

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
MARTIN MATOUSHEK  
Intelligence and Yeoman, Navy, World War II

2000

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**Matoushek, Martin.** (1924- ). Oral History Interview. 2000.

Master Copy: 1 video recording (ca. 80 min.); ½ inch, color

User Copy: 2 audio cassettes (ca. 80 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

### **Abstract**

Martin Matoushek, a Milwaukee native, discusses his time as an intelligence officer and then as a yeoman in the Pacific Theater of WWII. He states that he joined the Navy in 1942 and was sent down to the Signal and Radio Training School that the Navy had at the University of Chicago where he learned Morse code, regular radio, and semaphore. Matoushek remembers that after training in Chicago, he went to San Diego where he was picked up by the U.S.S. Liscome Bay on September 28<sup>th</sup> 1943, a small CVE aircraft carrier converted from a Liberty Ship that carried around 1,200 men. He recalls that despite his radio training, he was assigned to the intelligence office where he carried out a variety of duties including briefing and debriefing pilots. Matoushek mentions that the USS Liscome Bay stopped at Hawaii before assisting in the invasion of Makin and Tarawa and then was hit by a torpedo and sunk on November 24<sup>th</sup> 1943. He goes into great detail as he discusses his escape from the Liscome Bay and his subsequent rescue by a destroyer. Matoushek recalls that the destroyer that picked him up let him off at Makin where he got on a troop transport and then went to Pearl. After spending time in Pearl Harbor, Matoushek recalls that he was sent back to the United States before being assigned duty to the U.S.S. Bountiful, a hospital ship. He recalls that his mother thought he was dead and that she fainted after he telephoned her for the first time. Matoushek remembers that he was assigned as a yeoman on the U.S.S. Bountiful and did clerical work. He recalls that the U.S.S. Bountiful made a couple trips bringing servicemen back to Pearl Harbor as it was now deemed safe for them to live there. Matoushek states that the U.S.S. Bountiful provided medical services during the invasions of Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, Anguar, Leyte, the Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and visited Japan after the war. He describes the procedure for bringing casualties aboard. He describes how on Saipan the Japanese were committing suicide off of cliffs and that Marines were stuck with the job of dragging the bodies ashore using a boat and grappling hooks. Matoushek recalls how the nurses of the U.S.S. Bountiful suffered abuse through severe pranks. He describes one of the pranks that entailed shackling a nurse to a pipe standard and dropping eggs on her hair from the boat deck. He was discharged on April 1946 and attended UW Madison with the help of the GI Bill and received a degree in accounting.

## **Biographical Sketch**

Marty Matoushek was born in Milwaukee and served in the Navy in the Pacific Theater of WWII. After the war was over, he graduated from UW Madison with a degree in accounting.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2000.  
Transcribed by Andrew Spaid, 2010.

## **Interview Transcript:**

McIntosh: It's June 3<sup>rd</sup>, my father's birthday. Or was it June 2<sup>nd</sup>? Well, whatever. I'm talking to Marty Matoushek, and this is 3 June, the year 2000, and tell me where you were born.

Matoushek: Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

McIntosh: You grew up there and—

Matoushek: Grew up there.

McIntosh: Right.

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: That was in 1924?

Matoushek: '24.

McIntosh: Okay.

Matoushek: Birth—yes.

McIntosh: Right. And when did you first volunteer for the Navy?

Matoushek: '42.

McIntosh: Okay. And tell me how that went. Where did they send you? Great Lakes like everybody else?

Matoushek: No, I never have been to Great Lakes [laughs]. Ah, I went down to, well, it was the Plankinton Arcade at that time. I went down to enlist in the Navy Air Force. I went down to enlist. I wanted to join the Navy Air Force, and took three physicals, and the third physical, they said, "How come you got here—how come we've been fooling with you so long, and what's the matter with you guys?" [laughs] And they said, "Well, you have to have 20/20 vision in order to join the Naval Air Force." And they claimed at that time I didn't have 20/20 vision so I joined the Navy instead. I was Navy. I wanted Navy.

McIntosh: So, you went to boot camp?

Matoushek: Oh, I sat down there all day when they told me to come down, and I thought they'd forgotten me because guys were going down Wisconsin Avenue like mad—flags waving, bands playing. And finally they gave me

my service record and sent me down to the University of Chicago at the Signal and Radio Training School that the Navy had down there—

McIntosh: Didn't you have basic training somewhere?

Matoushek: Pardon?

McIntosh: Where was your basic training?

Matoushek: I didn't have basic training. They made me a seaman first class and sent me down to Chicago.

McIntosh: And how did you rate that?

Matoushek: Darned if I know [laughs]. I don't have any idea.

McIntosh: You'd had no previous—no education that—

Matoushek: Well, I had gone to, ah, Milwaukee State Teachers College and the extension—at the UW [University of Wisconsin] Extension.

McIntosh: You had a year or two?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: That's probably what—

Matoushek: See, I got out of high school when I was 16 years old—for better or for worse, I don't know—and then I went to school. Then '41 came up, and the Japanese thrust us into [laughs]—into combat in '42 and—

McIntosh: So your first experience, then, in the Navy, really, in training, was at this—

Matoushek: At Chicago, University of Chicago.

McIntosh: Radio School?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: And you learned Morse code and regular radio?

Matoushek: And semaphore.

McIntosh: And semaphore, too?

Matoushek: Yeah. Well, I had to. All these kids were there in class studying to be whatever, and you didn't know whether they were swearing at you or not, so I had to learn what they were saying [laughs].

McIntosh: I never knew, ah—I never talked to anybody about semaphore. Tell me about it. Is that hard to learn?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: With the flags and all that?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: Relatively easy?

Matoushek: Oh, yes. Ah, well, what it is, is practice—lot's of practice. As well as blinker is—ah, Morse code blinker. I had a buddy down there that was—he was from Chicago, but he was stationed at the university, and he and I at lunch hour used to go down to Lake Michigan, and there was a little, oh, like a lagoon. And one of us would stand on one part of the dry land, and the other one would go around the lagoon, and we'd semaphore to each other [laughs]. That's how—

McIntosh: You each had a supply of flags, and you'd—

Matoushek: Oh, yeah. You'd take a pair of flags down with us—each one. And then we'd signal back and forth—all kinds of stuff. Just practice. It really came in handy for me, learning those, after I went to sea—on sea duty and especially after I got on the [USS] Bountiful because the Bountiful would pull into port some place. There would be an "All Ships Present" list and I'd get ahold of the "All Ships Present" list. And I knew a lot of the fellas from the University of Chicago that had been shipped out. And so I'd find the ship and signal over to them and ask them if they had anybody that had done duty at the University of Chicago, and then we'd—

McIntosh: Flag each other back and forth?

Matoushek: Yeah, we'd talk to one another, and once in a while—quite often—we'd get in a small boat and go over and visit. That was fun. [laughs]

McIntosh: I see. Well, that's very good. Did—okay, that's enough of that. Tell me now, ah, after you got all this communication skill, [Marty laughs] what'd they do with ya?

Matoushek: Well, I became a yeoman.

McIntosh: Or did they let you go—a yeoman, yeah.

Matoushek: I became a yeoman.

McIntosh: A striker, right?

Matoushek: Yeah, I was a striker at first. Well, no. Yes, I was a seaman first class, and then I studied and became a third class yeoman.

McIntosh: Right. And where did you go?

Matoushek: Well, ah, I was shipped to sea after a while.

McIntosh: From Chicago where did you go?

Matoushek: From Chicago? To, ah—we shipped to San Francisco, and then from San Francisco we went down to San Diego and picked up the [USS] Liscome Bay—

McIntosh: That's where you picked up your first ship?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: The Liscome Bay?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: That was your first ship?

Matoushek: Right.

McIntosh: Even though I saw your notation that you thought you were going to go on the [USS] Bunker Hill.

Matoushek: Oh, my, the Bunker Hill was a beautiful vessel [laughs].

McIntosh: That was a CVE [escort aircraft carrier] and—

Matoushek: *My* ship was a CVE.

McIntosh: But the Bunker Hill was a CVA [attack aircraft carrier]?

Matoushek: No, that was a first line—

McIntosh: Probably a CV [fleet aircraft carrier], I think, those kind, just plain CV.

Matoushek: I don't remember what they called them. Mine was a CVE, which was a converted escort carrier.

McIntosh: Yeah, that wasn't built as a carrier from the ground up; that was a converted, ah—

Matoushek: It was converted from, ah—

McIntosh: Cargo ship?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: Liberty ship?

Matoushek: Liberty ship, yeah.

McIntosh: That's cargo.

Matoushek: We'd call it a "Kaiser coffin" [laughs], by Henry Kaiser [industrialist, owner of Kaiser Shipyards].

McIntosh: Yeah, my hospital ship was one like that. It was a Kaiser Liberty ship that was converted.

Matoushek: Yeah, that's right.

McIntosh: Five hundred and twenty-seven feet long. Right.

Matoushek: When you compare that with the Bunker Hill, it was a baby [laughs].

McIntosh: Yeah, I was aboard the [USS] Valley Forge when I was in Korea, so I know what the bigger carrier looks like. That's quite a ship.

Matoushek: Beautiful.

McIntosh: And Bunker Hill is a sister ship of the Valley Forge. Okay. So, you were slightly disappointed when you arrived at your ship?

Matoushek: Quite a bit [laughs]. But it was an aircraft carrier nevertheless, and that made me happy.

McIntosh: Okay, and before we get into the details, how many aboard the carrier?

Matoushek: How many onboard? We had about twelve hundred.

McIntosh: Twelve hundred.



Matoushek: Well, see we were also the flag [flagship; carried the flag officer of the commander]. We had three units on board: we had the flag, we had the ship's company, and we had the squadron—about twelve hundred all told.

McIntosh: And how many aircraft did you carry?

Matoushek: That I don't exactly remember. We had a full squadron. I think probably somewhere around thirty or forty planes. I don't remember how many.

McIntosh: Probably one squadron is about all it would take.

Matoushek: Yeah, it was a full squadron.

McIntosh: Okay. And your specific duty aboard the ship was what?

Matoushek: Well, I was assigned and attached to the flag in the admiral's, ah, deal. And basically I stood four on and four off in the radar plot [area where ship's sensors are displayed]. But when I wasn't doing that, I was supposed to be in the intelligence office. That's where I was assigned. And I was supposed to read—

McIntosh: Record signals, or write something down, or take messages?

Matoushek: No. No. That was in the past [laughs]. My signal training was in the past. I just used that for personal; I didn't use it for Navy.

McIntosh: What did you do in this—

Matoushek: In the intelligence office?

McIntosh: Yeah.

Matoushek: I was supposed to read up and study possible islands that we were going to invade. And talk to the pilots and tell them what they could expect—if there were natives on the island, if there wasn't, whether they could eat some of the vegetation on the island or not. And then when they came *back* from a flight I was supposed to interview them and find out what they saw, what they encountered, and that sort of thing.

McIntosh: Sort of kept a record of all this, then. Yeah.

Matoushek: Of the squadron members—of the pilots, yeah.

McIntosh: I see. Did you do this all yourself, or was anybody else with you doing this?

Matoushek: Well, I was supposed to do it by myself, but I was on the ship, so it was such a short period of time [laughs] that I never got to accomplish that. I did stand four on and four off an awful lot times.

McIntosh: So where did the Liscome Bay go after you left San Diego?

Matoushek: We went to Hawaii, and then we went right over to Makin and Tarawa.

McIntosh: Right. At Makin, this is a—did you stop at Makin?

Matoushek: No, we invaded—or, the *US forces* invaded it.

McIntosh: Yeah, that was a small invasion there.

Matoushek: Ah, what do you mean by small?

McIntosh: Compared to the others, I mean, it was not as many people, and it didn't take as long.

Matoushek: They'd tell us—or I'd been reading an awful lot about it—that Tarawa and Makin, of course together, that Tarawa was one of the bloodiest invasions of the war.

McIntosh: Right, but Makin was different.

Matoushek: Makin was—yeah, it was different—

McIntosh: That was a walk on, in comparison.

Matoushek: Than Tarawa [laughs].

McIntosh: Tarawa was the worst.

Matoushek: Yeah. Right. But we provided—“we”—*our pilots* provided air coverage for that invasion, both the islands.

McIntosh: And you were not involved with the aircraft at all?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: But just the pilots, then?

Matoushek: Just—I was supposed to talk to the pilots, that's—

McIntosh: How did that go?

Matoushek: Well, as I say, I never got to it, but I—

McIntosh: You never talked to them a great deal?

Matoushek: I talked to them, and every—ah. We had one—just as an aside—we had one chubby fighter pilot. Sometimes wondered how he got into his plane. He was a very jolly, good egg. I asked him one time, I said, “What does a Lizzie [USS Liscome Bay; later nicknamed “Listing Lizzie”] look like from up there, when you’re flying? What does she look like?” And he said, “Did you ever see a half a pea in a bowl of split pea soup?” [laughs]

McIntosh: That’s a good description, yeah.

Matoushek: But that was my only contact.

McIntosh: So in your first adventure onboard ship, which was, what, about a week after you came aboard, you were attacked?

Matoushek: No, I got on board, ah, I think it was the 28<sup>th</sup> of September, and we were sunk the 24<sup>th</sup> of November. So about two months.

McIntosh: Oh, about two months.

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: And how did the attack occur? Were you sunk by torpedoes, or?

Matoushek: Yeah, by a Japanese submarine.

McIntosh: A Japanese submarine. Were submarines known to be in the area, or was this a total surprise as far as you know?

Matoushek: Ah, it was a total surprise as far as I was concerned. We didn’t—

McIntosh: Where were you at the time the torpedoes struck?

Matoushek: In the intelligence office.

McIntosh: In the office?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Did somebody see it just coming before it hit?

Matoushek: I guess so, ah, I don’t know.

McIntosh: It hit you broadside?

Matoushek: Yeah. We were turning to get into the wind for flight quarters [a ship configuration that stations personnel at critical positions to conduct safe flight operations]. And as we turned, they got us [laughs].

McIntosh: One torpedo?

Matoushek: I don't know.

McIntosh: Okay. And so your first reaction was that there was a jolt on the side, and everybody was pushed aside or knocked down, or what? Or do you recall?

Matoushek: I had been standing before on the watch in the radar plot, and I had a chief yeoman that was with me on the flag. He and I would stand watch on the TBM in radar plot.

McIntosh: TBM?

Matoushek: It's the radio communication system. I think they call it TBM, TBS [Talk Between Ships]—something like that. At any rate, if I was on the watch, ah, in the morning, let's say, when they sounded general quarters or whatever they sounded—that was chief's station on the equipment. And I would get up and leave and go across ship to the intelligence office. Lots of times I'd wait until chief got the sleep out of his eyes and stuff like that, because I had nothing to do in the intelligence office. But that morning, for some unknown reason, I just got up and went across ship to the intelligence office. And I was sitting down, on the process of sitting down—I was going to read the daily newspaper that was always put out. I got about halfway down, and I saw the—it was either a bulkhead or a bookshelf—coming down on me. That was it until I found myself in the passageway. It must have fallen on me, and I don't know *how* I got out. All the lights went out.

McIntosh: And everything was on top of you there for a second.

Matoushek: Well, I think so [laughs]. But I think my lights went out with the ship's lights [laughs], so—

McIntosh: Oh, I see. So your next recollection was trying to get off the ship, or?

Matoushek: Yeah. Well, I came to—I was in this cross ship passageway, and everything was burning, except the deck. The whole—it was a mess. And, ah, both light lock doors were blocked with debris. And there were

other fellas in there at the one light lock on the port side of the ship. And all of a sudden one kid went down and started clawing like a dog would claw between his legs, like a dog would. And he cleaned enough room for us to—

McIntosh: Did you see any books?

Matoushek: Crawl up.

McIntosh: Did the bookshelf give way (??)?

Matoushek: Oh, I don't know. That's way in the past now. I don't know what happened to any intelligence office. I was out of it until I got in the cross ship passageway. Understand?

McIntosh: I don't know what he's clawing at.

Matoushek: At the debris at the light lock—light lock door.

McIntosh: Right, and I was asking what debris?

Matoushek: Well, from the explosion. Everything—ah—it really did a job on the ship [laughs].

McIntosh: So, you got some space, and then what? What'd you do with that space?

Matoushek: Well, I crawled through this hole, and so did the rest of the guys. And then we—there was a section of about 8 feet of catwalk left, ah—

McIntosh: Now you're crawling down into the depths of the ship, here.

Matoushek: No, no. We're up by the flight deck--just under the flight deck.

McIntosh: Well, if you're crawling down, you're crawling down into the flight deck?

Matoushek: No, no [laughs]. Whoops! We crawled through the hole and *up* to the catwalk.

McIntosh: Okay.

Matoushek: Okay? And we were standing on about eight feet of catwalk that was left. That was the only thing that was left on—

McIntosh: What ordinarily does that catwalk connect?

Matoushek: It runs from the front to the back of the ship. From the fo’c’sle [forecastle] to the, ah—

McIntosh: You mean the length of the ship?

Matoushek: Yeah. It runs the length of the ship.

McIntosh: And that’s outside, on the exposed side?

Matoushek: And it’s just under the flight deck. If you walk on the catwalk the flight deck comes up to about your chest.

McIntosh: Oh, I understand; that catwalk.

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: I didn’t know which one we were talking about. It’s the one next to the flight deck.

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Okay, now I’m with you.

Matoushek: It’s *up* there, [laughs] yeah.

McIntosh: Okay. So the flight deck was afire?

Matoushek: See, my office and everything else—the radar plot and so forth—that was just underneath the flight deck. Yeah.

McIntosh: So you got onto the catwalk, and then what?

Matoushek: Well, again, all hell was breaking loose [laughs]. Everything was burning, ah—stuff like that. One different kind of an incident happened as I was crawling out of this hole in the light lock that the kid had scratched for us. And I stuck my head out, and I looked aft, and I saw a fellow swabby [sailor] put his hand on the 40mm gun sponson and leap into the sea. He just leaped as if he was going over a farmer’s fence. And I remember thinking, “That’s an awful way down to the water. I don’t know if I’d have done that.” But, ah, at any rate, he did. And I’ll tell you a little bit more about that later. But, as we were standing there on the catwalk one of the fellas said, um—asked if we had a knife, anybody had a knife—and I had a jackknife on my belt so I gave him the jackknife. And somehow—well, he wanted to use a knife to cut the monkey line loose, and drop it, so that we could go down the line and abandon ship. And one of the kids said, “We can’t abandon ship; they haven’t given the order yet.” And he

said, “They *can’t* give the order. Communications have been knocked out. Everything is gone, everything is burning.” And he said, you know, something like, “Get your ass down.” [laughs]

McIntosh: Was the ship sinking at that time?

Matoushek: I suspect it was, ah—

McIntosh: Or listing? Or did you notice?

Matoushek: I don’t even know if it was listing. Later on, when I was swimming, we could see the ship, and then she started to list, and then I saw her list—I saw her go down.

McIntosh: Okay. But at that moment, it didn’t appear that it was going down?

Matoushek: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We knew it wasn’t going to—it wasn’t going to make it. *Couldn’t* make it. Everything was gone [laughs]. All hell had broken loose. Ah—so, you know—

McIntosh: So, you’re not in the water yet?

Matoushek: No, then I went—well, I was standing up [laughs] there trying to blow this stupid inflating belt up, and it wasn’t going. I felt kinda lost, and I think I was probably jostled a little bit, so I grabbed the line and went down, got in the water. I was in the water, and I knew I was going to have to swim because my damn belt wasn’t any good. And I started swimming away because a kid came down after me on the line, and his foot hit my head. And so I started swimming away to get out of the way. And he hollered, “Come back, come back. My leg is hurt, and I can’t swim.” So I—aw hell, I wasn’t very far away—I just went back. And he came down, and with his left hand he grabbed my belt—my pant belt. And then we got the heck out of there [laughs]. And after we got out a ways from the ship I discovered that he had an uninflated belt in his hand—in his right hand.

McIntosh: Oh.

Matoushek: And he was, you know—

McIntosh: So I assume that—

Matoushek: He was hanging on to me with his left hand and helping with his right hand. And so when he discovered *that*, why, we stopped and blew it up—blew the belt up. And it come out to about three feet, whatever. So he hung on one end and I hung on the other. And that’s when we looked around and saw the ship go down. When she went down everything was

burning except where we were; the water wasn't burning at all. But I'm told, and I've read, that on the starboard side of the ship it was—the water, and everything was burning.

McIntosh: Were you burned at all?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: What part of you? Your head and face?

Matoushek: I was burned—my face, my ears, my chin, my hands.

McIntosh: Do you recall when that happened? Probably not, they just, ah, they—

Matoushek: I didn't even know I had been burned or hurt in any way until I got on board the destroyer.

McIntosh: Okay, so how long were you in the water?

Matoushek: Well, I figure about three hours—hour and a half—about an hour and a half—see, they wouldn't come in to pick us up until daylight because they were afraid of running us down in the dark, and we were sunk about an hour and a half before dawn.

McIntosh: So they wanted to wait until they could see who was about.

Matoushek: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: Was there any problem with sharks at this time?

Matoushek: I didn't have any.

McIntosh: Okay.

Matoushek: This kiddo that came—the guy that came down and said his leg was hurt—he maintained that—he made a statement one time, “The sharks are nibbling on my toes.” And I made a mistake, and I said, “For Christ's sake, man, if there's a shark around, they're not going to nibble your toes. They're going to take your whole damn foot,” you know [both laugh]. Whoa! That sent him off a little bit! [laughs] But, ah, no, I didn't see any sharks. And I haven't talked or heard of too many that did. Some say that they might have, but—I think what he was feeling, ah—our planes were equipped for an anti-sub hop [short flight], and they had depth charges where they were set. And I think after the ship went down, the depth charges went off after they got down near that deal, and, you know, felt a concussion of it.



McIntosh: So there's another swimmer came along?

Matoushek: Oh, yeah [laughs]. Jeez, he really came along. I don't know—he had *all* of his clothes, and I'm pretty sure—everything; the shoes, the whole works—had been blown off by the explosion [laughs]. When he hit the water he was going to get the heck out of there, and he did. He just came out like an Olympic swimmer—very, very fast.

McIntosh: So you had three on your life belt.

Matoushek: Yeah, but that didn't work.

McIntosh: So, you just alternated? Two on at one time?

Matoushek: Well, that was the plan. But all of a sudden, I was all by myself.

McIntosh: [laughs] They took off with your life belt?

Matoushek: I called and called, and nobody answered. At least, I couldn't hear anybody answering, and—

McIntosh: So you are without a life belt now?

Matoushek: Yeah. And without light—it was dark. And *oh* man, it was dark [laughs].

McIntosh: I'll bet. So you were just treading water there, waiting for something to happen.

Matoushek: Yeah. Yeah. It wasn't any use to go any place, or try and go any place.

McIntosh: Were your clothes still on?

Matoushek: I had all my clothes on, including my shoes [laughs].

McIntosh: That didn't seem to drag you?

Matoushek: No, no. I've had people say, “Well, how in the world could you do that? You know, ya take your clothes off.” But the Pacific was awfully buoyant. I didn't have any trouble.

McIntosh: So when is the first sign of help?

Matoushek: That was, ah—

McIntosh: When it got light?

Matoushek: Yeah. When it got light this character came along with a plank from the flight deck. He had a flight deck plank under each arm, and he was singing *Deep in the Heart of Texas*, the idiot [laughs]. And that was the first sign of humanity I'd seen in quite a while. But I called over to him, and I said, "Do you mind if I hang on to the end of your planks?" And he said, "Help yourself! Come on!" So I did. And then shortly after that they started coming to pick us up. And a small boat went by, and that was loaded down with all kinds of survivors. And I suspect that the reason he didn't stop and get us is because he had a full boat load.

McIntosh: He was worried about capsizing.

Matoushek: Yeah. So, but we hollered at him. And we gave him the what for, verbally. But he kept right on going. And then all of a sudden we saw the destroyer. The destroyer came. And initially we were both very afraid that it was going to run us down—that it hadn't seen us.

McIntosh: You didn't think they saw you.

Matoushek: Unh-unh. It just kept bearing down—right straight down on us. It got bigger and bigger [laughs]. And we hollered and screamed, and all of a sudden it just, bam, pulled to and came right smack dab up to us and had this cargo net down the side—boy. Then we were kinda—

McIntosh: That was a sight to see.

Matoushek: Then we were kind happy to see it [laughs].

McIntosh: I'll bet that was.

Matoushek: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: So, when they got you aboard the—what was the destroyer's name? Well, it's in your report, anyway.

Matoushek: Yeah, I forget what it was now.

McIntosh: Okay. So when they got you aboard, what'd they do with ya?

Matoushek: Well, they stripped us.

McIntosh: You had some oil on your clothes.

Matoushek: Yeah, they stripped us and started washing us down, and I think they said they washed us down with diesel oil to cut all the crud that we had on us.

And that's when I noticed that I was burned. Boy, I wanted to—I darned near jumped back into the sea [laughs].

McIntosh: They gave you some new clothes?

Matoushek: Well, yeah, the kids on board went into their lockers and came out with this and that—that, you know, basically the guys that looked about the same size as we were. I got a suit of whites. And then about an hour after I had them on, they basically were blue, because I was perspiring all this junk and crud, and everything else [laughs]—even after they washed us down. So—

McIntosh: So—

Matoushek: They threw our own clothes—they threw that all.

McIntosh: Where did you go on the destroyer?

Matoushek: Where did I go on the destroyer *at that time*?

McIntosh: Yeah.

Matoushek: Up to the fo'c'sle and sat down.

McIntosh: I mean where did the destroyer go? Where'd they take you?

Matoushek: Oh! Well, right after we got on the stinker had—then we had an anti-sub alert—submarine alert.

McIntosh: Wonderful.

Matoushek: And that doggone thing shot down and really took off. He was going back and forth, going after the sub. I don't know if they—I don't recall if they dropped any charges or not, but I was just up in the fo'c'sle hanging on [laughs].

McIntosh: So they gave you a place to sleep?

Matoushek: Not on the destroyer. Later on in the day they took us over to Makin, and we got on a troop transport.

McIntosh: That's where they let you off—was that Makin?

Matoushek: The destroyer did, yeah.

McIntosh: Okay. And so what did you do on Makin, then? Did you have a place to sleep?

Matoushek: No, no. We just got off of the destroyer and on to the troop—onto the transport.

McIntosh: What transport? Do you recall?

Matoushek: I don't—

McIntosh: Well, it's not important.

Matoushek: I have the name, but I don't remember which one it was right now.

McIntosh: And where was that going?

Matoushek: That took us to Pearl.

McIntosh: Back to Pearl?

Matoushek: Yeah. Yeah.

McIntosh: Okay. So then you had some leave time.

Matoushek: *Yeah.* Thirty day leave time after a while. But we were pulling into Pearl Harbor, and somebody on the troop transport decided to have gunnery practice. And had a mess of survivors on board, and we were down in the chow hall eating. And they cut **[End of Tape 1, Side A]** loose with the—

McIntosh: Scared everybody to death.

Matoushek: I think it was a 5-inch [gun] they cut loose. Yeah, just [laughs] forget it.

McIntosh: That's—yeah, that was bad timing.

Matoushek: And then we got in *there*. We got on the so-called receiving ship in Pearl. And after, I don't know, a period of days, then we got on the *Saratoga*—the *old* *Saratoga*—quite a ship. And she took us back to the U.S.—Alameda—Alameda Air Force Base. Going into Frisco, the night before, we hit the December 9<sup>th</sup> hurricane out there. And that *Saratoga*, she was just a kicking around—and screws would come out of the water, whole ship would shudder. And we were quartered and billeted on the hangar deck. And the hangar deck had—oh, the *Saratoga* was so old it had an awful lot grease and oil from repairing the planes all these years. And it was slick, just very, very slick. And we were on cots. And, the *Sara*' would come up, and the screws would come out of the water, and she'd

shake, and we'd go, "bump, bump, bump!" You'd slight down to the other end of the hangar. Then she'd settle down, and we'd go "bump, bump, bump." [laughs]

McIntosh: You kept sliding back and forth?

Matoushek: Yeah. Finally we decided the hell with it, so we played poker until morning [laughs]. Sleep was not—not for us.

McIntosh: And then back to the United States; what was your next duty?

Matoushek: The Bountiful. Ah—

McIntosh: The hospital ship.

Matoushek: Yeah. We went on a thirty day survivor's leave. And then we went back to—

McIntosh: You went home?

Matoushek: Oh, yes. Milwaukee. Yeah.

McIntosh: Tell me about notifying your folks that you'd been sunk.

Matoushek: Well, that was a bad thing. They didn't. They didn't.

McIntosh: They told you they—tell me about that now.

Matoushek: They told us—they even gave us telegram blanks so we would fill out the telegram—

McIntosh: While you were on the Saratoga, they'd pass these out?

Matoushek: Well, this was even when we were on the troop transport. Right after we'd been picked up basically, you know. And they said, "You fill these out, and we'll wire all your next of kin, or anybody that you want."

McIntosh: To let them know you're okay.

Matoushek: Yeah. Yeah. But they didn't. And we got into San Francisco, and we'd go on liberty, but before we'd go liberty you'd try and pick up the phone and call home. And the phone lines across the country were always jammed, jammed, jammed. And I said, "Well, what the heck, you know? Mom and dad are notified—what's the difference, you know? Go have a good time." So we went; had a good—*finally*, I got through. Mom answered the phone. She fainted [laughs].

McIntosh: She assumed you were dead?

Matoushek: I think so. 'Cause all the newspaper articles and everything had—I'm told—

McIntosh: The local papers had you listed as gone?

Matoushek: Oh, I'm told that she gathered papers up from all over God's green acres, just to read about it. And every one of the things said, "Liscome Bay was torpedoed and sunk with heavy loss of life." *That's* what they said. Well, what the hell is a mother to [laughs]—you know?

McIntosh: They had to assume the worst.

Matoushek: Yeah. Right.

McIntosh: That was a shame.

Matoushek: No, they didn't tell her. And I thought that was kinda mean.

McIntosh: Well, they didn't do it on purpose. They did it out of carelessness, I'm sure.

Matoushek: Probably. They probably had so much going on at the time. But so had we [laughs].

McIntosh: Right. So once you got on—then you went home for a month?

Matoushek: Went home for a thirty day survivor's leave, went back to San Francisco—Treasure Island.

McIntosh: And that's where you picked up the Bountiful?

Matoushek: And I was assigned to the pre-commissioning detail of the Bountiful.

McIntosh: Oh, you were one of the original crew.

Matoushek: Yeah. Yeah. She was being outfitted at that time to be a hospital ship. And I guess she wound up being one of the best hospital ships in the service for various reasons. But I picked her up, and then on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of March—I typed "3-23-44" so many times [laughs]; "3-23-44."

McIntosh: Why?

Matoushek: Oh, I mean, all the paper work that was required. You know, bringing the crew on, and all this sort of stuff. A lot of—

McIntosh: What was your duty?

Matoushek: I was a yeoman. All the office were.

McIntosh: Right. Now, you're doing something that's a little less exciting than the--

Matoushek: That's doing what I was, you know—what I learned to do [laughs]. Yeah, but on the 23<sup>rd</sup> we were commissioned—The U.S.S. Bountiful.

McIntosh: Of '44?

Matoushek: AH-9.

McIntosh: AH-9, was it?

Matoushek: Yeah, AH-9. And then we, ah—I think that same day we took off—we took off to Pearl Harbor. Yeah, we took off to—oh, and we made a couple of runs between Pearl Harbor and San Francisco because, ah, when the Japanese attacked Pearl many of the wives and children of the service men that were stationed on Pearl were evacuated back to the States. Well, in March then of '44, at that time, they considered it safe enough so that a lot of the wives and family and stuff were going *back* to Pearl. And we made two or three runs with relatives of servicemen, taking them back. [thwack sound] Damn it!

McIntosh: Yeah, we'll just let it sit down. Maybe if your hands above it—

Matoushek: Yeah, okay [laughs]. Sorry about that. Yeah, we made several runs with loved ones of servicemen.

McIntosh: Sure. Now, let's get into more detail because I know about this hospital ship. Ah, where did you put the folks? Where'd you put them?

Matoushek: You mean that we took back to Pearl?

McIntosh: Yeah.

Matoushek: We would—all over the place. We had [them] in the various wards, and so forth.

McIntosh: You put them in the hospital wards?

Matoushek: Oh, sure. Sure.

McIntosh: Yeah, okay. That's what I meant—because you didn't have any patients?

Matoushek: No. No. We didn't have patients until our first encounter.

McIntosh: Okay. So you just kept them in the patients ward then?

Matoushek: Yeah, we were basically like a cruise ship, really, for about two or three runs. And then we got orders to go to invasion—cover an invasion.

McIntosh: And what'd you use that chow hall for? For crew and your patients—I mean your visitors, too?

Matoushek: I think so. I think so.

McIntosh: Same time? You chow down with them, or did they eat separately?

Matoushek: No, they had separate—although, ah, well, kinda one of the nicer parts of it—we were able to converse with the passengers, if you will, and several of the younger girls—my age especially at that time—struck up an acquaintance. And they'd come down to the office, and we'd listen to records. I had purchased a record player, a wind up record player, and about a half a dozen records. And I took it onboard the ship. And we had that in the office, and we'd sit and write letters home—use a typewriter, listen to the records. That was—that was good duty [laughs]!

McIntosh: Right, I knew that's just what you were going to say. So, after several of these trips back and forth you decided to go west?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Where did they tell you you were going?

Matoushek: Actually, I don't—oh, I think Eniwetok and Kwajalein were the first ones that we made—well, we were at sea, once we got out there, we were at sea over eighteen straight months without seeing, basically, civilization of any kind. Manus—have you heard of Manus Island?

McIntosh: No. You never came to port in any of the—or were you just out in the bay?

Matoushek: Well, we'd usually, ah—

McIntosh: You never tied up anywhere, I guess that's what I'm wondering.



Matoushek: No. No. But one place there, out in the Pacific, was Manus Island, and that was a recreational island.

McIntosh: Yes, I have heard of it. Now—I know about that.

Matoushek: And we'd go there. And that was the most civilization we ever saw.

McIntosh: Half the beer in the world was kept there.

Matoushek: Yeah, yeah. Palm trees, beer, and ants, and sand [laughs].

McIntosh: That was Manus Island.

Matoushek: Yeah. With an awful lot of ants [laughs].

McIntosh: I talked to a lot of sailors who were aboard there, and when they dropped off there and had their two cans of beer, and then they got back aboard ship, and went on their way.

Matoushek: That's it. You got it. That's it [laughs], yeah.

McIntosh: Right, it was sort of a beer depot.

Matoushek: Yeah [laughs].

McIntosh: That Manus Island. Okay, so where did you go more importantly than that?

Matoushek: From there? Well, I say, we're talking Kwajalein—

McIntosh: Well, they'd already been settled by that time.

Matoushek: And then we just made the list, right up on the line to, ah—well, let's see. I think I did it here. Don't I have the places that we—

McIntosh: Saipan, you said.

Matoushek: Oh, yeah. We went—but before Saipan— [rustling papers]

McIntosh: Any of these landings?

Matoushek: Well—

McIntosh: 'Cause a lot of those landings are Navy (??) by this.

Matoushek: We never landed. We always took casualties off of that, of Marine—

McIntosh: Right. But you were at a landing where? What landings were you associated with?

Matoushek: Don't I have it down here? Yeah, here. Kwajalein, Eniwetok, Saipan, Guam, Peleliu, Angaur, Leyte, Philippines, Iwo Jima, Okinawa, and Japan.

McIntosh: Right. Well, Okinawa and Iwo Jima were in '45, and the Philippines was in '44 of November.

Matoushek: We went up to—up the Lingayen Gulf to—what the heck was that island in the Philippines? Leyte. We went up to Leyte. And—

McIntosh: Well, where were you when you took your first casualties? I guess that's the way I can get you pinpointed here. Where were you when you took your first casualties aboard?

Matoushek: Eniwetok and Kwajalein was the first time, and then we took them back on all the other ones since then. Every one, and—[pauses] Like in, ah, in Saipan—that was a rough one. Guam. I don't remember Peleliu or Angaur too much.

McIntosh: Okay. Well, just pick one. Tell me about bringing the casualties aboard. How'd they get them aboard?

Matoushek: Saipan was the one where, ah, we were laying in to the beach so close that we had casualties on board thirty minutes after they were wounded or shot. And according to that, at that time, that was very, very close. But they'd bring 'em on board with Higgins boats, and we'd lower the gangplank, although it never—you know, they'd bring a boat up to the gangplank, but we had booms out from the side of the ship and bring them up in baskets.

McIntosh: In litters.

Matoushek: Yeah. Right, right. Bring 'em on board. And then everybody on board would partake in that procedure.

McIntosh: That's just the way we did it.

Matoushek: Yeah. We'd bring em on that way.

McIntosh: And were you filled up very so quickly?

Matoushek: Usually. Usually we never left until we had a full ship. And I think our capacity of casualties was about 650 or 700.

McIntosh: Seven hundred was what the [USS] Haven [the hospital ship Jim served on] was.

Matoushek: Something like that.

McIntosh: But that would vary depending on the type of casualties.

Matoushek: But typically we never, ah—typically we were always there on either D-Day [a day on which a combat operation begins] or D plus one. And we'd never leave until we had a full—

McIntosh: So if you filled up with casualties, then what would you do with all them?

Matoushek: Well, we'd take em down to a field hospital.

McIntosh: Right. But where would they go?

Matoushek: Well, lot's of times we went down to Guadalcanal, but Tulagi was a real pretty place, I thought.

McIntosh: Is that where you took the ones from in Saipan?

Matoushek: Oh boy, I don't remember where we took—

McIntosh: But the two places you disembarked these patients was either Guadalcanal or Tulagi?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Right?

Matoushek: Yeah, I think so.

McIntosh: Okay. That's what I want to establish.

Matoushek: Right. Have you ever been to Tulagi?

McIntosh: No.

Matoushek: Oh. It's pretty [laughs].

McIntosh: Oh. No, I've been Kwajalein, I've been to Guam, I've been to Okinawa. Okay. And so, you had enough medical personal?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Nurses?

Matoushek: Yes, we had—boy, they were honeys. They did their duty. You betcha.

McIntosh: Right. And did you seem to run out of any supplies for these patients? Was that a problem?

Matoushek: I don't remember running out of supplies. No, we always had enough.

McIntosh: And your job in those situations was recording all the events here?

Matoushek: Well, I worked in the office. I was yeoman in the office. But when we took them on board, you helped—

McIntosh: You had to keep hospital records.

Matoushek: You helped take them on board. Right. And that was another thing. Before we left any place we had to type up and prepare—

McIntosh: A roster?

Matoushek: A “ships present”—you know, everybody on board. In case something happened to us while we were gone, then that went to the two or three ships in the deal. So while you were taking on patients a lot [Approx. 15 second pause in recording] the up (??) time, too.

McIntosh: How did you get your supplies from where? When you were landing?

Matoushek: Well, usually we had supplies on board before we made the landings.

McIntosh: What about food?

Matoushek: We'd typically get supplies like from Manus Island or someplace when we were there.

McIntosh: But, like at Saipan, how many days were you at the landing before you filled up and left?

Matoushek: That I don't remember. But we were in—you have read about what the Japanese population of the island did. They ran to this cliff and—

McIntosh: Yeah, but that wasn't concerning you.

Matoushek: We were right under that *cliff*.

McIntosh: But you didn't have—if you were at the landing, how long were you there, usually, before you filled up? A week?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: Not that long.

Matoushek: No, a day or two.

McIntosh: Any other hospital ships taking on patients besides you?

Matoushek: Well, we had—not at the same time. But when we'd leave, then another one would be there.

McIntosh: But there rarely was more than one hospital ship there?

Matoushek: I think so. Rarely—

McIntosh: At one time.

Matoushek: At one time, right.

McIntosh: And, so after Saipan did you go to Tinian, or did you miss that? That was that not on your list here.

Matoushek: No, we didn't make Tinian. We made Guam. But Saipan was a stinker when—we were in there, tied up, and these Japanese would be committing suicide off this cliff, and the whole bay was littered with bodies. And the Marines—[laughs] they always got some good duty—they'd put two people in, like a Higgins boat; one coxswain and one grappler, they'd call them. And the grappler had five or six lines with a grappling hook on the end. And they'd go out into this bay and get a grappling hook in the body, and then they'd drag the body back to the beach and leave it on the beach, and they'd go back for more. And while the bodies were on the beach, of course, it was, ah, nice and warm, and these bodies would rot, and the *stench*—the *stench* was unbelievable. Some—these poor Marines then had to go through these bodies on the beach looking for dog tags and that sort of stuff—identification, you know, and they wore masks.

McIntosh: Dog tags? I thought these were Japanese—

Matoushek: Well, they were. All kinds: Japanese, Marines, the whole works.

McIntosh: Oh, but the—

Matoushek: And they were all dead, believe me [laughs].

McIntosh: Yes, I understand.

Matoushek: Yeah. But, ah, I felt sorry for the Marines—*many* times—especially on Iwo Jima. That was a hellhole.

McIntosh: Okay. Well, tell me about that landing. How was that different than Saipan? For you, not for the—I mean, I know the overall war—but just for you.

Matoushek: Iwo, they, ah, they pounded Iwo. Both the Navy did, the Air Force did. When the ships—they had the battle wagons sitting out, then the cruisers, then destroyers, and they'd shell. And then when they'd do that for a certain period of time they'd withdraw, and then the Air Force would come in and bomb. And this went on all day, all night, and all night they'd have flares.

McIntosh: Right, but where were you?

Matoushek: On the ship.

McIntosh: I know, but where was the ship? I mean in relation to these others?

Matoushek: You've seen pictures of [Mount] Suribachi? Right almost at the base of Suribachi; that's where we were anchored. I've got a picture at home that was taken by some naval photographer that shows exactly where we were.

McIntosh: Okay. So then you were taking casualties off of the Higgins boats then at that point?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Same way—just—

Matoushek: Same way.

McIntosh: We did the same thing at Inchon.

Matoushek: Yeah, yeah.

McIntosh: And you filled up pretty fast then?

Matoushek: It did the first time. We must have made two or—at least two, probably three, trips.

McIntosh: Three trips. Back to Tulagi?

Matoushek: Yeah. Well, back to a field hospital where we'd, ah—I don't remember whether it was Tulagi every time or not, but—

McIntosh: Well, you said it was either Tulagi or Guadalcanal.

Matoushek: Right. As far as I remember, that's what it was. Hollandia.

McIntosh: Oh, you took some to Hollandia?

Matoushek: Well, that's what I said when I meant Guadalcanal. Hollandia's in Guadalcanal, isn't it?

McIntosh: No, not really, but—it's up in New Guinea. Hollandia's in New Guinea.

Matoushek: Well, no, it was Hollandia; it Guadal—

McIntosh: That was an Army base in—

Matoushek: Huh?

McIntosh: Hollandia was mainly Army there.

Matoushek: Well, they had a field hospital there.

McIntosh: Yes, but it wasn't a Navy hospital.

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: All right. So, about three trips, and then your duty was the same all the time? It didn't change?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: Did you have any trouble getting mail?

Matoushek: Not really. Well, it always took [laughs] a while. It wasn't—you didn't mail it Thursday and get it Monday.

McIntosh: Okay. And after you left the last—tell me about the Philippines. What was different about that? Anything?

Matoushek: I don't remember too much being different about the Philippines as far as fighting was concerned. But one time we went up the Lingayen Gulf, and

the water was just absolutely golden yellow. And, ah, it was the surface—the ship would cut through this, and then it just come floating right on back behind the stern of the boat. And we found out it was just millions and millions of Man o’ War, these—

McIntosh: Oh, my goodness. Portuguese Man o’ War.

Matoushek: Yeah, that colored the water. Oh, man, and we could see it for *miles*.

McIntosh: Incredible.

Matoushek: Yeah, it was something else.

McIntosh: And then you stood off at Okinawa, too, for several days?

Matoushek: At Okinawa, we were at a latitude and longitude which was called “bedbug area” at the time. It was a spot in the ocean, and we’d go up to that point, and then we’d cut our engines and drift. And then we’d go back to the point, and cut our engines and drift. And every now and then, they’d fly a plane over and blink us a message. And the next morning we’d rendezvous with the fleet and take off patients by breeches buoy. So we never actually got to Okinawa, but this was the Okinawa encounter, and the patients that we took off of Navy ships at that point were from the kamikaze deal that they’d fly into the ships. And then we’d get the patients off of the ships.

McIntosh: Did you pick up any survivors of any sinkings?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: Put you in a reverse role from your previous experience?

Matoushek: No, no. Wish we had [laughs].

McIntosh: Hauling people aboard? [laughs]

Matoushek: Wish we had. [laughs] No, on the Bountiful my special sea detail was up with the cap’n and the skipper on the bridge. And I would relay his messages to the fo’c’sle and the fantail and the dock if we were docking or anything like that. And when we were in this “bedbug area” they’d give the last patient to come across on this dumb breeches buoy the service records of all the patients that had preceded. Well, this one time—I believe it was an aircraft carrier, and I don’t remember which carrier it was—they forgot to give the service records along. So my skipper looked at me, and he said “Yeoman Matoushek—”



McIntosh: “Go get ‘em”?

Matoushek: “Go get ‘em.” And I rode over on that dumb breeches buoy, got the records and came back, and *that* was an experience [laughs]. Oh, my. I got back to the ship, and I said, “Captain, hopefully, you’re never gonna do that to me again.” [laughs]

McIntosh: Why, what was the problem?

Matoushek: Oh, you got these two—we’re underway when this was happening—two ships, underway.

McIntosh: A big one and a small one.

Matoushek: Yeah, and you got two lines at least, you know, that go through there. Well, all of a sudden the lines go like that, and your toes start touching the waves of the—and you’d say, “Cripes sake! Go out this way! You go away!” So then they go away, and then lines would come up, and they’d be kinda taut, and we’d say “Oh!” [laughs]

McIntosh: It’ll break, huh?

Matoushek: Yeah [laughs]! Oh, I was scared. Boy.

McIntosh: Bobbing around in the air.

Matoushek: Yeah, bobbing around [laughs]. Yeah, that was one of my *different* experiences [laughs] in the Navy.

McIntosh: Yeah, well, that’s good. I mean, it’s really unusual.

Matoushek: Oh! We had a good skipper on board the Bountiful.

McIntosh: What about the physician skipper of the hospital? What was he like?

Matoushek: We had good, good people on board. We had all good people on board.

McIntosh: Because I know hospital ships have two captains.

Matoushek: I didn’t know that. Did we?

McIntosh: One for the hospital, one for the ship.

Matoushek: Oh, yes, oh, yes. We had—there was a doctor-in-charge. Well, we had a nurse-in-charge and a nurses-II, and that sort of stuff. Sure.

McIntosh: You don't recall how many of each of those you had, did you?

Matoushek: No.

McIntosh: Because we had twenty four physicians and twenty two nurses on the [U.S.S.] Haven.

Matoushek: I don't recall how many—I don't think had twenty nurses. I don't think we did. But the ones we had were good. Yeah, they were a lot of fun [laughs]. And they put up with a lot of stuff.

McIntosh: Oh?

Matoushek: We went—we had them on board when we crossed the equator for the shellback initiation. Oh, they were wonderful. They stood the—

McIntosh: They put up with all that?

Matoushek: The worst junk that you [laughs] can imagine. Yeah, they put up with it, and they smiled. It was amazing [laughs]. I was really—

McIntosh: Were they picked on pretty much?

Matoushek: Oh, yes. They picked on them.

McIntosh: Like what?

Matoushek: One of the things they did—we had a mast on the Bountiful which was a pretty tall mast—I don't know exactly anymore how tall. But, they ran two bosun's chairs up—one on each side of the mast. And they put two nurses in each bosun's chair, and they gave them two rolls of toilet paper, and they were supposed to sit up there and look for the King Neptune. Well, this thing—this mast was up there swaying from side to side, and these kids are—girls I mean—women, really, were supposed to be watching for King Neptune through a hole in a roll of toilet paper, and you can imagine they got sick. And they got sick.

McIntosh: Well, it was the whole purpose of the thing.

Matoushek: Yeah [laughs]! But they came down, they were having—they took it very, very well, I thought [laughs]. They tied one nurse up just below the boat deck to a deal. They shackled her to a pipe standard, a vertical pipe standard. And they took her shoes off and painted her toenails with red lead, and [laughs] stood up on the boat deck and dropped eggs down on hair.

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Matoushek: Terrible! Mean.

McIntosh: Childish.

Matoushek: Not really humorous stuff, just nasty stuff. **[End of Tape 1, Side B]** But this nurse that was in that situation, when they finally let her go she just went into her quarters and took a shower, and got some alcohol and got the red lead off of her feet, and came back with a great big smile on her face. She was perfect [laughs].

McIntosh: Not everyone would have done that.

Matoushek: Oh, no. We had one officer on board—now was that the Liscome Bay, or was that? I believe it was on the Liscome Bay when I first went across the equator with the “Lizzie.” Ah, yes, we had a flight sleeve—they had a flight sleeve on the flight deck. Boy, they’d left about a week’s worth of garbage, and you had to crawl through that flight sleeve on your hands and knees and stuff like that. But one officer was an ensign, and he locked himself in his stateroom, boardroom, and refused to come out. So they went in after him, and ran him through the whole schmear twice. I always figured he was kind of stupid to do that, but that’s what he did, and that’s what they did. You know, really, there’s very little sense to the initiation of the shellback initiation.

McIntosh: Of course, it’s just childish behavior.

Matoushek: Basically.

McIntosh: Yeah. Okay, so after all these trips, finally you got a chance to come home on your hospital ship?

Matoushek: Yep. Went to Mare Island.

McIntosh: When was that? What time—1945 sometime? After the war was over, or before?

Matoushek: Oh, we came back one time for a thirty-four day stay in Mare Island. And we each—you know, port and starboard watch—we got seventeen day leave parties. And I don’t remember when that was. But I can’t tell you for sure. And then, of course, we came home to stay, you know, after our discharge. But I only hit the States one time on the Bountiful after we left and were commissioned. We only hit it one time when we had a seventeen day leave.

McIntosh: When you came back the second time, was that after the war?

Matoushek: No. What do you mean?

McIntosh: Well, was it after the war was over?

Matoushek: After the war was over was the second time we came back to the States, yes.

McIntosh: So in other words you stayed in the Pacific for a few—

Matoushek: Then I was discharged.

McIntosh: For a while before—after the war was over—you were over there for a while before you came home, is what I'm getting at. Right?

Matoushek: Yes.

McIntosh: You go to Japan?

Matoushek: Oh yeah, we were in Yokosuka. We were anchored in Yokosuka, ah, even when the treaty was signed. We were there very early.

McIntosh: You go ashore?

Matoushek: Oh, yes. Quite often. [inaudible] And, well, initially after the war the people were being discharged on a point system. But they restricted yeomen because yeomen were the ones that were writing up the discharges and stuff. So even though I had plenty of points, I wasn't dischargeable. And then finally they said I could be discharged. And we were over in Yokosuka at that time. And I said, "Thank you, but no. The Bountiful is going back to the States sometime, and I'm going to ride her back to the States." And they said, "That's fine with us." So that's what I did. Because some of the kids were, ah—we were discharging them from the Bountiful and sending them home, but they'd be over on a Japanese camp of some sort for two, two and half, three months, you know.

McIntosh: Before they could get transportation.

Matoushek: Yeah. And I said, "That's not for me. I got my bunk here."

McIntosh: Japan was not fun to visit at that time.

Matoushek: No. No, it wasn't.

McIntosh: It was when I was there in 1950.

Matoushek: It was?

McIntosh: Oh, yeah. But not then.

Matoushek: No, sir.

McIntosh: So, you came back to the United States when?

Matoushek: In 1946. April—no. Yeah, I was discharged in April of '46.

McIntosh: So you were out there six months after the war?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: Came back to Alameda?

Matoushek: The ship was in Mare Island Navy Yard, and we were discharged, and I'll say "we," I'll tell you more about that in a little—well, I did here. We were discharged in Shoemaker, California. And there were three of us: J.D. McCann, W. Mil—well, his name was Washington Kimmy Milner, Jr., so we called him "Dubby." And he insisted upon it [laughs]. He was from Texas. But the three of us were discharged in Shoemaker, and the ship was up in Mare Island. And so we went up to San Francisco and bought ourselves a suit of civilian clothing, and went back on board the ship. And we had fun.

McIntosh: I'll bet.

Matoushek: We had an executive officer. His name was J.J. Yupkes (?). Just a prince of a man—just a wonderful guy [laughs]. He saw us walking down the dock [laughs], and he called from the bridge. And he called down, and he said, "Officer to the deck, officer to the deck. We're accepting *no* visitors onboard the Bountiful today." And we said, "Oh J.J., blow it out your—" [laughs] We had fun. He took us on board, and oh, man, we had a good time. He was a real nice person. We had lunch with him, and [laughs]—

McIntosh: After you got out, you went directly home from California?

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: And did you use your G.I. Bill when you got home?

Matoushek: Yes.

McIntosh: What'd you do with it?

Matoushek: University of Wisconsin. Over there.

McIntosh: Finished in—

Matoushek: '50—January of '50.

McIntosh: In what college?

Matoushek: Huh? Oh, accounting. B.B.A.

McIntosh: Accounting, okay. Oh, that was good. That was good use of it.

Matoushek: Ah, yeah. Those were different years, too.

McIntosh: Sure. And then what'd you get, a job, right after that?

Matoushek: Yes. Yes. My first [laughs] job they actually hired two, I think, or three from the group for the corporation audits division in Washington, D.C. And I accepted and went out there. You can imagine after spending, well, almost four years in the Navy, I wanted, well, at that time then I wanted out of the Navy. And I wanted an automobile. And then one of the first things I did when I got out of Milwaukee was buy myself a 1940 DeSoto and then went out to Washington, D.C. And there was *no* housing out there. And if there was housing out there, they flew us—throughout that time was the forty-eight states, Panama, and the Virgin Islands doing government auditing. So you could be, maybe, down at the Tennessee Valley Authority for a month, and they'd pick you up and fly you down to, maybe, Puerto Rico—whatever. And the gist of it is you were never in Washington, D.C. more than maybe a month at a time. And if you were in Washington, D.C., no place to stay, and certainly no place to own an automobile. No place to, you know—you leave it out for nine, ten months on the street. That was ridiculous. So I had to make up my mind whether I wanted that and get rid of the car, or whether I wanted to get a different job, and I said “The heck with it, I'm going back to Madison, Wisconsin, and getting myself a job.” And I did. I came back here. I got a job in public accounting.

McIntosh: Great. That served you well the rest of your career.

Matoushek: Oh, yeah; oh, yeah.

McIntosh: Did you join any veterans groups?

Matoushek: I'm a VFW [Veterans of Foreign Wars].

McIntosh: And have you kept track of any of your shipmates?

Matoushek: Yes. That's an interesting story. About two years ago, I think—three years ago—I was home—we were home—and the phone rang. And it was a man on the other end of phone, and June answered the—I'm not good anymore on the telephone with my hearing. June answered the phone, and she said, "Yeah, just a minute. He's right here." So, I took the other phone, and I had a speaker phone at home, and I said, "Hello?" And he said, "Marty Matoushek?" And I said, "Yes." And he said, "You were on board the Liscome Bay?" And I said, "Yes." And he asked—I said "See, what is this all about?" And said, "Well, I am so-and-so"—I forget his name right now—"and I am writing a book about the sinking of the Liscome Bay." And he said, "Would you mind talking to me?" And I said, "Heaven sake's, no." An hour and a half the man hung up. We talked over the phone that night an hour and a half. And then he asked me at the time to send him an account, my account of so and so. So I did, and he sent back a lot of stuff, too, from there. And now you just asked if they have started a reunion of members that have been found of survivors of the Liscome Bay. They just had one last month.

McIntosh: How many men did you lose on that sinking?

Matoushek: Well, I told you we had over twelve hundred on board, and two hundred and eighty seven of us got off.

McIntosh: That's all?

Matoushek: That's not a good average.

McIntosh: No.

Matoushek: About four went down for every one that didn't.

McIntosh: Right.

Matoushek: Yeah.

McIntosh: So, you're gonna have a reunion?

Matoushek: Well, I couldn't go to this last one, but I'm in communication with them. And then I recently had sent this man that I told you about on the telephone—I sent him a communication, and it came *back*. And it said, "Address unknown."

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Matoushek: So there's a fellow that is in charge of the Liscome Bay survivors—you know, in charge of the reunions and stuff—and I sent him a communication to tell him that I couldn't make this get together. And then he called me back, and while I was talking to him, I said, "Say, I sent a letter to so-and-so, and it came"—he said, "The same damn thing happened to me, Marty." He said he moved. He was out in Maryland. I think it was Maryland—out east. And then he moved from there to California. And he said, "I recently sent him a deal out in California, and it came back, 'Address unknown'."

McIntosh: So the book never was written?

Matoushek: No, apparently not, and we're just kind of in limbo right now—both of us—as to what happened to him. But, I don't know. So I'm—yeah—whatever.

McIntosh: Okay. Anything we missed here?

Matoushek: I don't—[laughs]

McIntosh: Any stories that you didn't tell me?

Matoushek: Well, you being a doctor may, ah—I don't think you're going to enjoy it, but you'll know what I'm talking about. At Iwo Jima, and I believe it was the first time we were there, we took a Marine on board who had stepped on a land mine. And when they brought him on board, he should not have been alive. He was in a basket, and we were supposed to—three of us—we were supposed to lift him from the basket onto a gurney and maybe operate on him. There wasn't anything left of the legs except stumps. There was one kid that took care of his shoulders. I was given to take care of his back. And a third kid was taking care of lifting what was left his legs. And at the count of three, we lifted. Nothing moved, except my hands—like going through a bowl of Jello.

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Matoushek: And he died. And I went to the waste and threw up.

McIntosh: Yeah, I'll bet.

Matoushek: That was—

McIntosh: Very bad.

Matoushek: That was—



McIntosh: It was amazing he was still breathing.

Matoushek: Yeah. He was still alive when they got him—

McIntosh: His whole back must have been blown out.

Matoushek: Oh, it must have been. There was nothing solid there at all. Just—

McIntosh: Incredible.

Matoushek: Ugh. And then, another incident—that’s why I probably hate Iwo Jima so much—we had a captain, a Marine captain, in charge of a patrol that was in a dugout area with five of his men. And he had given the order to, you know, “Up and over!” And all five of his men came—there was a Japanese machine gunner—and all five of his men came tumbling back. And they, ah, they found him with his arms around them crying like a baby [chokes up]. And then they brought him on board—I learned all of this stuff after he was on board, but I saw them bring him on board.

McIntosh: The captain?

Matoushek: Yes. And every time they tried to bring him up the gangplank, every time the boat would get to the gangplank, he’d go ape. And one time—and this is God’s truth—they wrapped inch manila line around this guys hands, and when they brought him up to the thing, he just—like it was string. They finally had to knock him out with a belaying pin [a device used to secure rigging lines] to get him on board. You must have had strong rooms on board. We had—

McIntosh: A couple of them.

Matoushek: Yeah. We put him in a padded cell strong room, Ward C. And after he was on board, he kind of calmed down a little bit. But all of a sudden, they said, “Yeoman Matoushek, you and Doctor so-and-so are going to interrogate him tomorrow.” And I said, “Where?” “In the strong room.” And I had seen this guy, and they gave him a truth serum—sodium—

McIntosh: Pentathol.

Matoushek: Pentathol? They gave him that. He was there, and this doctor interrogating him, and I was writing down everything, and that’s how we found out why he was in the condition he was in: because he blamed himself.

McIntosh: For all of the men?

Matoushek: Yep. But it wasn't *true*. And so they started working with him, and I followed him as far as I could. I think he went down to Tulagi, and then back to the States. But I followed—and they started bringing him out of that, thank God. That must have been—

McIntosh: Very difficult.

Matoushek: Oh! But you talk about strength of a human being under that condition. Man, I've never witnessed anything like that. And, well, [laughs] being scared at first—I was—you know, this man was—

McIntosh: How did the interview go?

Matoushek: *Good.*

McIntosh: Did he seem be fairly rational?

Matoushek: Yes, yes. He was just—

McIntosh: Sort of groggy.

Matoushek: He was, you know, basically out of it, because—

McIntosh: Right, you give 'em too much of that, they'll be asleep.

Matoushek: Oh, [laughs] is that right?

McIntosh: Well, it's sleeping medicine, sodium pentathol.

Matoushek: Well, he answered. The doctor questioned, and he'd answer. Pretty good—I mean—I don't want to—but if those two incidents, if I could, if I didn't have had to encounter them, I'd have been much happier than I am today [laughs].

McIntosh: Yeah, they were unpleasant situations.

Matoushek: Oh, yeah.

McIntosh: All right.

Matoushek: Did you ever have, on board your hospital ship, gangrene?

McIntosh: We had several.

Matoushek: Did you?

McIntosh: Yeah. Why?

Matoushek: Because one time, and I believe it was from Saipan, we took on board ninety-nine Japanese prisoners of war, and they all had gangrene; every—

McIntosh: From sitting around, and letting wounds fester, right.

Matoushek: Huh?

McIntosh: Letting wounds fester because there was no medical care.

Matoushek: Oh, they were all—almost all of them were in big body casts.

McIntosh: You can just see what it was like in the Civil War.

Matoushek: Oh, my!

McIntosh: When you had no antibiotics, you see.

Matoushek: We had them down in a hole, you know, with us.

McIntosh: You could smell them, couldn't you?

Matoushek: Oh! The *smell!*

McIntosh: Right. It used to be that you could walk down a ward, and you could pick out the guy with gangrene just from the smell.

Matoushek: I don't doubt it. I don't doubt it.

McIntosh: You could always smell it. It had a distinctive odor. Nothing else like it.

Matoushek: No. Not in my mind, memory at all, no. That and those damn bodies decaying out on the beach in Saipan. The *stench* of war, and that's what it is.

McIntosh: All right, I think we've run out of soap, here.

Matoushek: [laughs]

McIntosh: Thank you very much.

Matoushek: *Oh.*

McIntosh: You did a good job.

Matoushek: Well, thank you.

**[End of Interview]**