



**Joan Gould**

United States Navy

Lieutenant

Pacific Theater

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Interviewer:  
Rick Randle

**THIS INTERVIEW IS NOT EDITED FOR CONTENT, LANGUAGE OR HISTORICAL ACCURACY**

**Rick:** Joan do you want to just tell us your name and spell your name for us?

**Joan:** Well my name is Joan Gould it's spelled J-O-A-N and G-O-U-L-D is my last name.

**Rick:** Okay we're really happy to have you with us today. I'd like to ask you just about your early life leading up to December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941 and where you were and how you joined up in the...I guess it was with the WAVES is that what it was?

**Joan:** No it was the Nurse Corps.

**Rick:** The Women's Nurses Corps. – Navy Nurse Corps. Okay tell us about your early life and leading up to December 7<sup>th</sup> 1941.

**Joan:** Well um – December the 7<sup>th</sup> I was in Denver at the time finishing my nursing career and before that I just grew up in a small coalmining town. My father was a Scott and he was what we'd call the Mine Foreman – he managed different coalmines and so we moved around quite a bit but these are very small towns and Kemmerer as you could imagine is I think 3,000 people – maybe about that many now but that was the big place and so all of the little towns used Kemmerer as their big city to go to for banking and theater and all the rest. And so that was very small I went to small schools, some of them were you know two or three grades in a...for one teacher. And High School was for all the surrounding villages and towns. A lot of coal mining and also ranching in that area and so that's mainly where I grew up and that's when I graduated from High School I had really never been anywhere much – and went to Colorado. That's where the nursing school was. It was a school by the charity nuns of the Catholic school it was the kind of school where you were in at 10:00 every night – kind of like in a convent. And so when I got out of there – graduated finally we decided, my friend Kaye and I decided to go into the Navy and besides that my brother Jackie was in the Navy at the time and he was aboard a destroyer and he was out in the Pacific and my mother thought that was quite a good idea you know that I could go to the Navy and maybe I would run into my brother which was probably not possible

anyway but when I was going into the Navy my orders came and I was accepted and I was ordered to go to Mayer Island and that is close to Viejo California. It was very close to San Francisco.

**Rick:** You joined the Navy after 1940...or after December 7<sup>th</sup>, after Pearl Harbor?

**Joan:** Uh huh, it was actually in October of '42.

**Rick:** On Pearl Harbor day when you were in Denver did you anticipate that there may be a war or were you aware that there was some hostility possibly?

**Joan:** You know when I was in Denver I was like a say a nursing student – I was aware of not much besides being a nursing student and I knew my brother however was in the Pacific and of course that worried me quite a bit you know, but I don't think I had the full realization of a war at that time. That you know I soon learned but after that when I decided to go into the Navy and I was on my way to the train on the radio came the information that my brother's ship had been sunk and I never saw him again – I have thought about that (pause).

**Rick:** That's very hard. So you were just on your way – you had already joined up when you got the news of your brother's death.

**Joan:** Before I even got there and I got up to San Francisco and I realized that he was probably dead (I tell you I wish I wouldn't do that). Anyway it was a new experience for me if you could imagine coming out of sort of a convent place into this kind of a Navy place where there was a lot of excitement and things changing and going on and it was really quite interesting. But my mother and father kept asking me to find out what I could – 'was he missing in action?', 'was he on an island somewhere?' you know something like that and I couldn't find anything. (pause) I'm sorry I just haven't thought about that in a long time. The...

**Rick:** How old was your brother?

**Joan:** He was 23, he was just a kid and he was dead. The thing that happened...

**Rick:** Okay Joan you were telling us about joining up and hearing about your brother's ship being sunk and then tell us what happened after that.

**Joan:** Well my parents of course were upset and wanted me to see what I could do to find out if he had gone missing or on a desert island or something like that and of course I knew he hadn't but where I was stationed to work was called 'SOQ' that's Sick Officers Quarters and an officer came there while I was there and his name was 'Lt. Bates' and he told me that he had been on that ship and that my brother had died and that I should tell my folks and he was a very nice man and he was really quite mentally disturbed over the whole thing. They had gotten off of the ship and there were not enough rafts to go around for everyone and so some of the people were swimming and hanging on and whatnot you know so many of them just died and one was my brother and he then wrote a letter – a very nice letter to my parents because he knew I was never going to and he did and he explained to them pretty much...so that was a very nice thing this Lt. Bates did for them I thought. And so I was at Mayer Island – that's sort of where they induct people.

**Rick:** Did they have to go through basic training?

**Joan:** That was pretty much what we were doing there – you get the shots you know, you get one in each arm about once a week when you finally get better and then you get another one and I don't know how many shots we had but we never looked forward to that and all the marching, drilling and swimming and all of the other kind of things – getting your uniforms together was really a big thing. There were a lot of uniforms – you had the duty uniforms and then you had the dress uniforms and so on and capes and whatnot and we had to go every other week to San Francisco to have these made and so we had every other weekend San Francisco was not a bad thing. I had a lot of fun and had many good times there. That was just a wonderful experience but after I'd been there maybe a year, maybe not that long – I was ordered to do duty in San Francisco and that was to get other nurses to join up you know that was the whole idea and I was sent around to different hospitals and nurse hospitals where there were nursing students and so

on and I was on a fire truck one time and I don't know – and I had some pictures taken in full uniform and many of those and it was kind of an interesting few months. It didn't last a great long time until I had orders then to the Hospital Ship. And I had orders to the hospital ship it was to go to Seattle and I had to go up there and meet the rest of the people going on to the hospital ship and while the hospital ship was being outfitted in some way or another it had been converted from some kind of a merchant ship...

**Rick:** That was early in 1943? [**Joan:** yeah] And this was the 'Samaritan' when you refer to the hospital ship right?

**Joan:** That was the one – it had been a merchant ship and it had been...it was rather rough you know it wasn't – nothing like the ships you have today like these big floating hospitals that you know about. It was adequate you'd just have to say but there was nothing fancy about our ship but it was fine. And there were 16 nurses and I just remember that we had one bathroom. I don't know how we managed to deal with that but we did, we got along very well – we embarked on that ship and there's this girl a blonde girl and she said "would you like to be my roommate?" and I said "sure" and we had a stateroom and I had the top bunk and she had the bottom bunk and we were together for 18 months and never had a quarrel or fight or anything, we got along very well.

**Rick:** She was a total stranger when she came onboard.

**Joan:** Yeah – 'Annie Larsen', she was from South Dakota – Noreigean. And a real nice girl, I liked her a lot and a whole of the others I did too – we got along very well for 16 young women you know.

**Rick:** What was the total crew of that ship? Did they have some doctors onboard and?

**Joan:** I think they had about the same number of doctors. I'm not sure the exact number but I believe pretty much...but the other part of the crew you know that ran the ship, I don't know about that. There were Hospital Corpsmen, many hospital corpsmen and these are young boys

actually who did most of the work. There were chiefs and old timers, there was an old timer I used to call him 'Mr. Turwilliger', he was a chief and he was rugged and so we'd run into these people once in awhile but mainly we were the medical people and doing that kind of work. We had our own Mess – your restaurant, your good food and Philippino was our cook and we had good food, a wonderful place and it was clean and a nice place to be really and so I had none of these rugged bad things that happened to these army nurses that were out there in you know...

**Rick:** When did you ship out then?

**Joan:** We shipped out – I think it was in March.

**Rick:** March of '43?

**Joan:** Uh huh, and we went down the coast, we went down the coast to San Francisco and going down the coast to San Francisco you kind of go like this instead of going like that, well you get very very seasick and so all of this crew were new people mostly and when I got up in the morning I'd look down in this hallway and here were all these nurses sitting on the floor with their feet against the wall trying to eat breakfast out of a tray and all the trays were roped around the tables and so on and the ship had been going like this all the way down the coast. And a lot of people were just really really seasick except me. I was never, never seasick. I don't know why but I was never...I was ??? and let the waves kind of...and the air and it was really lovely you know traveling. The jobs that we had first was to take back refugees – people that had been evacuated from Pearl Harbor and Hawaii – wives and children and people like that. We called that 'the Milk Run' and we took them...we made two or three trips like that.

**Rick:** So you'd sail over to Hawaii and then sail back to San Francisco?

**Joan:** And then go back, uh huh, and we'd get another load of these people and take them.

**Rick:** And were there ill and sick and people that needed your help going and coming I guess?

**Joan:** Yeah, oh yes. And anybody who got sick you know was taken care of – that’s true. And I think about after the third time – this was a big hospital ship all painted white with a big red cross on it, big lights and so on – next thing I knew...do you know the word ‘scuttlebutt’? That means the kind of information that you sort of pick up and you try to figure out what’s going on around here and you say ‘scuttlebutt’...we were going out in the Pacific and sure enough we went to Pearl Harbor and they painted our ship gray – battleship gray so we were no longer identified and so we went out in the...in May of that year.

**Rick:** And prior to this did you ever see any submarines or minefields or anything that was a danger to your ship going back and forth?

**Joan:** Oh yes. I didn’t actually see them but I knew about it and there were...you see in 1944 is when we went out at this time – May of 1944 it got to be and we were gone a year out in the Pacific and we were in hazardous waters all the time and there were all kinds of things...one man’s submarine...you know they – finally the Japanese towards the end of the war were having little one-man submarines that would get under your ship and so they had means of putting up screens or nettings or whatever to keep those submarines out. And so we ran into some hazards like that, yeah.

**Rick:** Well now you said they took the markings – the hospital markings off the ship, why would they do that?

**Joan:** They had the impression that it wasn’t going to help any being a floating target I guess out in that Pacific water because that’s what you would be.

**Rick:** So they painted it gray so that you would blend right in with all of the other warships.

**Joan:** Yeah, that’s why they did that. We didn’t carry guns at all but we then...our job then we found out was to go to these different islands. We would pick up you know casualties and we would treat them. We had an operation room going all the time and I had a ward that was called

‘ENT’ which means ear nose and throat – actually it amounted to wherever the shrapnel wounds or the gunshot wounds were mostly – that kind of thing.

**Rick:** What island were you...tell us about these specific islands that you would dock from.

**Joan:** The Mariana's were Guam, Saipan and Tinian and there was an island called Palau. I think the most interesting one would be Iwo Jima.

**Rick:** That's where you were during that year of duty you were off the shores of Iwo Jima when the marines invaded I would imagine.

**Joan:** We were. We were there D-day and I was out on the deck where you know when you're with people continually all the time you like the little free time for yourself and I was just out walking around in the deck and it was D-day and I looked to the starboard and here's this big troopship that's full of marines and they're coming down these rope ladders just one after another and they're in landing craft that would go into the shore. You could see the island of Iwo Jima plainly and Mount Suribachi – you've heard about that I think where they planted the flag and so on. And so I watched that going on and I just realized ‘what's going to happen to those poor kids’?

**Rick:** How far were you anchored off shore at that time?

**Joan:** You know I think its like a mile – I wonder if Cal knows, I'm not sure how far that is, I think its about a mile, but you could plainly see and it's not so far that these landing crafts can't make those trips you know. And they'd drop off the marines and come back and get loads.

**Rick:** And did the Japanese airplanes – did they have an Airforce capable at that time to...and did they ever attack your ship or...

**Joan:** They didn't actually attack our ship they got the Kamikaze (you've heard of the Kamikaze planes) towards the end of the war would just land on the ship. They did land on one hospital

ship right in the operating room – it wasn't ours but I can remember being smoked, it would smoke all around our ship and then you'd hear that anti-aircraft going like that and I can remember these things that seem pretty scary today but you know when you're young you don't feel that. I think that's why the young people fight the wars, the older people could not do that I don't think.

**Rick:** Let's go back to now where these marines were invading Iwo Jima and you were watching this from the deck – take us from there.

**Joan:** Well you know I knew what to expect. I saw these kids going into that you know one after the other and I thought 'oh I wish I could tell them to not go' you know but sure enough you know here they come right about afternoon, they're being brought back to our ship – one after the other in terrible shape you know.

**Rick:** How would they get the wounded up onto your ship?

**Joan:** I don't know – they had lifts of some kind I guess. I don't know, that wasn't a big problem I don't think. They would come right after another and then they would be put into whatever department you know they should go and I would have maybe 30...yeah and then they would slide in sometimes the cots in-between these really close things you'd have a hard time getting around. And then I'd take care of these kids and my doctor's name was 'Wiezer' and he was from Ohio I think. These doctors were all excellent – real specialists. They were just there for the war.

**Rick:** I guess they had surgeons onboard that would do surgery?

**Joan:** Oh yes, yes we did have surgeons and orthopedic men and all kinds of people like that and...

**Rick:** What was your most interesting experience during your nursing duties and the thing that you remember at that point?

**Joan:** The most interesting? Oh my, I don't know. I guess kind of an interesting thing that happened in May finally after the year was up I was given orders then to go to Bethesda Maryland and to go there I was with a friend 'Gene Burkey' and we could choose to go either fly or go on a ship and we chose to fly and we were in Guam, I think it was either Guam or Saipan – those Mariana Islands are real close you know, you can actually swim across. The...there was just a little shack and that was the airport and it was just kind of a little rude shack there and we're there and we're waiting for this plane to come take us to Hawaii. We waited and waited a long long time and they would come they'd be filled up with people and we couldn't get on and so we were washing our faces you know in the ocean and brushing our teeth in the ocean and all of that. We had managed to get food from the mess hall that...I guess they're military people, I don't remember what they were and we just hung around there for quite a long time and I suppose maybe nobody knew where we were, I don't know.

**Rick:** Let's go back to when you were at Iwo Jima, tell us what...I mean these young guys would come in wounded and would they talk to you and?

**Joan:** Oh yes, they would. I liked them – their attitude, these kids were just so nice, they were great and 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.

**Rick:** And after they were treated in your ward and then did they have like a regular hospital ward with several beds in one area that they would stay in?

**Joan:** Yeah, my ward had like 30 but they were layered, you know like two layers of beds and so it wasn't easy to deal with that and then I would have hospital corpsmen working with me.

**Rick:** And if their wounds were not severe enough would they return back to duty?

**Joan:** You know I think they probably would. They would go to Guam – that was the hospital.

**Rick:** The headquarters, so they would be evacuated to Guam?

**Joan:** I think they would and whatever happened to them after that it depended on their condition, some were in very bad shape. Some of them lost maybe not two limbs maybe three or they were blinded or something like that, they were in very bad condition.

**Rick:** And were you there during the entire Iwo Jima campaign? Did you see the flag go up on Mount Siribachi?

**Joan:** I didn't actually see that you know but I was there.

**Rick:** But your ship was there?

**Joan:** Uh huh, we made trips you know we would go back and forth and then we went finally to Okinawa. We were stationed in a place called Ulithi Harbor during the Philippines campaign and I don't know why – there were many ships there and one was the New Jersey. It was the USS New Jersey it was the flagship for Admiral Halsey and that ship was fairly close to where our ship and I met Admiral Halsey and he had invited the nurses to his ship and had a steak dinner at one time I remember and that was really quite nice, I had an autographed picture of Admiral Halsey and it's disappeared, I don't know where it went.

**Rick:** So after you left Iwo Jima you went to Okinawa and were you there during the invasion of Okinawa?

**Joan:** Yes, and so was this nurse that you talked to that was stationed there. Well of course we were in a ship so we didn't have the conditions that poor women had but we had...it was towards the end of the war and the Japanese were getting reckless with these Kamikaze planes and these one-man submarines and so on and it was really a kind of a hazardous place to be.

**Rick:** Well so you were about a mile offshore of Okinawa during the early invasion and I understand that there were a lot of Japanese jumping off cliffs and stuff, did they ever bring any Japanese onboard to be treated?

**Joan:** Oh no.

**Rick:** Just strictly Americans?

**Joan:** Americans, yeah. Marines mostly really.

**Rick:** And that battle lasted 85 days – were you there during that whole campaign?

**Joan:** No because I was ordered to leave before it ended I think – it was in May anyway that I left and I went to like I say Bethesda Maryland.

**Rick:** And you saw Kamikaze planes hit other ships and...

**Joan:** That happened a lot. They would head mostly into destroyers for some reason and they would slam into these ships and do damage you know.

**Rick:** And there were no markings on your ship to differentiate you and as a hospital ship?

[**Joan:** No] But I guess Kamikaze planes would hit the bigger ships?

**Joan:** Well one ship – one hospital ship was hit, ours was not but one was. Right in the operating room. It was hazardous alright and...but my living conditions I could never complain about in the Navy. They were all excellent – really nice.

**Rick:** Tell me about your hours. If you work eight hours and then off, or what was it like?

**Joan:** When we had a new load of patients we worked continually until they were taken to [**Rick:** so you may have to work 12 or 14 hours], yeah as long as it took and then we would put them off

to Guam to a hospital and then we'd go back and then we'd take it easy for awhile and get ready for the next load.

**Rick:** Well you know – I guess nobody was aware at that time how significant those battles at Iwo Jima and Okinawa were, I mean it didn't show that significance at that point to any of you guys probably.

**Joan:** No, you're too close to it I think. I don't think that we did, we just knew we were doing what we had to do and I didn't do much thinking about the war actually just what we were doing. So like I say I think wars are fought by young people, I don't think older people can deal with it?

**Rick:** That may be true. Now you mentioned....

\*\*\*Tape Interrupt\*\*\*

**Rick:** Can you remember any more about your experiences on Iwo Jima?

**Joan:** I can remember mostly D-day that was especially the kind of day that I remember a lot of. What I mostly remember was taking on these poor kids that were all shot up and going back to Guam and then coming back again and getting more loads. And that's about what it amounted to for me. We were surrounded sometimes with smoke you know with anti-aircraft and so on going on there. We didn't worry a lot about it; young people just don't pay a lot of attention to things like that. One time while we were stationed somewhere in Iwo Jima a shell came and went down our stack. If you see our ship had a great big stack right in the middle and it went down there and my stateroom was very close. There was just a little hallway and then my stateroom where I was. It was a dud, it did not blow up but if it had I would have been gone. I'd not be here today I'll tell you for sure. We had to get specialists to come and get that shell out of that stack and that was quite an interesting experience. I was told to go forward to the doctor's quarters which I did, while they extracted the shell out of the stack of our ship. So that was just plain luck.

**Rick:** So you were inside that ship when they raised that flag. Did you see the flag after that?

**Joan:** No, I didn't even know about it, not until I got back to Washington and so on. I didn't know about that, I just knew what was going on that was this terrible war and a lot of people injured and killed and so on. We made maybe three or four trips I guess but other ships were going also.

**Rick:** So you were back and forth to Guam getting supplies and taking wounded?

**Joan:** Yes and then they would deal with them further in the hospital there but they had emergency care on our ship and surgery and some of them were in casts and so on and they would do whatever they could do in that emergency time. We would deal with them.

**Rick:** If any died on your ship were they taken to Guam as well?

**Joan:** Well you know we didn't have the facility to hold to many people like that so we would bury at sea. Right from the ship and they would have a service, we had a chaplain and they would have a service and we buried a lot, maybe 25. They would die before they ever got off the ship and so we would spare them at sea and I guess whatever they did about their identity to send to their next of kin and things like that was taken care of I'm sure, but we were required to be at the funerals.

**Rick:** Did they play Taps?

**Joan:** They did not do that but they said prayers – the Chaplain would and then they would bury them at sea.

**Rick:** Well let's go up to Okinawa, you left Iwo Jima and then you were off the shore at Okinawa.

**Joan:** Yes, then we went to Okinawa was the last place and that was kind of at the end of the war, as you know it ended in '45 and we were at May of '45 and I think it was August when the war ended finally. But in May we were there doing the same thing pretty much.

**Rick:** Taking casualties?

**Joan:** Yes and taking them to Guam and coming back and forth and taking care of these kids. And then finally we got our orders and that had been a full year. So we got our orders to leave then and like is say Gene Burkey and I (my friend) left and went to Hawaii. We got to Hawaii and had a good time and then we were flying propeller planes you know, they didn't have these...

**Rick:** Let's go back just a little, you went from Okinawa and that's where you met Admiral Halsey?

**Joan:** Admiral Halsey's ship was in Ulithi Harbor with a lot of other ships. There were a number of ships there. His ship was the New Jersey, a big battleship and so we were invited there, all of us, the nurses. We had a little talk and they served us some tenderloin steaks I think. We were there two times.

**Rick:** Did you shake Admiral Halsey's hand?

**Joan:** Oh yes.

**Rick:** What did he say to you?

**Joan:** He just sat there and chatted with us, I don't know, nothing special. He's a kind of rugged looking man and well thought of and it was really quite a privilege and I did get this autographed picture of him but I can't find it.

**Rick:** Was that when there was a submarine in Ulithi Harbor?

**Joan:** Yeah. It was kind of exciting because all of a sudden our ship had to get up and start moving around. We'd been sitting there for quite a few days and all of a sudden our ship was going around and around and around like this. They were depth charging and so we realized that one of those little submarines had gotten in there. You see they have kind of like a net, I don't know how they do that really to prevent the submarines from getting in there.

**Rick:** You saw the submarine actually being hit so that there was material coming up from the bottom?

**Joan:** Yeah, I saw the depth charges and I saw this kind of cork looking stuff coming up. I didn't see any person.

**Rick:** Did you hear the depth charges explode?

**Joan:** Oh yeah, yes indeed.

**Rick:** And when they hit that submarine was it a different sound?

**Joan:** Oh, well they sounded loud no matter what they did. They just went down there and banged around looking for that submarine and the submarine I don't know what it was going to do. I guess it was going to run into some ship or something.

**Rick:** And do you know if it was one of those small mini subs or was it a regular large Japanese submarine?

**Joan:** No, it was a little one. Those little one-man submarines, like the Kamikaze planes are one-man and they were out to kill themselves, which they did. They did a lot of damage that way. But then we got back to Bethesda Maryland, that's where I was stationed, that's right off of Washington D.C.

**Rick:** So you went to Hawaii...

**Joan:** Yeah, there were propeller planes and this was a PB2Y it was called and it was a seaplane and when it takes off out of the water it really makes a huge noise and we flew that to Hawaii and then from there we had a big commercial plane that took 14 hours to get to San Francisco from Hawaii.

**Rick:** When you were in that plane did you see the Golden Gate Bridge?

**Joan:** Oh yes! Yes, it was wonderful! We had special privileges of having a birth on that big old plane. I don't know if you ever knew about these planes but they had two or three little births and so we experienced that. Coming into San Francisco...I always loved to go to San Francisco, we've had wonderful times there, that's a lovely city. They were so good to military people! When I was doing the recruiting duty in San Francisco, it was on Market Street, if you're familiar, well the office was on Market Street so we just walked there from an apartment where I was staying and walk down the street on Market Street and nobody would bother me. I could walk all over the city and it was safe. It's not like that today, you could never do that I think now but I would go to you know, the Saint Francis Hotel and I would salute the doorman there and we were buddies and go to Saint Mary's church up the street and so on. It was really a lovely city.

**Rick:** After you got back to San Francisco the second time did you just muster out of the service then or did you stay in for a while?

**Joan:** I stayed in until '46 I think it was that I finally left. I intended to go back to school because I thought I really wanted to get a degree. I just had an RN by then and I wanted to finally get some more education, which I did. I went to the University of Utah being as my mother and father by that time were living in Ogden and that's where I met Cal. Cal and I met in biology at the University of Utah and he had been in the European theatre and so we had a lot in common you know. And so we met each other and got married in about June. We got married in June and met probably in December something like that.

**Rick:** That's great. We appreciate you sharing those experiences with us.

**Elizabeth:** Do you remember specifically hearing about Pearl Harbor? Where you were etc.?

**Joan:** Yes I do. I was in Denver and that's where the University of Colorado has a Psychiatric Hospital and I was getting some special training in Psychiatric Nursing and that's when that news of December the 7<sup>th</sup> came and I realized my brother was there so it was scary. Everybody then got frightened about that because we'd never been invaded before, you know. So this time we have a war that we were actually invaded.

**Rick:** There was a big patriotic swell I guess of people, even at your nursing school?

**Joan:** Yes, well I soon went to Los Angeles with my friend Kay. She's a friend that lives in Trinidad Colorado today and we decided that we would go to the Navy. My mother like I say was a big influence in everything I ever did and she thought that was a good idea. Kay and I were in Los Angeles where her sister lives and we then went up the coast to San Francisco and to Mayer Island.

**Elizabeth:** Tell us about your other brothers.

**Joan:** Well Melvin, my youngest brother, lives in Alaska. He was in the Coast Guard at the same time that my other brother was in the Navy and then I joined the Navy so there were three of us. That brother, when I was at Mayer Island and working at SOQ (Sick Officer Quarters) his flotilla of Coast Guard cutters (I don't know if there were seven or eight of them), they came into the harbor there and were going to get some medical supplies and they were getting ready to go up to the Aleutian Islands and so my brother was on the same ship as this Pharmacist Mate who came to the hospital to get some medical supplies who looked me up and told me that my brother was on that ship. His wife Wynnona was dying of cancer, which is true, she had Hodgkin's Disease and the officer would not let him off to go home. So there was another problem you see so I did go to the ship and the officer paid no attention to me and so when I went back to the Sick

Officer's Quarters I was telling them my dilemma to some of these people and they got the Red cross then to deal with that and they got him off and he then did go home and he was with his wife when she died.

**Rick:** So you appealed to the Red Cross and they were the one's that got him liberty?

**Joan:** Yes, these officer's did that for me. And they knew how to do that and I didn't. So he did get to go home. So that was another kind of interesting thing that happened and my brother still lives in Alaska.

**Rick:** Did he have to go back in after his wife died?

**Joan:** Oh yes, yeah he did. He was just there for a certain length of time.

**Rick:** Where did he serve after that?

**Joan:** He was always on the west coast; I think off of Seattle, I think around the Alaska waters, something like that. He was a career man; he stayed in as a career. Then when my brother (he still lives there) he started working for the state and they have this ferry system. It goes all up the waters of the Alaskan Islands and he worked on that ferry system for quite a long time too. So he just retired in Alaska then and that's where he lives.

**Rick:** Hollywood has done several movies about Admiral Halsey and they used James Cagney as Admiral Halsey. Would you say that's a pretty good likeness?

**Joan:** Well I think that's pretty close. He was himself. He was rather stocky and rugged looking, he didn't look snappy like some officers. He had this rugged hat and rugged looking and he was sort of a rough man but he was nice. He was a good person, at least what I know of him. He was very nice to us.

**Rick:** There's very few people around today that have had the privilege of meeting him personally.

**Joan:** I think that was a real privilege. I met a lot of people. I was trying to think of the name of this newspaperman who finally died in the Pacific – a well know man...Ernie Pile. I met Ernie Pile and that was interesting as well. I'm sure there were many people that came aboard the ship and some of those pictures that you see were some kinds of publicity and things like that for the wartime.

**Rick:** You were an eyewitness to two of the very significant battles in the Pacific – Iwo Jima and Okinawa, which is a remarkable thing.

**Joan:** I think I have four battle stars on my ribbons. I have a ribbon that has like four battle stars.

**Rick:** Well thank you so much.

**Elizabeth:** I was wondering, at the time these battles were happening did you have any idea how massive they were relative to others?

**Joan:** I did not. It was not that kind of a situation you know you were just for the moment kind of doing things with not a lot of things to consider or think about. You just do what you have to do. When you bring on all of these patients at once you are busy! You know, you just do that and think about it later maybe. I don't think older people can do that, I think only the young can.

**Rick:** Did you have to do things on patients where only doctors would be allowed to do if you had enough doctors but did you have to remove shrapnel from wounds and stuff?

**Joan:** Yeah, I think that the surgery probably removed shrapnel and things like that and talking about this fleet marine – the man who's name is on the Veterans Hospital now, his name is George Wallen – now he went into Iwo Jima maybe about that time that I saw these men going

in. I may have seen him go into Iwo Jima but he performed that kind of work, he was a Hospital Corpsman (Pharmacist Mate) and he probably did a lot of emergency cares to stop bleeding and the kinds of things that you'd do if you were doing Red cross kind of things – stop bleeding, help with breathing or whatever you had to do and he did that. And that is a hard job! And I think he got some kind of a medal as I recall but he surely deserved it and so did all of the other Fleet Marines I think.

**Rick:** Have you met George Wallen?

**Joan:** No but you know he lives very close to where I live and I realized that and I thought one day I would call him up.

**Elizabeth:** What exactly did you do when these soldiers came on the ship as far as their treatment?

**Joan:** Well you see that they get settled into their beds where they're going to be. I don't know you do whatever you have to do – you get water if they want it and food and whatever they need, sometimes a urinal. And the Hospital Corpsmen are working too, you know we're just working together and taking care of these people. The emergency kind of things probably go on mostly in the operating room and some of those people would be ambulatory and be out on the deck too because we carried around 500 people you know. It was just full of these injured patients. Then we disembarked these people and go back and get more and some would be badly injured and others would be kind of not so badly injured but they were injured.

**Rick:** How long was the trip from Iwo Jima over to Guam?

**Joan:** Well I don't know I think it might be two or three days.

**Elizabeth:** Can you describe your emotions as you're on the PBY plane and you see the Golden Gate Bridge – do you remember how you felt when you saw that in 1946 when you were coming home?

**Joan:** Well, I always like to see it. I saw it many times and if I were working at night on a ship and we'd be coming into San Francisco through the Golden Gate Bridge and it would be daylight you would never have a better experience than that. That is something to see, it's very nice. Anytime you go to San Francisco you can expect to really have a lovely time I think. We enjoyed that so much and I still like to go there. Cal and I have been there a few times and gone on those trails that you can take up along the city and had some good times like that. When I was in Washington I wasn't used to the East so much, I was very glad to go back to the west coast. But while I was east I did go to New York a couple of times and to Washington and I happened to be there when Harry Truman lit up the Christmas tree and I watched him do that.

**Rick:** Well Joan thank you so much. We appreciate everything.