

## Part 3: "The Pacific " Transcript

(Elwin Petersen )We were all ready to fight the Japanese until we were killed off.

(Keith Renstrom) We hated them because they did what they did on Wake Island and what they did to Pearl Harbor. We hated them because they were the enemy.

(Doug Howard )Their life was to die for the emperor, if you will. It didn't matter what the danger was, they had an objective to accomplish.

("Cyclone Davis") Our patriotism was just as strong and just as valiant, but we weren't suicidal in the way we fought a war.

(Keith Renstrom) And I had no sympathy for any of the Japanese that I killed. I felt there was one less that I had to fight, one less to kill one of my men.

(Bill Wassmer) This country was worth fighting for. If it took my life, it was going to take my life, and I didn't think I was ever going to come back anyway when I went over.

(Rick Randle) There's not just one story of World War II, there are as many stories as there were men and women to fight. More than 3,600 never returned to Utah to tell their stories. These are some of the 67,000 that did.

(Rick Randle) America and her allies had done the impossible in Europe. In three and a half long years of severe casualties and bloody fighting, they had defeated Europe's first modern superpower, Nazi Germany. But the nightmare of World War II was still not over. On the other side of the globe America was locked in a death grip on a battlefield of such immense proportions, it nearly defies human comprehension. This battlefield was 64 million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. An arena of combat so large, that all the earth's continents could easily fit within its boundaries. And in the skies above, the depths below, on worthless volcanic outcroppings and in steaming island jungles, Utahns along with hundreds of thousands of other Americans would offer themselves up with bravery and courage. I'm Rick Randle. KUED is proud to present the third in a four-part series, Utah WWII Stories: The Pacific, as told by Utahns who were there.

(LaVell Bigelow) We knew that the Japanese were a ruthless, relentless military people. They had already gotten a reputation for atrocities and our feeling was that the U.S. Navy and us dive bombers had a great mission to perform to keep those Japanese from their goals of occupying the Pacific.

(Rick Randle) The world's first use of air-craft carriers in a naval battle occurred at the Coral Sea in May of 1942. Dive bombers from both sides terrorized and crippled each other's ships. From that point in time, naval

battles would never again be the same.

(LaVell Bigelow) As I peeled off to enter my dive I became aware that a **Japanese zero** was circling around to get on my tail. And he did get on my tail. As I pushed over in my vertical dive I had my dive flaps open, and I was in a vertical dive and he settled down and right behind me in my dive—my first inclination was to jink, as we say, to evade being shot down. But I was given a very strong inspiration to stay in a steady dive because a steady dive was required to get a hit on the ship which was my target. Stay in a steady dive. Don't worry about that zero. He's not going to shoot you down. You'll be o.k. So I settled down in a steady dive, got a hit on the ship. The Japanese zero followed me all the way down in the dive, and pulled up along side of me—I'm not sure if he waved at me or not—but that's my imagination. I think he waved at me. I was afraid. But this admonition from the Holy Ghost stuck with me, so it gave me a confidence and it comforted me all the way through the war and I never was hit by any anti-aircraft or never did have any bullet-holes in my plane all the rest of the war.

( Glenn Parkin) Well we got about a day out of Pearl and we picked up speed again realizing that something else is coming on, but where? Well that was Midway.

(Robert Shaffer) There was a Japanese invasion fleet headed to Midway, and we were going to do something about it.

( Glen Lewis) We weren't seeing the Japanese. We knew they were coming in—it felt like they were coming in—but nobody had seen them. And so they sent us out. The planes that they had, those little navy water planes that they have. They were so slow and took so long that they couldn't do much so they used us to investigate. So we'd fly out. I'd fly a mission every day out there to see how far I could go out and see if I could find any of the Japanese planes.

(Robert Shaffer) You know how big the Pacific is, so we were sending scouting missions not from our ships but the PBM's and that type trying to locate the Japanese fleet, and they didn't. So we launched all of the fighters, then the scout bombers came next, the SBD's, and the last ones would be the torpedo planes from torpedo squadron eight. They'd lumber down the flight deck, then when some of them would kind of dip down like they weren't going to make it, finally they all got off. The commanding officer of torpedo squadron eight was a Lieutenant Commander by the name of Waldron, and he was the only one that found the enemy to begin with. He radioed their location, but by then the dive bombers weren't close enough to do anything and Waldron had to attack because he didn't have enough gas to stay around. So they attempted to attack but they were all shot down.

(Glen Lewis ) Our B-17's discovered those Japanese planes coming up from the Southwest to invade this island. We stayed down low and we looked for submarines and everything else and I sank one submarine out there.

(Glenn Parkin) June the 4th was when they hit us and we hit them and later on in that afternoon was when they made the attack on the Yorktown.

(Robert Shaffer) But it turned out that the Japanese had followed the Yorktown's planes back and they bombed the Yorktown such that she couldn't recover the planes. So they directed the planes to land on the Enterprise and the Hornet and the Yorktown stopped, the Hammond stopped, and a Japanese submarine torpedoed both of them.

(Glenn Parkin) Of course they sent in the destroyers and picked up a lot of the survivors.

(Robert Shaffer) So the next day we went after the Japanese carrier, the Hiryu which we finally caught up with and sank. They had six altogether which they'd use at Pearl Harbor, and we got four of them.

(Rick Randle) Imperial Japan was now on the defensive--facing a determined enemy with the ability to produce more ships, planes and ammunition. From that historic moment, the empire of the rising sun began to set.

(Gene Jacobsen) I thought the Americans would be there before the end of the year. I really thought they would be. In fact I thought the war would never last that long. I made up my mind that I was going to make it through.

(Rick Randle) Those captured in the early months of the war in places like Corregidor, Bataan, Wake Island and China were about to endure over four years of captivity. Surviving as a Japanese Prisoner of War was an experience never imagined at the Geneva Convention. The Japanese regarded those who surrendered as cowards. Brutality, solitary confinement, torture and starvation were common.

(Gene Jacobsen) They began early sending men to Japan to work in the mines and smelters and so on.

(Bill Taylor) We woke up one day and we saw this huge liner out there called the Nita Maru. So we went down to the boat. We were at the bottom of the boat, and there were about 250 of us in there and they had a five-gallon can on each side of the hold and that's what you use for a toilet. It's nothing but water gruel and a little bit of barley. And the Japanese would come down at down and they would say "Tokei damas ka" or "do you have a watch, or do you have this?" And they'd rob everybody down there. They would beat you, and so we sat down there for twelve days and the men just went down hill. They just went down hill.

(Gene Jacobsen) We thought when we got to Japan they'd be better. Not a bit. Not a bit.

(Bill Taylor) They were moving all, everybody out there for slave labor. You know it was slave labor. They were very vicious.

(Gene Jacobsen) We were in an area where it snowed and froze and we had poor clothing, worked hard in the mine.

(Rick Randle) In the coal mine right?

(Gene Jacobsen) In the coal mine.

(Rick Randle) Pick and shovel?

(Gene Jacobsen) All kinds. I was on a day shift all day and they had twenty-four hour shifts see coming and going all the time. But we worked hard, and we worked in nothing but a g-string. That's all the clothes we had in the camp to hold the lamp.

(Thomas Harrison) Well I started out helping to carry iron ore up to the feed port of this blast furnace, then I carried it in baskets. The camp commander who was a Japanese Lieutenant came to me one day in the office, sat down and gave me a cigarette which was not just their ordinary issue, it was a special one, and a glass of sake and he told me that he had just learned that my city, Salt Lake had been shelled by Japanese submarines, which is a pretty good deal. (laughs)

(Chase Nielsen) "Where did you come from? What are you doing here?" I said, according to the Geneva Convention all I have to give you is my name, rank and serial number. He said, "Don't you know we're fighting our own war and making the rules as we go, and if we kill you today, know one is ever going to know about it?" He said, "I guess we'll take you out and execute you if you're not going to talk." So they took me out of the compound and out to a brick wall about twenty feet high and I noticed along every six feet there were a couple links of chain with handcuffs hanging on it. They backed me up to the wall, stretched my arms out and put the handcuffs on and come out and put a blindfold on. I thought, "Well, this is it!" Then I heard a squad march out and the hobnails on that flagstone path, and when they stopped you could hear their rifle butts hit the ground, and I thought, "Well, I guess it's ready, aim fire and that's it!" I thought, "Who in the hell will ever know what happened and how far we got? I'd like to have somebody know that at least we tried. And I'm standing there thinking about all these things... "What will my mother think? What will my poor dad do?" And finally O'hara walked over with a smirk on his face and a "ha ha" and he said, "Don't you know we're knights of the bushido of the order of the rising sun, we don't execute at sundown, we execute at sunrise. If you haven't told us by morning what we want to know we'll execute you in the morning." And they unpinned me and took me back in the cell, put the handcuffs on and then put them up over a peg on the wall so my toes barely touched the floor. I hung there all night. I don't know how long I was to or where I was. I was, I guess mostly out yonder out somewhere but the next morning they came in and I thought, "These are persistent little buggers." They let me down and when my arms went down I felt the book come off at the shoulders. They took me back out and pegged me up the wall again.

This time they didn't march up a firing squad, but he stood there talking to another officer and they were talking in Japanese and then finally another guy came out and yelled at them and he walked over and they said something and then O'hara came over and jerked the blindfold off and un-handcuffed me and said, "You're lucky, you got a last reprieve. We're going to fly you back to Tokyo the MP headquarters for interrogation. And about that time somebody behind him said, "And I'll bet you talk then." (laughs) They took me into interrogation and they had a stack of maps and charts about that high that looked like they were wet and soggy and they were sitting on the end of the table and they sat me down right by them and then he said, "I want to show you now how much intelligence we have on the U.S.S. Hornet." They had pictures in dry-dock in New Jersey—I don't remember what dry dock it was—but in Norfolk where they built the carrier. They had pictures from the day they laid the keel until the night of the christening of the carrier they even had pictures of the navy guys in dress uniform dancing with their wives in the hangar deck. So when I got back to my cell I got the old code going and I told the guys, "Don't take anymore rough stuff, tell them anything they want to know, they already know." They came in and buttoned us up and took us back to Shanghai. They took the eight of us into court. The court convened. They conducted the whole court in Japanese, the interpreter wouldn't tell me a word of what was going on. They held another tribunal and they told us through this one with the interpreter that we had been ordered for execution as war criminals. But due to the virtue of the emperor and his nice-ness that he had sought fit to commute it to life imprisonment with special treatment, no work detail, no correspondence out or in, no communal living or getting together, solitary confinement and obey the court rules and the guards. They took us back and took us back in solitary confinement and I thought, "This is nice, but that's what's happened." And we stayed in solitary for two years and nine months.

(Doug Howard) The Japanese had done in Asia since 1936 or '37. And they had conquered most of the important part of China. And they weren't satisfied with that, they were moving on west and going into it to Burma. China, being circled by the Japanese had no way of supplies. The only way they had of supplies was the American Air-force supplying them gasoline and food flying over the Himalaya mountains they called "The Hump!"

(Edmond Hyatt) And they couldn't take everything up there and we had several convoys a day. We'd get on the road carrying supplies and we never saw those trucks again, they just kept on going and they were used in China after they got there.

(Doug Howard) The company I found out I was assigned to was the 191st Combat Engineers Light Pontoon Bridge Company. We went up through Shanglo mountains, Shanglo Valley all through there and right behind us they made this famous Ledo road and as the Japanese were pushed back the road proceeded up through these valleys and the sides of the mountains. It was an engineering marvel.

(Edmond Hyatt) We were at the town of Ledo and that road went over to Myitkyina and joined the Burma road and from there on trucks would go on into China. I was a company officer in the 93rd Engineer General Service Regiment. All the enlisted men were Afro-Americans. All the officers were Caucasian, and we would mine the rock and put it through the rock crushers and take this dry shale and stick it in the mud holes and the next rain or the next convoy would go by we'd have to repeat the process. It was kind of a discouraging way to build and maintain roads. That was what we did.

(Doug Howard) We were down close to the Salween river, but we were cut off again and behind enemy lines and we went ahead and built this infantry foot bridge that went across the river and sunk this dead man and we came and strung the guy-line back in and dug another one and we started putting the blinds back on the pontoons and the Japanese broke through on a pincer move on both sides of us. We were pinned down and we dug fox holes in the sand in the dirt on the side of the river and the guy cranked up the radio and called for some help. We had a couple of green P-51 pilots come down that river, we could hear them roaring and going like heck. And I don't know what they thought they were doing but they saw this bridge and boy they let those bombs go and just blew our bridge all to heck. That night we dug in and we had a double fox hole, this Bill Leonard and I it was his turn to stand guard and it was my turn to sleep down there and I put the helmet on the back of my head and all of a sudden it was pitch black and I heard a crash on the back of my head and Bill said, "Oh my gosh!" He reached up and picked up a hand grenade and through it out. It was a Japanese hammer-type hand grenade. He threw it out about fifty feet out there and it never did go off. And through the day and the night that I—it kind got to me I guess and my nerves kind of went to, they guys would say went to hell in a hand-basket. Some of the things that were worse than the Japanese were the things in the jungle. The leeches, the spiders, all sorts of animals that you heard all night long that would scream and scream. Monkeys by the thousands would screech and go through the trees. There are a lot of ticks and blood-sucking flies and all kinds of animals and insects. It's hard to describe. And snakes—holy smoke, I killed a snake twenty-one feet long. We were on a patrol, and I turned around waiting for my friend and coiled in a big bush along side this game trail was this big snake staring me right in the eyes. He was probably maybe ten feet away. Boy, my BAR came off my shoulder just like that—you never do that. And I sprayed that guy and he started flashing around anyway. I don't know why we did it but we put a rope around it and pulled it back to camp to show the guys (laughs). Everyone had their picture taken with this dog-on snake.

(Keith Renstrom) And so we actually landed one day ahead of the main assault and as we came ashore I will never forget the sick feeling inside of me as the amphibious tractor touched ground and you knew you were there! So in our battle, which only lasted about a half hour, we had seven men killed and three men wounded. This was the first territory taken away from the Japanese that were their islands to start with.

(Cal McPhie) The submariners are a hardy trained bunch. There is nobody to help you when you're out there.

(Rick Randle) Submarine war patrols lasted from forty-five to seventy-five days and were filled with the constant threat of danger. Fear and terror were familiar emotions. Living beneath the sea in such close quarters created additional hardships. Patrolling the depths of the limitless ocean, engaging enemy ships and submarines as well as rescuing down airmen at sea were some of their duties.

(Cal McPhie) We found out that George Bush had been shot down. And he had hit a radio tower on Chichijima so he was on fire and he came out to sea knowing that there were subs there to do rescue work and the thing you have a problem with is there are Japanese patrol boats and also Japanese submarines around there. We moved in and he'd been in the water about three hours I guess. So when we moved in I got him and took him aboard and submerged again so we could do some more rescue work. The next day we have a fighter pilot shot down off of Mt. Suribachi on Iwo. The current was dragging him into shore and the shore batteries were firing at him. So we went in at periscope depth and made an approach on him and he didn't want to grab it because he thought it was a Japanese sub. So finally the shells were getting close to him and getting close to our periscope so he decided he better grab on so we made the approach on him and he grabbed onto it in his life raft and we turned around and headed out to sea until we could get out of range. Then we planed up to fifty-three feet, which is when a hatch can be open on a tower and he was hanging in the sheers with his life raft and when the guys opened the hatch he had a pistol pointed at that first guy that opened the hatch. He said, "I would have shot you if you had slant eyes!" We lost fifty-two boats for a loss of 3,505 Men and there all down there still in what we call "eternal patrol."

(Rick Randle) Pilots in the Pacific Theatre flew thousands of miles across the vast open water. For P-38 fighter pilot, Phil Shumway, a simple engine overheating forced an open-water landing that left him alone in a nine-day ordeal to survive.

(Phil Shumway) I could see a little island, it was a long ways away it looked like but I got out of my boat and started pushing it and swimming toward it. I hadn't been doing that very long until I became dreadfully ill and began to vomit. And I got back in that boat just sick to death and I didn't wake up until the middle of the night and oh my, the old yellow moon, and those waves. What a site. I'll never forget that. The next morning when I could see, I couldn't see any island. There I was for the next nine days in the South Pacific, quite often it's the big storms, big storms I mean waves high and rough, rough sea. I had my boat hooked to me with a little chord and I'd go in and that would turn and tumble me over and over and I'd get back in and the next thing it would be on top of the wave and back down and oh it was hard but thank goodness for it, because I caught a drink two times. There were two storms. I had a friend that stayed with me. It was a bird,

and albatross. And that albatross stayed with me when the terrible storms, and when it was over, here it was again. And so one day I had that and I had my cap down over my eyes and I was watching that little bird and he went around circling around and got very inquisitive and he came and he leaped up right on my little boat right by my toes and he was still more inquiring and he came and looked right up under my hat, and I grabbed him and I eat him, all but his feathers. I've always been a religious man. I asked the Lord to help me many times. But the Lord heard me. On the eighth day, the night in the evening I saw coming up over the horizon a navy convoy just as the big old sun was sinking into the ocean. Now I could tell they were ours so I watched them as they zig-zagged this way and that and then they turned and I could see they were coming by me and it was dusk by that time—just twilight. And I stood up in that little boat and here one of those big ships went on this side and one on this side, almost ran over me. And I screamed at the top of my voice and waved my bucket, "man overboard!" And they just slipped on through the night. That was the worst. I mean to come so close--horrible. I got back in my little boat. I spent a horrible night. All of my wounds were infected and I had a fever and I thought, "I'll just jump over and end it all. It can't get any closer than this." But I knew better than that. As long as there is life, there's hope. So I got back in the boat and the next morning I could see an island and pretty soon I saw two P-40 fighters going up and down that beach. They thought I'd made it to the beach I guess. I said, "I'm going to make that island. I'll never get back in this boat. I'll either make it or die." So I said my last prayer and got out of the boat and started swimming. I guess I didn't really believe myself, because I was pushing the boat. In a little while over the horizon came a big flying boat. We called them Dumbos. Here it came right up over me. I leaped back in that boat and I began to wave and wave and they just went right on over me. And all of a sudden I saw them turn up on their wing and they came slicing down right and those sailors, there's those side windows that they look from and they were waving to me and waving to me. I'd been found. Then in about thirty minutes here came over the waves a little boat. Two big sailors came down that rope ladder. They grabbed me by the arms. I kept my boat, and what was left of the bird. And when I got up and those strong men took me and laid me on the bed I had no strength. As long as I was in charge of myself, I still had strength. But when they were there to take care of me, that's the last I remembered for the last two or three days.

(Keith Renstrom) As we came in on Saipan, it was just like a California beach head—beautiful palm trees, a great sandy beach, you'd think you were landing on Santa Barbara beach or something, it was just beautiful! And then we came within range, then the atmosphere changed.

(Max Gollaher) I was responsible to land about 250 soldiers on range at exact time on the beach. Those poor marines and soldiers didn't know that their life kind of depended on what I did. When we were just about into the beach with the first wave, with the LCVP's, we were only out there about fifty

yards off the beach, and the Japanese were shelling us real heavy, and one of the Japanese made a good shot and he hit an LCVP dead center, and there are about 25 soldiers or sailors in those LCVPs fully equipped to their bedroll and everything, and their backpack and their guns, dead center and it just went wham. We had to finish taking the rest in and ignore it.

(Keith Renstrom) We were sort of maybe about fifty yards off the beach when the beach really got hit. A lot of the boats got hit and as they were backing out and so forth there was a marine laying out there right out in the open, and his machine gun was going "dudududu" and bullets were coming down and they were coming down all around me and some of the guys got hit around me. So I rolled over and this kid was lying down like this, face down and he was just shaking like this, and we called him by name and talked to him and he said, "Gunny I'm too scared to move. I'm too scared to move!" And so I talked to him for a little bit and I says, "O.k. when you get your act together we got to go right across that rail-road trussel to your right somewhere up in the vicinity is where we're going to be. I guess at about four or five o'clock he finally came up to the line and was o.k. from there on out. But the emotional stress that you have to be trained to handle, and that's what we try to do in the marine corp. I mean, a guy gets killed, you can't do anything for him, he gets wounded you try to get him out of there. But you can't do that, you have to let some of the wounded stay because you haven't got men enough to carry them all back. So you've got to let the people behind you take care of that.

(Max Gollaher) One of them I recall hit me with a question as he was dying. I've sprung it on people many times. He'd been shot pretty heavy just one shot, I'm not sure which direction it went through, the thorasic part of the body here between the legs and the neck. And he was bleeding, and he said, he was frantic and he said, "I know I'm going to die. Where am I going to go? Where am I going to go?" And I held him in his arms and I tried to tell him, "You're going to go back to where you came from—where God has sent you, we're all going to go there!" And all of this and I said, "You'll get rewards for what you did good on this earth and I guess for what we do bad, we'll have to account for." And with that, he just, that was it and that's all I got out and he, I only about thirty or sixty seconds to talk to him. And I recall that question, "Where am I going to go?"

(Carl Workman) When you're nineteen years old you're scared all the time. I was scared every minute of the day. Night is the worst. You get in your foxhole on the line. You listen all night, and it's pretty hard with the rain coming down because them Japs they crawl in there and throw hand-grenades in which they did in some of the holes. I was lucky that I didn't get one thrown in. Most of the islands we used flame-throwers to shoot down into them caves to try to get them out and that brought some of them out but a lot of them it would cook them. It was hard to do things like that but that's war. A lot of them come out of the caves and they was scared just like I'd been scared if I would have been captured or anything like that. They were scared. We talked—had the interpreter talk to them and tell that we'd

take them back and they had them all fenced in down there and they had the women, the soldiers and stuff like that in different barricades.

(Keith Renstrom) But the bonsai charge, we were clear back around the other side of Mt. Tagpochau on five hundred.

(Carl Workman) Imagine about 4,000 attacked and everybody counting children, women, men, soldiers shooting and then they just kept coming. We had our guns wide open. I had mortars going.

(Keith Renstrom) And they charged up right over the army lines that night clear back to the marine artillery which is about 3,000 yards. In the marine artillery, I think there were ten guns and they had them point-blank 155s and those guns were firing and they were red hot and those shells were going off four tenths of a second in front of the guns and that stopped it.

( ) We killed most—it was a slaughter. And we had a lot killed ourselves by the bullets they would snap as you went by ya.

(Keith Renstrom) We started going up on the backside of Mt. Tagpochau. That was the highest point on Saipan and that's where hill 500 was, and where all of the mortars and guns were up there. And then we went from there all the way down to the end of the island down to what we call Murphy point where the dirt airfield was.

(Carl Workman) And we seen these women not too far and we could see what they was doing.

(Bill Wassmer) They were jumping off cliffs because they figured Americans were going to kill them. They tell them what to do and the die for it.

(Keith Renstrom) This Japanese man and his family, his wife and this little girl and two little boys they were probably within fifty yards of me—and this is one of the things I wish I would have shot because I had the time but it catches you off guard so quick, sometimes you just don't know. He took the little baby out of his wife's arms and threw it over the cliff and then he pushed this one little boy and the little boy was trying to not, to hang on to his dad's leg and finally the dad hit him and threw him over and then he threw the girl over and then he threw the other boy over and he and his wife stood and bowed to each other and she hesitated and he pushed her over and then he jumped.

(Carl Workman) We had interpreters go over there and watch them to try to keep them from jumping off. There were a lot of them that didn't jump, but a lot of them did. They jumped down into the rocks a long way down.

(Raymond Uno) The Japanese were not ever told to be captured so they were expected to die while they were in the front lines and so when they were captures they were never told, you know, information they should or should not give and so it turned out favorably for the American forces that they

were able to be interrogated.

(Rick Randle) Japanese-Americans played a vital intelligence role in the Pacific. Their dangerous front-line duties involved great risk but saved many American lives.

(Raymond Uno) I was a second wave of a group of MIS people who served in the occupation and were military intelligence and many of us were attached to the counter-intelligence corp. It consisted of people who were trained and knowledgeable about the Japanese language and they were essentially used as interpreters, translators and interrogators. And in certain instances they were used to go into the battlefield and seek out information in front lines. When documents were captured they were able to translate those documents so they were able to find out the field positions, the strength of the enemy, and in many instances they captured the Japanese prisoners and they were able to interrogate them to get information. And these people served very bravely in many instances where they were exposed to the enemy plus they were exposed to the American forces because know one could identify if they were Japanese or Americans since they looked exactly alike.

(Rick Randle) The Battle of Leyte Gulf was the greatest naval battle in modern history. But for mine-sweeper skipper, Orson Blackett, the biggest battle was getting there.

(Orson Blackett) We got in this typhoon and I was getting low on fuel and there were at least 200 ships on this convoy heading up to Leyte Gulf and we were about right in the middle of the convoy. Being part of the seventh fleet we had not radar. The seventh fleet was like belonging to the French foreign legion as far as the rest of the navy was concerned. We were McArthur's navy (laughs). Keeping station in that storm was something else. Well the next morning came along and there wasn't a ship in sight. And we'd been right in the middle of that convoy. Somewhere during the night we got right through that thing so I did a ninety degree left turn and we were heading out and all of a sudden I saw a big mask go across the horizon. And I said to myself, "I hope it's ours!" And it was one of our cruisers and he told me how to get to the convoy. Got in there and they told us to start sweeping, now we were still in 25 and 30 foot waves. And the sweep was almost impossible. They told us to recover our gear and while I was recovering our gear the ship wouldn't answer to the helm. And you get in on top of a great big wave and it would just roll like this and stay there, then it would slowly come back and one of the crew members came up and said, "Mr. Blackett, you better come down and look in the forward cruise quarter." So I went down and the water was up to my knees. But each time it rolled it just stayed there longer and longer. And you get on top of these big waves you knew it was going to capsize. And so it was about 5:30 in the evening, it was still a little light and I said, "Let's abandon ship" and we went to the life rafts. And the life rafts got on top of these big waves and the wind was blowing about 70-80 miles and hour and just take the rafts and roll then and

throw them end over end and you just hang onto the rope. And there was a YMS341 that was picking the raft I was on out of the water. So they threw this grappling hook over and I could feel something sticking into my arm and I looked down and the grappling hook had gone through my life jacket and was starting to penetrate my arm right here, so I had to let go of their life raft, and pull the grappling hook out and then all kind of things go through your mind. What am I going to do when I get washed up on the beach? I have no shoes on. I had thrown my 45 away because it was too heavy and I saw a life ring there and I grabbed onto the life ring and I held on there for dear life. It so happened that the life ring was tied to the 341, and they spotted me. The only thing is, I came up on the other side. And so they started pulling, and they pulled and when the ship went up on a great big wave, I could look right down the keel to the stern. And I just held on and they just kept pulling and pulling me up on the other side and got me on board. Then at two o'clock in the morning the storm went through and Leyte Gulf became like mill pond. And when it got light we spotted the raft with the seven men with sharks swimming around them and we got them off immediately and didn't lose a man.

(Rick Randle) In October of 1944 as sea battles raged around the Philippine Islands, a deadly Japanese naval attack force would catch a nearly defenseless U.S. amphibious invasion fleet, open and vulnerable in the San Bernardino Straights. Much like The Alamo, The Little Bighorn, Wake Island and Bataan, desperate American fighting men found themselves outgunned and outmanned against overwhelming odds.

(Glenn Parkin) They had already passed the word to abandon ship, but there in gun 2, we hadn't heard it and somebody come up and started beating on the door and of course they opened it up and they told us to get out and as I went out it was a mess because we had a 40 mm gun tub on the port and star board side of the gun, two guns in each one of them, and there were dead bodies around quite a bit. I said a little prayer to my mother, my dear wife, and I said to myself, "It's a hell of a long ways for a swim back to San Francisco." But I threw my life jacket in and I jumped in after it, and I swam away from the ship maybe fifty yards and I turned around and looked back and it was going down then and the funny part of it is, they were still firing at it and they were still hitting it. Right after that it was so peaceful, so quiet. Nobody... just sitting there bobbing up and down in the water. Somebody said something about the Japanese destroyers coming to pick us up. They could see the flag. That kind of made us a little bit apprehensive and a cruiser went by oh maybe 50 or 100 yards away from us, then here come the Yamato, the biggest ship the world has ever known. I've never seen anything so huge in my life. All of the men were in white—all the Japanese were in white but these three guys, these men up there, and they went past as they saluted the men in the water, to give you a little extra recognition that the Japanese navy had more so than what the army had.

(Officer/Interviewer) You are about to hear six Americans who became prisoners of the Japanese in the Philippines after the fall of Bataan and

Corregidor.

(Eugene Nielsen) I'm private 1st class Eugene Nielsen. My home's in Logan, Utah. I was stationed on Corregidor, 59th Coast Artillery, Battery B.

(Eugene Nielsen) They let us build three tunnels because the Americans were starting to strafe. That day we went out to work at the usual time in the morning. We noticed that the Japanese were acting very strange. Instead of hitting anybody with their clubs, they just standing around kind of leaning you know.

(POW) They had two air raids that day in which some planes bombed the field, but the second air raid they wouldn't let us go back up to the compound.

(Eugene Nielsen) They want us to get in those tunnels. Now those tunnels, the three of them fifty men to each one. They just had an opening in each end, enough for one man to get in and out of.

(POW) And then they started shooting. I didn't know what the shooting was, so I stuck my head out to see, and I was immediately shot at, but while I was up I saw them pouring gasoline into the other holes.

(Eugene Nielsen) And I got back about half way and I could smell the gas.

(POW) And then they started shooting into the entrance of our dug-out. There were so many men in there that they just couldn't miss.

(Eugene Nielsen) They threw some kind of a paper or rag with gas on and lit it with a match and threw it in those trenches. Well when that big flame shot through there why I made my way toward the other end. Some of the officers had separate little places to go themselves. Dr. Mango, he came out, I heard him. He says something about, "Do not kill these men, don't do it." And I think he said something like, "For the love of God don't do it!" And they just shot him. I knew it was either die or get out of there. They were shooting, but some way or another I made it through this fence. I got down on the beach. As they came over there why they saw me and I swam out as far as I could underwater. They were shooting and they emptied their guns twice. Their magazine held five shots. Well that comes up to 100 shots (laughs). One hit right along side my temple here, kind of knocked me out for a little while. I got out far enough so they couldn't shoot you, still trying to swim across the bay in the daylight like that. I just went along parallel to the shore.

(Rick Randle) After a long night in the dark, shark-infested water a wounded, starving Nielsen managed to swim to safety. Harbored by natives and finally rescued by a flying boat, he eventually was taken to Washington D.C. to meet General George C. Marshall, Commander of all military forces in World War II.

(Eugene Nielsen) He kind of apologized and said he was very sorry we couldn't be of help.

(Bill Taylor) I should have been killed. I think I was telling my wife the other day I think about six or seven times that I should have been dead, and how I happened that I didn't. So I figure that the Lord has got me mixed up with somebody else.

(Rick Randle) Bill Taylor was captured on Wake Island in December of 1941. He was one of the few Americans that escaped from the Japanese and lived to tell about it.

(Bill Taylor) They're going to move you up to Beijing. They're going to move us up in railroad cars and so on and so on. So I had, I was able to steal a pair of pliers and on our car there's one bar that's out. You know, there were two bars in the window, and this one lower bar was out. I said, "If we can that bar off of there and get that wire then I can go out the window." So I asked Jack, "Do you want to go?" And he said, "Ya, I'll go with you." I said, "I'm going out tonight." I said, "We got some supplies." I said, "I'm going to go out the window." This is the way it was and it was just going tick tick tick and Jack turned around and says, "I got the wire off, the window's up, I mean that's it." And that is the time when if you hesitate you're never going to do it. I said, "Let's go!" It was pitch black, traveling thirty-five to forty miles an hour, so it's moving along. The thing is you don't know what you're jumping into. So I jumped and then he jumped. We didn't know we'd jumped off into a concentration of Japanese—the whole army was out there. And it was a very critical part, and I didn't know it until the next day. But we were out there and I was, hurt myself and Jack broke his leg. So one of the most wonderful things that happened is the train went by and the two little red lights on the back of the caboose I saw those and I thought, "Damn, I'm free for the first time in all these years!" What a wonderful feeling you know?

(Rick Randle) Taylor was recaptured by collaborators of the Japanese and escaped once again. Later he was harbored by the communist Chinese and eventually found himself in the presence of their leaders.

(Bill Taylor) I met with the Generals and we had banquets and so on. Then Mao showed up and he came and gave me some rugs, some Chinese rugs and told me I was the only prisoner of war that ever escaped through North China during the war. He had been through this. He had been through this on the long march you know. He had done all of these things. People never believe me until they see the picture.

(Rick Randle) Navy Privateer Bomber Pilot, Elwin Petersen and his crew were eight hours out of their base on Tinian. They were alone and the mission had been uneventful until curiosity changed their fate.

(Elwin Petersen) As I made this turn to head back toward base, my co-pilot, Wallace R. Robinson said, "Enemy ship below." And I was almost right above

it and I had full throttle and I can still, in my mind's eye, see those bullets splashing against the hull of that ship. Well he didn't blow up. We didn't have any bombs so I told them we were going to make one more run. This time the ship blew up. It was a terrible explosion and it was right in front of me and the crew wanted to go down and see it sink because it was stopped dead in the water. There was an oil slick on the leeward side of the boat. I said, "That's it." The crew said, "Can't we just make one more run?" I said, "We're running low on fuel, but o.k." I don't know how close to being down I was when we were struck. The bullet came through the windshield on the starbird side and hit the co-pilot and blew his head right off. His skull was lying right between us upside down like a salad bowl and my visibility was greatly impaired. I couldn't see anyplace. Immediately I knew that I had lost my eye. I put my hand over my left eye, cupped it over there and uh everything went blank. I had the course set on the repeater compass to go home and I lined that up then I turned around and hollered for the navigator and he took one look at me and the co-pilot and tried to jump over the top of him and grab a hold of the controls. And uh, I actually had to beat him with my fist to get him away. I said, "Joussie, I'm fine, just call Martin forward and we'll get Robbie out of here and we'll be going home." They wanted to give me a shot of morphine. We had a first aid kit and I just said, "No, I don't want any morphine, I want to be able to land this plane when we get to Tinian" which was about seven hours away. I told them that I was going to fly the plane in on the nose-wheel with a little power setting, then try and break it, and did any of them want to bail out, and they said, "No!" So I ordered them to get a parachute, put it behind their back and get against the bulk kit. I later found out that no a one of them did it. The windshield had been so covered with blood, and I was flying mostly out of the little bubble window on the side of me, and when the runway came up I could see the white line, I could see everything and I reached over and just shot the throttles off and brought up and landed and the glass of water I had been drinking and had been heated to control my shock, and it was still sitting on the navigation table, not a drop had spilt when I parked the plane so I made a pretty good landing I guess.

(Bill Johnson) We listened a lot to Tokyo Rose. She was a moral booster.

(Byrne Fernelius) We kept Tokyo Rose on the radio all the time because she had good music and it was American music and she'd tell us where the next invasion was going to be and told us a little bit about the war.

(Orson Blackett) She would come over and say, "Hey Yank, your wife's home sleeping with your best friend while you're overseas fighting" and this kind of stuff. This is what she peddled. It was a bunch of bologne, but we all enjoyed listening.

(Elwin Petersen) She was amazing. When I landed on Tinian that night on the radio they called the name of me and everyone of my crew how she got it, I don't know.

(Byrne Fernelius) She'd say, "Tokyo and PT boats so and so, and they're going to strike." She'd tell everybody where we were going to go. I don't know how she did it, but she did.

(Jack Russell) After we had left Guam and was on our way there, they opened the sealed orders and then while we were still aboard ship, we all found out where we were going. I'd never heard of the place.

(Keith Renstrom) We called it the pork chop of the Pacific. It looks like a pork chop.

(Bill Wassmer) Well we could see the bombardment from the battle wagons and the cruisers and stuff bombarding Iwo Jima way out. So as soon as we got there, then we started firing our mortars and we'd go in a circle. We'd fire, and this next one would fire behind and just keep firing until you run out of ammunition and go low to get ammunition from the ammo ship and get it out of the crates and get ready to fire again.

(Keith Renstrom) That roar of those nine big guns coming across the ocean, and you can see the water going down as the concussion catches them—while they're still shooting, the planes are coming in and they're dropping their bomb and their napalm and all this sort of stuff. This is what you're seeing is explosions all over the place. And the cloud, you can't see through it.

(Bill Wassmer) We had one mortar hit our ship. It was a dud and bounced off. One mortar came over and hit the well deck right on our magazine that was a dud. So I ran down and picked it up and threw it over the side. A lot of people can't remember that, but I do. I was shaking when I let it go.

(Joan Gould) I was just out walking around in the deck and it was um, D-day and I looked at the starboard, and here's this big troop ship. It's full of marines and they're coming down these roof ladders just one after another, and they're going into this landing craft that would go into the shore. So I watched that going on and I just realized what is going to happen to those poor kids.

(Bill Wassmer) And we watched the small boats getting mortar shells in, you know, and they're blowing thirty or forty men at a time, just gone. And they just kept going in and every wave went it, they get a little more on the beach.

(Jack Russell) And when we hit the shore and the front dropped down to go running out of there, you get out of there as soon as you can, we hadn't went very far until there was kind of a little ledge and right on top of that ledge was a dead marine laying on his face and I remember I looked at that guy and I just turned sick in my stomach. I didn't know whether to heave or to cry or just what, just something I'd never experienced and I thought, gee I just can't see myself in that position and I just said that to myself and from then on I was alright and I went.

(Keith Renstrom) The noise was beyond anything you can describe. I mean it's just, it's so shattering to have one of those big shells go off when you're close to it. It blows dirt all over ya, and your head just feels like it's just going like this, you know. Your eyes are blurry.

(George Wahlen) This is when the marines were wounded and under fire and for me to go out and take care of them, and I thought, "Am I really going to be able to do this?" These marines in my company and platoon, I was pretty close to and good friends with. I'd never been very religious up to that time, but I think during that time that I started praying to the Lord, I says, "If there's anybody up there that can help me, please help me because I'm going to need all the help I can get." And for some reason I guess that kind of helped.

(Jack Russell) Whenever you was out at night, you had to know the code word for that day. And they usually had some kind of a word with "r's" in because the Japanese didn't say "r" so we would purposely, this particular day I had in mind, we had Chevrolet. Well we were taking ammunition and supplies up to the front guys and I remember the flares were shooting up in the air and they came down in parachutes. And whenever a flare lights, if you're in the middle of a step you just hold it like that, and you don't move an eyebrow because if you do, you give your position away. So anyway, we were going up this ravine and we heard three guys coming down over the side and this BAR that I knew, a friend of mine, Murray he challenged these guys and they didn't say the right word. He hacked them right there because they didn't say the word right.

(Rick Randle) Were they Japanese?

(Jack Russell) Oh ya.

(Bill Wassmer) The Japanese they dug in. You had a hill like this and they dug in here and the shells were going over, and it didn't do too much good and then they had caves there too. And the rock in the volcano had caves all the way through it and they had been in that cave.

(Keith Renstrom) There was one pill-box that we couldn't get past and it was really a mean one. We just couldn't get in there and we had lost too many men trying to take the dang thing so our artillery observer called back and they brought one of the little pack howitzers like the University of Utah uses to shoot, and they put the gun in place, pulled the bags down, and the first guy who was sliding that gun into the—it was like only maybe a 150 yards away—he was hit right between the eyes and he just fell right back and was laying there and the next guy came up and looked off to the side, had the shell in and fired it and that first shell went right in the slip, and "peeeeuw" and that as soon as it did that we moved in on that pill box and we lost several guys from the flank but we knocked out the flanks and all that and now we're in a position just to roll up the line.

(Bill Wassmer) I was right off that volcano when the first flag went up, and I

was right there when the second flag went up.

(Keith Renstrom) And when the flag goes up, it was just a satisfying, great feeling to see those stars and stripes flying over the highest piece of ground on the island.

(Bill Wassmer) And watching... and watch that flag we just, you know hurray. We got it. We made it.

(Keith Renstrom) We had the high ground and that meant stuff. They had the high ground on our left flank, had control of it. From then on it's just a matter of time. Every day was pretty much the same—wounded, dead, wounded, dead—getting them out of there and making the sacrifices that a lot of the men do to put their lives in danger to retrieve the body or the wounded.

(George Wahlen) A marine had been hit on my right flank so I felt it was my responsibility to go out and see if I could do anything to help him. So I crawled out to see if I could do anything to help them so I crawled out to both of them and both of them had been killed outright. I remember I started to crawl away and something hit right to the side of me and I recognized as a grenade before it went off. It went off before the time I recognized it and I'd caught some fragments right in my face so I got battle dressing out and put it around there and somebody on the other flank was hollering for a corp. man so I started to crawl over that way and I could see where the grenades were coming from so I hollered at one of the marines down the hill to throw me a grenade. So a couple hit the side of me so I put it in my pocket and started to crawl up to where these grenades were coming from because I knew I had to probably get rid of that placement and take care of that marine. Those grenades were landing behind me all the time so I was catching grenade fragments in the back of my leg and my butt. They didn't do too much damage, except they stung like the devil. I grabbed my grenade out of my pocket and went to pull the pin out to throw it in there and the ring came off and the pin stayed in. I always remember the shock of what was I going to do, you know, but I got my knife out and straightened out the pin and pulled it out and crawled over by this big hole that was there where these grenades were coming from and there the Japanese down there, and he had an interlocking tunnel, and he was throwing these out about as fast as he could and so I was close enough to him that I could have shot him with my 45, but I had the grenade so I pulled the pin off and let the spoon come off and we usually had three to five seconds before it exploded and I counted to three and dropped down and it went off almost immediately and I crawled down and this marine was in the... his leg was all tore up and I got him bandaged up and finally a marine crawled up with a stretcher and we rolled him on there and we both crawled off.

(Joan Gould) I knew what to expect. I saw these kids going into that, you know one after the other, and I thought, I wish I could tell them to not go you know, but sure enough here they come right about afternoon, they're

bringing them back to our ship, one after the other in terrible shape you know. We would treat them. We had an operation room going all the time.

(Jack Russell) We lost 100% of all the officers. This friend of mine caught a burst across his chest, I think about four rounds whacked him here with a nambu machine gun. I seen where this Nambu shot from and it was in a big pill box. It was a slot they shoot out of. I crawled up there and was going to throw a grenade and I threw a grenade and it hit just short and it rolled down. I ducked down and let it blow off. And I turned around for another friend, I says, "Throw me another grenade." And he threw me one and this time that Jap seen me and he threw one right at me and I seen it coming right at me and I dove right off to the side. The thing hit and blew up. And it hit me and it hit my leg, my arm, and it felt like a ball-back hit me in the back. It really whacked me. Then I took that grenade that I'd asked for, and I was so mad, I was so mad, I was ferocious and I just ran right up there and threw it in that hole and that was it.

(Keith Renstrom) The grenade went off. Several pieces hit my helmet. One piece went under my helmet into my lip, down into my jawbone, and another piece went in behind my heart. I walked back down with the other wounded back to the battalion and they took me out to the hospital ship. The smell of perfume was probably the greatest smell I smelled in WWII and when those nurses would walk by, they just smelled heavenly and I a lot of us were commenting, we'd see them go by "wheeeew" you hadn't seen a woman, you hadn't smelled anything like that, you forget what in the world they even look like, you know?

(Joan Gould) These kids were just so nice. They're great. They would have these kind of fun fights with the navy people and they would say, "Ten thousands gobs put down their swabs to fight one sick marine" and those kind of things would go on and they would laugh and cut up and you know, they were nice and easy to deal with.

(Keith Renstrom) And the nurse that came and looked at me, you know she was an older nurse, and she was pretty hard you know, and she looked around at everybody, yet there was a moment of tenderness as they pulled my lip out and looked and said, "we can't do anything for you now" because other guys were worse off than I was. Iwo Jima was supposed to be a three-day operation and that's what they expected it to be but they had no idea that it was dug in so deeply as it was. So the fighting and the dedication to the Japanese, you have to respect them for what they did because they made it pretty rough for us, but we still won.

(Rick Randle) Iwo Jima was half the distance from Japan to the Mariana Islands—the main base for B-29s. Hundreds of crippled planes and crews were saved by landing at Iwo after bombing Japanese cities in the spring and summer of 1945.

(Roy Tew) We'd fly these missions that would be oh, 18 hours at the

longest, and maybe 12 at the shortest—somewhere in that range. We started out mostly flying missions that would carry demolition bombs and most of these first missions were on the southern island of Japan there a Kyushu because the planes on those airfields that we were bombing were of course bombing the ships that were around the invasion of Okinawa. The results weren't as good as what General LaMay wanted so initially we even dropped 2,000 pounds at 2,400 pound bombs once and you could even feel the explosion right up in the air as high as we were. But he decided that we would go to a different format on bombing, in other words we would go to dropping incendiaries and with incendiaries it's not exactly a precision bombing it's a bombing of areas. So you would start fires in the different cities that you bombed and it would great fire-storms. Those fire-storms were something else, I mean they just... you could see down in the cities and see the streets burning and imagine the people running for cover and not being able to even get out. There were over a hundred thousand people killed in that March 9th raid. That incendiary raid on Tokyo killed more people than either of the atomic bombs. After awhile I just kind of felt a hate for this airplane when I realized what we were doing bombing civilians up there in Japan, innocent people. I'm sorry. I just couldn't take it hardly, could hardly take it. I feel like I just didn't like what we were doing. I guess the hate for the plane, I guess I was just trying to transfer some of the guilt I was feeling for doing this but of course it was war and it was our job to do this.

(Carl Workman) Marines hit the beach. They all went in there and they were surprised. We never did have an island that we went into that didn't fire at us as we come in. They let them come in, get all the supplies and get all of the stuff in there, get all of our equipment and they give the artillery—mortars, it was bad then. When we were up in the front on the line the artillery was terrible, the Japs they knew every bit of that island where to drop them and everything like that. They had pinpointed before we got there you see, they had all that artillery in them caves push them back and bring them out. You had to have a big bomb to knock them out. And then we'd go in and get the Japs and stuff that was in the caves. It took time. The mud slowed us up, the rain, every, it was bad--mud up to your ankles and trying to get up to the front.

(Ora Mae Hyatt) When we got to Okinawa, the battle hadn't progressed as fast as they had expected. Instead of waiting for our hospital to get set up, they asked for nurses who would go on detached service immediately and my classmate and I and two others volunteered. We went down over the ship into a landing barge and then the landing barge took us to the beach and we got in a truck. We drove across some rough dirt roads and we could hear the gunfire and see some shells exploding. We were part of a surgical team. The wounded would be brought in and we'd take of their wounds and give them emergency care and prepare them for evacuation.

(Bill Wassmer) Okinawa is a probably more dramatic for the navy than it was for anybody else because of the kamikazes.

(Carl Workman) I was right close to the coast where I could see all of the two side planes coming down. I like to have some of them sailors come over there and get some of my holes. They didn't have no place to go.

(Bill Wassmer) Sitting in the harbor we just anchored there you know and here come a kamikaze, two of them. One hit at a cruiser and went right through four decks and killed everybody in sick bay. This one came right straight down at us. And our 20's quit—our machine guns, at that time we had some 50's and 30's on it. And our 40 just kept pumping and pumping and he came down and I held my hand up and says, "Not now Lord." And that Kamizake came down and he just about took the pennant flag of the mask, he went like this. He went up again and he came down to hit a Dutch merchant ship and he missed it. He blew into pieces before he hit it. But all that crew that was on the other side was in the water and I still think what my time.

(Woody James) I looked one right straight in the eye. I was standing gun watch, captain was on the 5H gun. I looked up and I seen that plane coming out of the cloud, but I only got half a gun and crew and I couldn't get trained on it anyway. And I stood in that spot and I looked and I looked and my brain finally told my feet "you better move, it's going to hit where you're standing" and I moved. I had a set of phones on and I hit the end of that phone chord going up deck to get under shelter, and it jerked me over and backwards onto the steel deck, bounced my head and the kamikaze hit on the other side of the ship. It didn't hit on my side at all

(Bill Johnson) Kamizakes they didn't always make their target. They were shot down before they ever reached their target, although they did much damage.

(Carl Workman) I think it was over two months to take that island.

(Ora Mae Hyatt) That was one of the worst battles in the Pacific and there were more casualties than they ever expected.

(Mont Mickelson) I was sent to Wendover in December of '43 and all of these bomb groups were going through and then along about the 17th of December 1944 an air of secrecy permeated the entire base.

(Rick Randle) Just ninety miles west of Salt Lake there was a small remote airbase surrounded by desert. Colonel Paul Tibbets and the 509th Composite Group trained there for a top secret mission which brought an early end to the war. The Enola Gay, Wendover, Hiroshima and Nagasaki are now familiar names that ushered in the atomic age.

(Mont Mickelson) They asked there of us in the machine shop to join the 509th Composite Group. We were told that it was high risk. We were told that there was a remote possibility that we wouldn't be returning. Colonel Tibbets was a man's leader. He would walk up in his coveralls as the rest of us had on with his hands in his pockets, he didn't say anything about what

he had or what we were going to do. Some of us thought it would be in the, well we all felt it would turn the tide of the war. I was escorted by two MP's with guns, full regalia, through two security fences, two AB29. It was dark at night but I had to perform a functional fit of the manufactured part with the Bombay. I had seen a couple of the bombs and of course at Wendover the bomb would be lowered into the pit with the hydraulic system and then the plane would be towed over the pit, and then the bomb's winched up into the Bombay. We knew that it was not a conventional type bomb just by the looks.

(Rick Randle) Many navy ships made the journey across the Pacific, but few people knew in mid-summer 1945 that one ship had been secretly chosen to deliver the ultimate weapon against the empire of Japan. The U.S.S. Indianapolis and its crew of 1,196 successfully transported the atomic bomb to the island of Tinian. The passage there was uneventful. The journey after turned into a nightmare.

(Woody James) While the skipper was getting the orders, they asked for an escort. They says, "You don't need an escort, it's a clear lane, there's nothing out there." So we sailed. I stood the 8-12 watch that night and it was so dark I couldn't recognize you from me to you and when the submarine spotted us, their skipper testifies that for just a moment against the horizon, a light spot and we were in it and he fired six torpedoes at us, two of them hit. It was only a few minutes until word of mouth passed to abandon ship. My friend Jim Newhall and I were together and we went over the side of the ship holding hands, made it to the surface and swam out a ways from the ship and I'm all alone, nobody around, I don't hear a thing so I let out a big yell, "Is anybody out here?" A great big old rough voice, "Hey Woody over here!" My buddy Jim Newhall. And I swam over a little ways and there was quite a group of them. The first day, in the afternoon, about noon somebody started yelling shark, shark, shark. And they came, a whole school of them with their fins sticking out of the water that high and pretty soon somebody let out a scream and all of the guys were just quiet, as quiet as it is here, just the lapping of the water, that's all you could hear. A chaplain happened to be in our group and he started repeating the 23rd psalm, and everybody in hearing this joined in. We were all denominations, but everybody joined in and that became our prayer for the next five days. We'd pull the lifejackets off of bodies that were cut in half by sharks. You could see them coming close enough to pet, right there...swim by me, go to him, bite the guy's leg off or... why me? You know. And it happened more than once. We tried to keep everybody in the group and we did for the second day it worked pretty good. All the time there were high-flying planes in the day time. But they couldn't see us. The third day guys started drinking salt water. You have to remember there was no water, no food, no nothing. Salt water will kill you. It will eat your insides up and does funny things to you and makes you do things you would never do otherwise. You go completely out of your mind. And there were fights starting. Some of them were serious. My friend Newhall and I decided it's time to move away

from this group. If there is going to be any survivors we'll be two of them. Then the fourth day came, more screams, more sharks, fewer guys in the water, another high-flying plane, then lo and behold about noon-time, another plane, but he's not nearly as high as everybody else has been flying. But he flew over us and we had choice words for him, believe me... tell him how blind he was. And lo and behold he turned and he happened to look down and he seen and oil slick. He's low enough now that he can see what's on the water and of course he radioed for help right away.

(Rick Randle) The message, "Many men in the water" was received at the base in Peleliu. PBY Captain, Adrian Marks was dispatched to lend assistance and report. En route, Marks flew over the destroyer, U.S.S. Cecil Doyle. He notified her captain of the emergency.

(Woody James) The skipper on the destroyer he didn't wait for orders. He immediately turned his destroyer around and cranked it up top speed and headed our way. And he was getting, what he thought pretty close, and he says, "I can't run in there running this speed, I got to see what I'm doing." Navy regulation says do not under any circumstances turn a light on at night in enemy territory. You can understand that. He turned one on and pointed it forward, put lookouts on the bow to watch for bodies in the water so he didn't run over anybody. Then he conversed with his officers of the deck and said, "Well we've got one light on, two lights can't be any worse than one, let's turn another one on." So they turned another one on and pointed it toward the sky and the reflection off of the clouds, we could see that for miles and miles--the prettiest sight in the world, bar none. He arrived on the scene about midnight. In the afternoon they diverted all kinds of planes over us and dropping survival gear; little rubber rafts, and a raft fell close to Jim and I and we started swimming to it. I got about half way to it and I gave completely out. Just to heck with this, I can't go any further. But Jim made it, kept yelling "C'mon Woody you can make it, c'mon Woody you can make it!" There were two other guys that made the raft about the time he did so there are all three in it. Then opposite direction there were two guys in the water. Jim said, "We're going to go pick up Woody" and the other guys said, "No these guys are right there, we'll get them, they can help paddle and we can go get Woody" and he says, "It ain't going to work that way, we're going to go get Woody first." And aboard those little rafts they had the same the thing they have today—aluminum ores, two-piece that you put together. There were two of them. Jim threw one overboard, put the other one together, and his sore-burned hands, he says, "You guys, we're going to pick up Woody and you're going to paddle by hand and if you don't you're not going to appreciate what's going to happen with this ore, that I can guarantee you." Then about 9 o'clock in the morning, the Doyle came by. I climbed a rope ladder and got aboard ship, saluted the flag, saluted the officers of the deck. I had a boatswain's pipe hanging around my neck, that's the only thing I had on. And to this day I don't know why but I pulled it off and hung it around the neck of the boat's mate of the watch. We were all dehydrated out and I lost 65 pounds in that five days. I could take my

skin and lift it that high. They assigned a guy to each one of us, to bathe us and get us clothes and find us a bed, and the first thing they did was offered me water, one tablespoon full of sweetened water, and I couldn't swallow it. I had altered my throat, salt-water altered my throat. My neck was as big as my head and I couldn't swallow at all. When we were rescued they said we were scattered over a fifty-mile radius. There were 321 live bodies came out of the water, two died aboard the rescue ships on the way to the hospital, and two at the island of Peleliu after we were there waiting for the hospital ship to come in and take us out. 317 people came home. Today there's 99 of us left.

(Max Gollaher) On the island of Maui in the Hawaiian Islands we were practicing to go and invade Japan and I didn't have much hope. I thought I've(gone through) six of them and I knew what would happen in Japan. I knew what the terrain and topography of the land is in Japan cuz I had studied it and I knew they'd shoot down at us and I knew I couldn't last one more or be that lucky.

(Jack Russell) We were all prepared to go into Japan proper.

(Robert Schaffer) The third marine division was to land on the west coast of Kusu so that's what it was there for. And I remember the medical officer speaking. He said we've got to plan for a million casualties. We've got to have medical facilities, hospitals, coffins for a million casualties.

(Jack Russell) In fact we done several months preparation we'd be mixing big barrels of gel, well diesel oil and a gel for the flame throwers and for the flame throwers in the tanks and that that we used.

(Mont Michelson) There's no doubt about it that the Japanese people were being trained with sharpened sticks and rods and whatever to go, they were prepared to go hand in hand combat.

(Roy Tew) The Japanese were prepared to defend their island even down to the women and children.

(Keith Renstrom) It was beyond any kind of an explosion that we can comprehend because we'd never seen anything like the pictures that they showed and so forth of it. It was sort of a feeling of unbelief on my part that they could put together something that could be so destructive as that was. And in just a flash a whole community gone, 300,000 people just gone. So I was relieved.

(Phil Shumway) And the day that they dropped that bomb was a great day, for me and everybody else really. There was, it was a terrible thing that happened but we were just getting ready to—our squadron had been given notice we were going to sent back over. I didn't want to go back there.

(Roy Tew) We had it going for us and we didn't feel like that really that they needed to drop that bomb, well I didn't anyway and some of them did of

course, but the thing of it is, I still feel, I wish they had never invented that bomb because then we wouldn't be living under the threat of, and our future generations, the threat of that nuclear attack.

(Keith Renstrom) I feel that the bomb saved our life. There is not question in my whole thing... it had to be done because they, Japan would have fought it out until the end and all it took was the emperor to say, "It's over boys!"

(Rick Randle) Captain Emmett Cyclone Davis was a fighter pilot and commander of the 8th Fighter Group known as Cyclone's Flying Circus. He had been stationed at Wheeler Field when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. Davis was one of a handful of pilots to managed to get his fighter plane off of the ground. Almost three and a half years later, the day after the second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki, Cyclone Davis flew a bombing raid over Japan. This operation distinguished the famed Utah fighter pilot for flying the first and last fighter missions of WWII.

("Cyclone Davis") I took at daybreak and I had sixty two P-38's and we flew up to the island of Kyushu and I flew off over the water away from the shore for protection until I got to where I was going to make the turn in, and what I decided to do, my plan was and what I had briefed would we'd fly north of Kumamoto and turn in and go down through a mountain pass and bomb Kumamoto from the north going south. And for some reason or another, I got the strangest feeling that that was the improper attack, that I really should turn early and go in and attack from the south going north. But as I approached the coast of Kyushu, I turned that whole flight of sixty two P-38's in a new direction and just as I did, where I would have been if I hadn't had turned, right at my altitude where I would have crossed the beach, the sky went black with anti-aircraft fire and I suspect that the artillery might have decimated me, but as it was I didn't lose a P-38. We went in and did a low-level attack. You can imagine this fire bomb is much more effective if you can deliver it at low level and at high speed because it sets on fire everything it touches. When we did that to Kumamoto and the Japanese surrendered four days later, so you know I kinda smile when I tell my story that the two big bombs got their attention and my sixty two P-38's brought them to the surrender table.

(Ora Mae Hyatt) One night we were watching an outdoor movie and we could see the harbor and the ships in the harbor and while we were watching the movie all of a sudden the ships were sending up flares and rockets and there were guns being fired and a lot of yelling and we heard them say, "The war is over!"

(Leslie Lund) That night was when the tracers went off. Everything, it sounded like everything on the island was shooting.

(Orson Blackett) But I thought we need to do something to celebrate VJ day so the quartermaster came to me and said, "Well I have a letter that tells us that we need to get rid of all of our pyrotechnics." Now we had a pretty good

sized pyrotechnic locker and so I signaled the other four ships and said, "Well why don't we get rid of our pyrotechnics tonight in celebration?" Well they didn't believe me on this letter and they wouldn't do it, so I said, "Well when it gets dark you stand by and I'm putting on the fireworks display for ya." We shot every pyrotechnic we had and it lasted for two hours.

(Gene Jacobsen) About noon time a young fellow, a Japanese came and told all of us topside hayaku and so we said, naka naka, yokadanai. But we went up, turned our tools into the sheds, underground sheds, heard some Japanese talking, heard them say, "senzoryamae" senzo is for war, yamae is finished. And boy we, I tell you the old heart began to beat.

(Eugene Nielsen) They opened the door and the guy that opened the door looked at me and he says, "Are you an American?" I couldn't say a word. Hell I hadn't talked to anybody for so long and I figured if I ever get out of the hell hole I'll talk forever. Finally I got my voice and I said, "Yes, I'm an American." My hair was long enough that I could just pull it this way and pull it right down over my face. Lice bites, flea bites, dirty scurvy, and he said, "Where were you taken a prisoner?" And I said, "I was taken a prisoner in Shanghai but I was originally with a fellow named Jimmy Doolittle who flew B-25s off an aircraft carrier, the U.S.S. Hornet and bombed Japan on the 18th of April back in 1942. And he looked at me for a minute and he looked at these guys and he says, "You know, it's him, he's clear off his trolley, those guys were all executed years ago." And I said, "Like hell they were, there's three more of them down the hall here." And I guess by then they'd heard me speaking English to somebody else speaking English and they started yelling. So we went down the hall and sure enough there were three more of them there. By then Meter had died so there were only four of us left.

(Gene Jacobsen) We got out on the parade ground and they gave us a brand new Japanese non-commissioned officer's uniform. And it was a nice wool, letter shoes and socks and underwear and all that good stuff you know, and oh boy the moral shot way high. The camp commander got up on a platform, and with tears running down his cheeks he told us through the interpreter that the war was over and the allies had been victorious. But when I saw that, the fact that he was crying, all of a sudden all of the hatred that I had for the Japanese just evaporated. I know longer hated them and I found myself feeling sorry for him because I knew how he felt and that hatred that I had was replaced with joy. That was my first experience with joy, and I'm telling you it was the most beautiful thing that could happen to me. I never could believe I could be so happy. I know I cried, I know I laughed. I'm sure I say a little bit. I was so, I was just overcome with joy.

(Thomas Harrison) We tore down bars and tore down fences, wandered around the countryside pretty aimlessly but first time you'd been free in years. Our own people bombed us with parachute-delivered food packages dropped from B29's.

(Roy Tew) And as we came down from that saddle and towards the camp, we could see that all of these prisoners were out there waving at us and that was a wonderful sight to see. We were the first signs of freedom for them and of course as we went by we dropped the parachutes that we had with the supplies and we could see that they were there gathering them up. It was a wonderful sight to see.

(Thomas Harrison) And that kept us going for a week or two that we waited for our own people.

(Gene Jacobsen ) We said, "Where's the army of occupation?" He said, "It's a short way down the road." And the camp commander greeted us, welcomed us and he said, "We suppose you're hungry." We said, "We're hungry!" He said, "What would you like? We'll get the cooks up. What would you like to eat?" And just like we had rehearsed, everybody said hotcakes. He set our tents up for you, we knew you'd be coming. They have a bed, a blanket and a pillow—that's the best we can do for you. And when you hear the bell ring, come and we heard the bell ring shortly and we had ham and eggs and sausage and hotcakes and everything you want.

(Ora Mae Hyatt) There were some more POWs who had worked in the Japanese coal mines. They'd received such inhumane treated. They hadn't been fed and they were like they were starved to death, and they came, those who were patients in the hospital. I don't know what happened to all of them but those we saw, it just broke your heart to see what it was like.

(Gene Jacobsen) We landed in Okinawa and they put us in a truck, took us across the field to a red-cross thing you know that has stuff in it with about six or eight beautiful American girls around it. And we got fairly close to that but didn't get any closer. We didn't, nobody would go closer. They said, "Don't you want a cup of coffee or a coke or something?" And everybody just wanted to look at them. For most of us, for a lot of us it had been over five years since and they were so nice and so cute.

(Ora Mae Hyatt) U.S. Army trucks were going by at night. The driver was fairly close and I waved to him and he was so amazed to see an American girl just off the side of road that he turned his head and didn't watch. He slowed down and the truck behind him also was distracted and saw me and he didn't look and there was a chain reaction and about four collisions just because I'm afraid I distracted the drivers.

(Bill Taylor) And when I got off the plane, when I got off I looked across and uh there was there was an American flag. Beautiful, beautiful thing. I looked at that and I thought, "Damn, boy this is something else!" I here I am, I've made it and I met the Americans and that's why I love America.

(Ora Mae Hyatt) As we approached the California coast it was night and we could tell that we were coming into San Francisco near, there was the Golden Gate Bridge we could see it from the air, but then we saw along the coast spelled out in lights were the words, "Welcome Home, Well Done!" And that

was such a thrill. I'll never forget what it meant to see those words and to know that this was America you were landing on.

(Bill Wassmer) It was a thrill to come back to the United States. It really was. It was a sight for sore eyes.

(Mont Michelson) We entered under the Golden Gate and uh, you see that huge sign on the hill, "Welcome Home... Welcome Home."

(Byrne Fernelius) Oh it was great to be home. You know when you go out and see the departing in out behind you, you think, "Well, I don't know if I'm ever going to come back or not." But we came back we were real happy.

(Leslie Lund) And there was a ship that came out to meet us and it had a whole bevy of beautiful girls on it waving at us.

(Gene Jacobsen) I mean beautiful! And they escorted us in all afternoon and the guys lined the dock looking at them, picking out the one he wanted or two, uh when we docked it just looked like San Francisco had moved down on the docks.

(Leslie Lund) That was just unreal. Just glad to be home. It was a beautiful sunny day.

(Orson Blackett) And so they assigned me to a hotel for the night and said, "What are you doing for the rest of the day?" And I says, "Nothing." And he said, "Well, let's get started on your paperwork." So I spend that afternoon doing that and then the first thing Monday morning I walked in there and someone hollers out, "Orson Blackett!" And it was a gal from the University of Utah, her name was, excuse me, her name was Maud Mathews. She knew Virginia and I and she says, "Give me your papers." And I was on the train home to Salt Lake by noon. And I was out.

(Carl Workman) WWII I think we brought peace to the world. We got the dictators that we fought. We figured that they'd, if they had been rulers of this country we'd have been slaves.

(Roy Tew) Japan and Germany together they probably could have, if we hadn't won the war, they probably could have controlled the world. We might be in serious trouble at this time. We might not be a country like we are with freedom that we have.

(Keith Renstrom) And as I think in my lifetime what I have seen and participated in, for the one sacred thing of freedom, I'd do it again, because freedom is by far one of the greatest things that a nation can have.

(Cyclone Davis) Really the driving force of winning that war was the civilians here in the United States when they all reacted to what they had to do to give those American boys something to fight with so when you get a whole nation all pointed in the proper direction, you know they couldn't do anything except achieve victory.

(Rick Randle) The citizens on the home-front outperformed and out-produced our enemies with the help of millions of women in the workforce. Rationing of food, gas and raw materials, and a massive increase in production of munitions, tanks, ships and planes all played a great part in our victory. Let us not forget this monumental effort to defeat evil and preserve our freedoms. Let us always teach our children, our grandchildren and all those in the world who love freedom of the 400,000 heroes who gave up their young lives, and millions of heroes who interrupted their lives and endured unspeakable hardships to answer their nation's call to serve. Let us keep alive their memory in hopes that never again will such a sacrifice be required from so many of our nation's young men and women.