

U.S. NAVY MEDICAL DEPARTMENT ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

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JOHN CLAYTON, USN

CONDUCTED BY
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Telephone interview with former PhM1c John P. Clayton, Jr. of HQ and F Company, 2nd Battalion, 18th Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, who was present at Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Saipan, and Tinian.

I've read the memoir of your wartime experiences and found it very compelling reading. Are you planning to publish it?

No. I wrote that strictly for the family. My son is a Navy doctor, and members of my family became more interested in recent years and prevailed upon me to put into writing some of the things I remembered. When I went back to Saipan for the 50th anniversary visit, it kind of came together.

I don't want to go over old territory so I thought, in the course of today's interview, I would concentrate on a few things you mentioned.

I thought I'd mention that I'm in the process of putting together my revisit to Saipan. I did spend an eventful day there with two former Japanese soldiers who were there shooting at us back then.

Yes. You had mentioned the other day that they took you into a cave.

They showed me where they had caught us on the beach with their machine guns. I have some photos of that and some memorabilia I picked up when I was at Saipan.

I'd like to start with your preparation prior to going to Guadalcanal. What do you remember about your trip from San Diego out to the Pacific?

After being transferred to the Marines, I received training at a place called Camp Eliot, which is no longer there. At that time Camp Pendleton was still under construction. We were in a place south of Pendleton and north of San Diego.

We left San Diego in September just after my 19th birthday. We left on two ships. One was the SS *Monroe*, which was a cruise ship that used to go to Hawaii. The principal part of our division went to New Zealand. It took 21 days to get there. We arrived in Wellington directly from San Diego.

In your memoir you said that the New Zealanders were pretty glad to see you because most of their people were over in North Africa fighting Rommel.

Yes. They were over in North Africa when the word came that the Japanese were bombing Darwin in the northern part of

Australia. So they were pretty nervous.

Then they put you on another transport and you started heading toward Guadalcanal.

After our stay in New Zealand, our outfit was shipped to Guadalcanal. By the way, there's a very interesting book by Leon Uris-*Battle Cry*. It's an excellent description. In fact, he was in my outfit; I didn't know him. He speaks of the four ships that used to ply from New Zealand to Guadalcanal and back. Those were the *Adams*, *Hays*, *Jackson*, and *Crescent City*. I was on the *Crescent City*.

I don't know how long it took us to get from Wellington, New Zealand to Guadalcanal. We left in December and supposedly had a Christmas celebration on board ship. Then we arrived about a week after leaving Wellington. It may have been 8 days; it may have been 9.

The major portion of the fighting on Guadalcanal had already taken place by the time you got there.

Our main goal was to secure the island and relieve the 1st Division, which had made the initial landing. Most of the fighting had died down by then, and we didn't have any major conflicts. But we had a lot of sniper activity. And we had air raids.

When you were offshore, I recall you had said something in your memoir about how green everything looked.

Yes. Having come from southern California and gone to New Zealand, this was the first experience I had in seeing a tropical island. We looked over the side of the ship at the distant island-Guadalcanal-and it was just an expanse of green. What we saw were coconut trees. It was as green as can be. Later we learned that these trees were part of Lever Brothers Plantation.

How did you go ashore?

We had to go over the side of the ship on cargo nets made of rope and it was very hazardous. You climbed down into Higgins boats.

As a corpsman, there were lots of things to deal with-disease and many Japanese bodies still lying around.

Yes, that was a big problem. The dead Japanese were not buried. All of ours, however, were buried in a cemetery we had

established previously. The unburied were lying around and eventually a fly problem got to be terrible.

The flies would land on the corners of your mouth and eyes and then land in your food. We had a heck of time with them. We finally had to get some details out and cover the bodies with quicklime. So there were all these white mounds around.

But that really didn't solve the problem.

No. It didn't.

Were the bodies quite close to where you all were?

Actually not in our immediate camp area. Our camp area was kind of a clearing in the jungle next to the main road. That dirt road went from north to south. I think I mentioned the fact in the memoir that the main road was heavily traveled but the trucks had to have snow chains because of the mud. Being from California, I didn't know what a snow chain looked like. And that mud was slippery.

The biggest problem you encountered was malaria.

That was the major medical problem. I think I said that 75 percent of the troops had it but that would be a very conservative figure. As a corpsman, our instructions were to instruct the Marines to take better care of themselves by not exposing themselves to mosquitoes. We had mosquito netting but it was very hard to bridge that ignorance gap. The Marines wouldn't use the mosquito netting or, if they did use it, they used it improperly. And we didn't have any mosquito repellents then.

Atabrine had been introduced and these guys didn't want to take it.

Atabrine came out and it was still in the experimental stage. We didn't know what the dosage should be. BUMED came out with a bulletin suggesting that we give two tablets a day. Previously, we were giving one tablet a day. But the Atabrine was a yellow tablet about the size of an aspirin tablet. After a while you got jaundice looking from the pigment in the tablet. And they were very bitter so the Marines wouldn't take them.

Didn't the quinine come in gelatin capsules that melted in the tropical heat?

The only quinine we had access to was in powder form, either granular or flake that was apparently donated by

pharmacies throughout the country. Normally you would take the powder and put it in gelatin capsules. But the gelatin capsules we had melted. So I tried mixing the quinine in water and stirring it up so the guys could drink it. But they were sick to begin with and when they'd go to drink this concoction of quinine and water, they just couldn't do it.

So I devised this method of putting a scoop of quinine in a square of toilet tissue. Then I folded it and wound it up into a little ball. Then I shoved it in the back of their throat and made them gulp the water real fast. And it worked . . . sometimes.

You had all these patients around with malaria. What were the symptoms that you witnessed?

They'd start out with fever followed by the chills. In this situation on Guadalcanal, it was called benign tertian malaria. So every third day they would have an onset of symptoms which would be chills and fever.

Besides the quinine, what did you do for them?

Nothing. Fortunately, in our case, we were eventually able to leave Guadalcanal and take all our malaria cases with us and those who were about to get it. I should say that by the time the malaria became a real problem, we were about ready to leave.

We had gotten there either the last day of December of '42 or the first week of '43 and left in mid March of '43. By the time our malaria outbreak reached a large proportion, we were ready to leave so we were able to transport our malaria cases back to New Zealand.

There's another interesting thing I didn't include in my memoir. When we got back to New Zealand, I came back to a different location. Although they had a naval hospital at a place called Silverstream, they were so overburdened with malaria cases from other outfits, that we were compelled to treat our malaria cases as best we could. We set up our camp there in a former New Zealand military camp.

There were little wooden shacks even though all of us lived in these large tents. The mess hall was a little wooden shack. The shower facilities were in a little wooden shack.

We ended up taking over one of these shacks and making it into a hospital. So we set up and operated our own little hospital in that camp, and treated our malaria cases there. At that time, we were still using Atabrine and quinine. But now we could dispense the quinine more reasonably in capsules rather

than the primitive method I had devised on Guadalcanal.

When you were on Guadalcanal, was there any attempt to reduce the mosquito population?

It was almost impossible to control the mosquitoes. There was no aerial spraying. There were no ground crews that came around. There was just so much water and so many pools. In fact, the coconut trees themselves were water reservoirs and the mosquitoes were multiplying in the water located in the coconut trees. So it was virtually impossible to control the mosquito population.

So the water was collecting in the palm fronds?

Yes. Down in the center portion or base of the fronds. There's enough of a space there to hold water so that's where the mosquitoes were multiplying. Of course, there were pools and puddles all over the place.

You had other diseases at Guadalcanal to treat such as the so called jungle rot and you were able to treat these with gentian violet.

Yes. They used to call it jungle rot. It was probably a mycotic fungus type of infection and it was very prevalent.

Did the gentian work?

Our standard treatment for these fungus infections was to use gentian violet or crystal violet. It's a chemical dye. We simply paint the lesions with that blue stuff.

Did it work?

In a way, it did. Compared to what we have in the way of modern fungicides and topical ointments, it wasn't very effective, only somewhat effective.

Because of the sanitation, I'm sure you had a lot of diarrheal diseases.

Oh, boy! We had what the Marines referred to as the "GIs." That was the standard reference to dysentery and other diarrheal conditions. And it was very prevalent. Our standard treatment for that condition was something I used to mix up. I mixed camphorated tincture of opium (paregoric) with a substance called bismuth subcarbonate that resembled chalk. You'd take a spoonful of bismuth subcarbonate and stir it up in half a glass of diluted paregoric and drink it. On occasion, I'd have to use

tincture of opium (laudanum), which was more potent.

What did you do for potable water?

You didn't dare drink water. In fact, I had a case of a Marine who came in with a very bad diarrheal condition. He admitted to me that he drank out of a stream. It so happened that he didn't notice that some distance up that stream was a floating body. So he drank this and got quite sick. You only drank water that had been purified. We had quite a unit that would purify the water. Then they would dispense the water in what they called Lyster bags. The bags were made of a rubberized cloth in the shape of a huge upside down balloon with little spigots on them. They were suspended from tripods. They would come by with a tank truck and fill these bags. The Lyster bags were distributed throughout the camp. They even had Lyster bags on board the troopships where you literally had thousands of people and couldn't dispense fresh water except with these Lyster bags which were on deck.

You mention in your memoir the fact that you had some air raids, particularly the repeat visits of "Washing Machine Charlie."

Yes. I didn't include this in my narrative but years later, I met a student who was on Guadalcanal and he was telling me about Washing Machine Charlie. He asked me if I knew where he came from and I said I hadn't the faintest idea. He said he was flying a pontoon plane that landed on a lake on some island near Guadalcanal and they would take off from that lake and then that single plane would come over and drop a single bomb.

He was noted as being a pretty poor bombardier.

It was a nuisance and frightening and you couldn't get much sleep because they'd sound the air raid alarm (condition red), which often lasted all night. Perhaps I should mention that the air raid alarm was a section of railroad rail suspended from a tripod. When struck with a piece of pipe, a loud clanging sound resulted.

You also talked about a big daylight raid.

Yes. We had a big one around noon one day but it was the only big daylight raid I ever encountered. It was the Japanese fleet. I don't know where they came from but there were several bombers and a number of fighter escorts that flew over. They were trying to get the airfield.

How close were you to Henderson Field?

Less than a quarter of a mile, if that. It was just east of us but you couldn't see it because of the jungle. I was there a number of times.

There was talk at that time that the Japanese were coming back. And I guess there was a great deal of consternation among you folks.

That was a scary episode because the word went out that we were under what was called "Condition Black." Condition Red meant air raid. Condition Blue was clear. But Condition Black meant that there was a Japanese fleet steaming towards us ready to take back the island. So we were pretty much on edge waiting for that.

But part of our fleet and the Australian cruisers caught them up in the straits and they had quite a naval battle up there just before they got to our area. It was enough to make them turn around and go elsewhere.

What was your rank at that time?

When you got out of corps school, you were called an HA deuce. Then you made HA1. Then you went to pharmacist's mate third class. I think I made third class not at Guadalcanal but by the time I got back to New Zealand.

What was the unit you were with?

I was attached to what was called F Company, 2nd Battalion, 18th Regiment, 2nd Marine Division. Your numbered regiments tell you what kind of an operation it was. The 18th was the combat engineers. The 10th Regiment, for example, was artillery. The 2nd and the 6th were rifle teams.

I want to take you back to Guadalcanal for a moment. You tell a story in your memoir about the man who had been shot by a sniper who you tried to assist.

No. He was dead when I arrived.

Then you had to take his body through the jungle in the middle of the night.

They came and got me. We had a sick bay tent that we had set up. We also slept in that tent. This was late in the evening and they came and got me and said that they had a casualty and needed me. When I got there, there was a group around this

fellow. I took one look at him and saw that he had been shot through the heart.

By that time, someone had summoned the doctor. We did not have a doctor in the camp where I was. There were just two corporals for this company I was attached to. The doctor was in another part of the same company but some distance away. When he arrived, he shook his head and turned to me and said, "Take him to Regimental Morgue."

Well, I didn't know where the hell Regimental Morgue was. Somebody said it was up near regimental headquarters. So we loaded his body on a large pickup truck and the driver and his partner rode in the cab. I was going to ride in the cab, too, but the road was so rough, the body threatened to bounce right out of the truck. So I had to get back there and sit on him to keep him from bouncing out. I sat on this body going through the jungle. And it was dark and we couldn't turn on the headlights.

Well, these guys knew where they were going and we finally got to the regimental morgue and unloaded the body. It was quite an experience.

You also mention in your narrative that they made a headstone out of concrete and then Mrs. Roosevelt came out to visit.

I have a picture of that. I didn't see Mrs. Roosevelt but she did visit along with the Secretary of the Navy, [Frank] Knox. I understand the visitors also went to the cemetery but I was some distance from there when that occurred.

Some of the Marines made a full square cast of concrete with the man's name and his outfit on it. Being engineers, they were clever at construction and they made this and showed it to me. They then took it and placed it in the cemetery. There's a picture of Mrs. Roosevelt looking down at this. I think it was in *LIFE* magazine at the time. I took no photographs because we weren't allowed to have a camera.

Did you keep a journal or is what you are telling me all from memory?

Both. I did write things down in a small, looseleaf notebook. I used to jot things down. It wasn't a diary but incidents that occurred. Sometimes I had to make a record as to who I treated and what I treated him with. I was told that if I got caught with such information in my possession, that I'd be court martialed. So I put that thing aside. I never got rid of it and I have it to this day. I could put my finger on it in 30

seconds. But other than writing this notebook, everything is from pure memory--most of it.

From Guadalcanal, you got aboard a ship which took you back to New Zealand.

Yes. We went back on the same ship--the *Crescent City*. We went back to Wellington but transported to a different location that was a former New Zealand army camp that I mentioned earlier. And that's where we set up our little hospital to treat our malaria patients.

In your memoir, you talked about a very interesting way of conducting tonsillectomies.

We had one of these little wooden shacks that looked pretty much like somebody's garage. It had unpainted boards on the inside, a rough concrete floor, some windows, but a rather crude building. It was weatherproof. This was our sick bay. In one corner I put up what was called target cloth. It was white cloth that I tacked onto the bare boards to make it look white and clean. Then we designated that corner as our surgical area. We had a number of cases where we had to suture cuts, etc.

Being in New Zealand that time of the year, which was getting on into cold weather, it was very cold and damp in our camp. So we had a lot of sore throats, colds, and a lot of tonsillitis. The doctor decided that we would do some tonsillectomies. Some of us corpsmen--I being one of them--assisted him. It was very interesting how we had this room set up. The corner of the shack had a chair, which had been wiped and sprayed with disinfectant.

We put the fellow into the chair and then dosed him up with morphine or codeine. Sometimes we'd use phenobarbital and put him pretty much out of it. Then we'd inject his tonsillar area with procaine hydrochloride using a long needle--syringe. Dentists used to use it in bygone days. Then they used what they called a "tonsil snare." It looked like a chrome-plated pistol handle and a loop of piano wire that stuck out. You looped the piano wire over the tonsil and pulled the trigger. It then snipped the tonsil off. I don't know if they still use this or not. On occasion, when the tonsil was very obvious, he would let me snip the tonsil out. He also did number of circumcisions, but I performed none of those.

While at this camp, there were ongoing field exercises in preparation for the next campaign. Part of these were long hikes. A corpsman always had to go along. The most frequent

medical problem encountered was the occurrence of blisters. I treated these, quite successfully by painting them with tincture of benzoin (which I always carried in my Unit 3s). This is almost like painting on a medicated "varnish." When dry, it would form a hard, protective surface. On more advanced blisters, I would use tincture of benzoin over a cotton patch. For the most part, this procedure proved effective.

The next campaign you were involved in was Tarawa.

Yes. We left Wellington, New Zealand in early November of 1943 and went to Noumea, New Caledonia. I think we picked up some more ships that were anchored there. From there we went to Efate, New Hebrides, which is Vanatu now that's independent. We practiced landings there. One of the things we had to do was to make landings in smoke. They let out these smoke bombs and we had to find our way through the smoke.

We then left New Hebrides and went nonstop to the Gilbert Islands, to Tarawa. We got there on the 19th of November 1943 and landed on the morning of the 20th.

What do you remember about waking up that day?

I remember quite vividly that we arrived on the 19th in the late afternoon. Then we were all called into what was called a ward room. Actually, it was a big mess hall they called the ward room. We were called there for an indoctrination or instruction about the landing. They had a big map on the wall and they described the island and where we would land. They told us what was going to take place before we landed the next day. There was to be a bombardment that was soon to commence and it would continue. Then they said planes would come in and drop a bomb called a "daisy-cutter," a bomb having terrible destructive action. It was supposed to go off before it hit the ground. In fact, the guy who was telling us said, "These daisy-cutters have been proven to take out an acre of coconut trees." Right then and there I said, "Baloney!" I thought that was a gross exaggeration.

Well, it turned out that the planes did not arrive and no daisy-cutters were involved. But the ships did commence their bombardment in the early evening of the 19th. That's what I remember so vividly-standing out on the deck of our troopship watching those ships cut loose with their armament. And there were battleships, cruisers, and destroyers just firing that stuff and practically obliterating that island. We were told that after this bombardment, very likely we could swim or walk

across our objective.

Well, it didn't turn out to be that way because they didn't realize the Japanese had fortifications that were so well built and so underground, that even the 16-inch projectiles from battleships failed to dislodge them. On the morning of the 20th, the first wave went in, I think, at daybreak. It was around 9 o'clock by the time we were heading into the island.

What then happened was a complete surprise. They thought they would have an 8-foot tide to go straight into the island and the landing craft would go over the coral with a good clearance. Unknown to anyone, the tide receded and it wasn't until 40 years later that a physicist, by accident, found out why the tide went out. It wasn't supposed to have gone out. It was some screwy thing to do with the moon. It only happens once in a century or something of that sort. And that was unpredicted. The tide went out and we couldn't get over the coral. It was devastating. So we had to hold back and I didn't get to the island until the early morning of the 21st.

What kind of landing craft were you in at that time?

They go by letters like LCT and this and that. I don't remember what the particular designation of the craft was but let me describe it for you. It had a ramp in the front that dropped down. The nickname for the craft I was on was a tank lighter meaning that you could get a small tank on it. The idea was that it would go right up to the shore, the ramp would drop, and the tank would go driving off.

A good number of troops went in what were called Higgins boats. Later on they had a boat called an alligator. That thing sat way up in the water and was a sitting duck.

What was the run in to the beach like?

There wasn't any beach where I landed, just rocks. On the way in, we paralleled a pier. The Jap machine gunners were under that pier so we had to get out of there and move away. Eventually, we got fairly close to the island and then hit the coral. Then they dropped the ramp and said, "This is as far as we can go. You'll have to walk in." And that's where we ran into some trouble because we were about a hundred yards offshore at that point. The water may have been 6 inches deep where you were stepping but then you moved a little bit and it was the edge of the coral and down you went. So we lost a number from drowning as a result of that.

What kind of medical equipment did you have with you?

I had a Unit 3. It was a canvas sack about 10 inches wide and maybe 12 inches deep. We had two of those. They came with straps, but we discarded the straps and instead hung the Unit 3s from our web belts.

So you didn't carry the sacks over your shoulder?

No. On the web belt. It was too bulky on your shoulder and, besides, I had to carry a rifle.

Was it a rifle or a carbine?

I had a .30 caliber carbine. On Guadalcanal I carried a .45 Colt. The carbines came out later and that's what I carried for the rest of the war.

What supplies did you have in the Unit 3s?

Metaphorically, I had everything but the kitchen sink. Those possessions stayed with me the whole time I was in the Pacific. I had all sorts of things I carried in addition to the basics. What were the basics? I had a number of battle dressings. Incidentally, I have a couple of those battle dressings right here that I brought back. They came in a camouflaged packet. They were just a big pad with tails attached that you could tie on. These were a great thing to use. They came in different sizes. We also carried bandages and tape. Interestingly, I carried sulfanilimide and that was our standard treatment. It was dispensed in small packets. I carried a box of these packets and when I encountered a casualty, I'd cut open one of these packets of sulfanilimide and pour the powder into the wound. Well later on BUMED said, "No, no, don't do that. You're doing more harm than good by putting it in the wound." By the time you got to treat that casualty later on, you had to clean all that sulfanilimide out. Furthermore, it was later proven not to be that effective.

I also carried my packet of instruments and a bandage scissors. I still have the scissors. The only thing I still have but for a couple of packages of battle dressings, is my bandage scissors and I carried them everywhere I went in the Pacific.

I also had morphine syrettes. They were real handy to have. They were a half a grain of morphine tartrate and that was a walloping dose when the standard dose is one-eighth of a grain.

How many did you carry?

We were given complete latitude in handling narcotics. I

had a bottle of codeine. I just picked it off the supply shelf. I never used it but I had it. I came across a box of morphine syrettes lying out on the field one time. There must have been a thousand of them in there. I picked up a few and put them into my Unit 3. Gosh, I had enough morphine but I used a lot of it.

Once you got ashore at Tarawa, what did you see around you? It must have been total confusion.

I've got some pictures that came out of *LIFE* magazine that come pretty darn close except for the smells. You can't recreate a smell but you can sure recreate the visual aspects of it. It was like looking inside an incinerator after the fire is partially out. There wasn't a coconut tree with its fronds intact. Everything was burned. It was just a jumble of everything. There were bodies, pools of water-junk all over the place. It was just a nightmare. If you want to recreate a nightmare on a TV commercial or something, that would be a good example.

I also remember the dust and smoke from the fires. It was just a pall of smoke and, of course, the smells that are hard to describe.

Do you remember the first casualty you treated?

They all blend together. I remember my first casualty on Saipan as clearly as if it happened yesterday, but on Tarawa, things were so chaotic and mixed up. I wasn't with my outfit. Corpsmen were often farmed out when they were needed. So you might have been with F Company, 2nd Battalion and went in with them. Then, all of a sudden, you were needed someplace and you found yourself in a different company and a different regiment.

You probably treated a great number of casualties.

Not a great number. I'll tell you what I did most of. I loaded the wounded on a rubber raft and pulled them out to a waiting ship. And I have a picture of that. These were large rubber rafts. You took the stretchers and set them on the raft just like railroad ties. The tide was out so you could wade out to either a landing craft or a barge or something that would take them to a troopship that was designated as a hospital ship. Most of my activity was not actually treating casualties per se but picking up a casualty and transporting him.

This Tarawa operation took a couple of days.

Yes. They said the whole operation was supposed to be

completed in 72 hours but by the second day, I had moved to another part of the island. Then the next day, I moved to another island. There were a string of islands there you could walk across at low tide. So I spent some time on that second island.

You already mentioned the aftermath—the bodies and debris of battle. In your memoir, you also talk about this Japanese prisoner you witnessed.

Oh, yes. I have a picture of that, also. I was standing right next to the *LIFE* cameraman when he took that picture and this guy walked right in front of me. I made eye contact with him but that's all I did. He looked at me and I looked at him but there was no expression on his face. If you have that photo and look down at his right leg, there's a bloody bandage on it. He had a wound on there and I was going to go over and treat him or something but the MPs who were holding rifles on him weren't too interested in that. And I wasn't too interested either. I think I was more curious than compassionate.

You talked about leaving Tarawa and returning to the ship. They were serving Thanksgiving dinner. Can you describe that experience?

I remember how dirty and filthy we were and getting on that ship. I think it was the same ship we had been aboard going from New Zealand to Tarawa. It was called the *J. Franklin Bell*. I heard about this ship some years later when they were going to have a reunion of the crew. But to answer your question, I remember how dirty we were. I remember going into the mess hall when they served Thanksgiving dinner. They had turkey all cut up. The turkey legs looked the size of ostrich legs or something. They were huge things. Some were overdone and some were underdone and in a great big tub. We walked through and a guy would spear one of these and put it on these metal trays that had divisions in them. Anyway, he threw on this big hunk of turkey. The potatoes were just boiled. They weren't mashed or baked or fried. I took one bite of that and got sick. And most of the other guys just nibbled at their food.

Was it that the food was bad?

No. The food was okay. It was the letdown, the psychological effect. You're filthy. You haven't eaten. I never remember eating anything on that island. I must have eaten something but all I remember was that on Tarawa I was always

dying of thirst. And there was a water shortage. They would allow you two canteens a day. And I was dying of thirst. What a miserable way to go, I thought. The sights and smells, and everything-you just don't think about eating.

And then you went to Hawaii.

Yes. We went to the island of Hawaii. We pulled into the harbor at Hilo. Then we were transported by trucks to our new camp, which was on the opposite side of the island at a place called Parker Ranch. This was a former cattle ranch, a huge cattle ranch. It was on the other side of Mauna Kea, the huge volcano. It was an interesting trip because we went through the lava beds.

I describe the camp fairly well in my memoir. It was kind of a hostile place. But I was fortunate enough to be transferred to the harbor area and set up a sick bay and an aid station at the harbor where our supply ships were coming in. So I got away from that camp.

Mr. Clayton, we're going to call it a day right here. If you don't mind, I'd like to call you again tomorrow and we'll talk about Saipan and Tinian.

That's fine.

I thought we'd pick up where we left off yesterday. We talked about your Guadalcanal and Tarawa experiences. Today, I'd like to talk about Saipan. In your memoir you talk about landing on Saipan. What do you recall about that?

I recall it all very clearly. We were all assigned to boat teams. Each member of a boat team had to go to a certain place on the transport ship. In our case, we loaded directly from the ship into a landing craft. Then they lowered us into the ocean. So we didn't have to climb over those cargo nets to get down into the landing craft.

We took off in the craft I was in. I don't recall how many people there were. There was one officer, a Marine lieutenant. The rest was a mixture-radiomen, signalmen. I think I was the only corpsman aboard. There were probably a dozen or so personnel in that landing craft.

Anyway, we were lowered into the sea and took off. It was still dark because it was just a little after midnight. I presumed at that time that we were just waiting to join other landing craft and then we would soon be going in for our landing the moment it was light enough. So, here it is midnight and

we're out there circling around and around and around. Midnight became 2 and 2 became 3 in the morning and we were still circling around. I don't know what the delay was. We may have been waiting for other craft to join us.

Just about the beginning of daylight, we moved alongside the cruiser *Chicago* [CA-29] just when it opened up its batteries. And that like to blew us out of the water! That was the first encounter with fright and loud explosions. But we continued to circle until it got light enough and the message came through and we started in. At that time, I could see Saipan in the distance. We were probably a mile or so off our landing area. I could also see the big smokestack and some building in the distance and quite a bit of smoke.

We got so far and hit a coral reef. Then we had to transfer from the landing craft we were on into a craft that had treads on it. I don't recall the name of that type of craft but it sat down low in the water. We transferred all our stuff. I was carrying, in addition to my Unit 3s, which I had attached to me, a steamer trunk painted green with red crosses on it. This trunk contained all my plasma and extra supplies. When I got ashore, my assignment was to establish some kind of an aid station and team up with other corpsmen who were in other landing craft.

Anyway, we had to transfer all that stuff into the tracked landing craft and then we literally climbed over the coral reef and down into the sea. These things moved rather slowly. Nevertheless, we were over the coral and now I could look over the side. The lieutenant kept saying, "Keep you heads down!" But all heads were sticking up to see where we were going. We could see the island getting closer now. That's where I saw these tall black columns of water rising up into the air from the surface of the water. They were obviously explosions and so I yelled out, "What the hell are those?"

The guy said, "That's our underwater demolition team [UDT] blasting holes in the coral to make our landing easier."

Well, just about the time he said that, one hit on the starboard side forward and lifted us out of the water. The guy standing right in front of me got hit in the shoulder. I then knew it wasn't the underwater demolition team. It was enemy fire. So from that point on, it was dodging those black columns.

You got ashore and the landing craft didn't stick around long enough . . .

When we hit the beach, the first thing I did was jump out and grab the kid who had been hit in the shoulder and pull him

in so I could work on his shoulder. All the other guys in the landing craft jumped out also. The coxswain of the landing craft panicked at that point and pulled the landing craft back and sped off, taking my steamer trunk of medical supplies, the generators, the signal lights, the radios, and everything else with him. So there we were standing on this beach in a terrible state.

You moved up the beach from there.

Yes. We were on the shore but now under fire. There was a bank about 3 foot high that we hid behind. Then I moved in. There were pine trees of all things. Not coconut trees but pine trees along that shore so we were trying to hide behind them. I had moved in maybe 25 or 30 yards from the actual beach and took shelter among those trees.

You said in your memoir that there were shells exploding in those trees sending shrapnel down.

We had advanced in among the pine trees thinking that we would hide behind them for protection but in some ways it turned out to be a mistake because they were dropping mortars in on us. The shells would strike a branch and then explode, sending shrapnel down on us.

You came across a Marine who had a very bad spinal wound and you needed a helmet at that point.

For some reason-and it sounds absurd-but often absurdities arise under crazy circumstances. For some reason, I took my helmet off or it fell off. Anyway, I didn't have a helmet and I was crawling, crouching, or bending over trying to see what was going on. What happened at that point-and it became a very sad and familiar sound-was someone yelling for a corpsman. I kept hearing "Corpsman! Corpsman!" and I was running around without this helmet.

This fellow had been hit in the back and had a terrible back wound. He was lying on his belly on the ground. He turned around long enough to say, "Doc, you'd better take my helmet." So I took his helmet. I can still see him lying there with that terrible hole in his back. Yet he was conscious and had enough of a command of thinking that he looked at me and offered me his helmet. From there on I kept that helmet.

Shortly after that, you came upon a Marine who had been killed and saw his name very distinctly stenciled on his

uniform.

Yes. When I visited the memorial at Saipan with the bronze plaques on the wall, one of the first things I came across was the name of that fellow. His name was Shiley. The Marines often stenciled on the back of their jackets. Most of us didn't have camouflage stuff. The clothes were kind of a dull, dark green dungaree type of outfit that we wore. It was a jacket and the trousers. A lot of the guys stenciled their name and wrote things on them. He had his name on the back and was up against a tree like so many of us did, hiding against the tree when he got hit. That was one of my first casualties but he was dead by the time I got to him. I still see him.

There was another incident shortly after that.

I got a number of calls about then and I went over to another guy against a tree. His back was against the tree. He had been hit in the foot. The piece of shrapnel had gone through his laces, all the way through his foot, and tore the heel off his boot. He was bleeding so badly I knew he'd be bleeding to death before long. I knew I had to get his boot off. I did the best I could to unlace what was left of the boot. I then pulled on the boot to get it off but he just screamed bloody murder. Just about that time, we got another incoming shell that came so close that it blew me onto him. He screamed again in pain. I had to get that boot off to stop the bleeding. I took my trusty bandage scissors and cut the boot off. I had a hell of a time but I finally got it off and worked on him. We got him evacuated.

By that time, there was the establishment of what they called a beach party. Landing craft were coming in and discharging their supplies. Several doctors came ashore. I was able to get some of the Marines to help with the stretcher-bearing and we took that fellow down to the seashore about 25 to 30 yards away. By that time there were two doctors working in what we called a collecting station. The aid station was right on the shore and there was a crater that had been created by a large shell explosion. It looked like a large inverted cone. We had, by that time, brought in a number of stretchers and leaned them up against the sides of this conical depression. The tide had come in, we were up to our knees in water, and the crater was full of blood. That's why I described that scene as being up to my knees in blood trying to help these doctors as best I could. But I had to go back and take care of other casualties that were coming in.

About this time you had a near miss yourself.

You have to remember that everything was chaos. Not only did I lose my steamer trunk full of equipment that I needed to establish an aid station, the radiomen didn't have their radios, and the signalmen didn't have their generators. Everyone was running around and it was chaos. The main question was "What's your outfit?" It's hard to realize how chaotic things were.

Anyway, to get back to your question and the answer to it. I was inquiring as to what outfit this was and where my outfit-F Company 2nd Battalion-was. I didn't know where I was. Of all things, I looked up and here was this sergeant I knew. He was looking around in a state of confusion also. His name was Tessier. His was the first familiar face I had seen so we started talking. And just as we did, I heard a sound that went "Pft." Then there was an explosion and it knocked me unconscious. I recall coming to and choking because of the cordite. That's the explosive that was used and it was very bitter and acrid. So when you get a shell that explodes close by, it's almost like you've been gassed. You gag and cough.

Shortly thereafter, you looked down the beach and saw something you couldn't believe. You saw General [LGEN Thomas E.] Watson just wandering along as if nothing was happening.

I went back to the beach to help move some of the casualties back to that collecting station because from there they were put on landing craft and then taken out to the transport ships that were made into hospitals. Our pattern was to move the casualties to a collecting point and then from there take them out to the waiting ships.

All of a sudden, we had to hit the ground again because of incoming fire. We were hunkered down against the bank right there on the seashore and I looked up and there was this guy walking. He looked like he was walking down some friendly beach back home. He wasn't running. He wasn't bent over. He was just strolling along. He walked by me, looked down at me, shook his head and said, "Rough." And then off he went down the beach.

A few moments later, a runner came by, and that's how I knew it was General Watson. He said, "General Watson! General Watson!" He never got hit. I didn't think about that for many years until I saw the movie "Patton." I saw Patton's behavior under somewhat similar circumstances and he was right at home.

The first night you spent on Saipan was pretty eerie from

your description of it.

It was a nightmare. We couldn't go in. We couldn't move around. If you stood up and move around, you were a moving shadow and you were dead. There I was on the shore and the tide came in. I was literally in the water--wet, freezing to death, scared to death, bewildered, and in a state of total misery. I said, "The heck with this." I needed to move inland to higher ground so I stood up and just as I did, I heard the click of a rifle bolt. I dropped immediately. The man with the rifle told me the next day that he would have shot me. Under those conditions, you'd shoot at anything that moved. I think there wasn't a twig or a pine cone that didn't get shot at.

At this point, were you armed with your carbine?

Yes. But I didn't carry that carbine. I would prop it against a tree because I needed both hands to do what I was supposed to be doing. I was a semi-combatant in that I had the carbine and, if necessary, I would use it. But, on the other hand, I couldn't be carrying it all the time and still do what I had to do.

In your memoir you remarked about the flares that night.

It wasn't that night. I saw the flares some time later. Some destroyers got close enough . . . and they were really the only ships that could get in close because of their shallow draft . . . I don't know how they got through all that coral but they came in fairly close and fired 5-inch shells. They produced a very peculiar and characteristic sound. Then you would hear this "Pop!" It wasn't a loud explosion; it was a very loud pop. I found out later that these were magnesium-phosphorous flares they fired in the air. The flares would then slowly descend under a parachute and illuminate the area. And they really lighted the place up. But these flares had a dual effect. The illumination of the area was somewhat of a relief, even though it was short-lived--maybe minute or so from when they went off until they descended to ground level. During that minute or so, it was quite uplifting to have things illuminated. And they would continue to fire these every so often at a different point. They developed a pattern for dropping them. Your area might be thoroughly illuminated and the next time it would be a little darker, and then pretty soon they were dropping some distance away.

As I was saying, these flares had a dual effect. It illuminated the area but it also created shadows. It's hard to

relay this to the average person but your imagination ran wild. You saw things that you thought were something but were really non-existent. For example, as they came down and produced shadows, these shadows took on human forms. And if there was a breeze blowing, they moved. So you saw all sorts of things that just preyed on your crazy imagination.

Incidentally, when I talked to those two Japanese soldiers during my visit there, one asked me, by way of the interpreter, what those things were because the flares were frightening to them. They had no idea what these flares were. They thought they might have been some hideous, secret weapon.

I've seen newsreel footage of that famous ammunition dump exploding. Where was that from where you were?

I don't know how many days this was into the operation; I just can't recall. But sometime later, I had moved further inland. I found myself alone. I set up an aid station inland and some distance from the shore. From there we transported the wounded to a landing craft for evacuation to the ships. My job was to collect the casualties coming in, kind of triage them, and then send them on. Further inland was this ammunition dump which I didn't know even existed. I had decided to dig my fox hole next to my aid station. When I dug the fox hole, I found that mosquitoes had occupied it and decided not to go into it. Instead, I lay on a stretcher next to it. If we had an air raid or incoming fire, I would just roll into the fox hole. That did happen one time.

Anyway, I was lying there on this stretcher with my shoes off. My feet and socks were wet. I put the shoes right next to the stretcher thinking I would grab them if necessary and roll into the fox hole. During the night or the early morning hours I thought I was having a nightmare and saw this sheet of flame. I awoke and started looking for my shoes but couldn't find them. In fact, I couldn't find the stretcher! Apparently I had been blown off the stretcher about 10 feet away from the fox hole but didn't have a mark on my body. It was the ammunition dump that had blown. It blew my aid station out into the ocean and just cleared everything away. Of course, I didn't know what had happened.

The next day, we got the word that the ammo dump had gone off. It was our ammo dump. They had been bringing in supplies by that time and with them the howitzers. I think they were 105mm howitzers. They brought them in but couldn't move them because there were no trucks to pull them. This was all part of the

confusion that occurred under those circumstances. So the howitzers arrived before the trucks.

In the meantime, they were also bringing in ammo on large sleds and loading it in that dump. It was supposed to be for the artillery. So that's how the dump got there in the first place.

You also witnessed a Japanese counterattack or what was actually a banzai attack.

Oh boy! That's probably the most frightened I've ever been. I really didn't understand what actually happened until I went back to Saipan 50 years later and I got an explanation. There's a mountain almost in the center of the island called Mt. Topotchau. It's 1,500 feet in elevation and almost like an inverted ice cream cone. They had that thing developed into observation points looking down on us.

Anyway, I don't know the full story by any means. But this one morning the word came that they had broken through our lines and were counterattacking. And we were about to be overrun. That's when I really got hold of my carbine and made sure it was in working order.

Did you actually see the enemy or was it too dark?

I heard them. I saw evidence of them. But I did not see them because of the brush and bushes. But you could hear the noise.

Were they shouting?

Yes. There was some noise but I don't know who was shouting. There was noise in the distance. This sergeant kept running back and forth and saying, "They're coming. They're coming. Get ready."

And here I am paralyzed with fear. As I said, I heard the noise and the rustling of the bushes, but didn't actually see anybody because they were too far away.

Just about that time, our machine gunners got into operation and they opened up. They must have melted the barrels of those machine guns because they were firing, firing, and firing.

Eventually it got quiet and it was over.

Did you see anything the next morning?

No. This occurred in the morning and later on I found myself with another outfit advancing to the sugar mill, which was in a town. So I found myself moved away from that area so I

never saw what the aftermath was.

You talk about walking through the sticky, gooey, sugar.

There was an enormous sugar mill. In fact, the Japanese were the main exporters of sugar in the Pacific until our invasion. This enormous structure was pretty badly damaged. There were these very large storage tanks where they stored the sugar syrup prior to processing. Our bombardment knocked holes in these tanks and the syrup started flowing all over the place. When we advanced to the sugar mill, I remember two things. They dropped these shells and bombs and burned the sugar cane so the enemy couldn't hide in the cane fields. I was running through and was covered with soot, charcoal, and sticky syrup.

You must have been a mess.

Yes. And there was no water to clean up with at that point.

You ended up having this unpleasant duty after that and that was collecting the dead.

Yes. A few days later, our dead were strewn about the beach and inland. I don't know how many days later this was but several of us corpsmen had to participate in gathering the dead, identifying them, if possible by collecting the dog tags, and transporting them to a tent that had been set up. It was called Graves Registration. About this time a bulldozer came in and bulldozed a 6-foot-deep trench about 25 to 30 feet long. We wrapped the dead in ponchos and lay them out in the trench. It's difficult to explain how we could do such a thing, and were I to do it today, it would be devastating. But then we had seen such death and destruction, you were inured to that kind of thing. When I talk about pulling these men out of holes in the sand and so on, it's hard to imagine, but I did it. As corpsmen, we were designated to do that. We had a cemetery designated for their burial.

You wrote about a man painting crosses.

I would like to re-tailor my remarks a little bit. Let me explain it to you this way. We'd take the bodies to grave registration, which I said, was a big tent. There sitting on a tall stool at a draftsman's table, was this guy painting names on crosses. On his left, there were blank crosses. He would pick one up and had a list he'd go by. He'd be sitting there with a brush painting the name, rank, serial number, and so on. Then he would throw that to his right, onto a pile of crosses. I think I

was a little coarse in my description when I described this guy as sitting there nonchalantly as if he were bored. And said something to the effect that he was smoking a pipe and seemed more concerned about lighting his pipe than with what he was doing. I think that might be more my imagination than reality. I don't know what he was thinking. Anyway, I do remember him sitting there painting the crosses.

After that, you wandered into the town of Garapan.

Yes. Eventually, I was reassigned to go north to the town of Garapan. That's where I had my first encounter with house-to-house fighting. It was Saipan's largest town, I guess. By the time we got there, there were a lot of fires burning. We were going down the little streets from house to house. That's about it.

You mentioned something about being in one of the houses when you discovered a firefight going on underneath the house.

It started to rain and I decided to seek shelter in a house. As so many of them were, it was raised almost on little pilings because of the heavy rains they have there and so on. Anyway, I went into the house to get out of the rain. When I got inside, I spotted a trunk. I was curious about what was in it but I never got that far because just about that time I heard voices yelling at something, and then I heard shots fired. There were two or three Japanese soldiers underneath the house. Some Marines had spotted them and were shooting at them. It sounded like bullets were coming inside the house. That's when I got out of there in a hurry.

When you were in Garapan, you ran into a Japanese woman holding a child.

We had just moved through Garapan and were going north. There was another corpsman I didn't know, and several people gathered around a little building. When I approached, I encountered a woman holding a baby and she was hysterical. It seemed to me that she had some kind of wound, which didn't appear to be very serious. I bandaged it and then was trying to find out more about her. She spoke no English but there was a Chamorro woman there who spoke both Japanese and Spanish. The corpsman could speak Spanish so he would talk to the Chamorro woman in Spanish and she, in turn, would talk to the Japanese woman in Japanese. Then they would reverse that and would get back to the corpsman who spoke Spanish and he would relate to me

what they were saying.

I saw a lot civilians but didn't treat but a few of them. They were mostly en route to some other place.

After that, you ended up getting pretty sick with dengue fever.

Yes. This was after we had gone through Garapan. One afternoon I started feeling bad like I was getting the flu but found myself getting sicker and sicker. By the next day, I was pretty feverish and real sick. That night I remember finding an old quilt and wrapping myself in it because I was feverish and cold at the same time. I lay there on the ground in the mud, very sick.

One of my friends must have notified the doctor and he showed up. Very seldom did I see the doctor who was attached to our outfit. Anyway, he showed up and had me shipped to the hospital which was in the southern part of the island. Things there were fairly secure at that time. They took me there by truck and I stayed 3 or 4 days while being treated.

Once you were well enough, did you end up working in that field hospital?

No. I never did. I was still quite weak because dengue fever is very debilitating. It leaves you quite weakened and you're so feverish that it was nothing to see a great big strapping hulk of a Marine reduced almost to a skeleton as result of that illness. In my case it wasn't quite as severe. Several days later, they told me I was sufficiently well enough that they couldn't do anything more for me and I had to leave to make room for more serious cases coming in.

After about 3 or 4 days of being in that field hospital, I was shipped back to my outfit which had now been given word to advance and help another outfit which had run into trouble. By the time I got there, I was still quite weak.

You ended up treating some patients after that. You wrote in great detail about administering plasma and the problems you had with patients who had lost a lot of blood and were in shock.

Yes. My supplies were hard to come by. I did manage to get a hold of some plasma units and had returned to where I had set up the aid station earlier. But I was very short of plasma and had to use it very sparingly. I was more or less on my own. There may have been more of us there but they were busy doing other things. I found myself a good deal of time all alone

treating these casualties they were bringing in to me. I did what I could for them and got them evacuated.

I understand that the plasma came in two bottles. One was the dried plasma and the other sterile water.

Let me relate this to you as though you had never heard about plasma. The plasma is obtained from human donors. At that time, they were appealing to the public to donate blood. In the field, there was no such thing as a whole blood transfusion. Today, casualties can virtually be treated right away even using whole blood. That was not so in World War II.

But what they did perfect was extracting the plasma from whole blood. The plasma then was dried and dispensed in a bottle. So you had a bottle about quart size containing the dried plasma. There was a companion bottle containing sterile water. The plasma bottle was vacuumized. The implements or instruments that went with it--a couple of needles and sections of rubber tubing--were contained in a cellophane package. They didn't use plastic then.

What you had to do was connect a needle to one end of a piece of rubber tubing about a foot long. Then you would attach another needle to the opposite end of that rubber tubing. You then pushed the needle through a rubber stopper on the bottle of water. Then you held it up and inserted the other needle at the opposite end of the rubber tubing into the bottle of dried plasma. Because that bottle had a vacuum, the water was drawn into it through the tubing. When all the water was drawn into the plasma, you agitated it to make sure it dissolved.

There was another piece of rubber tubing, which was a few feet in length. You attached the needle to one end of that and that went into the plasma. The other end had a needle attached to it and that went into the vein of the recipient. There were pieces of cloth tied around the plasma bottle so you could suspend it. You've seen pictures of plasma being suspended from a rifle with a bayonet driven into the ground. I never did that; I held it. You held the reconstituted plasma up and it ran into the vein.

When you landed on the beach, you wouldn't have had bottles of plasma. This was something you would have only had in the aid station.

Yes. The steamer trunk I lost contained units of plasma. The plasma bottles came in a cardboard container. The two halves were held together by a piece of tape. So you grabbed hold of

the tape and pulled on it and the two halves of this cardboard box came apart. And so the entire unit of two bottles was dispensed in a cardboard box. I had extra plasma in that steamer trunk but I lost the trunk going in and had to scrounge around. I did find a couple of stations nearby where I found two or three units of plasma, but it was very difficult to come by.

In your memoir, you told the story of encountering a senior corpsman with unpleasant results.

I had written that one of the things I had tried to do was evaluate the severity of the casualties. Later on, I had heard the word triage. At that time I had no idea what that word meant. But I found myself practicing triage. I recall they brought this casualty in with a severe head wound at the base of his skull. He was totally unconscious but there was enough remaining of his brain that controlled his movements. So he was twitching and moving, he was breathing, and his heart was going. He had not lost any blood to speak of so he wasn't in shock from hemorrhage. By that time, I was down to only a couple of plasma units. If I had had a severely wounded individual who was hemorrhaging, who needed plasma, and if I didn't use the plasma correctly, I wouldn't have had a sufficient amount to treat the more serious and deserving cases. In this case, there was nothing I could do.

A senior corpsman I knew came by--an older fellow. He looked at this patient and said, "Let's give this guy some plasma."

I said, "No, I only have a couple of units left. He doesn't need it. He hasn't lost anything."

We got into an argument over that and he got hostile. He didn't like what I said; I didn't like what he said. For some reason, a doctor came by and said, "What's the beef?"

I told him the situation and he said, "You're right. Don't waste the plasma."

The corpsman got mad, stormed out, and I never saw him again. It was just one of those things. In those situations, tempers flare and people react differently.

Shortly thereafter, you took a boat over to Tinian, which wasn't too far away. What kind of experience was that?

The word came down that I was to join such and such an outfit and was to board a ship that evening to Tinian, an island just south of Saipan. The shortest distance between the southern end of Saipan and northern end of Tinian is only 3 or 4 miles. In fact, the Japanese had a big artillery piece on Tinian from

which they were lobbing shells onto Saipan.

Sure enough, we boarded the transport and arrived at Tinian shortly after daybreak. We landed virtually unopposed. There was some artillery fire that some of the ships received, but we didn't get hit in our landing craft. The only danger I suffered in the landing craft was that our boat was hit by another one. We slammed into each other and started taking on water but got to shore before anything happened.

We walked ashore at Tinian virtually unopposed and advanced to the airfield which we took by that afternoon. But that night, the enemy counterattacked and there was a lot of activity. The action took place north of where we were but we heard and saw the firing. We drew a little fire at the end of the airfield but it was nothing of consequence.

So Tinian was a cake walk compared to Saipan.

Oh, yes. For me it was. But I lost three or four of my good friends on Tinian but they were north of where I was. I was on the southern end securing that airfield. I think I spent the better part of a week there and then was sent back to Saipan.

Had things settled down by then?

This was probably in early August. There was still some activity at the north end of Saipan and we had to go back and help out up there.

You didn't witness it yourself, but that's where "Suicide Cliff" was, the place where all those people jumped off.

I visited those cliffs when I went back for the 50th. But at that time I had heard about it and word did come down that there were a lot of civilians committing suicide but I didn't see any of it.

How long were you in Saipan that second time before you left?

We relocated to the southern part of the island. I had my 21st birthday on the 4th of September on Saipan. It was some time after my birthday in September that word came that I was being transferred stateside with several other corpsmen. We then left Saipan and went to Hawaii. I can't recall how long I was in Hawaii before we left and headed for San Francisco. I would say that we left Saipan sometime in September and got back to San Francisco sometime in October.

You were in the Navy until after the war ended. In your memoir, you mentioned that you were in a hospital and that you heard about V-E Day and then, of course, V-J Day. Do you recall when you heard about the atomic bombs?

Yes I do. I came back to San Francisco and was stationed at Treasure Island in the Bay area and stayed there a long time. Then we were given a 30-day leave plus travel time and that's when I traveled to the East Coast. When I returned, I was reassigned and transferred back into the Navy, thank God! I thought I would be with the Marines again.

Anyway, I was assigned to the Naval Hospital in Port Hueneme, just north of Point Mugu, where the missile testing area is. It's still there. It turned out to be one of the main debarkation ports on the West Coast and also the headquarters for the Seabees. It was quite a nice hospital.

I had written that one of my first assignments at the hospital was in the orthopedic ward. I drew ward duty and worked there for quite some time. It turned out to be a lot of work but a good experience.

Eventually, I was able to get into the clinical lab. During that time, I wanted to go to clinical lab school. The captain OK'd my application to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda because that's where the school was. About that time, V-E Day occurred and things began to quiet down so that I never did get my assignment to Bethesda.

Then, later on, we heard about the bomb but you know more about that than the average person, anyway.

**Well, I was born the day they dropped it on Hiroshima-
August 6th.**

Is that right? Well, I was working in the lab when that happened. I was standing in the lab. When V-J Day occurred, one of the things I did was to run out of the lab. A couple of us got into the ambulance parked outside and stepped on the siren to make a lot of noise. There was a lot of celebration going on.

When did you get out of the Navy?

I got out in '46. I actually enjoyed working in that lab so much that when the time came to begin separating people . . . and it was based on the point system. The greater the number of points you had, the sooner you were up for discharge. I, having been in the combat zone 2 years, had a high number of points and was eligible quite soon for separation. But I also wanted to go back to college during the spring semester. Well, here it was in

the latter part of '45 and what was I going to do as a civilian with no place to go? It was too early for college and, besides, I was very happy working in this lab.

So I stayed on in the clinical lab until the spring semester was about to start and I chose to leave in '46.

What did you do for a living after you left the Navy?

After I got out of the service, I went back to school and, eventually, I became a college professor. My main subject was microbiology but I also taught other courses.

Where did you teach?

At Fullerton College. Fullerton is a city near Anaheim. I taught there for 40 years and retired about 8 years ago.