULD THINK BECAUSE WE WOULD SET THE FUSE SETTING TO BURST FROM CENTRIFIGIUL FORCE. THAT WAY, WE WOULD DISCHARGE THEM. WE DISCHARGED LIKE TEN, LIKE I SAY, 110 LAUNCHERS AND TEN ROCKETS IN EACH ONE SO YOUR'E TALKING OVER A THOUSAND ROCKETS YOU COULD SEND OUT IN --- I DON'T KNOW THE PERIOD OF TIME WAS. WE WOULD HAVE TO GO BELOW DECK EVERY TIME THESE ROCKETS WOULD GO OFF BECAUSE THE ROCKET FIRING WOULD TAKE AWAY THE OXYGEN OFF THE SHIP. THE ONLY ONES LEFT WAS THE CAPTAIN UP ON THE BRIDGE AND I GUESS SOME OTHER PEOPLE UP THERE TAKING CONTROL OF THE SHIP, THE QUATERMASTER. THEY WERE LEFT UP IN THERE. THE REST OF US WOULD HAVE TO GO DOWN BELOW DECKS. ALL YOU COULD HEAR WAS THE BOOM, BOOM, BOOM. ONE DAY I THOUGH I WOULD SNEEK UP THERE ABOVE DECK AND SEE WHAT WAS GOING ON. I GOT UNDERNEATH IN A 40mm MOUNT UNDER THE TARP AND I HID THERE. WHEN THOSE THINGS WENT OFF, I COULD SEE THE REASON THEY CHASED US OUT OF THERE BECAUSE YOU COULDN'T HARDLY BREATHE. THERE WAS NO OXYGEN. ALL THESE ROCKETS TAKING OFF JUST SUCKED AWAY THE OXYGEN.

FLOYD

LET ME ASK YOU THIS. HOW LONG DID IT TAKE YOU TO LOAD 110 ?

HANK

GEE, I DON'T KNOW. IT WAS A TEDIOUS JOB. AFTER WE FIRED THESE THINGS WE WOULD GO BACK OUT. I GUESS IT WOULD TAKE US A GOOD HOUR AND A HALF, MAYBE TWO HOURS.

FLOYD

FOR THE WHOLE 110?

HANK

YEAH, YEAH,

FLOYD

SO , SAY IT WOULD TAKE YOU TWO HOURS TO LOAD THEM, HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO FIRE THEM?

HANK

ABOUT FIVE MINUTES. AND THEY ARE ALL GONE. THEY HAD CONTROL WHERE THEY COULD HAVE SHOT THEM OUT IN SPURTS. THEY USED TO JUST LET IT ALL GO BROOOM,

FLOYD

THAT IS WHAT YOU SEE ON TV.

HANK

YEAH. THEY LET IT ALL GO OUT. IT'S QUITE A THRILL TO SEE ALL THAT. SOMETHING THAT THE AVERAGE PERSON DOESN'T GET TO SEE.

FLOYD

DID YOU HAVE ANY PRACTICE ON THIS TYPE OF SHIP BEFORE YOU WENT INTO ACTION?

HANK

NONE WHATSOEVER.

FLOYD

JUST TOLD YOU THIS IS THE WAY YOU LOAD IT AND THIS IS THE WAY YOU FIRE IT.

HANK

WE WENT INTO IT COLD TURKEY. THE FIRST TIME YOU EVER FIRED IT WAS IE SHIMA, A LITTLE ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF JAPAN. IT'S STILL IN THE CABRAOTTA (SP??) GROUP.

OKINOWA IS THE GROUP THERE. THAT WAS THE FIRST TIME WE FIRED THOSE ROCKETS AT IE SHIMA AND THEN OF COURSE, WE FIRED A LOT OF OUR 5 INCH AND 40mm INTO THE CAVES WHERE THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS WERE HIDING THERE. OCCASIONLY YOU WOULD SEE ONE OF THEM COME CLIMB OUT.

FLOYD

HOW CLOSE DID YOU GET, ON A CALM SEA, HOW CLOSE DID YOU GET TO THE ISLANDS?

HANK

WE WOULD GET RIGHT UP ON SHORE REALLY. IF THE SEA WAS CALM ENOUGH, WE WOULD GO RIGHT UP ON SHORE AND THEN LET GO OF OUR ROCKETS. AFTER THE ROCKETS WOULD GO, WE FELT IT WAS PRETTY CLEAR. I WOULD COME UP ON TOP DECK. I WAS SITTING OUT THERE AT THE 40mm MOUNT RIGHT AT THE BOW OF THE SHIP ONE DAY AND I HEARD PIIING. I LOOKED DOWN AND I HAD ALMOST LOST THE FAMILY JEWELS.

FLOYD

WAS THERE A SNIPER ON SHORE?

HANK

YES. I THOUGHT WE WERE GOING TO BE PRETTY SAFE, BUT ONE OF THOSE DEVILS GOT THROUGH.

FLOYD

DID YOU EVER SEE THE AFTERMATH AFTER ONE OF YOUR ROCKET ATTACKS?

HANK

JUST A LOT OF FIRE AND FLAMES. THE MAIN THING THEY TOLD US, BE SURE THAT YOU DON'T KILL ANY HORSES. THEY SAID, STAY AWAY FROM ANY HORSES AND THE REASON FOR THAT WAS THAT IT WAS RAINY SEASON, SPRINGTIME, AND OF COURSE WE WENT INTO OKINOWA MARCH 26TH, THE WEEK BEFORE THE ACTUAL INVASION AND WE HAD TO CLEAR THE BEACHHEADS SO WHEN THE MARINES AND ARMY CAME IN, THEY HAD VERY LITTLE RESISTANCE, WHICH THEY DID HAVE VERY LITTLE RESISTANCE FOR ABOUT A WEEK OR SO UNTIL THEY GOT INLAND. WHEN THEY GOT INLAND, THAT'S WHEN THEY GOT MOST OF THE RESISTANCE.

FLOYD

NOW OFF OKINOWA, HOW LONG DID YOU STAY THERE?

HANK

WE STAYED AT OKINOWA FROM MARCH 26TH WE WENT IN THERE AND I HAVE A LITTLE STORY TO TELL THERE. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR IT?

FLOYD

SURE.

HANK

WE ARE FIRING THESE ROCKETS FOR THE ENTIRE WEEK, SOFTENING UP THE ISLAND. ON GOOD FRIDAY, BEFORE EASTER SUNDAY. THE INVASION WAS ON EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 1, ON GOOD FRIDAY, I HAD A BIG TURKEY DINNER. EVERYTHING WAS REAL FINE, BEING A CATHOLIC, I THOUGHT, "MY GOD, AT THAT TIME WE WERE NOT ALLOWED TO EAT MEAT ON FRIDAY." I THOUGHT, BOY, I'M GOING TO GO TO HELL. ANYHOW, THE ACTUAL INVASION HAPPENED, WE WERE FIRING THE GUNS, WE HAD TERRIFIC AIR RAIDS OVER THERE. WE ARE FIRING OUR GUNS AT THESE JAPANESE KAMIKAZE PLANES AND THE CONCUSSION FROM THE GUN KNOCKED A SANDWICH OUT OF MY HAND. THAT'S ALL I HAD TO EAT. NOW, THIS EASTER SUNDAY, BUT IT'S THE INVASION AND ALL I HAD WAS A SANDWICH BROUGHT UP TO ME. I'M EATING THE DARN THING AND LOST IT. I THOUGHT, WELL, THAT'S MY PUNISHMENT.

FLOYD

OFF OKINOWA, YOU MENTIONED FIRING AT PLANES. WERE THE KAMIKAZES AFTER YOU AS WELL THE FORCE?

HANK

WELL YES. THE FIRST DAY WE WERE THERE WE HAD 12 ROCKET SHIPS. THE FIRST DAY WE WERE THERE, WE LOST ONE OF THEM, THE 197. THEY CAME DOWN AND DESTROYED THEM AND ERNIE PYLE WAS ON THAT SHIP. HE JUST LEFT THE SHIP THAT DAY AND WENT ASHORE AND THAT'S WHEN HE GOT KILLED. HE WENT ASHORE AND GOT KILLED THERE. WE LOST THE 197 AND THEN WE LOST 2 MORE THAT WERE COMPLETELY SUNK AND I THINK OUT OF THE 12, THERE WERE ONLY 4 OF US CAME BACK THAT WERE NOT DESTROYED. OURS WAS ONE OF THEM THAT WAS NOT HIT. WE WERE LUCKY THAT WE WERE SAVED.

FLOYD

YOU SURE WERE, OFF OKINOWA.

HANK

IT WAS TERRIBLE WITH THE AIRCRAFT. I THINK OVER 3,000 PLANES WERE DESTROYED OVER THERE AND I DON'T KNOW HOW MANY SHIPS WERE SUNK, AND HOW MANY WERE DAMAGED. I DON'T KNOW---THEY CLAIMED THAT WAS THE BEGGEST LOSS THAT THE NAVY HAD IN PERSONNEL OF ANY WAR THAT THEY HAVE EVER HAD. OFF OKINOWA.

FLOYD

THEY LOST FOUR TO FIVE THOUSAND. NOW THE KAMIKAZES, DID YOU SHIP GET ANY?

HANK

YES. I AM SURE WE KNOCKED OUT ----- THEY ARE COMING AT YOU AND THEY ARE NOT GOING TO STOP UNTIL YOU EITHER BLOW THEM OUT OF THE SKY OR THEY ARE GOING TO GET YOU. OF COURSE, WE WERE ALWAYS AMONG BIGGER SHIPS SO THEY ALWAYS LOOKED FOR THE BIG SHIP. IF IT'S AN AIRCRAFT CARRIER OR A CRUISER, DESTROYER OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT, THEY ARE GOING TO GO FOR THEM, 'CAUSE OUR SHIP WAS JUST A LITTLE BITTY ONE. NOT MUCH OF A TARGET, I THINK. THAT'S WHAT THEIR BIG THING WAS. THEY WOULD JUST LEAVE US GO AND GO AFTER THE BEG SHIP, BUT WE WOULD BE FIRING AT THEM, FIRING, AND EVENTUALLY THE ONLY THING YOU WOULD SEE WHEN YOU WOULD BLOW THEM APART AND YOU KNOW THEY ARE NOT GOING TO HIT YOU. OTHER THAN THAT, THEY COME DOWN AND THEY ARE GOING TO GET YOU.

THEY ALSO USED BAKA BOMBS. I WAS SPLASHED PERSONALLY WHEN ONE OF THOSE BAKA BOMBS CAME DOWN, WENT INTO THE WATER OFF THE PORT BOW OF OUR SHIP. THE WATER CAME UP AND SPLASHED ME.

FLOYD

IT WAS THAT CLOSE?

HANK

IT WAS THAT CLOSE. I'VE GOT THE LOG BOOK AT HOME THAT TELLS EXACTLY HOW CLOSE IT WAS. WHAT AMAZED ME WAS, I COULD ACTUALLY SEE THE FELLOW SITTING UP THERE. YOU ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE BAKA BOMB, IT WAS JUST LIKE A FIGHTER PLANE LOADED WITH DYNAMITE, WITH WINGS. THE FELLOW SAT THERE WITH SORT OF A JOY STICK DRIVING THAT THING DOWN AND HE'S SITTING ON THERE COMING DOWN AND IT MISSED THE SHIP BECAUSE WE ARE SIG-ZAGGING. SO, HE MISSED US.

FLOYD
AND YOU SAW HIM?

HANK
OH YEAH. I SAW HIM JUST AS PLAIN AS DAY. I SAW THAT MAN COMING AT US. HE WENT DOWN INTO THE WATER AND WE JUST KEPT GOING.

FLOYD
YOU ARE THE FIRST PERSON I'VE TALKED TO THAT HAS ACTUALLY SEEN ONE. I TALKED TO A PILOT THAT SHOT ONE DOWN. FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE READER, HE HAS DESCRIBED WHAT A BAKA BOMB WAS. IT WAS IN FACT A GLIDER FLOWN BY A KAMIKAZE PILOT. THERE WAS NO WAY HE COULD LAND. HE HAD TO CRASH. THAT WAS THE WAY THEY WERE TAUGHT IN THSE DAYS.

OFF OF OKINOWA, DID YOU SEE ANY OF YOUR SHIPS NEARBY THAT WENT UP DUE TO A KAMIKAZE?

HANK
OH YEAH. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM GET SUNK, BUT I HAVE SEEN THEM GET HIT. OF COURSE, ALL THE FIRE HOSES AND THINGS SUCH AS THAT. ONE OF THE WORST THINGS THAT I REALLY SAW WAS, I'LL TELL YOU THE TRUTH, WAS ONE OF THESE HIGGINS BOATS, GOING IN WITH A LOAD OF SOLDIERS, NEXT TO THE ISLAND, AND THAT DEVIL CAME DOWN AND HIT THAT HIGGINS BOAT. I GUES THERE WERE ABOUT 40 OR 50 SOLDIERS IN THAT THING AND ALL YOU COULD SEE WAS A BIG FLAME AND POOF, AND THAT WAS IT AND THERE WAS NO MORE----. IT JUST DISINTEGRATED THE WHOLE THING. IT WAS TERRIBLE.

FLOYD
BY THE WAY, OFF THE COAST OF OKINOWA, WERE ANY OF YOUR SHIPMATES INJURED IN ANY WAY? DID YOU LOSE ANY?

HANK
NOT ON OUR SHIP. NO WE DIDN'T LOSE ANY BUT THE DE THAT I WAS ON WAS OVER THERE. THEY LOST FIVE. I WAS TRANSFERRED OFF THAT DE WHEN I TOLD YOU ABOUT. THEY WERE ALSO OVER THERE AND THEY LOST ONE OF THE FELLOWS. I OFTEN WONDERED IF HE WAS MY REPLACEMENT OR NOT. HE WAS A SECOND CLASS GUNNERS

MATE AND HE WAS ASSIGNED TO THE SAME GUN THAT I WAS ASSIGNED TO. IT OFTEN HIT MY MIND, IS HE SAME FELLOW THAT REPLACED ME?

FLOYD

YOU OFTEN WONDER. STRANGE HOW THINGS WORK. YOU OFTEN WONDER FATE INTERVENES IN THERE SOMEWHERE. AFTER OKINOWA, WHERE DID YOU GO FROM THERE? WAS THAT YOUR LAST BATTLE?

HANK

NO. FROM THERE WE WENT OUT TO WHAT THEY CALLED RADAR PICKET STATIONS, ROGER PETER AREAS. WE WERE OUT THERE, SUPPOSED TO INTERCEPT THESE KAMIKAZE PLANE OR AT LEAST NOTIFY THE FLEET THAT THE KAMIKAZES WERE WERE COMING BACK IN. WE WERE HEADING UP TOWARDS KYUSHU ALREADY. ANYTIME YOU SEE THESE KAMIKAZES, WHY WE WOULD RADIO IN TO THE FLEET. OF COURSE, WE FIRED AT THEM. AS I SAID, WITH US BEING A SMALL SHIP I GUESS THEY WEREN'T THAT INTERESTED IN US. THEY WANTED THE BIG BOYS. THEY WOULD FLY OVER US AND KEEP GONG IN TOWARDS OKINOWA. WE WOULD BE OUT THERE----ONE NIGHT, ONE OF THE SHIPS THAT WAS OUT THERE WITH US, THERE WERE ABOUT 3 OR 4 OF US TOGETHER, ONE OF THE SHIPS THAT WAE WITH US SPOTTED ONE OF THESE PLANES ON THE RADAR. THEY ASKED FOR PERMISSION TO FIRE AT THE PLANE. THE CAPTAIN GOT PERMISSION TO FIRE AT THE PLANE, THEY FIRED AND THEN CAME BACK THE SHIPS NAME WHICH THE CALLED OUT AND SAID, ONE ROUND EXPENDED, THE BOGEY IS DOWN.

FLOYD

ONE SHOT?

HANK

YEAH. ONE SHOT WITH A FIVE INCH 38. THAT WAS REALLY A GREAT SHOT. ALL YOU COULD SEE WAS A BIG FLAME UP IN THE SKY.

FLOYD

THEN YOU WERE ON PICKET DUTY. WHAT TRANSPIRED AFTER YOUR PICKET DUTY?

HANK

WE WERE HEADING IN TOWARDS JAPAN AND WE ARE GETTING READY FOR THE INVASION OF JAPAN WHEN THE ATOMIC BOMB WAS DROPPED OVER HIROSHIMA AND THEN OF COURSE, THERE WAS ANOTHER ONE DROPPED AFTER THAT. I DID'NT

KNOW ABOUT THAT AT THE TIME.

FLOYD

LET ME ASK YOU THIS WHILE WE ARE TALKING ABOUT THAT, AS A YOUNG MAN, IN THE NAVY, AT WAR WITH JAPAN, WHEN YOU HEARD ABOUT THE ATOMIC BOMB, AND HOW MANY PEOPLE IT KILLED, HO DID YOU FEEL?

HANK

I WAS GLAD.

FLOYD

WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?

HANK

BECAUSE I FELT THAT WITH THE INVASION OF JAPAN---WHAT WOULD YOU CALL IT? THE MENTALITY OF THESE PEOPLE AT THAT TIME. THEY WERE ALL FOR THEIR DEAD PEOPLE, FOR THE EMPEROR AND THEY ARE GOING TO GO INTO THEIR HEAVEN OR WHATEVER IT IS THAT THEY ARE GOING TO GO INTO, SO THEY FELT THEY WERE DOING IT ALL FOR THEIR ANCESTORS. WE WOULD HAVE HAD AN AWFUL LOT OF MEN KILLED, WHICH WERE ALL YOUNG AMERICANS AND ALSO THE JAPANESE WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED, PLENTY OF THEM.

I THINK THAT BY DROPPING THE ATOMIC BOMB, THERE WERE POOR INNICENT CIVILIANS KILLED, WHICH I FEEL SORRY FOR, BUT HOW MANY MORE WOULD THERE HAVE BEEN KILLED HAD IT NOT BEEN THAT? THERE WOULD HAVE MILLIONS, IF NOT MILLIONS, AT LEAST HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF JAPANESE CIVILIANS WOULD HAVE BEEN KILLED DURING AN INVASION.

FLOYD

EXACTLY. IT WOULD HAVE ANHIALATED THEM. BECAUSE, AS YOU SAID, THEIR FRAME OF MIND, AND THE WAY THEY WERE TAUGHT. SO, THEY DROPPED THE ATOMIC BOMB AND THEN WERE DID YOU PROCEED FROM THERE?

HANK

FROM THERE, WE PROCEEDED TO----WE WERE TOLD TO HEAD FOR GUAM. WE WENT DOWN TO GUAM AND OF COURSE, WE HAD OUR BEER PARTIES, PICKED UP A BUNCH OF SOLDIERS AND TOOK ALL THE ROCKETS THAT WE HAD. WE TOOK THEM ALL OUT, TOOK THE LAUNCHERS APART, NOT THE LAUNCHERS, BUT THE RACKS WHERE WE KEPT THE ROCKETS. WE TOOK THEM APART, PUTS COTS IN THERE IN THE BOTTOM AND WE TOOK A BUNCH OF SOLDIERS

BACK. THEY WERE INJURED OR SICK, WHATEVER YOU KNOW. WE TOOK THEM ALL BACK TO PEARL HARBOR AND LEFT THEM OFF THERE.

FLOYD

WHAT DID YOU DO WITH THE ROCKET EQUIPMENT AND YOUR ROCKETS? DID THEY DROP THEM OVERBOARD?

HANK

YOU KNOW, I DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY EVER DID WITH THOSE. WE WERE TOLD TO STOW AWAY ALL OF OUR BRASS. A LOT OF THE BRASS REALLY WASN'T STOWED AWAY. WE WOULD JUST KICK IT OVERBOARD. OF COURSE, THE ROCKETS THEMSELVES, THEY WERE GONE. THE LAUNCHERS,---SOMEBODY MUST HAVE TAKEN THEM. I DON'T KNOW. WE DID HAVE THEM WHEN WE GOT INTO PEARL HARBOR.

FLOYD

LET ME ASK YOU THIS HANK. IN YOUR EXPERIENCES IN THE NAVY, HOW LONG WERE YOU IN THE NAVY BY THE WAY?

HANK

ABOUT 27 MONTHS.

FLOYD

A LONG 27 MONTHS. DO YOU REMEMBER ANY SPECIFIC INCIDENTS THAT WERE HILARIOUS, I MEAN REALLY FUNNY THAT HAPPENED TO YOU WHILE YOU WERE IN THE NAVY?

HANK

THERE WERE A LOT OF FUNNY INCIDENTS. THAT ONE I TOLD YOU ABOUT: THAT HAM SANDWICH. I THOUGHT THAT WAS FUNNY. WE HAD OUR GOOD TIMES ABOARD SHIP, TELLING JOKES, THIS AND THAT. I LEARNED TO SMOKE WHILE I WAS IN THE NAVY. I NEVER SMOKED, BUT THE AMERICAN RED CROSS WAS VERY KIND AND THEY USED TO GIVE US CIGARETTES AND TOOTH PASTE AND A TOOTH BRUSH. I GOT TIRED OF GIVING THE CIGARETTES AWAY SO I STARTED SMOKING THEM. IT FELT GOOD, JUST LIKE TODAY YOU SEE THESE KIDS WITH DRUG DOPE. OF COURSE, IT GAVE ME A LITTLE WOOZY FEELING IN THE HEAD AND I SAID, HEY, THIS IS GREAT. AFTER ABOUT A YEAR OF THAT, YOU FIND OUT THAT ALL IT DID FOR YOU WAS GIVE YOU BAD BREATH.

FLOYD

AND SINUS PROBLEMS.

(BACKGROUND PROMPT FROM WIFE ABOUT NORTH AFRICA)

HANK

THE BED SHEETS. SHE IS TALKING ABOUT NORTH AFRICA WHERE WE USED TO GO ASHORE AND WE WOULD TAKE OUR BED SHEETS. YOU KNOW HOW THE NAVY HAS THESE BED SHEETS THAT FIT OVER THE MATTRESS; YOU PULL THEM JUST LIKE A PILLOW CASE. WE WOULD TAKE THE MATTRESS COVER AND TAKE IT ASHORE. YOUR NAME IS STENCILED ON THE BOTTOM THERE. YOU TAKE IT ASHORE AND SELL IT TO ONE THE ARABS AND GET TEN DOLLARS FOR IT. WHAT THEY DO IS PUNCH THREE HOLES IN IT. ONE FOR THE HEAD AND ONE FOR EACH ARM AND PULL IT DOWN OVER THEMSELVES AND THEY WOULD WEAR IT. YOU WOULD SEE ALL THESE ARABS RUNNING AROUND WITH SOMEBODY'S NAME ON IT.

FLOYD

I NEVER HEARD THAT ONE BEFORE. I HEARD THESE NAVY MEN WOULD ALWAYS COME UP WITH SOME KIND OF DEALS SELLING THINGS.

HANK

WE HAD A FELLOW FROM BROOKLYN WHO WENT HOME A MILLIONAIRE.

FLOYD

THEN YOUR TIME IN THE NAVY; OF COURSE YOU HAD A LOT OF FREE TIME WHEN YOU ARE ON THE SHIP.

HANK

YES. THE CAPTAIN ON OUR ROCKET SHIP WAS GEORGE B. TIMBERMAN, JR. AFTER THE WAR HE WAS THE GOVERNOR OF NORTH CAROLINA. HE WAS A CAPTAIN WHO THOUGHT OF HIS MEN. HE REALLY LOVED HIS MEN. EVERY SHIP HAD A PAINT LOCKER UP IN THE FRONT, UP IN THE BOW. HE MADE US TAKE THE PAINT OUT OF THE BOW OF THE SHIP, GOT A LOAD OF BUDWISER BEER AND REPLACED IT.

FLOYD

STRICTLY NAVY REGULATIONS.

HANK

RIGHT. HE WAS ONE OF THESE RED-FACED PEOPLE INDICATIVE OF THE FACT, I LIKE TO DRINK. SO, WE HAD OUR BEER ABOARD SHIP. ANYTIME WE WERE IN A WAR ZONE, OR ANY KIND OF DANGER, WE WERE'NT ALLOWED BUT WE WOULD ALL GET TWO CHITS WHENEVER WE WERE

IN AN AREA WHERE WE COULD HAVE ONE. HE WOULD GIVE US TOW CHITS AND WE WOULD GO UP AND GET TWO BEERS FROM THE SHIP'S STORE AND IT WAS ALL FREE. WE WOULD GO ASHORE, SIT DOWN AND DRINK OUR BEER, COME BACK ABOARD. YOU NOT ALLOWED TO GIVE YOUR CHITS TO ANYBODY ELSE BECAUSE THEY ARE LIABLE TO GET DRUNK AND NOBODY WAS SUPPOSED TO GET DRUNK. HOWEVER, ON A DESTROYER, THEY HAD TOPEDO JUICE. I'M SURE YOU HAVE HEARD ABOUT THAT. A LOT OF THE FELLOWS, THE ONES THAT WERE ALCOHOLICS, WOULD TAKE THAT AND RUN IT THROUGH BREAD AND HAVE THEMSELVES AN ALCOHOLIC DRINK.

FLOYD

DID YOU HAVE ANY CASES WHERE THEY WOULD TAKE SHAVING LOTION AND DO THE SAME THING?

HANK

I HAVEN'T HEARD OF ANY.

FLOYD

THAT IS WHAT THEY DID IN THE 50's, BELIEVE ME.

HANK

WHILE ON THE PACIFIC ON A SHIP THERE, WE USED TO USE UP A LOT OF THESE CO2; THESE BELTS THAT YOU WEAR AROUND, HAD THE CO2, THE LIFE BELT: WELL, WE WOULD TAKE THESE LITTLE CO2's AND WE WOULD PUT A COUPLE OF CANS OF BEER IN A BUCKET OF WATER, THEN FIRE THAT CO2 IN THE BUCKET OF WATER AND ALL THAT BEER IMMEDIATELY WAS COLD.

FLOYD

I NEVER HEARD OF THAT ONE. WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THAT 40 YEARS AGO?

HANK

THAT'S THE WAY WE USED TO COOL OUR BEER . YOU KNOW, IN THE PACIFIC IT GETS HOT. WE WOULD TAKE THAT, PUT A COUPLE OF CANS OF BEER DOWN THERE, MAKE SURE YOU'VE GOT WATER IN THERE AND OPEN THAT THING AND SHOOOO, NEXT THING YOU KNOW YOU HAVE COLD, REALLY COLD BEER.

FLOYD

TO GET BACK TO THE PACIFIC, AFTER YOU FINISHED AND THE WAR WAS OVER, DID YOU COME STRAIGHT BACK TO THE UNITED STATES WITH WOUNDED GI's LIKE YOU SAID?

HANK

NO, WE WENT TO HAWAII. WHEN WE GOT TO HAWAII, I LOST AN AWFUL LOT OF WEIGHT OVER THERE IN OKINOWA. WE HAD THESE SMOKE POTS THAT USED TO BURN DIESEL OIL. EVERYTIME WE WOULD GET INTO A BIG ATTACK, ONE OF THE BIGGER SHIPS WOULD ---- WE WOULD HAVE TO GO AROUND THESE BIGGER SHIPS AND MAKE SMOKE TO COVER THEM UP. SMOKE SCREEN. INHALING ALL THAT SMOKE, IT WAS LIKE AN OIL, AND GUESS IT WOULD GO DOWN INTO MY STOMACH AND I LOST AN AWFUL LOT OF WEIGHT. THEY SENT ME DOWN INTO HAWAII, I THINK IT WAS CAMP ST. ANDREW, AND I STAYED THERE FOR A COUPLE OF WEEKS AND WASN'T DOING ANYTHING, SO THEY SENT ME BACK HOME. AT THAT TIME, THEY HAD A POINT SYSTEM AND I HAD BEEN IN COMBAT ZONES PRACTICALLY ALL THE TIME I HAD BEEN IN THE NAVY SO THEY FELT I HAD ENOUGH POINTS. I WAS ONE OF THE FIRST ONES TO GET SHIPPED HOME. I GUESS IT WAS IN NOVEMBER OF 1945, THEY SHIPPED ME BACK HOME AND I WENT UP TO BROOKLYN NAVY YARD TO GET A DISCHARGE. FROM THERE, THEY SHIPPED ME DOWN TO MARYLAND, CAN'T THINK OF THE NAME OF THE PLACE. ANY HOW, I WENT DOWN TO MARYLAND. THAT'S WHERE I GOT DISCHARGED FROM. (BAINBRIDGE)

FLOYD

THAT WAS WHAT, 1945?

HANK

YEAH, 1945. NOVEMBER 1945. AS SOON AS I WAS DISCHARGED, I CAME HOME I KNEW HER SISTER PRIOR TO THE WAR. OF COURSE, SHE WAS JUST A LITTLE GIRL AT THE TIME. SHE IS 5 YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME. HER SISTER THOUGHT I WAS PRETTY GOOD LOOKING GUY AND SHE INTORDUCED ME TO HER. FROM THEN ON, HEY, WE JUST HIT IT OFF PRETTY WELL.

FLOYD

SO YOU HAVE BEEN MARRIED HOW LONG?

HANK

FIFTY FOUR YEARS. I WENT WITH HER FOR ABOUT A YEAR AND A HALF AND THEN HAD TO MARRY HER TO GET A KISS.

FLOYD

CONGRATULATIONS. AND THEN, DID YOU GO BACK TO WORK OR DID YOU GO TO SCHOOL?

HANK

YOU KNOW. A FUNNY THING. I'LL TELL YOU. I WAS GOING TO SCHOOL UP IN---- AT FIRST, I STARTED WITH THE UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA. I WAS STUDYING TO BE A MECHANICAL ENGINEER. MY MIND JUST COULDN'T HACK IT BETWEEN WHAT I HAD BEEN THROUGH, MY AGE, AWAY FROM SCHOOL AND THEN OF COURSE, HAVING A NICE LOOKING GIRL FRIEND, I DIDN'T WANT ANYBODY TO STEAL, SO I JUST LET THAT GO AND I WENT INTO ---- I GOT A JOB UP IN PENNSYLVANIA WORKING IN THE ?????? MILL AND DURING THE DAY, I WAS GOING TO AN AUTOMOTIVE MECHANICS SCHOOL. I STUDIED AUTOMOTIVE MECHANICS AND I GOT A DIPLOMA IN THAT WITH THE INTENT TO OPEN UP A GARAGE AND A GAS STATION. MAKE A LIVING THAT WAY. IN THE MEANTIME, THE NAVY SENT ME A LETTER TO GO TO THE WILKES BARRE POST OFFICE AND PICK UP MY MEDALS. I WENT UP TO THE WILKES BARRE POST OFFICE, BROUGHT MY DISCHARGE THERE AND WHILE I SIGNED FOR THE MEDALS, HE HAD A PIECE OF PAPER LIKE THIS. HE SAID, "WOULD YOU SIGN THIS TOO?" YOU KNOW, YOU DON'T READ THESE THINGS, YOU SIGN 'EM. I SIGNED IT. I ENDED UP SIGNING IT FOR TEN YEARS IN THE RESERVES, NAVY RESERVES. SO, THE KOREAN WAR BREAKS OUT AND THEY ARE SENDING ME LETTERS. IN THE MEANTIME, I LEFT WILKES BARRE, PA. AND MOVE TO WASHINGTON, D.C. AND I JOINED THE POLICE DEPT. I HAD MY OLDEST DAUGHTER AT THAT TIME. SHE WAS ALREADY BORN. THE NAVY IS WRITING LETTERS TO MY MOTHER THAT THEY NEED ME FOR THE KOREAN WAR. MOM WOULD CALL UP AND SAY, "HENRY, THEY ARE SENDING YOU A LETTER FROM THE NAVY DEPT. THEY WANT YOU TO GET IN TOUCH WITH THEM ABOUT GETTING IN THE NAVY AGAIN." I SAID, "MOM, I AM OVER 21, I SERVED MY TIME. LET 'EM FIND ME." I WAS IN THE POLICE DEPT. AND I COULD HAVE BEEN, -- I COULD HAVE GOTTEN AWAY WITH IT ANYHOW. I LEFT IT GO AND AFTER THE KOREAN WAR ENDED, I LET THEM KNOW WHERE I WAS AT. THEY SENT ME ANOTHER HONORABLE DISCHARGE. I'VE GOT WO DISCHARGES NOW.

FLOYD

YOU CAN COLLECT GI BENEFITS TWICE NOW.

HANK

I NEVER REALLY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF IT. HERE I HAD A COLLEGE EDUCATION IN FRONT OF ME, HOWEVER, ON THIS DAY I AM NOT SORRY I DIDN'T BECAUSE I JOINED THE POLICE DEPT. AND I HAVE A GOOD RETIREMMENT FROM THE POLICE DEPT. I GET MY REGULAR RAISES WITH THE POLICE DEPT. WE ARE LIVING ALLRIGHT. MY WIFE AND I DO AN AWFUL LOT OF TRAVELING. WE ARE ENJOYING LIFE REAL WELL, HAVE NICE CHILDREN. WE HAVE 3 DAUGHTERS, TEN GRANDCHILDREN, AND 3 GREAT-GRAND-CHILDREN AND 3 MORE COMING UP.

FLOYD

WELL, HENRY, I WANT TO THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO AN ORAL HISTORY WITH US. AS I TOLD YOU BEFORE, THIS WILL END UP IN THE ARCHIVES OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR. AS A YOUNGSTER, DURING 1941, I WANT TO PERSONALLY THANK YOU FOR WHAT YOU DID FOR US DURING THAT TIME. IT'S GUYS LIKE YOU THAT MADE IT SAFE IN THE WORLD FOR GUYS LIKE US. THANK YOU AGAIN.

HANK

(PART GARBLED) MARION BERRY WAS THE PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.. MARION BERRY AND MYSELF NEVER GOT ALONG TOO WELL TOGETHER. I'VE BEEN THROUGH HIS POCKETS SEVERAL TIMES.

FLOYD

LOOKING FOR WHAT HE GOT BUSTED FOR, RIGHT?

HANK

SO, HE WAS LOCKED UP REALLY. HE WAS WITH SOME KIND OF ORGANIZATION, SNIC, STUDENT NON-VIOLENT COORDINATING COMMITTEE, THAT'S WHAT IT WAS. HE WAS IN CHARGE, OF THAT, SO HE WAS IN CHARGE OF THAT. AFTER THAT, I BETTER GET OUT OF THAT SO I RETIRED.

FLOYD

HE GOT RE-ELECTED TOO DIDN'T HE?

HANK

YEAH. HE BECAME MAYOR. IF HE RAN AGAIN, HE WOULD STILL BE MAYOR. JUST LIKE BILL CLINTON, IF HE RAN AGAIN, HE WOULD BE PRESIDENT.

FLOYD

HE WOULDN'T GET MY ELECTION.

HANK

WHILE ON THE DE, WE HAD-----THE GUNNERS MATES HAD MAGAZINE LOCKS ON THE REFRIGERATORS. I BEING ONE OF THE GUNNERS MATE PETTY OFFICERS, I HAD A KEY TO THE LOCK. WHEN WE ARE OUT THERE ON THE MIDNIGHT WATCH, I'D GO INTO THE LOCKER THERE, GET OUT A BIG STEAK, BO UP INTO THE GUNNERY CABIN THERE----4 O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING YOU WOULD SMELL STEAK ALL OVER THE ATLANTIC OCEAN.

FLOYD

WHILE THE MARINES WERE ON THE BEACHES, DOGING BULLETS AND EATING K-RATIONS.

HANK

WHEN WE WENT TO HAWAII, THEY MADE US TAKE IT OFF. YOU KNOW HOW THE DOCTOR WOULD COME ABOARD SHIP. THE DOCTOR COMES ABOARD SHIP AND HERE'S THE SMOKEY DOWN THERE. YOU REMEMBER HOW THE BUTTER WAS IN THESE LITTLE GI CANS? THE SMOKIES ARE DOWN THERE. THE DOCTOR SAYS, "HE'S GOT TO GO" AND THAT WAS IT.

FLOYD

WHERE DID YOU GET THE MONKEY?

HANK

IN THE PHILLIPINE ISLANDS. WE TRADED FOR BUNTING. REMEMBER THE BUNTING YOU HAD TO MAKE FLAGS? WE HAD SOME BUNTING ABOARD SHIP AND WE TRADED ONE OF THE WOMEN. SHE CAME UP IN A ROWBOAT AND SHE WANTED SOME MATERIAL SO SHE COULD SEW DRESSES. WE GAVE HER A ROLL OF THE BUNTING AND SHE GAVE US THE MONKEY.

FLOYD

DO YOU REMEMBER WHAT THE MONKEY'S NAME WAS? WHAT DID YOU CALL HIM?

HANK

JUST MONKEY I GUESS. LOOK AT THA DAMN MONKEY, CLIMBING ALL OVER MY CLOTHES WHERE YOU HANG THEM.

FLOYD

BUT HE WAS A MASCOT FOR YOU?

HANK

HE WAS A MASCOT. WE ENJOYED HIM. HE WOULD CLIMB, GET UP AROUND THE RADAR MAST AND STUFF LIKE THAT.

END OF TAPE

TRANSCRIBED BY FOREST J. REES
FREDERICKSBURG, TX MARCH 2002