

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

#269

DON S. JONES

MARINE BARRACKS, PATIENT IN NAVAL HOSPITAL

**INTERVIEWED ON
DECEMBER 7, 1998
BY DANIEL MARTINEZ**

TRANSCRIBED BY:

CARA KIMURA

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Daniel Martinez (DM): ...conducted by Daniel Martinez, historian for the National Park Service at the USS *Arizona* Memorial. The taping was at the Imperial Palace Hotel in Las Vegas, Nevada on December 7, 1998, at approximately 1:30 p.m. The person being interviewed is Don S. Jones, who was at Marine barracks, as a Marine on December 7, 1941. For the record, Don, would you please give me your full name?

Don Jones (DJ): Full name is Don Stewart Jones.

DM: And your place of birth?

DJ: Lost Springs, Kansas, 1919, July 5, 1919.

DM: And would you consider that your hometown in 1941?

DJ: Yes sir.

DM: Giving me a little bit of background on yourself, how many were in your family?

DJ: Okay. I was number four in a family of seven. I had three older brothers and a younger brother and two younger sisters.

DM: And where were you?

DJ: I was in the middle.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And then we grew up in the middle of the Wheat Belt in central Kansas. I was probably eight or nine years old before I ever even saw an indoor toilet. Because the school we went to—they finally built a new school and they had indoor toilets and I was about eight or nine years old when that school was finished.

DM: Would it be safe to say that your mom and dad, their profession was farming?

DJ: Farming.

DM: And what kind of guy was your dad?

DJ: What kind of a what?

DM: What kind of guy was he? What was...

DJ: He was tall, slim and had a handlebar mustache, chewed tobacco and he smoked a corncob pipe and I remember, the most fond remembrance I have of him is when I was a little boy and would get to sit on his lap and he smelled like tobacco and alfalfa hay and the barn. He would probably almost turn your stomach today. (Chuckles) He had the smell of honest sweat, you know, I mean, he was a farmer.

DM: Right. How about your mom? Tell me a little bit about her.

DJ: She was a little heavysset lady. She was a schoolteacher. And of course when she started having babies, she quit teaching school, but she, her qualifications to become a schoolteacher was that she graduated from the eighth grade.

DM: I see. Now, did you go to grammar school right there?

DJ: Went all through school in Lost Springs, Kansas. I graduated from there in 1938.

DM: Now, you went to high school as well?

DJ: Oh, we went to high school in the same building. The grade school was in the bottom of the building and the high school was in the upstairs.

DM: It would be safe to say there was a small school.

DJ: Yeah. I graduated in a class of fifteen and it was the largest class that had graduated for eight or ten years, so.

DM: How did the Great Depression affect you and your family?

DJ: Well, nobody had any money. I don't think anybody that I knew was unhappy, but I left home at fifteen and went to work on a big farm near Lost Springs and the old fellow I worked for was born in 1900 and he's still alive. And I still visit with him.

DM: How old is he then?

DJ: He's a hundred years old. He'll be a hundred years old in the year 2000.

DM: And he's in good shape?

DJ: Yeah. He's not in good shape. He's in a rest home, but he's still alive.

DM: And when you go to him, he recognizes you and you talk?

DJ: Oh yes. Yeah, we have a good...

DM: So he's still sharp?

DJ: Yeah, he's real sharp. He was active in community affairs and politics and all this and that for years and years. He founded the Kansas State Farmers Union and I worked for him for the last two years I was in high school.

DM: What did you do for him?

DJ: Milked cows and harvested wheat and in the cornfield and you know, I learned to work, working for him. We worked all day every day from before daylight 'til after dark.

DM: Holy smokes. Well, the obvious question is after you graduate from high school, you're looking forward to what your future is going to be. Did you have any idea of what you were going to do when you got out?

DJ: I wanted to join the Marine Corps.

DM: You really did?

DJ: I always wanted to be a Marine. When I was probably eight or ten years old, we had a neighbor who had been a Marine in World War I, I guess. And he went to China at some time or other and he told me all these wild stories about how much money a dollar a month made you in China. And so I joined the Marine Corps with the idea of going to China.

DM: To be a China Marine.

DJ: I wanted to be a China Marine, but I never made it to China.

DM: But you understood that the Marines was a pretty tough outfit?

DJ: Well, when I went in, the first platoon that I was in was the Sixth Marine Fleet, Sixth Marine Fleet Marine Force, stationed at the Marine base at San Diego. And the company that I was in was the base football team. We had three heavyweight champions in the platoon, in the company. And the football team and everybody had to be at least six feet tall, so I was one of the little guys in the company.

DM: How, what were you?

DJ: I was six feet tall and weighed 190 pounds. And we were the parade platoon. And we did the Queen Anne's salute and all the fancy things and the big thing that we did is one time we paraded for President Roosevelt.

DM: Is that right?

DJ: Yeah.

DM: So it would be safe to say that you were one of the top...

DJ: I was among the top Marines at that time. We had the Asiatic Pacific heavyweight champion in our company and we had two Golden Glove champions, Norman HARE and the Asiatic Pacific champion was a guy by the name of Jesse Kraft. We had some all-American football players. And we had three or four guys from the Pendergast machine in Kansas City that

either joined the Marine Corps or went to jail. And they were in our company.

DM: So that was a pretty tough outfit?

DJ: Yeah.

DM: Now, did you play any sports at all?

DJ: I played football with 'em a little bit.

DM: Okay. And I bet you guys won a few games?

DJ: Pardon?

DM: I bet you guys won a few games.

DJ: We got the championship in '39 for the league that we were in.

DM: That's great. Now, you stayed there, when were you reassigned and when did...

DJ: Okay. I stayed there until the spring of '40 and I had put in to go to China and they finally approved my transfer and they went aboard the *Chaumont* [AP-5], which is a transport ship in those days. And it went from San Diego to Long Beach and to Breming—to San Francisco and to Bremerton, Washington, then to Honolulu. And somewhere between Bremerton, Washington and Honolulu, they decided they wanted about twenty more Marines to get off the ship at Pearl Harbor.

DM: For what purpose?

DJ: And I was one of them. Because they needed to replenish the garrison at the Marine barracks at Pearl Harbor and I was one of the people that was going to have to get off.

DM: Okay. What was your rank at the time?

DJ: I was a private.

DM: Uh-huh. So you get there to Pearl Harbor, you're going to be in Hawaii. Were you happy about that?

DJ: No, I wanted to go to China!

(Laughter)

DJ: But it didn't make any difference.

DM: You were, you had orders.

DJ: I had orders to get off there, so it didn't make any difference what you wanted to do. You did what they told you to.

DM: Okay, so you end up at Marine barracks and who were you assigned to?

DJ: I was assigned to "A" company, but I don't remember the company commander. But after a while I went to headquarters company and I got attached to the supply department.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And I was a better worker than I was a Marine. I wasn't a spit and polish Marine.

DM: Okay.

DJ: So when Pearl Harbor started, I was in the supply department at the Marine barracks and I was a corporal on December 7, 1941.

DM: Okay. Marine barracks is still there, I mean, it's...

DJ: Yeah, they look just the same. We were there on the 50th and the 55th [anniversaries].

DM: And I was at the close, when they closed Marine barracks.

DJ: Did they close 'em?

DM: They closed Marine barracks.

DJ: They have?

DM: Yeah.

DJ: Oh boy.

DM: And I'll make sure one thing is I will send you a copy of that program, 'cause I was there and there was a lot of former Marines that were there that served during different times of its history. The Marine barracks is still standing, they didn't knock it down, but it's still there.

The events that unfolded in December of 1941, of which we're observing now, the 57th anniversary, that particular weekend, were the Marines affected prior to that, in November, with any of these alerts? Or did that affect what the Marine Corps, their mission at Pearl Harbor?

DJ: We talked about Japan and on December 6, I bet a guy a dollar that we would be in war with Japan within a year. On December 7, he gave me my dollar and I don't know who he was or what his name was. But in the afternoon of December 7, I think he gave me the dollar.

DM: We're going to stop for just a moment...

DJ: Okay.

DM: ...because...

(Taping stops, then resumes)

DM: I know him.

DJ: I forget what the name of the general was on the 50th.

DM: Yeah. All right. So, this bet eventually pays off, unfortunately, with the attack on Pearl Harbor. What was—again, I want to just ask this question, as the events were leading up, did you guys go to special alerts and what were you supposed to do if war broke out?

DJ: Nothing in particular that I remember of.

DM: Okay, did you have any gun batteries there that the Marines had?

DJ: No, nothing. We had, all we had was some guns in the guard shack. And everybody had their own rifle of course.

DM: Right. And a Marine is always trained to be a rifleman?

DJ: Oh yes. It was a rifle...

DM: But you weren't in a rifle company?

DJ: I was in headquarters company, which was a service company.

DM: Okay. That particular weekend, did you get liberty and do you remember what you did on the night of December 6, 1941?

DJ: I went to the hospital about three or four days before Pearl Harbor.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And I had a minor operation.

DM: And would you mind telling me what that operation was?

DJ: Well, when I went into the hospital, I had a cyst right next to my rectum.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And the doctor said, "We'll have to operate on that and take it out," you know, it was a cyst. And he said, "As long as we're going to do this, you

will sooner or later be bothered with hemorrhoids and if you'd like, we'd remove them." He said, "It's a good time to do it."

I said, "Okay."

So anyway, they give you a spinal for this kind of an operation, so you're awake from your waist up. And so they had three or four Navy corpsmen and a Navy doctor operating on a Marine and they were all getting a big kick out of operating on a Marine. They were joking with me about how they were cutting up my rear end. (Chuckles)

So one of the doctors said, "Well, we've got that all taken care of. Is there anything else we can do to this Marine?"

So one of the corpsmen says, "You know, doc, he's never been circumcised."

The doc says, "Hell, let's turn him over and take a look at that!"

So they turned me over and he said, "Son," he says, "this is the best time in the world to be circumcised." He said, "You're going to be sore down there anyway, we just want to get this over with."

And I said, "Well, okay."

And so I was circumcised.

DM: How old were you when...

DJ: I was twenty-two.

DM: Well, okay. So you were a rather mature man at that time?

DJ: Oh yeah. When you're, when we were born, when I was a kid, they didn't circumcise little boys.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And it was something that should've been done, I guess.

DM: So what was post-op like after this? Were you a little sore?

DJ: Well, I had just gotten to where I could get up and walk to the bathroom.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And it was a painful operation, I'll tell you! So on the morning of the raid, that was the condition I was in. I still had stitches, both ends, all around everything.

DM: Were you at Navy Hospital then?

DJ: I was at the Naval Hospital.

DM: And right there at Hospital Point?

DJ: At Hospital Point, yeah.

DM: Okay. Now, describe to me the events as they unfolded that morning for you.

DJ: Okay. I had went to breakfast and gotten a morning paper and I was laying on my bunk reading the Sunday paper. We started hearing explosions. And some guy said, "Boy, they must be working on the dry dock this morning," 'cause they were building a new dry dock in the area.

DM: Right.

DJ: And another, about that time, a little guy ran into the quarter and he said, "The Japs have attacked! The Japs have attacked!"

And somebody said, "Baloney."

And he dropped to his knees and put his hands in a prayer position and he said, "God so help me, we're being attacked by the Japanese!"

So of course we all ran out in back of the hospital, well, front or back. But anyway, I went out in back of the hospital.

DM: Okay, were you in your...

DJ: In the hospital pajamas.

DM: Hospital pajamas. You had been obviously laying in your bed.

DJ: Yeah.

DM: Recuperating. Had you had breakfast yet?

DJ: Oh, I had had breakfast, yes.

DM: Okay. So you go outside and what do you see?

DJ: The first thing we saw was a plane flew right over us, hardly any higher than the ceiling and the dirt kicked up beside us and somebody said, "What's that?"

And somebody else said, "My god we're being shot at!"

And we were being strafed.

DM: Okay.

DJ: So another fellow and I decided to get close to a ditch that was behind the hospital. They had dug a ditch to lay a water line or something. We don't know what for, but it was a ditch like maybe two or three feet deep. And we decided if he came back, we were going to jump in the ditch.

DM: Okay.

DJ: In the meantime, there were plane high bombers flying over.

DM: Right.

DJ: Dropping long cigar-looking, silver, cigar-looking bombs.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And we thought they were going to land on us and they floated on over side into the harbor. And...

DM: What's...? Excuse me for interrupting, what is that feeling like when you know you're under attack and they're dropping things that maybe could kill you?

DJ: We were thoroughly frustrated, confused and terrified and didn't know what to do and wasn't anybody telling us what to do.

DM: Right.

DJ: And so all of a sudden, some guy hollered, "Here he comes again!"

And here was a plane coming at us. It was on fire and the pilot was standing up in the cockpit, as if he were trying to get out. So this other fellow and I jumped in the ditch and I landed on top of him and the plane crashed and slid over the ditch.

Now, we think this is the first plane that was shot down in the war. I don't know if that—nobody knows for sure.

DM: Right.

DJ: And but it was one of the first if it wasn't the first.

DM: Okay.

DJ: And I laid on top of this guy for a minute and it seemed like forever. And he was cussing and crying and praying and he had a rosary and he tore it all to pieces. And I thought, well, I'm not as afraid as he is, so I got out of the ditch and the first thing I saw was a sailor, had a leg. The pilot had evidently went through the propeller of the plane and the biggest part of him that was left was a leg. And a sailor had this leg and he was beating it on the ground

and he was screaming, "I'll kill him! I'll kill him! I'll kill him!" And he stopped and looked at us as if to say, well what in the world am I doing, you know. And he pulled the boot off and he said, "I have the first souvenir of World War II."

And he may very well have. Maybe he said the first souvenir of the war, but anyway he said, "I've got the first souvenir."

And I thought, well, I should have a souvenir. So I went to the plane, which was on fire and I got a piece of the parachute that was hanging out of the plane. And I've had that all these years.

DM: You still have it?

DJ: No, I donated it to the Palm Springs Air Museum to put in the Pearl Harbor booth that they have at the Palm Springs Air Museum. So it'll be on display there.

DM: Now let me make sure I understand this. When you guys jumped in this ditch, the plane literally, when it crashed...

DJ: Crashed before it got to the ditch and slid over.

DM: Went over the ditch?

DJ: Yeah.

DM: And then you...

DJ: Now, I don't know whether it slid directly over us or not. It didn't hurt us.

DM: Okay. And then it, as I understand it, it slammed into a building?

DJ: Yeah.

DM: And pieces of it were everywhere.

DJ: Well, it wasn't all tore to pieces, but people went down there for weeks and clipped pieces off the wing for souvenir and things. And you actually have some pieces in your museum.

DM: Yes we do, from that particular aircraft. And we have a seat belt from that plane as well.

DJ: You do?

DM: Yeah, we have a seat belt from the plane. Now, we know what kind of plane that was. There was actually three men in that plane. It was one of the torpedo bombers that was...

DJ: Oh, there was actually three men in the plane!

DM: Yeah, it was a KATE.

DJ: There was one fellow standing up.

DM: And that was the pilot trying to get out.

DJ: Evidently.

DM: What happened next?

DJ: Well, I went back in the hospital, because when I slid in ditch, things kinda messed me up. (Chuckles)

DM: Right.

DJ: And the doctor...

DM: Did the stitches break loose?

DJ: Pardon?

DM: Did your stitches break loose?

DJ: Oh, tore all to pieces.

DM: Were you bleeding?

DJ: Oh yeah. So I soaked in salt water.

DM: Oh man.

DJ: And the doctor said, "It'll be all right." He said, "We got people a lot sicker than you are."

And so he gave me, asked me to take a pitcher of water and the doctor, by the way, is a Russell Jensen, who lives in Yucca Valley and I just saw him this past week and he was the only doctor on duty at the Naval Hospital on that day, and we're very good friends with him. And he's the vice president of the chapter and I'm the president.

DM: Well, I would very much like to interview him sometime in the future.

DJ: Well, it would be wonderful if you could because he's got a good story.

DM: Okay, and you'll be able to give me his address...

DJ: Yes.

DM: Dr. Jensen.

DJ: Yes.

DM: Very good.

DJ: Anyway, he said, "Son, why don't you get a pitcher of water and give everybody that would like a drink of water?" All the people that were burnt.

By then, they were really starting to come into the hospital and it wasn't but a little while that every bunk was filled and there was someone under every bunk and all the aisle ways were filled and I tried to talk to the people and

some of 'em would talk to me. One fellow says, "Hey, aren't you from Kansas?"

And I said, "I sure am."

And he was from a town that was neighboring to our town, about the same size as our town was. And we had played sports against each other like rival sports. And he and I had ran the quarter of a mile in a district meet. And he beat me by a foot or two. And we did it for two or three years in a row and I never did beat him. But his name was Hines and I went back two or three days later to see him and the doctor said he had probably died.

DM: What were his wounds? Could you tell what his...

DJ: He was burnt.

DM: He was burned.

DJ: Almost everybody that was there were burned.

DM: Lot of these were *Arizona* guys, were they not?

DJ: Well, I don't know where they were from. I have no idea. But I tried to talk to 'em and I just asked 'em where they were from, you know, and they were from Ohio or Nebraska or wherever. And so I stayed there for probably an hour or two. And the doctor finally said, "Son," he says, "you're walking. You go back to duty."

So I reported back to the Marine barracks and I stayed there for another year.

DM: Can I go back just to the hospital? They had all of these casualties coming in.

DJ: Yes.

DM: I know that you probably saw things that you never had seen in your life. How did you handle seeing these badly wounded men?

DJ: Well, it didn't seem to bother me too much. You kind of get numb to it. The stench was unbelievable because they were all burnt. And I didn't, it didn't seem to bother me. Some people, it made 'em sick, but it didn't bother me that much. And I tried to help 'em and do what I could and tried to talk to 'em. And I went back to the hospital three or four days later, because I had had a radio there. And there were hardly anybody in the hospital. They almost all had died. But I actually saw dump trucks back up in front of the hospital and dump the guys. They just slide out of the truck onto the lawn.

DM: You're kidding.

DJ: And...

DM: Was that during the raid do you mean?

DJ: It was during the raid, yeah. They were hauling people in from off the ships and out of the water and they were...

DM: These were dead?

DJ: Some of 'em were dead and some of 'em were alive. But there were guys running in and out carrying them into the hospital and they didn't necessarily have stretchers to carry 'em on.

DM: Right.

DJ: They just grabbed 'em and hauled 'em into the hospital and put 'em into bed. Some guys would pick one guy up and bring 'em in. It was a pretty gruesome sight. It was—you've all seen a hamburger that's stayed on the hamburger grill too long.

DM: And that's what it was like?

DJ: And that's what it looked like, yeah.

DM: What was your feeling? I mean, you're seeing these casualties come in. What was your feeling or feelings of maybe the people around you towards the Japanese for this surprise attack?

DJ: Well, you hated the Japanese, of course.

DM: Sure.

DJ: And but I don't know really what my feelings were. I was confused and frustrated and I wanted to do whatever I could do to help whoever needed help. And...

DM: So are you telling me despite all this recent surgery and ripping the stitches and everything you'd been through, you went back that day, December 7, to your unit?

DJ: I went back to the hospital three or four days later.

DM: Okay. And three or four days later you went back to your unit.

DJ: I went back to the hospital, but I went back to duty on that day.

DM: Oh you did?

DJ: I went back to the Marine barracks on that day. I spent the first night on top of the Marine barracks and we manned a machine gun.

DM: Okay.

DJ: Everybody knew that we were going to be invaded.

DM: That was the feeling.

DJ: That was the feeling. Everybody knew we would be invaded and we fired the machine gun in the air maybe every hour or so because it made a lot of smoke and it got rid of the mosquitoes. (Chuckles)

DM: Do you remember that night when the *Enterprise*'s planes came in and everybody opened up on 'em?

DJ: Yes.

DM: Can you tell me...

DJ: But I didn't know what it was.

DM: Can you tell me what you saw and what you did?

DJ: Well, I just—we heard a lot of explosions, a lot of guns took off and I didn't know what it was.

DM: Somebody described it as one of the greatest fireworks shows that they'd seen in a while.

DJ: Well, I don't remember that much of it, but I just remember that there was a lot of gunfire going on and I'm sure that most of us thought at that time that we were being invaded.

DM: The next day comes, December 8, and do you ever get a chance to see what had happened to the fleet and all of that?

DJ: The next day come, December 8, the sun came up and the Japanese weren't there and of course this was a big relief.

DM: Right.

DJ: And I went back to duty at my job at the supply department at the Marine barracks and we had what we were making a supply depot, there was supposedly going to supply the Marine forces of the Pacific. And I was one of the original people in this supply depot.

DM: When did you get a chance to get a look around Pearl Harbor?

DJ: Oh, three or four days later.

DM: And what'd you see?

DJ: Well, it was just total destruction. I went down where the *Pennsylvania* was in the dry dock and the *Shaw* and the *Downes*.

DM: Yeah, *Cassin* and *Downes* and then the *Shaw* was...

DJ: Yeah, I saw all that. Then of course you look out over the harbor and we couldn't believe what had happened.

DM: Did you see the *Arizona*?

DJ: Well, you could just see the superstructure.

DM: And you knew she had gone down...

DJ: Well, everybody, you know, everybody—they didn't talk that much about it. We weren't supposed to talk about it. It was supposed to be hush-hush. We actually had a musician that was nosey character and he was always asking everybody questions and he would go down to the docks and ask questions and one thing or another, and we had some new guys come in so one of 'em got guard duty on the dock. And so we told him there was a heavysset guy that kept asking questions and if he came down to the docks asking questions, to arrest him. So the new guy didn't know who he was, so they arrested him, put him in the brig overnight. (Chuckles)

DM: Is that right?

DJ: Yeah. (Laughs) But we weren't supposed to ask questions. We were supposed to just be quiet.

DM: Did you lose anybody that day that had been with you in San Diego or any of that training that you know?

DJ: No. The only person that I lost that I know of was this fellow from Durham, Kansas.

DM: From Kansas, the guy you ran against.

DJ: Yeah. He was the same age as I was and we went to school at the same time.

DM: When you found out he had passed away, did that affect you or did you have time to let those feelings in at that time?

DJ: No. I didn't. Didn't let it bother me.

DM: Now, you fought throughout the war.

DJ: Yeah.

DM: What were some of the major landings that you were involved...

DJ: Well, I went to Saipan. I joined up during the Saipan operation and finished up there. Then I went to Okinawa. And I'm the only person that we know of—I don't know, maybe you've heard of somebody else—but anyway, I was among the first troops that landed at Nagasaki, where the atomic bomb was dropped.

DM: You're kidding?

DJ: So I'm the only person that I've heard of that came as close as I did to see the beginning and ending of World War II.

DM: The last bomb dropped on Japan.

DJ: Yeah, yeah.

DM: That's very interesting and I was just wondering, can you describe what Nagasaki looked like?

DJ: Okay. I go to schools and talk to the kids about it. And what I tell them is when our ship stopped in the harbor, you couldn't even see land. It was a rainy, foggy morning, drizzling rain. We got in small boats to go ashore and we went ashore in Japan just as though we were going to make an invasion. We were fully armed. We didn't know what to expect.

DM: The surrender had been signed.

DJ: Yeah. No, the armistice hadn't been signed yet.

DM: Okay.

DJ: So when we went ashore, we didn't really know what to expect. But as we got closer to shore, we started seeing floating mines in the water. And they'd had to put the boat in reverse and go around the mines and a little after that, we started seeing dead bodies floating in the water. And by the time we got to where we could see land, we probably saw several hundred dead bodies floating in the water. They were all swelled up and green. They were all laying on their back, and I remember looking at 'em and they looked as if they were grinning at you as if to say, "Well my troubles are all over, how are you doing?"

And so when we got ashore at Nagasaki, there was nobody there, no opposition. And it was unbelievable to believe that Nagasaki had been a city of like 100,000 people. And if you could imagine a city of 100,000 people and some giant taking a broom and it's just gone. Sweeping it all away. And Nagasaki was in an area that had mountains behind it and they were gullies and one thing or another. And you could look up the side of the mountain and you could see where debris had been blown up into the mountains and it was sucked back like wind rows on the sides of these canyons and one thing or another. The only thing that was standing at Nagasaki were round smokestacks and round telephone poles. Everything else was gone. The railroad was still intact and the railroad station was intact because it was underground.

So I was in supply and I was put in charge of about maybe twenty-five or thirty guys that were truck drivers and jeep drivers and in the supply. And we stayed in Nagasaki proper, right on the edge of the bombed out area, for the first night. And we had all of our supplies stacked up in the tracks and one thing or another. And the rest of the battalion marched like ten miles out into some old prisoner of war barracks, close to Nagasaki, and that's where they spent their first night. And then we stayed there for a couple of weeks, then we went to Kanoya.

But the next morning, another fellow and I got in a jeep and we drove around the area that was bombed out. And we got to the railroad station and there were people going in and out of the railroad station, and we had learned how to say good morning in Japanese, which was, "*Ohayo gozaimasu.*"

So we walked to the railroad station and here we are, with a forty-five and a carbine and bandolier of ammunition and as we said good morning, the Japanese all stood up and bowed to us and, "*Ohayo gozaimasu.*" And it was probably a block long.

We got to the other end of the railroad station and, oh, this guy's name was George Hay, and he says, "Hey, that's fun. Let's go back and do it again."

So we went back to the railroad station and the people had all gone. Now, we were told—I had an interpreter that stayed with me for about a year in Japan. I stayed there for a year. And he said the Japanese people had been taught to believe that in order for us to join the Marine corps, we had to kill our father or our mother in cold blood to qualify to be a Marine. So you can imagine how afraid they were when they saw us walking through that station.

DM: We're going to stop tape right here.

DJ: Okay.

DM: 'Cause we've got to change...

END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE

SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE

DJ: Well, there was always a prevailing breeze in Nagasaki, so it probably blew most of the radiation away.

DM: When you went to Nagasaki, it was August. And I know that you guys had been trying to find out. Can you tell me a little bit about—you don't know

the exact day you went in there, but you feel it was towards the end of August or beginning of September?

DJ: Yes.

DM: And...

DJ: We loaded up ship in Saipan. We were in Saipan and we loaded up ship as fast as we could and headed for Japan.

DM: Did it—it must have struck you that this weapon that had been used in Hiroshima and now Nagasaki was of unprecedented power; that we were in a whole new era of warfare.

DJ: Yeah.

DM: Did that strike you at that time or did that come to you much later?

DJ: Came to me years later. We knew it was our atomic bomb and we knew we destroyed it and we knew it was one hell of a bomb, but it didn't really, the significance of it took a while to really soak in.

DM: So, in later years, when these politicians and Krushchev and the Cold War comes around, and they start talking about nuclear exchange...

DJ: That's right.

DM: ...maybe that meant a little different to you than the average citizen that had never seen such things.

DJ: I went to the doctor and got a physical.

DM: You did?

DJ: Yes.

DM: For what purpose?

DJ: To see if I had any radiation in my system.

DM: And how did you come out?

DJ: The doctor said, "Nothing wrong with you."

DM: Now let me talk to you about the politics and that's where that question was. And that's a great answer because I was concerned as the cameraman was here about what your health would be being in a radioactive area. The politics of such, you must have had—when these politicians and, during the Cold War years of Eisenhower and Kennedy and Johnson and Nixon, during those times, when they started talking about nuclear exchange, that probably meant something different to you than the average citizen, I suspect.

DJ: Oh yes.

DM: Because you knew what it could do.

DJ: Yeah, I knew what it could do. And I go to schools, I've got three appointments to go to schools the next month or so and talk to the kids about it. I tell them this very same story. And I've got over 2000 letters from kids thanking me for coming to school.

DM: Is that what the Pearl Harbor Survivors, or your chapter likes to do? To tell the...

DJ: There's only three of us that are doing it now. When we first started, there was six or seven of us and it's a strain on people.

DM: Right.

DJ: And people get to be our age and if it bothers them, I've got one guy that's ninety-one that does it.

DM: Okay.

DJ: If there's ever anybody you ought to interview, he went through the Haitian campaign, the Nicaraguan campaign, the China rebellion, all through World

War II and the Korean War and he actually evacuated the French troops out of Vietnam.

DM: He sounds like quite a guy.

DJ: He joined in 1926. He's a retired full commander.

DM: And what's his name?

DJ: Clyde Ernst.

DM: Clyde Ernst, okay.

DJ: Yeah.

DM: Well, we'll keep it in mind.

DJ: I'll send you his name and address.

DM: When the war ended, 'cause you were there when it started, what did it all mean to you?

DJ: Okay. When they dropped the bomb on Nagasaki, we heard over the radio that the war was over. I was in camp and the whole company was out on Saipan on maneuvers. So I heard it and the colonel or the captain or somebody was there, he says, "Whatever you do, don't tell anybody else."

I said, "Okay," and I jumped in the jeep and I ran out where they were having maneuvers and told everybody!

(Laughter)

DM: Kind of messed up the maneuvers, I bet.

DJ: Oh yeah.

DM: Did you guys all celebrate?

DJ: Well, I think they finished the maneuvers.

DM: Uh-huh.

DJ: And then we went back and it wasn't but a couple of days later that they said that get ready to load ship and of course, being in supply, well, I had to box everything up in boxes and get ready to go aboard ship.

DM: What did it personally mean to you, the war had come to an end?

DJ: Well, I'd get to go home. I had twice as many points as I needed to get out when they started giving points, but I was a regular and I had over a year to do. So I went to Japan and you know the rumors were flying thick and fast that it didn't matter if you're a regular or not, if you had the points and wanted to get out, you could, but it wasn't true. So I spent a year in Japan. We spent a year destroying Japanese armament.

DM: Right.

DJ: I spent three months in Kanoya. We destroyed caves that were in the mountains overlooking the waterfront that had a railroad track in 'em, with a cannon setting on a flat car.

DM: Well, I'd like to address this thing right off the bat, because there's been, as you know, there was a great controversy in 1995 about whether we should've dropped the bomb or not or anything. Now, you were there. What do you think the Japanese were prepared to do had we invaded Japan?

DJ: I have a neighbor who was a nine-year-old girl that lived twenty miles from Nagasaki. Her father was a schoolteacher. Before the bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, she had already been issued a bamboo stick with a sharp point to kill the terrible Americans. They had closed down the schools and so they were prepared to invade. And it's our belief, for the ones of us that were in the Pacific and saw how the Japanese defended their islands, if the Japanese had defended Japan like they did the islands, we don't believe there would have been enough Japanese people left to have called themselves a population. And we're sure that they would have killed over a million Americans.

Now, here's something interesting that I heard just recently from a fellow that works for the federal government and he was in Japan for a year and he said he made three or four trips to the museum at Hiroshima. He said they now have pictures of Harry Truman in the museum at Hiroshima and the attitude of the Japanese have turned around and a lot of 'em believe he was a savior and stopped the war.

A General HA-YA-TI-KI [*Korechika*] Anami made the statement, after the second bomb was dropped, that we may be able to reverse the situation and turn defeat into victory and would it not be a wondrous thing if the whole Japanese population were to die like a beautiful flower.

DM: Well, I think that that, Don, summarizes a feeling of other historians that have refuted some of this history, as you know, which was surrounded the whole *Enola Gay* controversy.

DJ: Oh yes.

DM: It tore our country apart, especially among the museum community, because the veterans were very, very concerned about what they considered very poor history—revisionist history that was twisting historical facts. Would you agree that the *Enola Gay* controversy about whether or not we should drop the bomb was difficult for veterans to see how the world was now turning upside down?

DJ: Most of the veterans are very much in favor. It must be remembered that the atomic bomb was dropped to stop a catastrophic war quickly. Japan bombed Pearl Harbor for the sole purpose of starting a terrible war. And the bomb did do its duty. Our generation of Americans did save the world for democracy. We were more dedicated to a common cause during World War II than at any time in the history of our country. The only two wars this country ever fought that were completely necessary were the Revolutionary War and World War II. You think about it.

DM: Well, with that note, I'd like to thank you very much for this interview and it's been very enlightening.

DJ: Thank you.

DM: Thank you.

DJ: Been a pleasure.

END OF INTERVIEW