

Interview of Lorus Bud Haacke

Interviewer: Ready to go?

Crew: Yep.

Interviewer: Well, today we have with us Mr. Bud Haacke, who is a United States Navy veteran. Bud, it's an honor to have you with us today. We appreciate you coming up here. Can you tell us about where you were on December 7th, 1941, and what was going through your mind and, we'll start from there.

Bud Haacke: December 7th was a Sunday, and I had been to church. I lived all my life in Woods Cross, Utah. We went to church and we came home from church and they said that Pearl Harbor had been bombed and that was the first inkling we had of it, I guess. I had been to church that day, and we came back from church and found out that Pearl Harbor had been bombed.

Interviewer: How old were you?

Bud Haacke: Well, that was in 1941, so I was born in '24, so I was 17.

Interviewer: What happened after that?

Bud Haacke: I was going to Davis High School, and I was born on December the 26th, 1924. In order to finish high school, I had to get a deferment. I had one brother that was already in the Navy and one that was in South America, hadn't come home from a mission. So I had to get a deferment for high school to finish high school. So I graduated from high school on the, I think the 21st of May, and on the 1st of June, I got my draft notice. On the 1st of July, I was headed for San Diego, California. We went from there down to the Social Hall Avenue in Salt Lake where they process you. We went down to Social Hall Avenue, and then they had the selective

volunteer. You could choose which branch of the service you wanted to go into. I had a brother in the Navy also, an older brother in the Navy, so I selected the Navy and went into the Navy the 1st of July of 1943. Just a month or so after I graduated from High School I was headed for San Diego, California for boot camp.

Interviewer: And tell us about boot camp down there in San Diego.

Bud Haacke: When we got down to boot camp, we got down there. I was just a young kid. I didn't weigh very much. I didn't weigh more than 125 pounds and it was a traumatic thing, that boot camp was. Then when we got through boot camp, I had a chance to come home. I was an alternate on a draft for radio technician. So, of course, when you are an alternate on a draft in the Navy, you are just not picked. After boot camp, I got I think a three or four day leave to come home, and I didn't get mine. So finally after they had picked who they wanted, they sent me home on a three or four day leave from boot camp and I went to come home for three or four days and I went back. As I was going back I was on the destroyer base at San Diego, California, and there was a bunch of guys. We were all standing around there and one officer came out and said, "I'm looking for a bunch of people to come to diesel school. Does anybody want to go to diesel school?" We were in the landing craft in the amphibious force, so I was right next to him and just grabbed him and I said, "Yeah, I would like to go to diesel school." So I got picked to go to diesel school and I went for about six weeks to diesel school in San Diego, California.

Interviewer: And diesel school, that's how to run the diesel engines?

Bud Haacke: Diesel school taught us how to repair and maintain a diesel engine on landing craft, on those LCP's and LCM's. They were, I think, General Motors diesels and we learned to repair them and take care of those things. That's what my duties were in the Navy. I was in the

amphibious force in landing craft. We made different landings on different beaches and landings.

Interviewer: After you left that diesel school, where did you go from there?

Bud Haacke: I went from there up to Treasure Island off of San Francisco, stayed there one night and caught a liberty ship the next morning out of San Francisco and headed for Noumea, New Caledonia. We were out about 18 or 19 days on the water on a liberty ship going to Noumea, New Caledonia. I landed in Noumea, New Caledonia about 19 days after I left San Francisco.

Interviewer: Did you have to zigzag going across or were you in a convoy?

Bud Haacke: We were in kind of a convoy. That was one of the bad parts of my experiences in the Navy because it was a liberty ship. It was really, really crowded. We had no fresh water showers, to speak of. We took salt water showers then. It was crowded. There are things I better not mention. Anyway, we were there and went 19 days on the waters and as you go out of San Francisco, there's a lot of ground swells and what have you. So we had, on the ground swells, we got sea sick. They have garbage cans on each one of the holes where we were sleeping and when I got up the next morning, they were full. They barfed it all up. We were kind of sea sick for a long time going over there, but we were 19 days on the water.

Interviewer: All right, and then you landed.

Bud Haacke: Then we landed in Noumea, New Caledonia and then we went to a camp in Noumea, New Caledonia and were there for about two weeks, waiting there. Then finally after Noumea, New Caledonia, I caught a Dutch ship -- Japara was the name of it -- and I went from there up to Guadalcanal and Tolagi in the Solomon Islands. Guadalcanal was the big island there

and Tolagi was the island where the Navy had their base at Tolagi there. I stayed there for about two weeks waiting for the ship, this AKA that I was finally assigned to come back from an R&R down in New Zealand. I went aboard this AKA 13, which was called the Titania. That is where I spent the rest of my career in the Navy in the amphibious force making different landings on different islands.

Interviewer: And bringing Marines and--

Bud Haacke: Marines and Army and what have you.

Interviewer: --onto the islands.

Bud Haacke: Making landings and making the different landings on the island.

Interviewer: Now tell us in detail if you can about those landing barge and what your duty was.

Bud Haacke: Our duty on those landing barges -- we were an AKA ship. "A" stands for cargo and we, we basically took personnel ashore the first two or three waves. We would take them in waves. We would practice those landings a long time because it was critical that we hit the beach at a specific set of time. We made one landing down, I can't remember the name of it, just off of the Solomon Islands there. That was the first landing we made, we didn't hit a lot of resistance there. There wasn't much resistance there. So then we came back and the next landing was the invasion. We went up to make the invasion of Guam. They were going to invade, they were going to take on Saipan and then they were going to take on Guam a few days later. They made so much resistance in Saipan that we went back to Kwajalein and we stayed back there for about 30 days. Then we went back and made the initial landing on Guam, on the island of Guam. That was really a traumatic experience there, that landing on Guam. It was one

of the worst I was ever on. The cargo ship -- we would go in and take troops in there. The first two or three times, we'd took troops in, and then because we were a cargo ship, we would have cargo on the ship and then there'd be supplies, food, ammunition, trucks, and that have you. Then we would spend the next three, four, five, six days unloading that stuff and making trips to and from the beach, unloading different cargo for the troops that were on the beach. Guam was a really, really a traumatic landing because, as I remembered it, when we went into Guam, it was kind of a rocky point come out there. The Japanese had built a lot of caves in the rocks and so they had gone down and we'd go in and drop a ramp to unload troops or supplies and then the Japanese would come out of these caves that they had dug in these rocky formations. Then they'd start dropping mortars down the beach. I'd wind the ramp back up and we would go out there and sit out there for awhile, and then finally after we figured they quit, why, we'd sneak back in. We'd done that for four or five days, and some of the troops there on Guam, I don't think they made it off the beach for a day or two or two or three days because of that. Eventually what they did is they took flame throwers and went up in the mouth of those cave and just lit the flame throwers and burned the Japanese out, actually burned them up. There was a lot of -- I probably saw more dead there than I did anywhere, and I made other landings, too. More dead bodies floating in the water, on the beaches. There were a lot of dead bodies floating on the beach, floating in the water off of Guam there. Then we took a lot of the wounded off of Guam and we always had a hospital ship that came along and it was always painted white. So a lot of times we take the wounded from the beach and take them up to the hospital ship to be treated at the hospital ship.

Interviewer: Go over what you're specific duties were on those--

Bud Haacke: My specific duties on the boat were to keep the motor running. If we had problems with any of the landing craft, we were attached to the ship and we'd actually -- they'd hoist us aboard the ship and we'd go with the ship where ever it went. My specific duty was to keep the motor running and keep it going so it would be ready for any landing that we went to. My specific duty -- there was two of the us, the craftsman that ran the boat, and there was me, and the mechanic that was there too. My duties, of course, when we hit the beach, I dropped the ramp and let the troops out. My duties were to keep the boat running, keep it in good shape, and the two of us would go when they make the landings and go in on the landings. Sometimes on the landings the ships would be two to three miles out and, and the big ships were that far out -- battleships, cruisers, what have you -- and they would shell the beach until, if H-Hour was 9:00, for example, they would shell the beach at 9:00. We were trained to hit the beach at exactly the same time. If you hit the beach prior to when you're supposed to hit the beach, then you're under your own fire. If you hit the beach after, too far after, then the Japanese would come out and so you had to fight it solo. So our specific duty that we trained for was to hit the beach at a particular time and that's what we did. I was in on the invasion of Guam, I was in about the 8th or 9th wave on that island there. The waves -- the landing craft went in kind of like waves, and the waves would be two to three minutes apart. So I was in there on Guam basically 15 or 20 minutes after the first troops hit the beach of Guam.

Interviewer: After you let these guy off, how far away from the beach were they?

Bud Haacke: We were right on the beach. We dropped them right off on the beach. We dropped our troops right off on the beach. Normally, in Guam, for example, was basically done by Marines, where other landings were led by the Army. So we would drop them off and they were always happy to get out of the boat. They didn't want to be on the water, they wanted to be on

the ground. So we'd drop them off and back out to the ship and we'd either get more troops or we would get food supplies, jeeps, trucks, ammunition. We'd do that basically, basically almost 24 hours a day. I mean, we had some sometime off, but sometimes we'd be on the beaches, on Guam, for example, we were there for about seven days unloading the ship with supplies and stuff.

Interviewer: And then when you went to your main boat, they would lift your whole boat up on to the boat?

Bud Haacke: Yeah. When we'd go, they wouldn't left us on there until -- they would drop cargo nets with supplies in the boat while we were there. But then when we were underway to go somewhere else, then they'd lift the landings boards up and put them on the ship and carry them right with them.

Interviewer: So during that invasion of Guam, you'd sleep at night -- when you did sleep -- on the boat?

Bud Haacke: We'd sleep, sometimes we could go back and tie up alongside the ship and sleep in our bunks on the ship. We had bunks on the ship and we'd sleep on the ship.

Interviewer: There in Guam, were they firing mortars at any of those barges that you were on?

Bud Haacke: Oh, yeah. All the time, mortars were firing all around us, yeah. Mortars and sometimes, they'd even have artillery shells that would come in. When I went to the Philippines, we'd have artillery shells come out at us all the time, so that was another story. Maybe we'll get to it later.

Interviewer: How about airplanes?

Bud Haacke: Yeah, there was always a lot. You could always see -- there were always carriers that went with the convoy. We always went in a convoy, and we had battleships, cruisers, destroyers, destroyer escorts and that. You'd see a lot of airplanes flying. I'd see dog fights with Japanese when they were intercepted and I've watched that. I've watched them be shot down and dunk into the ocean. So, yeah, I saw a lot of that.

Interviewer: Did the enemy air craft ever attack these landing barges off of Guam?

Bud Haacke: Did the attack -- well, they were always attacking. They'd come out of these caves and always try to attack because they'd come down and drop those mortars. You'd see the mortars going down the beach. So, that way we'd roll the ramp up and get out of there till they kind of quit and then we'd sneak back in again and drop the ramp and unload. We'd be five, six days doing that on Guam.

Interviewer: So Guam was basically your first, uh--

Bud Haacke: --real first sight of real action was on Guam, yeah.

Interviewer: Uh, what happened after Guam then?

Bud Haacke: After Guam, I don't know. The next invasion we went on was the invasion of Leyte Island in the Philippines. Of course that was made by Army personnel. I was in about the fifth wave that hit the beach on Leyte Island in the Philippines. That means I was there about four or five minutes after the first troops. I watched the first wave of Army people sticking the American flag in the sand there on Utah Beach on Leyte Island. We were there probably four or five days unloading cargo and stuff there, too. As we were going into Leyte Island, those LCVPs carried about 20, 25 troops when we took them in. In the first wave or two, we'd take troops in.

I remember the first time we were going in there, and as we were going in, the Japanese had some artillery I guess they were firing. We'd watch this artillery hit in the water. In fact, it hit there once and then splashed water all over us and the troops and I thought, "Well, this is the end of this. They've got our range now. We're dead. We're gone." But as I went on, I don't know whether the battle hips or the cruisers knocked the artillery deal out or not, but that was the last time I'd seen that artillery come out. So didn't see any more artillery come out. But we did see, as we hit the beach on Leyte Island, as we dropped the ramp, you could always hear machine gun fire -- a lot of machine gun fire and bullets hitting around you. Then the Japanese on Leyte Island had built a bunch of pill boxes. They were pretty strong there. They had machine guns in them and what have you and the troops had a hard time infiltrating Leyte Island at first. So what they ended up doing, we went back with these LCMs -- which is a little bigger than an LCVP -- and got bulldozers. They were going to build an air strip on the beach there at Leyte Island, so they went back to the ship and got a bunch of bulldozers they had on there and they brought the bulldozers ashore. Then they put the blade up because the machine guns couldn't go through the blade of the deal and then they'd go towards the pill box, and just before they'd go to the pill box, they'd put the blade down and scoop it up with dirt and cover the pill box right up -- just bury the Japanese alive in their pill boxes.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Did you see any LCVP's get blown up?

Bud Haacke: There were always -- you always lost a few. Sometimes, when you make that landing on the beaches, those LCVPs would be lined up for as far as you could see both ways going in. There would be just hundreds of them just going in. Lots of times, they'd get hit -- but you'd always try to get in and get your load unloaded and get back out there as quick as you could to where they couldn't get to you.

Interviewer: What was the most dangerous assignment that you think you had during your--

Bud Haacke: Well, I think as I looked back on it -- those landings. I made the initial landing on Guam, Leyte Island, and then went up to the main island of the Philippines, Luzon, up to the Lingayen Gulf and made a landing up there. While we were up there, we made the landing up there and we had some pretty harrowing experiences up there. As we went in up there, we kind of prided ourselves that we were an experienced landing craft regiment. So we went in, and when you'd go in and hit the beach, you'd just and in your landing craft till we got right up on the beach and we could actually drop the troops off on dry ground. But we'd leave the motor running on this landing craft and it would churn the water and the sand up and it would kind of dig a trench behind it. So in the Lingayen Gulf, they brought in a bunch of soldiers from Hawaii, and these landing craft people were not experienced and they hit this sand bar out a little farther and as they dropped their ramp and the troops started in, they got into this trench that we had dug. A lot of them started floundering, so we ended up throwing life jackets to them and helping them get ashore. In fact, I dove in there once and tried to save one guy and I knew that if I got to him - - he had his hands out like he was going to get me -- and I thought, "Well, we're both going to die if he does." I said to him, "Do you want to die?" And he said, "No, I don't want to die." So I said, "Then put your feet down, you can walk out of here." By that time, they had washed him back onto the sand bar again and then we took ropes and strung it from there to the beach and hauled them all into the beach. None of them drowned that I know of. But then the Japanese after that first night, after we landed at Lingayen Gulf, they had a bunch of what we called them "suicide swimmers." They would put an explosive pack on their back, and there was always a bunch of debris floating on the water next to those landings -- wood crates, boxes, cardboard boxes, what have you. They'd get underneath those boxes and they'd swim back out to where

the big ships were, the main ships were. Then they put the backpack against the ship and put on the lanyard and blow it up. We lost four or five ships that night after they'd blown them up from suicide swimmers.

Interviewer: These were large ships?

Bud Haacke: These were large ships, like a big cargo, like our mother ship. Our mother ship was an AKA, which was about 360 feet long and drew about 15, 20 feet of water. They were big ships. They weren't landing craft, they were big ships

Interviewer: And if, say, your mother ship had a hit on it, then what would you do? Would they assign you to another ship?

Bud Haacke: We had lots of close calls. We had one Kamikaze plane just miss us. In fact, we went through the fire after it hit. It came down and I was up on the bridge loading 20 millimeter anti-aircraft gun and it came down. Just before it got to hit us, I guess an anti aircraft gun clipped one wing and it veered off to the right and crashed and we went through the fire from the crash of it. Our general quarter station on the main ship was either loading anti-aircraft guns or doing something. We had a general quarters station we always had to go to. They'd sound the horn and you had to go to general quarters station -- to your battle station when you were aboard the mother ship.

Interviewer: Well, that's interesting. Overall, during your service you participated in seven landings?

Bud Haacke: After the invasion of the Philippines, there was a ship -- a cargo ship -- that sunk down around Borneo. They assigned us to go down and we worked with Australian troops down

around Borneo. We made three more different landings on Borneo down there. I made a total of seven different landings in the time of the service.

Interviewer: That's interesting. Where were you towards the end of the war?

Bud Haacke: My understanding at the time was -- we had been to the Philippines two or three times, and Subic Bay was the naval base in the Philippines. So we had left Subic Bay and were headed back toward the United States. Our understanding was that we were going back there to pick up troops to go back to make the invasion on Japan. It was about 12:00 at night when the word came over that the war was over, and they dropped the big ones on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and Japan had surrendered. I was somewhere between Subic Bay and Guam when that happened. After that happened, we went into Pearl Harbor and I stayed one night in Pearl Harbor. A lot of guys took leave at Pearl Harbor. I didn't want to, I just stayed on board the ship. We stayed there one night and pulled out the next morning and left from there and went back to the United States. I went up to Bremerton, Washington up to the dry dock up there.

Interviewer: So you didn't go to San Francisco through the Golden Gate Bridge on your way back then?

Bud Haacke: No, no. We went from Hawaii back to Bremerton, Washington back there. I took a 30 day leave at Bremerton, Washington, and I went back after the 30 day leave in January of, I guess it would be '46. Then we left there and I was supposed to be discharged around March sometime. I had enough points to be discharged. We went down to Long Beach, California, and up to Oxford, California, and took on a load and headed back to the Philippines. I landed back in the Philippines the day I could have been discharged., but they extended our enlistment for 90

days, so I stayed with them for 90 day. Then we come back come back to San Francisco, California, to Stockton, and that is where I was discharged from the Navy in 1946.

Interviewer: So you were planning then -- heading back to the United States to pick up troops for the invasion of Japan?

Bud Haacke: That was my understanding of it -- for the invasion of Japan.

Interviewer: Did you have any inkling that we had any secret weapons or that we were going to end the war like that?

Bud Haacke: No. No, we had no idea. All that we knew is they had some big atomic bomb. They dropped one on Hiroshima and they dropped one on Nagasaki. Harry Truman was my ideal. He saved my life. I would have probably been dust on the beaches of Japan had it not been for them dropping those two big ones.

Interviewer: What happened on board ship when you heard that the Japanese had surrendered?

Bud Haacke: It was late at night, it was midnight, so we just went to sleep. I mean, we figured it was all over. It came over the radio that Japan had surrendered and the war was over and we were on our way home. So it was just a good feeling.

Interviewer: Well, that's great. We really appreciate your service. Uh, Elizabeth, have you got any--

Elizabeth: Oh, of course I do. We've got to go back, though.

Unknown Person: Ask him about MacArthur.

Elizabeth: Ask him about MacArthur, she said.

Interviewer: Okay, tell us how you felt about General MacArthur.

Bud Haacke: I didn't mention that, but when we went to the invasion of Leyte in the Philippine. We made the landing there about 9:00 in the morning or something like that. MacArthur was on the cruiser, the Indianapolis. I had been ashore to the Philippines three or four times and when we passed an armada of landing craft going ashore and they said that was MacArthur's barrage going in there. My idea of MacArthur -- he was a good General. He was a flag-waiver, but he was a good General. He had a big home down in New Guinea. We used to call it, "MacArthur's TP-hut" down there. I was on the Philippines three or four times before he ever made a landing. They always pictured him going ashore and wading ashore in the water. If he had to wade ashore and get his feet wet, he did not have a very good landing crew because we put our troops up right on dry ground. He was a good guy, though.

Interviewer: (Laughter) That's interesting.

Bud Haacke: I shouldn't have told you that.

Interviewer: So you guys brought in all your guys in on the ground, and then when they staged that famous picture of--

Bud Haacke: --him walking to shore.

Interviewer: --they let him out with a couple feet of water.

Bud Haacke: --so he could get his feet wet.

Interviewer: (Laughter) That's interesting.

Bud Haacke: I shouldn't have told you that.

Interviewer: That is a good story. Any others? Can you think of anything else as far as any dangerous situations you were in? Funny stories?

Bud Haacke: Like I told you, we always traveled in a convoy and I've watched Japanese aircraft. Of course, we always had carriers in our convoy so we had aircraft protection. I've watched the American fighters get into dog fights with Japanese zeros and fighter planes. I saw one night, about dusk, two Japanese torpedo planes came in. They dropped fish and you could see those torpedoes going through the water. Of course, we were zigzagging, so they didn't hit us or any ship that I saw get hit, but you could see the fish going through the water. Then we were there one night, and like I think I mentioned it, there were some Japanese planes that came over. They had these Kamikaze planes, and they'd come across and then when they'd dive, they would dive right down and just crash into the ship. In fact, we were coming from Luzon down one time down around Mindanao and I watched some of those suicide planes crash into a CVE, which was a small aircraft carrier. It just went up in flames. When we passed it, it was dead in the water. I mean, it was dead in the water. So I saw Kamikaze planes, I saw dog fights, I saw torpedo planes -- a little bit of everything, I think I saw.

Interviewer: Were those engines on those LCVPs pretty reliable?

Bud Haacke: Yes, they were very reliable. The only problem we had a lot of is, we'd get our fuel from the mother ship. A lot of times, the diesel fuel would get water in it. You know, when you have diesel fuel, it will fire by compression and no spark plugs. Sometimes if you got diesel fuel with water in it, it would hit that cylinder and blow a hole about the size of your thumb in the cylinder head. So a lot of times, we'd operate to keep those landing craft running. We'd work on

board the mother ship. We always worked to keep those repairs going, putting new cylinders on, overhauling them, always keeping them running.

Interviewer: Do you ever regret you applied for diesel school?

Bud Haacke: No, if I hadn't had been in diesel school, I would have been driving one of those stupid boats. I shouldn't say "stupid boats," they were good boats. I would have been driving one. I was assigned a landing craft, so I would be in a landing craft no matter whether I was in diesel school or other. This taught me -- I didn't go into diesel when I come back out of the service. My dad was an electrician by trade, so I went in to the electrical business, but no, I am not sorry. I saw a lot of countries. I have probably been through most of the islands in the South Pacific except for down around New Zealand, didn't get down that far. I have been up to Guadalcanal, Utah, Kwajalein, Philippines, Borneo, New Guinea. I have been through all of those islands.

Interviewer: Originally, you said you went to Guadalcanal, and that was sometime after we had taken Guadalcanal. Was there a lot of evidence there of--

Bud Haacke: Yeah.

Interviewer: Tell us about what that looked like.

Bud Haacke: Well, we only stayed at Guadalcanal a few hours. There were a lot of coconut palm farms on a lot of those islands where they raise coconuts. So when we came from New Guinea, no, New Hebrides, when we got there, one of the guys started drinking coconut milk. Coconut milk will give you the diarrhea quicker than anything. So we had quite a few exciting nights that night -- all of those the latrines were built out over the water, and Tulagi, where we

stayed, was basically jungles. Sometimes there would be big land crabs that would come off the jungle there and crawl up on you and some of the guys had the diarrhea and they would go screaming down the trail to get to the latrine. It was a different story.

Interviewer: (Laughter).

Bud Haacke: How big is a land crab?

Bud Haacke: Sometimes as big as your fist, big as your hand.

Interviewer: So, a lot of times, those crabs would hook on to--

Bud Haacke: --get underneath your mosquito netting, and the next thing you know they were crawling up your back. So you took off and down the trail and all that, heading for the outhouse down there.

Interviewer: (Laughter) That's, uh--

Bud Haacke: I'm not going to tell you what it takes.

Unknown Person: I have an imagination.

Bud Haacke: Your imagination is pretty good.

Elizabeth: Can he discuss, he can talk to rick when he answers it, but uh--

Interviewer: When you answer your question, talk to me.

Elizabeth: --talk a little bit about, were you afraid? Describe, if you will, how afraid you were.

Bud Haacke: I don't remember being too afraid. The first landing, of course we was didn't meet a lot of resistance in there. At the time we made it, we made that landing, there was a lot of

airplanes flying overhead. You didn't know they were friendly aircraft or zeros or what. You wondered if you were going to get strafed or whether you were going to get shot. Always when you're on the beach, in Guam and the Philippines, there was always rifle fire, machine gun fire. You could look over the side of the boat and you could see bullets splashing in the water around you. I don't remember ever being too awful scared. We had a job to do and I don't remember being too awful scared about it. It was either that or meet your Maker.

Interviewer: How about the Marines and Army personnel going ashore. Any of them ever panic and not want to get off?

Bud Haacke: No, we had mounted on the back of those LCVPs, there were two 30 caliber machine guns. We were told if they decided not to get off, to force them off. But we never -- I don't ever remember having to. They were always schooled in the fact that they were safer on the ground than they were in the water. So when that ramp dropped, they were gone. They were out of there. And as soon as they were out of there, we rolled that ramp back up and got out of there, getting off the beach. We wanted to be back out on the water.

Elizabeth: What do you think of the enemy?

Interviewer: What was your opinion of the Japanese soldier and the war itself?

Bud Haacke: I did not see too much of the Japanese soldiers. We were down on the island of Morotai, which is down off the Halmahera group, and they took a little island called Morotai down there. Halmahera was the big island in that group. So what they did, they went down there and equipped it with PT boats, and they got smart after awhile -- the United States got smart. Instead of going and invading every island they come to, they go and take one island and either patrol it with PT boats or aircraft or something and just let the Japanese. We bypassed a

big island -- there was a big naval base of the Japanese, Truk Island, when we went to Guam. We bypassed it, and that was a big naval base of Japanese, was Truk Island. We just bypassed it and left them there to die. They ran out of food on the Halmahera group. I watched two or three times, Japanese would try to build rafts out of something, logs or trees or something, and then they'd try to float over to Morotai where the U.S. ships were in order to surrender and give up. I saw a lot of that. I didn't really see an awful lot of -- as you go on the different invasions, you'd go down -- if you walk down the beach, sometimes you'd see, in the sand or somewhere, an arm sticking out of the ground or a leg sticking out of the ground. The Japanese would try to bury their dead in a shallow grave, and an arm was sticking out or a leg was sticking out. The Japanese, for example, on the Philippines would climb up these coconut trees. They could climb the coconut trees, and they'd get on the top of the coconut trees and they would tie themselves in there and they would be snipers for the American troops down below. So when they went in there, the American troops would have to find them and sometimes shoot them, kill them right in the top of the trees and they wouldn't fall out because they were tied in. It was an interesting experience.

Interviewer: Natalie, have you got a question?

Natalie: How about the war effort? What's his feeling about the whole war effort?

Interviewer: Yeah, if you were going to talk to future generations, what would you tell them about World War II and your feelings about the war?

Bud Haacke: World War II was a war that, to me, we had to fight. We had to fight World War II. They had invaded Hawaii, or, not invaded it, but had the Japanese known what they finally found out, they probably could have invaded the west coast. World War II was a war where we

were invaded, and we had to fight it. I feel sorry, in a way, for Vietnam veterans, Korean veterans, even these veterans today in Iraq. I feel sorry for them. I don't know that they're fighting a war that they can win. We knew where the Japanese were. We knew where to go get them, and that's what we did. We got it, and got it over with. Now, I, I have mixed emotions about this war now. For example, I have mixed emotions about it. We've lost 4,000 of our boys over there -- that we've lost -- and we've got another 90 or 100,000 that are wounded or something. I just don't think we can police the whole world as a whole. I don't think we've got to. They've been fighting for the last 10,000 years over there, and as far as I'm concerned, let them fight it. Let them kill each other off and bring our boys home. They're coming home with mental disorders and what have you. I feel sorry for them, you know? And the vets have been good to me. I've only been going to the vets' hospital for four or five years. I didn't go to it before, but I just got from it last week. The vets hospital here is a good hospital. I give them an A-1 rating. They've been really good to me, they've treated me really, really well. So I say that for the vets' hospital

Interviewer: Well, that's good to hear that. We appreciate you coming in today.

Elizabeth: I have a couple more. You say boot camp was traumatic. Why?

Bud Haacke: Well

Interviewer: Look at me.

Bud Haacke: Your freedom was gone, it wasn't that bad, but I was just a young kid and I had got out of high school, and I felt sorry for some of the older guys that went into boot camp. When I went into boot camp, I got out for track the last. I knew I was going in the service. I knew I was going in the service, and I went out and got myself in pretty good condition. Some of the older

guys, I don't know how they made it through some of those runs they put them through there. It was pretty traumatic for them. They were really disciplined. There was a lot of -- I mean, they disciplined you in boot camp.

Interviewer: Anything else you want to ask me?

Elizabeth: I'm trying to figure out my notes here. Oh, what was it like for you to take these wounded soldiers from the beach to the hospital ship?

Bud Haacke: Very, very, very traumatic. I took a lot of there -- as I interviewed for one of them done for at vets -- with their skull pealed back. You wondered how they even lived. They were probably all morphined up, taken off the beaches on stretchers, taken into the landing craft, taken back out to the hospital ship, dropped them off out there. You never knew whether they made it or didn't make it. You never really realized whether they lived or died. There was a lot of -- especially at Guam -- there was a lot of dead. I saw a lot of dead on Guam floating in the water. Of course it was hot in Guam, in the South Pacific, it was hot, and being in the water for four or five days, you were all bloated up floating in the water. It was, it wasn't a pretty sight.

Interviewer: If a guy was severely wounded that you were taking him back, did they have a medic that went with him?

Bud Haacke: Not all the time, not all the time, no. Sometimes they just bring them down to the beach in a stretcher and they bring them in and we'd take them, and when we got out to the hospital ship, they'd take them from there.

Interviewer: They'd lift them up with a stretcher.

Bud Haacke: Mm hmm.

Interviewer: Anything else?

Elizabeth: I think I'm good.

Interviewer: Bud, well thanks for coming in. You did a great job.

End of interview.