

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. James R. Hood

Date of Interview: June 21, 2007

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Telephone Interview in progress.

Interviewer: My name is Richard Weisheimer. Today is June 21, 2007. I am interviewing Mr. James Hood by telephone. His phone is area code 317-872-6083. His address is (blank), Indianapolis, Indiana 46268. This interview is in support of the National Museum of the Pacific War (unintelligible) for the preservation of historical information related to World War II. Jim, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II. The first thing I...what is your middle initial?

Mr. Hood: R...as in Roger.

Interviewer: Okay. And...

Mr. Hood: Except its Richard.

Interviewer: Right...it is Richard?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, it is Richard, yes.

Interviewer: That's a good name; I like that name.

Mr. Hood: Okay, well good.

Interviewer: Well, what is your mailing address?

Mr. Hood: It's...I'd have to give you two because on July the 16th we're moving.

Interviewer: Oh, well...let's take...let's take the new one.

Mr. Hood: My address right now is 9132 Fordham...F-o-r-d-h-a-m St., Indianapolis, 46268. If...the next it will be 1596 Constitution Row...R-o-w...Constitution Row, Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933.

Interviewer: 47933?

Mr. Hood: That's it.

Interviewer: Okay, Crawfordsville. Let me get that down here. Okay...1596 Constitution Row, Crawfordsville, 47933.

Mr. Hood: That's it.

Interviewer: Okay, good. I think that's the address I'll use because we probably won't be doing much correspondence before then...but that's the one I'll put into the records here...what I'm saying.

Mr. Hood: Alright. Do you have email?

Interviewer: No I don't; do you?

Mr. Hood: Oh yeah...have for years.

Interviewer: Okay. Now the next thing I'd like to get is an alternative contact. Just like here...if we'd have done this a year ago and you would have moved, we wouldn't know where you were. Is there someone...a son or a daughter or someone that would know where you were in case you move or something?

Mr. Hood: A daughter...in Crawfordsville.

Interviewer: Okay, what's her name?

Mr. Hood: And her name is Deanna...D-e-a-n-n-a...Durrett...D-u-r-r-e-t-t.

Interviewer: D-u-r-r-e-t-t...D-e-a-n-a?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, D-e-a-n-n-a.

Interviewer: Two "n"s. Okay. And do you have a phone number for her or an address?

Mr. Hood: Uh, it's not right at my fingertips.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: Number is...I can give you her...her phone number...is 317-850-9456.

Interviewer: Okay, now when you move, will you have the same phone you have now?

Mr. Hood: No, no I will have a different one. If you...again...must be excused. I'm going to get...new number will be...area code 765-359-0178.

Interviewer: Okay. Do you have your daughter's address there then?

Mr. Hood: Uh, 3933 Overcoat Road.

Interviewer: Overcoat?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, Overcoat Road.

Interviewer: Okay...Crawfordsville?

Mr. Hood: Yes...47933.

Interviewer: 47933. Now you gave me her address. Is it 317 area or would it be the 765 area?

Mr. Hood: 765.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: Crawfordsville is 765.

Interviewer: Yeah. Yeah, you said 317 awhile ago and I thought you were wrong on that, yeah. It's...easy to do that. I do that myself from time to time. Okay, good, I appreciate that. Alright. Now the first thing...let me ask you...what is your birth date?

Mr. Hood: October the 3rd, 1916.

Interviewer: Let's see...you are at this point...89 years old?

Mr. Hood: I'm 90...I'm...I'm...

Interviewer: 90...you'll be 91 in...

Mr. Hood: I'll be 91 in October.

Interviewer: Right, well you sound very good! And where were you born?

Mr. Hood: In...in...on a farm...in a farmhouse...four miles northeast of Crawfordsville.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Hood: I had one sister...now deceased.

Interviewer: Okay, was she involved in World War II at all?

Mr. Hood: No.

Interviewer: Okay. And where did you go to high school?

Mr. Hood: A little rural school in Alamo, Indiana. A-l-a-m-o, Indiana...Alamo, Indiana...part of Montgomery County.

Interviewer: Okay, I'd not heard of Alamo, Indiana. Of course the Alamo, Texas is quite popular.

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: (unintelligible).

Interviewer: Right, okay. Now you grew up during the Depression. How did...how did that affect you and your family?

Mr. Hood: Right...oh, nobody had anything. There was no new building going on, but we visited with one another and we got along. As a kid, I didn't know much

difference...heard people talking....the good old days of the past. That was truly a Depression.

Interviewer: Okay, what was your father's occupation?

Mr. Hood: Farmer.

Interviewer: Farmer?

Mr. Hood: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay, so you had your own garden for food and things like that then?

Mr. Hood: Right, right.

Interviewer: Alright, okay. And they...did he own the farm or was he a tenant?

Mr. Hood: Yes, he owned the farm.

Interviewer: And was able to keep it during the time?

Mr. Hood: Pardon?

Interviewer: He was able to keep the farm?

Mr. Hood: Uh, yeah, yes.

Interviewer: Okay, right, okay. Now what year did you finish high school?

Mr. Hood: 1938...1934...(unintelligible).

Interviewer: Okay, and what did you do when you finished?

Mr. Hood: Well I started working half-time for the Fraternal Life Insurance Company in Crawfordsville...named the Supreme Tribe of Ben Hur. And I worked half days until I started Wabash and worked half days all during four years of Wabash and graduated from Wabash in 1938 and worked for Ben Hur full time after that until going into World War II.

Interviewer: Okay, and what...what did you major in at Wabash?

Mr. Hood: Speech and English.

Interviewer: Okay. Now what kind of work did you do for the insurance company while you were going to school?

Mr. Hood: Ad...administrative work...administrative (unintelligible).

Interviewer: Okay, and when you got the full time job when you graduated what did you do then?

Mr. Hood: Uh, same thing. It was...in those early years it...I better change that to auditing. I did clerical work.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, alright. Then when did you go into the service?

Mr. Hood: In September 1943.

Interviewer: Okay and you went into the Navy, right?

Mr. Hood: Right.

Interviewer: Now how did you choose the Navy?

Mr. Hood: Well a friend of mine had seen a notice in the newspaper that said the Navy was looking for college graduate to become supply officers...supply and disbursement officers in the Navy. And he mentioned that and I followed up and ended up getting a commission to the Navy.

Interviewer: Okay, and so you went...got a direct commission? You did not have to go through any kind of boot camp or anything?

Mr. Hood: Right, that's right.

Interviewer: Okay...as an Ensign?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, that's right.

Interviewer: Okay, let me back up and ask another question. On December 7, '41, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall where you were when you heard about that?

Mr. Hood: Yes, I was...I do. I was in our...our kitchen...just outside Crawfordsville, Indiana rocking my first child in a cradle.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. And how did you feel that that would affect you?

Mr. Hood: Well I didn't think it would affect me because the general feeling was that we would whip Japan before breakfast the next morning!

Interviewer: Right. Okay...now you were married and had a child at that point then?

Mr. Hood: That's right. I was married in 1940.

Interviewer: Okay, now is that the reason you had not gone into the service before '43?

Mr. Hood: No, no I had a high draft number and there wasn't any need to.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. As I recall, they had a lottery and they drew numbers didn't they?

Mr. Hood: Yes, sir.

Interviewer: Okay, now what...what month was it you went into the Navy? I'm sorry, was it September?

Mr. Hood: Yes, uh-huh.

Interviewer: Okay, alright...and you were able to get a direct commission then as a...Ensign?

Mr. Hood: In...in the Supply Corps.

Interviewer: Supply, okay. And...then where did you go in at?

Mr. Hood: Well I was sworn in at Wabash College...had a V-12 program so there was...made a contingent there. I was sworn in there. And then as ordered to Fort Pierce, Florida to an amphibious training base down there just to warehouse me until time for a class... baccalaureate class to start at Harvard University...the Harvard Business School. And so I went there for a few months. Then we went to Harvard Business School for...four months at Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Interviewer: Okay, now that...at Harvard...is that what they call a Midshipman's School?

Mr. Hood: No, that was...this was Supply Corps School.

Interviewer: Supply.

Mr. Hood: ...having...already had my commission. I...

Interviewer: Okay, I've heard some people say they were in ROTC when they went in and then they had to go through a Midshipman's School.

Mr. Hood: I...I skipped all those...I was a little older, see.

Interviewer: Okay, so you did not have to go through the Midshipman's School then?

Mr. Hood: That's right...didn't.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Then how did you learn about all the Navy tradition and how to...how to be a sailor?

Mr. Hood: Didn't have to learn...didn't...in...in wartime they make a lot of exceptions.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: I didn't learn how to be a sailor or didn't...but all I did was go through Harvard Business School Supply Corps and then went direct...out to sea.

Interviewer: Okay, and what all did you study there at Harvard?

Mr. Hood: Well...just...mostly the rules and regulations of the...of the Navy supply (unintelligible) routines...learned to feed and pay the crew of a ship.

Interviewer: Okay, now when you went from Indiana to Florida, how did you travel down there?

Mr. Hood: By train.

Interviewer: And how was that train trip?

Mr. Hood: (laughter)...a new experience to me because I hadn't been out of Indiana before.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: Though it was a slow, rattley trip...but...best we had in those days.

Interviewer: About how...how did it take, do you recall?

Mr. Hood: I don't recall.

Interviewer: Okay, did you have a place to sleep on the train or just sat up?

Mr. Hood: I don't even remember sleeping. I'm sure I...I'm sure I did, but I can't answer that...

Interviewer: Yeah.

Mr. Hood: Don't remember that.

Interviewer: And then when you left Florida to go to Harvard, how did you travel there?

Mr. Hood: Well...while down there...I asked...well my wife and her first child traveled down to Florida and we lived at...in a house...we rented an apartment on a house near Fort Pierce, Florida, so we traveled back from Florida to Crawfordsville. She was pregnant with the second child and we didn't stop at

night...overnight...unless we were sure there was a hospital in the area because she was ready to have the second child.

Interviewer: And you drove back up then?

Mr. Hood: Drove...yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, let me ask you...now why did you decide to join the Navy? Were they getting close to drafting you or something like that?

Mr. Hood: No, I had a personal reason. I was old and having been born in 1916, I naturally as a kid heard a lot of people who were in World War II tell war stories.

Interviewer: World War I you mean?

Mr. Hood: World War I...I did not want to go through life hearing more war stores and not telling some myself, so I just wanted to be part of it.

Interviewer: Okay, and did your wife agree with that?

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, okay...so then when you finished there at Harvard, what happened then?

Mr. Hood: Well I was ordered to a...let me read my orders.

Interviewer: Okay, sure, be good, right.

Mr. Hood: Let's see...I don't...I can't catch...get them right here, but I was...was ordered to report to the Commander of the Pacific Fleet and wherever he might be, so I thought that might be coast...the west coast...

Interviewer: So you went to the west coast?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, west coast and reported up there and then they sent me to...and I had to go to Pearl Harbor...and got my ship at Pearl Harbor.

Interviewer: How did you travel to Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Hood: Well again, went to Pearl Harbor on...on a small aircraft carrier.

Interviewer: Oh, okay...a VCE - one of the escort carriers?

Mr. Hood: I don't know what it was.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. How was that trip over...?

Mr. Hood: I don't...I know the name of it was the Copehee...C-o-p-e-h-e-e.

Interviewer: Copehee, okay. As...that was a carrier, okay. Okay, how was that trip over there?

Mr. Hood: Well it was interesting...nothing exciting. We just...I remember that I stood on the deck and...looked at the Golden Gate until I couldn't see it. I thought I might never be back to see it and...took great pleasure in standing there watching it disappear in the distance.

Interviewer: Okay, and what time of year did you go over there?

Mr. Hood: Well that would have been...I think that was September.

Interviewer: September, okay...of '44.

Mr. Hood: No, that wouldn't be right.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: Well...wait a minute...I have that.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: '43...report...reported to Harvard Supply School in March 31, 1944 and I...reported to the ship then...my ship...September 17, 1944.

Interviewer: Okay, and what ship was that?

Mr. Hood: That was the USS Damon...D-a-m-o-n...M as in Mike...Cummings...C-u-m-m-i-n-g-s...DE643. Let me add a little story here that I found interesting.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: I went out to...to report...as I was supposed to the morning aft...the next morning after arriving at Pearl Harbor and the naval officer there said that he was going to assign me to the Samuel B. Roberts (unintelligible). I...and he said, "Bring your gear back in the morning." So I did that. When I got there, he said, "Well I've changed my mind; I already sent a man out to the Roberts...I'm going to send you to the Cummings.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: As it happened...and...and...I wrote my wife a letter and told her what ship I was on and then the next morning went out and boarded the Cummings...did not get any...I didn't have an opportunity to send the letter back...she thought I was on the Roberts.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Mr. Hood: Thirty-seven days later the Roberts was sunk and...and the word...it was in the news and she thought for about six weeks...she didn't know what had happened to me.

Interviewer: Right, okay. Alright...now the Roberts was sunk where, I...I can't recall?

Mr. Hood: In the Battle of Leyte Gulf.

Interviewer: That's right Leyte Gulf, right. Okay, now when you went to Pearl Harbor on the Copehee how was that trip over there?

Mr. Hood: Oh that was interesting....but that's all...I...there wasn't anything unusual about it.

Interviewer: Was there much sea sickness?

Mr. Hood: No, well...as it happened, I didn't get sea sick; I...I don't think on that big of ship there wasn't much. I didn't see anybody sick.

Interviewer: Okay, yeah. I understand when you leave San Francisco Bay there's some awfully big ground swells there that make a lot of people sea sick.

Mr. Hood: It might be...anyway, I didn't...I wasn't conscious of sea sickness during that...

Interviewer: Okay, did you have any duties on the ship on the way over?

Mr. Hood: No, no.

Interviewer: Okay. Were you by yourself with some escorts or what?

Mr. Hood: Oh I was just traveling by myself.

Interviewer: No, I mean the ship. Was the ship escorted?

Mr. Hood: I don't recall that it was.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: It might have been and I wouldn't have paid any attention to it.

Interviewer: Yeah. I think by then...particularly something as fast as a carrier they were not necessarily escorting them that late in the war there. Okay. Had you been on a big ship before?

Mr. Hood: No.

Interviewer: Or...or any size ship at all before?

Mr. Hood: No ship...had never been...at sea.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. So what happened when you got to Pearl Harbor? You were assigned to the Cummings of course.

Mr. Hood: Well at Pearl Harbor I was housed in a...in a Navy unit onshore, and I recall the next morning was awakened by the raucous sound of tropical birds.

Interviewer: Oh okay.

Mr. Hood: ...here coming from Hoosier land and all of a sudden finding myself out there listening to tropic birds...to wake up...was a transition. But then...so I stayed overnight in a...in an officer's headquarter...billet...until reporting in next morning to this...

Interviewer: Okay now was there much damage still left at Pearl Harbor when you got there?

Mr. Hood: When...you know that something I've...I never bothered to...to look. I figured it was pretty well cleaned up and I...I didn't investigate that...had too many other things that seemed to interest me and I thought about trying to get out there but never did. So...I...I can't answer anything about...the...

Interviewer: Okay, yeah...now where was the Cummings anchored? There in Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. I think most of the ships had been cleaned up by then.

Mr. Hood: I...must...I didn't see anything unusual.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Alright, then what happened next?

Mr. Hood: Well, I just...went...we went to...I don't recall exactly where we went but down in the South Pacific...and...my...I do recall that the first trip that I

made was in a whale boat to get supplies...was to get supplies at Solomon Island and remember one thing...(unintelligible)...Florida island, it was actually in Florida and there was a huge sign up on a hill that...that...remember it said, "Admiral Halsey says kill Japs...kill more Japs!" That was the first time I really was ordered to kill human beings. It kind of surprised me to see somebody telling me to kill somebody else.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Now when you were...had you had any kind of weapons training at all up to that point?

Mr. Hood: No. They trained us just a little bit on...the...carrying a side arm...on pay day and that's...that's as much as we had. One session of shooting a six-shooter.

Interviewer: Okay, now when you left...

Mr. Hood: (unintelligible)...six-shooter...

Interviewer: Yeah, or...or automatic, Colt automatic, right. Now when you left Hawaii heading for the Florida islands, were you by yourself or were you in a convoy?

Mr. Hood: We were...we were the screen for a convoy. We were a...destroyer escort...is a...that's it's name...the escort (unintelligible)...submarine...so we did escort of other ships.

Interviewer: Okay, were they cargo ships or were they...?

Mr. Hood: I don't know what (unintelligible) they were, I just know we were the escort and had ships behind us.

Interviewer: Okay, what was your battle station on the Cummings?

Mr. Hood: Well it was...I was...in charge of a gun...4-barrel pom-pom...1.1 and a...and that battle station was a wonderful place to see a war because the topside and...and the keel action. We did shoot down a kamikaze. Do you want that story right now?

Interviewer: Sure go ahead!

Mr. Hood: Okay, here...this 1.1 had the...the director of the...the control of the gun (unintelligible) little and the unit just back of the gun...so...but there were three of us up in this director's tub. One guy was strapped into...in the director itself and he (unintelligible). The other fellow was on (unintelligible) on a telephone and I was the...supposedly the officer in charge. So one morning we...of course we always went to...battle...battle station or to...before...half hour before sunset...and one morning when we were at Okinawa a...I looked up and saw a Jap plane with...a two-motored plane with the Rising Sun...what we called meatballs (unintelligible)...travelling from our...forward... to aft...just about a hundred yards to the left...on the starboard side of the ship and he didn't try to head for our ship but for some reason he ducked up into a...a dense cloud...small dense cloud...and I wondered what...wondered what was happening but I thought he might come...be coming out of there and gave a very unmilitary order to the fellow who controlled the gun (unintelligible)...I said, "If he comes out of there, let him have it!" It...I said, "Train...train on that cloud, and if he comes out of there...let him have it!" So our gun was pointed right at the cloud as he did come out and he looked like he headed toward our ship and then chose a

bigger ship through our...aft of us. And I...so this 1.1 has...used 8-shell clips and one clip was phosphorescent so we had...the...every eighth shell you saw (unintelligible). The first one went low because we were trained right on the guy when he came out. The rest of the shells...the ones we could see went right into the fuselage, and so he splashed about 300 yards behind us. And just to tell...chuckled about this...I visited our captain some years later in his law offices in New York City and he introduced me to his fellow worker as *The Man Who Saved His Ship!* Well now, we could have been hit...if...if the gun hadn't started shooting at him, he might have chosen us. So maybe it happened...maybe it was that way, but...but it was good to have shot down a kamikaze at Okinawa!

Interviewer: Yeah, good, right! Did you shoot at many other planes at any time?

Mr. Hood: No they...as it...not...not many occasions. Now we...we were primarily an anti-submarine ship. We didn't have too many occasions to use our anti-aircraft artillery.

Interviewer: Okay, we'll come back to Okinawa after awhile. That was good; I'm glad we got that in there. Okay, now you went to...to Florida...was that Tulagi...where you were?

Mr. Hood: Pardon?

Interviewer: Was it Tulagi in the Florida Islands...is that where you were?

Mr. Hood: Well, I've drawn supplies there. We...I can't tell you all the ports that we were in, but most of them were in the South Pacific...on the way up to Okinawa.

Interviewer: Okay, now was the Battle of Leyte Gulf over when you got down there?

Mr. Hood: No, no.

Interviewer: That was October 22nd...along in there.

Mr. Hood: Well let's see, the Roberts...I've got that here...the Roberts was sunk October 25, 1944.

Interviewer: Right, right, okay. Well, you...you mentioned you got down to...the Florida Islands and drew supplies...then what did you do?

Mr. Hood: Well just routine work from then on. We'd escort...serve as an escort and...for ships...and attend to our duties and once in awhile we'd get what we called a...a (unintelligible) sonar course and there might be a signal that might indicate that we were...picked up a submarine, but also those signals would bounce back from a whale, so we never knew for sure if we ever made contact with submarines. We did drop depth charges a time or two and fired our hedgehogs and we were in the midst of the battles through...all the way up to Okinawa.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Now tell me about the hedgehogs. How did those work?

Mr. Hood: There were twenty-four of them up in the...in the bow of the ship and all destroyer escorts have them. And they...they would fire...they would fire up forward and in a pattern up high and (unintelligible)...in a pattern. They were such that they did not explode unless they made contact, so you could...it...the ship...thought they might have a contact, they could...the charge...they would fire those and it...and if that did not stir up the water...then we'd go back and keep on looking. For the...for the depth

charges that we had, they exploded at a position or a depth set before firing them and so that would stir up the...bottom of the ocean. Once they were fired you had trouble finding...your target. Now we had lots of depth charges...and rolled off the side of the ship and off the fantail...and then these...these hedgehogs...they were nice little weapons.

Interviewer: Okay, good. Were they powerful enough to damage a sub if they hit one?

Mr. Hood: They would...you could sink a ship...a sub with a hedgehog.

Interviewer: Okay, good, okay. Were there a number of occasions you had to fire your hedgehogs?

Mr. Hood: Not a number...but a couple of...I could say one or two times...three times maybe.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. What other battles were you in besides Okinawa? Were you in some others?

Mr. Hood: No I don't think we were actually in the battles until Okinawa. That was our first real...

Interviewer: You didn't get to Iwo Jima?

Mr. Hood: No, I...I got ashore. I was ashore some time...for some reason at Iwo Jima but I don't remember why...and...seemed to me that if...we had liberty on Iwo Jima one time or another...(unintelligible)...but I've been there. Picked up a souvenir that I had here for a lot of years.

Interviewer: Oh, what...what was that?

Mr. Hood: A baseball...that had been recreation...and...soldier that had been...just been an ordinary...all ships had sports gear that they took ashore

(unintelligible)...and to use and this one baseball...ordinary baseball that had been used and left ashore...I happened to pick it up...just happened to remember that I got that on Iwo Jima.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you get home with any other souvenirs?

Mr. Hood: No, well yes. I had probably against regulations...I picked up a couple of their shells from this Okinawa experience...and might tell you a little more about those. I kept them for years and...who piloted the ship for the...the plane that shot...that dropped the first atomic bomb?

Interviewer: Paul Tibbets.

Mr. Hood: Paul Tibbets was in Indianapolis one time...making a talk and he had (unintelligible)...so I took those two shells and had his name...and he...he very happily autographed them. So I then...put...put the names...the date that we shot the kamikaze down on those shells, and that made them reminder of both the dropping of the atomic bomb and the Battle of Okinawa. And just recently I sent one of those shells to...(unintelligible)...Dick...Dick Hoffman (spelling ?)...actually delivered it to the...the (unintelligible) in Albany...up in Albany...and also delivered the other one to the Stewarts (spelling ?) down in Houston.

Interviewer: Galveston down there, right.

Mr. Hood: I have a shell that has those two incidents reminded on them and...but I hope goes into...my...my immortality because I'm an atheist...I'm not going to go to heaven but I am going to leave a couple of autographed shells.

Interviewer: Okay, okay. Dick Hoffman mentioned something about escorting a damaged cruiser to Ulithi. Do you recall doing that?

Mr. Hood: I don't really recall when we did it, but I...I know we did and...and again, I was bored...not bored but I...soon felt that I'd never get home...that things weren't going to last forever and I didn't pay too much attention to (unintelligible)...doing except I...I did my job...stayed aboard and let it go at that.

Interviewer: Okay, for the record...kind of tell me exactly what your job was.

Mr. Hood: Well I wouldn't...one of the big jobs was to keep track of the payroll for the ship's crew, and then pay them money at...on payday or send it...indirect...(unintelligible) routine which I don't recall right now...of sending their money back home. So then the other job...the rest of the job was to supervise the cooks and the stewards' mates and preparation of the food. And...and acquiring it at various places which is what I was doing when I mentioned going (unintelligible) Florida Island.

Interviewer: Did you have to keep an inventory of the food and things like that?

Mr. Hood: No, we...we just acquired it and then used it up; we didn't have to keep track of it, no.

Interviewer: But I mean you had to know what you needed though when you went in to get supplies, right?

Mr. Hood: Oh yeah, yeah. (unintelligible) had a chief that usually made up the list and...but I always...almost always...well I think maybe I can say always went...on the whale boat to go get supplies.

Interviewer: Okay, alright, yeah but there was somebody that had to make a list of what you needed...that was the chief there?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, that was the chief...he had a list and I'd take it and draw the supplies.

Interviewer: Okay, did you ever have trouble getting the supplies you needed?

Mr. Hood: No, and let me add another little story. We had...as we were preparing to leave the Philippines and go up and escort...group...the ships up to Okinawa, I was....we were running a little low on supplies and there was no place to draw supplies...and I was concerned as all...as could be...but fortunately the very day before we were to sail to Ok...escorting that group to Okinawa...the very day...a supply ship came into harbor...and of course we...I...I would draw supplies off of supply ships a lot of times...not at...not offshore...not off of shore base. So that...that was relief that I remember to this day how...how great it was to find that...was there...there we...we got supplies just before. And I'll add another little thing.

Interviewer: Sure, go ahead.

Mr. Hood: The morning...on Easter morning when we went into Okinawa, we'd been at general quarters...dark...and when the light begin to show...I was amazed, absolutely amazed at how many ships were up there...with...there was three groups (unintelligible) that...assembled and came together at Okinawa. And the sky was filled with planes and sea was filled with ships...and of course I'd been one...one of the usual...that made the usual complaints about the Navy being snafued...in situation normal...all fouled up. But when I looked out there and it occurred to me that this Easter morning all those...people on those

ships had...probably had eggs for breakfast as we had this Easter and they had ammunition and supplies and I...said to myself, "I'll never complain about the Navy administration again!?" Because it took an awful lot of organization to get that many ships and all those people fed and armed and going into...ready for battle.

Interviewer: That's right. Was it a time...ever a time y'all got short on food on your ship?

Mr. Hood: Not...not short...not...not completely short, no, we...we never really suffered. (unintelligible) food sometimes from...neighboring ships...not supply ships just other...other supply officers and they...and they would share some food once in awhile...when you were desperate. We never...supplies...I would have to say again the Navy was a good organization and I...I...we really didn't suffer any.

Interviewer: Okay, good. Okay tell me what else...what all happened there at Okinawa. You got there on the 31st, right, the day before the invasion?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, and went in the next morning...went in the bay...and here's another thing that I remember...there. At night you cannot imagine...you'd have to see it to ever describe...to believe...but the 16 inch shells being fired from a battlefield at night gives this great...big fireball of a shell which looks like it's just being lobbed. It doesn't look like its going fast at all, but that's one of the things...when we went in there...and...the battleships and cruisers were shelling Naha and the area around it. I do remember that. But again I'm a little...awfully embarrassed here...knowing...seeing...recognizing that I...at

my age...I've lost the ability to talk well...so I'm stuttering around...awfully embarrassed about that.

Interviewer: You're doing awfully well; don't...don't feel bad at all because you're doing a lot better than others I've talked to.

Mr. Hood: Well, okay. Just keep in mind that I'm 90 years old (unintelligible)...

Interviewer: You're doing very...

Mr. Hood: ...not as articulate as I used to be.

Interviewer: You're doing very well...right, okay. How close did y'all get into the shore?

Mr. Hood: Well when you say how close in...relatively close and...and

Interviewer: A mile, two miles, three miles?

Mr. Hood: Oh, less than a mile.

Interviewer: Less than a mile, okay. Now you...now you didn't do any bombarding, did you?

Mr. Hood: I don't believe...no, I don't think we ever fired on...

Interviewer: Yeah, I don't think the DEs had a...anything suitable for that.

Mr. Hood: Well our...our DE had just 3 inch guns, and the...then later on they put 5 inch guns on it, so there was not...the 5 inch was pretty good gun, but the 3 inch wasn't much.

Interviewer: Right, right, okay.

Mr. Hood: Now I'll tell you another story.

Interviewer: Sure, go ahead.

Mr. Hood: Not another story but just a thought that I...I remember we...we used to...one of our duties at Okinawa...was to go out at night on the picket line and try to

sight kamikazes to give...so...so we (unintelligible) a warning back to shore that they were coming. There were...when the night the Yamaha...the largest battleship in the world...

Interviewer: The Yamato.

Mr. Hood: 18 inch...the Yamato...the 18 inch guns came down from Japan...suicide mission...and here we were with 3 inch guns out on that picket line waiting for her. So it was a relief the next morning to get the word that the planes...the fly boys as we called them...had sunk the ship.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think that was...

Mr. Hood: We had a...well...we'd unmasked our main batteries...3 inch guns (unintelligible)...(laughter)...waiting for 18 inches.

Interviewer: Yeah, I think that was like April the 12th it was sunk or something like that.

Mr. Hood: Yeah, I have no idea.

Interviewer: Something like that.

Mr. Hood: (unintelligible)

Interviewer: Right. So...how...how many times were you out on the picket line? Quite a bit?

Mr. Hood: Oh yeah, that was just night after night...(unintelligible).

Interviewer: Did you have any...any problems with kamikazes when you were up there?

Mr. Hood: No, not...except with this one we shot down while we were right in the bay. And another story. We...we were patrolling off Eshima the morning that Ernie Pyle was killed.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. Did you...did you hear about that?

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did you ever have...?

Mr. Hood: In fact one of the...fellow officer of mine had worked with Ernie Pyle in...in his newspaper in Washington D.C., so he had met him.

Interviewer: Oh okay, yeah, that was a shame he was killed there.

Mr. Hood: Yeah, he stuck his head up...to take a look and some sniper happened to be looking at him.

Interviewer: Right, right, okay. What were some other things that happened?

Mr. Hood: Oh right at this moment I can't recall.

Interviewer: Alright, let me ask you a few questions here. Did you hear Tokyo Rose over there?

Mr. Hood: I think the ship did, but I...I never paid any attention. I don't...none of my crew ever paid much attention...I don't know...I can't say that we heard. I'm sure that we were within range...knew about her and...ignored her.

Interviewer: Okay. Did you ever have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. Hood: No.

Interviewer: Did you see

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Mr. Hood: ...satisfy ...about what...what you would expect in the occasion...a great deal when we could get mail.

Interviewer: Would it be several months late or how late would it be?

Mr. Hood: Oh, I don't know... whether it was several months or not... just late... but not... it was kind of what we expected... good occasion to get mail but it didn't come often.

Interviewer: Yeah, now you crossed the equator, right?

Mr. Hood: Yep!

Interviewer: What kind of a ceremony did they have?

Mr. Hood: Oh, typical one... that... and I've got some paper or two that shows that I crossed the equator, but we... we had... I... I have no trouble explaining the ceremony... I remember getting the chiefs and... had... kind of took charge...

Interviewer: And did they... do a lot of things to you all?

Mr. Hood: Not a lot... some. They had... they had fun.

Interviewer: As an officer, did they take it any easier on you than on the enlisted men?

Mr. Hood: No I don't know if they did. It wasn't that bad.

Interviewer: Okay. Now April 12th of '45 President Roosevelt died. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Hood: Yes, yes. We were out at sea.

Interviewer: Okay, and what was the reaction to that?

Mr. Hood: Well the reaction... my... my own reaction was real disappointment. And of course... think he would... that Truman was not up to the job... kind of disturbed that Roosevelt had... had died.

Interviewer: Right, okay. And no one knew who Truman was.

Mr. Hood: That's about it, you're right!

Interviewer: Alright, okay. Now on May the 8th of '45 Germany surrendered. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. Hood: No I really don't. I...I...we knew...I do kind of recall that we felt that well the war...the war is going to be over before long and it...I can't...as far as I remember now that you asked the question, I thought, "Well, so what? We're out here fighting Japan...fighting the Japanese." And I...I figured it's going to take a long time to get (unintelligible)...which I went through different periods out there thinking it was going to be a short period and then it finally got to thinking, "Well, hell this war is never going to be over."

Interviewer: Okay, alright. I know some people's reaction to when Germany surrendered was, "Well maybe we'll get some help here in the Pacific now."

Mr. Hood: Well I didn't even think that to...that far.

Interviewer: What would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. Hood: Frightening?

Interviewer: Yes sir.

Mr. Hood: I don't know that I ever was frightened. I mean, as I look back on it the most dangerous time was when this kamikaze could have...and...and incidentally in...just before we set sail from the Philippines on...to go to...kamikaze...that maybe...magazine came out...and on this cover of the magazine was a picture of this...my station...the director's tub and on it was the picture of three...uh two dead sailors that had been hit by this kamikaze. So that was my...my station and it was pictured...what might hap...but I again I repeat...it

was...had the advantage of being a good place to see the war and see what was going on.

Interviewer: Okay, now what magazine was that in?

Mr. Hood: It was...seems to be it was Navy News...it was a monthly news...Navy (unintelligible). And that picture is published in many places...took...I say many...it's not uncommon to see that picture...still. I have a...let's see there's one of the ships over in (unintelligible)...I think...well anyway, I've...I've seen this picture many times. I...I've got a real good blow up of it.

Interviewer: Did you get that magazine pretty often then?

Mr. Hood: Well once a month, yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: That picture...it almost...you know...it would...better not promise but I think I...I almost like to send...send you that picture.

Interviewer: Oh sure, good! Okay.

Mr. Hood: You...you...some place you'll me your address so that I could do that (unintelligible)...

Interviewer: Yes, right.

Mr. Hood: Okay, go ahead then.

Interviewer: Okay. Any humorous incidents you can recall...anything funny happen along the way?

Mr. Hood: Oh no, I can't say that I recall anything like that...anything that...another little incident.

Interviewer: Sure, go ahead.

Mr. Hood: One night we...we got word to pick up a floating kamikaze pilot and we located him and dragged him aboard the ship. The idea was to take any (unintelligible) off of him...pictures or orders or what have you and to relay them some place and the captain was supposed to do that. So he was...his body was finally dragged up on the fantail. I do recall that I went back there to see what...to just see the...the body. He was still strapped in his parachute and his face was all gone. Fish had eaten that. But the thing that I remember most was the horrible stink...and I was from the farm and I've smelled a lot of bad smells, but that was the worst that I'd ever smelled! It...human body decayed that way. And we...we got the...pic...some little items off his body and (unintelligible) his billfold and little (unintelligible)...and then dumped him unceremoniously back in the water. I've thought about that so many times. We...we weren't any...we...we should have given him a little better (unintelligible).

Interviewer: Yeah, right.

Mr. Hood: (unintelligible) might have...objected to that.

Interviewer: Right, yeah. But out of it they said the captain gave him an honorary...I mean honorable burial at sea...they didn't think that was right...they were upset about it. So you never know which way you should do.

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Alright. What did you think of the officers you had over you?

Mr. Hood: Oh I...they were just friends...nothing...nothing special. I didn't have any particular feelings.

Interviewer: Did you think they were capable...did a good job?

Mr. Hood: Well, they were just normal people. And you see we were all just not too (unintelligible). My captain had graduated from the...Naval Academy as had the Executive Officer...but I didn't consider them anything special and out there you'd don't...on a small ship you don't stand on ceremony very much. So we were just old friends.

Interviewer: Yeah, I've heard some people say that the Annapolis graduates looked down on the not...non-Annapolis graduates.

Mr. Hood: Oh, I supposed there were some who did and...and after all the people you have...the people that look down on you and me...right now.

Interviewer: That was probably more true and so, you know, on the land or in the bigger ships probably.

Mr. Hood: The...the bigger ships are...have to be more rigid than we would...(unintelligible)...we were just...fifteen guys down there way...one way or the other...together...out here fighting Japanese and didn't know when we were ever going to go home.

Interviewer: Yeah, how many...were in the crew on your ship?

Mr. Hood: In...the destroyer escort...the Buckley class...which we are, 100, uh 105 crew and fifteen officers.

Interviewer: Okay, okay, 120 total.

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. What medals and ribbons did you get?

Mr. Hood: The only ribbon that I...that...kamikaze...the Okinawa Campaign and shooting down that plane. I...I don't recall how I ever got that or...again, that wasn't very important to (unintelligible).

Interviewer: Okay, did you get one battle star?

Mr. Hood: I suppose; I can't answer that.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. Okay, then when did you get out of the Navy?

Mr. Hood: Well I...it was...let's see I think...I...I was detached from the Cummings on February 28th, 1946 and I was recalled in the Korean deal on March 2, 1951 and was detached at that time March 30th, 1953.

Interviewer: Recalled in '51 and...until '53.

Mr. Hood: Yeah, right.

Interviewer: Okay. Now on August 15th of '45 when Japan surrendered where were you and did you hear about that?

Mr. Hood: I don't recall exactly hearing about it, but one month later we went into...into Tokyo Bay and...I do remember that...about three or I think there were four...four officers...I don't know how we did this, but we rode from Yokosuka to Tokyo on a...train and along up in the cab. And in fact, we...we rode...went up like conquering heroes (unintelligible)! People...we weren't afraid of the people...they were...anxious to talk to us.

Interviewer: Okay, now when they had the surrender ceremony on the Missouri...on September 2nd, were you in Tokyo Bay for that?

Mr. Hood: No, no, I don't know where we were. We were out...out in the Pacific. Another little incident...comes to mind.

Interviewer: Sure, okay.

Mr. Hood: I...after the war, we came back and had repairs at Bremerton, Washington and then back out in the Pacific. (laughter) We were waiting outside to go to...to...for a pilot to come out to take us in, and the new skipper then got restless and said, "Hell, I'm going on in!" So, we started in...up the Yangzi River and...heading toward the mouth...and a ship not far away signaled us and said, "Are you a mine sweep?" And we said, signaled back, "No, we are a DE." And they said, "You're right in the middle of a mine field!"

Interviewer: Uh-oh!

Mr. Hood: So...

Interviewer: And that was on the China coast?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, just outside Tokyo Bay.

Interviewer: Oh, Tokyo Bay, okay...alright. Did you say y'all went to China?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, I said...yeah, I...I'm mixed up there. We...we were heading to Sing Tao (spelling ?)...our destination, so we were outside Shanghai...out...down the China coast...that's where the mine fields were.

Interviewer: Shanghai, okay.

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Alright, now what'd you take to Sing Tao? Did you take...(unintelligible) up there or what did you do there?

Mr. Hood: You know...I don't recall...why...how we happened to be there. I do recall that I...I could have gotten...I was going to stay in the Navy awhile and I'd already had orders to be in charge of a commissary store in Santa Ana,

California, and I could have gotten off at Guam. But I spoke...had guy...had been on Guam and I didn't want (unintelligible). So Skipper didn't mind that I ignored my orders and stayed on the ship till we got to Shanghai. I'm not proud of the fact that I...let somebody that...the officer in charge of that store was anxious to get out...and here I was goldbricking my way from Guam to Shanghai. But having already won the war, I felt...taking privileges.

Interviewer: Yeah, well Dick Hoffman mentioned that you all escorted some LSTs taking Chinese troops up to Sing Tao.

Mr. Hood: We may have; I...I didn't pay any attention to what we were doing really. He...he was the executive on staff at that time; he might have been...well I don't know what he was at that time, but he...he would have known. He was navigator; he knew what we was doing and I didn't care...I was going to go anyway.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay. When did you get out of the Navy then?

Mr. Hood: Well I...I was...let's see if I have it here...when you asked me when...see I got out...the first time...

Interviewer: Yeah, the first time, right.

Mr. Hood: I...I don't have it right in front of me...when I got out. But I got out from...the commissary store in Santa Ana, California...that's where I got out of World War II.

Interviewer: Oh okay, so that would have been '46...'47?

Mr. Hood: I suppose it was.

Interviewer: Okay.

Mr. Hood: Be '46.

Interviewer: What was the highest rank you got to in World War II?

Mr. Hood: Well I...I was...in World War II...I think I was just a...Full Lieutenant and...but...and the Korean deal, I just decided to get out...I was...promoted to lieutenant commander. But I never accepted it because I didn't...I knew I was going to get out...(unintelligible). My highest rank would be Full Lieutenant.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. What...what was your total time in the service then?

Mr. Hood: Only about three years the first and a year and a half the second.

Interviewer: Okay, and what did you do when you were recalled for the Korean War? What did you do then?

Mr. Hood: I did...administrative work for Farm Bureau Insurance.

Interviewer: No, I mean when you were recalled for the Korean War...what did you...?

Mr. Hood: Oh, went to...four Naval officers were...included in the...a class at the Army Quartermaster's School in Chicago. And we had (unintelligible) learned how to cook; more training on being officers. Well there was...it was a Quartermaster's School and they were...quartermasters did the same thing...Navy supply officers did...though we...we did the...then I went to...I was assigned to the naval air station out at Whidbey Island in Washington...just north of Seattle and they didn't have a place for me out there...and made me the Household Goods Officer, so I was the Household Goods Officer at a naval training...naval station...naval air station...in Whidbey Island. A wonderful duty! It was a wonderful duty.

Interviewer: Okay, now when you got out in '46 from World War II, did you have any trouble adjusting to civilian life?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, I did a little bit. I...I...seemed like the things we were doing...and a lot of people thought we were important...didn't seem like very much to me having...war...in a war and been in combat, so I...I did have a little trouble with the...finding anything that was real meaningful.

Interviewer: Okay, did your wife have any trouble when you got back adjusting to things?

Mr. Hood: No, no. In fact she kind of wanted me to stay in the...in the...

Interviewer: Career out of it, huh?

Mr. Hood: Career...but I had parents and I thought I ought to be looking after. And as it turned out, they had long lives. I could have stayed in the Navy and retired and then taken care of my parents. But...I chose this other routine and I retired from the Farm Bureau Insurance I believe as Vice President of Administration and Secretary after thirty-five years.

Interviewer: Oh okay. Did you use your GI bill for anything?

Mr. Hood: No.

Interviewer: Have you had any reunions?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, our ship has...had about eleven.

Interviewer: Had you been to many of those?

Mr. Hood: All but the first one.

Interviewer: Okay, alright. Now there's one thing I need to do...I should have done it at the first...I didn't do it. There's an agreement with the Nimitz Museum I should have read to you and I didn't do it...let me read it to you now and

make sure it's okay with you. When I do this in person, of course, I give it to the man to read and sign, but since this is a phone, let me read it to you. The heading says, "The National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission Oral History Project – The purpose of the National Museum of the Pacific War Oral History Project is to collect, preserve and interpret the stories of World War II veterans; home front experiences; the life of Field Admiral Chester W. Nimitz and the Old Nimitz Hotel by means of the tape recorded interviews. Audio recordings of such interviews become part of the Center for Pacific War Studies, the Archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission. These recordings are made available for historical and other academic research by scholars and members of the family of the interviewee. We the undersigned have read or heard the above and voluntarily offer the National Museum of the Pacific War full use of the information contained on audio recordings and or written text of these oral history research interviews. In view of the scholarly value of this research material, we hereby sign rights, title, (unintelligible) pertaining to it to the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission. "

Is that okay with you?

Mr. Hood: That's okay with me.

Interviewer: Good, good, I should have done that at the first but I didn't...I...it was one of those things.

Mr. Hood: I'd do that anyway, so that's alright.

Interviewer: Alright, okay. Alright, well...now you say that your...your ancestor patented the first 80 acres in when?

Mr. Hood: 1830...1823.

Interviewer: And the second was 1831?

Mr. Hood: That's right.

Interviewer: Okay, now by patented...what do you mean by patented?

Mr. Hood: Well got it from the government.

Interviewer: Homesteaded it or whatever.

Mr. Hood: No...the...you...it wasn't homesteaded. You...you bought...you bought it from the government.

Interviewer: Oh, I see you bought it from the government. Okay.

Mr. Hood: Ain't nobody'd owned it before but the Indians.

Interviewer: Yeah, okay, and it's been in your family ever since?

Mr. Hood: Yes.

Interviewer: That's quite awhile...that's quite awhile.

Mr. Hood: Yeah.

Interviewer: Well, Jim, is there anything that you've thought of about your service in World War II or anything?

Mr. Hood: No, but I repeat...I'm embarrassed that I'm so inarticulate.

Interviewer: Oh no, no! Don't...

Mr. Hood: Kind of mixed up on my dates and so forth but...

Interviewer: Don't feel that way at all. As I say, you do better than about 90% of the people I talk with! So don't feel bad at all. Well again, I want to thank you for your time today.

Mr. Hood: Let me tell you another little story.

Interviewer: Sure, okay, go ahead.

Mr. Hood: Not...not related really, except for the fact that I have a...when I was recalled and was out at Whidbey Island...that...naval officer's wife (unintelligible)...she was...had been raised by Admiral Gallery and Admiral Gallery was the one that captured the submarine out in the landing (unintelligible). They kept it a secret so the Germans didn't know that their codes...didn't...(unintelligible).

Interviewer: The U505?

Mr. Hood: Pardon?

Interviewer: The U505?

Mr. Hood: Yeah, you got it!

Interviewer: Right.

Mr. Hood: And...she was a gabby gal, and she was always talking about Uncle Beauty. Dan Gallery's nickname was Beauty. So she was always talking about whatever! But never in the time that we knew her did she ever mention that he was given credit for capturing that (unintelligible). Well I learned later that after they captured that submarine, he sent an order to all the crew...there was some destroyer escorts involved in it...sent it to everybody involved...saying that if any of them ever revealed that they captured that ship

they'd be court-martialed the morning and shot at (unintelligible). But anyway...he couldn't have carried that out, but I just wondered if he...if that's true...that he did demand code of silence...if it was out of principal...he did not tell his own family. And of after the Korean deal, word came out...many years later...but again I just suspect that she did...was I'm sure if she had known that her uncle had captured the 505, she (unintelligible) us and everybody else.

Interviewer: Well the word came up pretty soon after the war, didn't it?

Mr. Hood: Well I don't know...I'm not so sure.

Interviewer: Well it...it wasn't too long after the war...they paraded that thing around the country.

Mr. Hood: Well maybe so.

Interviewer: I think; I'm not sure. Yeah, no I do know that they did enforce a code of silence on everybody...at the time you know...but I'm sure after the war was over...wouldn't make much difference. This is the end of this tape.

(End of Interview)

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