

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
GERALD PARSHALLE
Navigator, Merchant Marines, World War II

2001

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Parshalle, Gerald, (1924-). Oral History Interview, 2001.

User Copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 88 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 video recording (ca. 88 min.); ½ inch, color.

Abstract:

Gerald Parshalle, a Milwaukee (Wisconsin) veteran, discusses his World War II service with the Merchant Marines. He describes training at Coyote Point (California) and transporting Sea Bees to construct an airstrip during the battle of Tarawa. Parshalle mentions carrying supplies to soldiers at Guadalcanal, nightly bombing by a Japanese airplane while near Guadalcanal, and seeing actor and high school friend Richard Jaekel while in Guam. He touches upon transfer to a "liberty" ship that carried ammunition to South Pacific islands, seeing Japanese soldiers commit suicide at Saipan, and providing supplies to American forces at New Caledonia.

Biographical Sketch:

Gerald Parshalle was born in Hollywood (California) in 1924 and served in World War II as a navigator for the Merchant Marines in the Pacific Theater. Parshalle was recruited from King's Point Merchant Marine Academy and was trained at Coyote Point before being sent to the Pacific. After the war, Parshalle returned to California where he was married. Parshalle became the president of the Sunbeam company in Canada, and eventually settled in Milwaukee as the president of the Oster company.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 2001
Transcribed by Elizabeth Hackett, 2009

Interview Transcript

McIntosh: Okay, up and running here. Talking to Gerald Parshalle.

Parshalle: Gerald S. Parshalle. [laughs]

McIntosh: Okay.

Parshalle: My name—my name, in the beginning, was Gerald Arthur Switzer. And I was about one or two days old, and a car hit my father and killed him. So my mother, finally, when I came back, she wanted her name on the thing, too. So the name is Gerald Switzer Parshalle. But the other one was Gerald Arthur Switzer. And I changed it to Gerald S. Parshalle.

McIntosh: What year were you born?

Parshalle: 04/27/24.

McIntosh: 1924.

Parshalle: Mm-hm.

McIntosh: Okay, and you said Hollywood.

Parshalle: Hollywood.

McIntosh: Okay.

Parshalle: Why don't I—may I just show you this—the information?

McIntosh: No, not now.

Parshalle: You don't need it?

McIntosh: No—we're off and running here.

Parshalle: Okay.

McIntosh: What year did you enter military service?

Parshalle: Well, I—I couldn't go until I was eighteen years old, because my mother was a—

McIntosh: She wouldn't let you?

Parshalle: She was a widow. And therefore, they—she had to sign that that would accept that.

McIntosh: She wouldn't do that (??)?

Parshalle: She *did*.

McIntosh: She did?

Parshalle: Yeah. So they—so then I took off.

McIntosh: And what did you join?

Parshalle: Well, they sent me up to—through San Francisco, to Coyote Point, which was San Francisco Bay, there.

McIntosh: You mean, you enlisted, or you were—they drafted you?

Parshalle: Well, I was in. They—they took me over as a cadet midshipman.

McIntosh: They—

Parshalle: But it was coming out of this—this was coming out of Kings Point, see. But what was happening—then they put me on—the Navy just picked me up, and so forth. And then I was in the Reserve.

McIntosh: But you began your military service enlisting in the Coast Guard, at—

Parshalle: No, not in the Coast Guard. No.

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: The training was in Coyote Point down there. But, about where you can see.

McIntosh: What did you enlist in, is what I'm trying to find—the Navy?

Parshalle: Originally, I—I checked in for the—as I said, I checked in—the guy talked me out of it—

McIntosh: Yeah, I told you that—

Parshalle: To go—to go to Kings Point. So they—then they took me—and they took me up to San Francisco, and then they took me to the first ship, after I was trained. After I was trained.

McIntosh: I want to go back to the beginning. How did you get in the Navy?

Parshalle: Well, they put me in it. I was—

McIntosh: They?

Parshalle: I was a Reserve person. Reserve Navy was plunged in right in with that Kings Point deal.

McIntosh: How did you get in the Reserves, in the Navy?

Parshalle: Well, they just put it in. I've got all the papers. I can show you my Navy—

McIntosh: Well, I understand. I just wondered what—the process you went through, to become a Navy Reservist. Did you join? Did you sign up somewhere?

Parshalle: They put—no, they just—they call me a cadet midshipman, and then the Coast Guard did our—part of the final time, to get our Merchant Marine things. We had to go—we took examinations, everything on that, to pass our licenses and all of that stuff.

McIntosh: Oh, I misunderstood. You were in the Merchant Marine originally.

Parshalle: Well, I was—it—Kings Point is a Merchant Marine academy.

McIntosh: I understand that.

Parshalle: Yeah.

McIntosh: Tell me—

Parshalle: But the minute I got in the ship, the Navy had chartered the ship. And I was in the Reserve. I was a midshipman in the Reserve there.

McIntosh: I—right, I'm trying to go back to how you got in the Merchant Marine to begin with. You walked in an office and signed up for a ship?

Parshalle: No, no. I was—I was taken from Coyote Point, where the—my training was finished. And they just took it up in San Francisco, took it up to this first ship. I had three ships. They were C2 cargo ships.

McIntosh: Really?

Parshalle: The first one was.

McIntosh: But you had to sign papers to join the Merchant Marine.

Parshalle: Oh, sure, I got all that paper. It's actually up—

McIntosh: Where did you sign those?

Parshalle: Sign them to go, or?

McIntosh: Well, where did you—how did you get your first ship?

Parshalle: That's where—that's where they put me from Kings—Kings Point people down there, where the first training location in Coyote—so I went with a deck cadet and an engine cadet.

McIntosh: Sure. You were at Kings Point?

Parshalle: They were two—two of us were in the bunks on the ship.

McIntosh: How did you get to Kings Point?

Parshalle: I never—I never went to Kings Point. I just—I quit that—I drove that guy about the plane job—go on airplane (??). And the guy said, “Oh my god—you got all those tickets of—with your name on it.” And I said, “Well, I'm not going to do it. I'm going to go wherever—the Kings Point thing over there.” So that was that.

McIntosh: So you signed up for the Merchant Marine.

Parshalle: Well, it was a U.S. maritime service that had—

McIntosh: Right, that's what you signed up for.

Parshalle: Yeah.

McIntosh: And you said then you had some training.

Parshalle: Yes.

McIntosh: What kind of training?

Parshalle: Three months.

McIntosh: Uh-huh.

Parshalle: What did they trace?

McIntosh: Where—where would that training—

Parshalle: At Coyote Point.

McIntosh: What state of the union is Coyote Point? I don't know where that is.

Parshalle: Coyote—Coyote Point was—was part of the Navy that the people who'd—

McIntosh: What state are we talking—see, I'm trying—I'm trying to locate this place.

Parshalle: Well, this is San Francisco, sir.

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: See—

McIntosh: I didn't know that.

Parshalle: You drive down there—

McIntosh: Right.

Parshalle: To this place, and there's a place—it's about near Stanford.

McIntosh: Okay.

Parshalle: Right there. And then they take us in. They have the whole thing. They have all the marching places, and all of this stuff. And they—

McIntosh: You were there three months?

Parshalle: Three months of training.

McIntosh: And they—had you ever been to sea before?

Parshalle: No.

McIntosh: Okay.

Parshalle: No.

McIntosh: And so, they taught you how to swim?

Parshalle: Well, I knew how to swim, sure. I—

McIntosh: Oh, because—

Parshalle: Listen, I was—I was—I used to go with Jason, and we used to go down bodysurfing all the time down there.

McIntosh: I didn't know that the Academy required that Merchant Marine had to be able to swim.

Parshalle: Well, I can—they probably know this, but I know how to swim. In fact, I'll tell you what they also gave me—an abandon-ship suit with a rubber suit. Remember that? We had a fifty—fifty foot tower.

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: And you had to jump off there. And those buggers would wake us up in the middle of the night. They'd wake us up, and "Get up there, put that in there, get in there, put this on, and then go up there, and jump off." That was part of the [inaudible]. That was not a problem there. I can't even [inaudible] there. There was only—one of the kids there chickened out. He wouldn't jump off the top. And they let his parents, for two weeks, to come. And the kid came back, and he got back up there, at the top of the top. And he didn't come down. He wouldn't jump. So they—then they took him, they just made a sailor out of him. They just dumped him out

McIntosh: So then what was your first ship?

Parshalle: The first ship was a cargo ship that had been chartered by the Navy. So we had gun tubs, we had 50s, and flying—on the flying bridge, we had 50s. And we had a big arrangement, that—we had even a padded cell, because when we got in there pretty soon, some of the men broke down during the war. And so we had a padded cell and we had doctors there, we had that kind of thing, and we had surgeons—

McIntosh: Yeah.

Parshalle: And so on. That was all on the—on the after portion of the mid-ship house.

McIntosh: What was the ship's name?

Parshalle: That was the Dashing Wave. There were—the Dashing Wave was on old square rig. The next one I was—I was in a Victory ship, and it was called the Brazil Victory, the—and the other one was the Young America, and that's what you saw on that thing—the Young America.

McIntosh: Okay. And what was—you were an able seaman?

Parshalle: Yes.

McIntosh: And what was your duty aboard this—

Parshalle: Navigator, basically.

McIntosh: Where did you learn your navigation skills?

Parshalle: I was—I was taught it, well, at least came along—it was taught at Coyote Point. I learned all of that.

McIntosh: Learned your navigation in three months?

Parshalle: Well, more than that—

McIntosh: [inaudible]

Parshalle: It could have been—I think it was about three months.

McIntosh: Uh-huh.

Parshalle: It—that’s about all.

McIntosh: You learn how to shoot the stars and the—

Parshalle: Oh, sure, and I had my own sextant.

McIntosh: Sure.

Parshalle: That’s—

McIntosh: Was that hard to learn?

Parshalle: Well, I don’t think it was hard. I was taught—I had the captain—Elwood P. Miller, was a terrific guy, was from a Merchant—old time Merchant captain. And he—he treated myself as a deck cadet kid, and the engine crew.

McIntosh: Sure.

Parshalle: And he treated us like a couple of sons on that ship.

McIntosh: Oh!

Parshalle: He really did. He was just a wonderful man.

McIntosh: Oh, yeah.

Parshalle: There's a terrible story connected to that.

McIntosh: That's—if it doesn't involve you, then I—we don't want it.

Parshalle: Well, he was just—well, there's some things—what I'm writing now, I'm doing a little vignette—

McIntosh: Uh-huh.

Parshalle: Because there humor in a lot of that, too. So I wrote that. I've been writing about humor—the thing—and Elwood—Elwood P. Miller, he was the greatest of all. He had all of these things. When we went—I'll tell you one thing, just one thing, and that is at Tarawa—we were at Tarawa, had been there. And then what happened every time the Japs would come around, see, we had Seabees. We had about probably two hundred Seabees. And they had all their gear, and the deal for the Sea Bees was to smooth out—smooth out if the island is secure. And we had this steel matting that they put down there, so they could lay that—so that the planes could land on that thing. And so when we went over, we pulled in to Betio, right inside of Tarawa, and we just hooked on to it. And we went over there and everything. At about 4:30 in the afternoon, we saw the fleet start taking off, and at that point—well, at that point we—the thing really got—the Japs started coming. And they knew where all the ammo was—all the ammunition was, everything down there, because they were flying around this, dropping all over, blowing up everything. And I turned around, I came down on the flying bridge, and I came down to see the—I said, “Captain, what are we going to do?” And he says, “We going to get the *hell* out of here!” [laughs] Just one thing he said to me. Oh, and another time, I got two collisions. We were hit by a—by a Danish icebreaker in the middle of the Pacific—South Pacific.

McIntosh: When was that?

Parshalle: Well, we hit it. He hit us, and he—

McIntosh: I said, when was that?

Parshalle: I don't know the dates.

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: I was—

McIntosh: What year?

Parshalle: I don't know what year that was. First—the first time I went down was Guadal[canal]. And then when—Tarawa was later on.

McIntosh: Tarawa was in '43.

Parshalle: Yeah. I don't know the—I've got the thing written down over there.

McIntosh: All right.

Parshalle: But what Tarawa—

McIntosh: What damage did the icebreaker do?

Parshalle: It put a hole on us. It put a hole on us, and—

McIntosh: Whereabouts was—

Parshalle: On—one the port—port side, on the hull. And at that point, Miller, he said, "Get a battle lamp, and go down there, and see if we're taking water." So down I went, and I had a light—and I turned the lights on, that were—looking, I was looking down there over the rail, looking over to see the water that's starting to come in. And a guy took a hatch block off the hatch cover, that holds the canvas down on the hatch, and he—he—the guy turned around with a hatch block, and he hit me. See it?

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: It's never really [laughs] gone away all—he hit me there, and here's the blood down here, blood's coming down here. And I had already been hit in the leg, because when I—one time I had a plane going around, and I was—I was just in the flying bridge up there, and I was just by the shield there, and a little bit—and I moved a little bit. And this—in Terawa, everything was exploding, it was just going everywhere. And that's when we were getting the hell out of there, at that point. And at that point, the metal—what had happened—I ran down, then I went on down to Spark, down to the radio guy. And I said—he said, "What in the hell is—look at—your pants, all red, on the pants there!" [laughs] So I looked down, and I looked there, and I looked there. And he says, "I can see it." He said—he said—he said, "There's a piece of metal." So I looked at that. And he says, "I'll fix it! I'll fix it." And I said, "Oh, fine!" And Sparks came right out, and had a pair of pliers. And, he pulled it out [laughs]. So anyways, between that—that thing—and so here was this thing, Captain Miller, here's this, my—one of my boys here, and he—and that thing. And then the next thing in, this guy turns around me with his hatch block and

hits me in the head. And two guys grab me, say, “What the hell are you doing?” And they—he said, “You’re sinking in.” [inaudible] old man thought it was the side of the ship. [laughs] Oh. So we had to plug it with as much as we could in mattresses and everything else down there in the [inaudible]. But fortunately, the icebreakers have a high bow, so it went up there, so there was pretty good clearance where we weren’t—where we weren’t taking water. If we had gone to the mid-ship house, which is right where we would have gone, actually—and the bone (??) was hurt, too. The bone (??) was, see, before—and those guys with that car (??)—the Roseville was the name of the bar (??)—the ship. And when it hit, that—of course, that really put a hole in the—in the ship there, and all of that stuff. So with that situation, I went back up then, after I got hit here. And here’s the blood coming down here. Captain Miller looked at me, and he said, “What in the *hell* have you done *now*?” [laughs] I said, “A guy hit me! He hit me with a—with a block there! He hit it on the head!” [laughs] So I took that lamp back. Hooked it up—[laughs]

McIntosh: So then you were [inaudible]—you were hit again a second time?

Parshalle: No, just the one.

McIntosh: Just that one time.

Parshalle: Yeah, the just—no, just—I—listen—

McIntosh: I’m [inaudible] here and stop you

Parshalle: I’m no hero. I just got that one place here. That other—being hit in the head, that’s—[laughs] that didn’t do—

McIntosh: How long were you at sea, generally, on these runs out to the Pacific?

Parshalle: For the Pacific?

McIntosh: About three months?

Parshalle: Three and a half years at the—at sea.

McIntosh: How many trips? Each trip was about how long?

Parshalle: Well, the first trip that we took was just to Honolulu, to see if these new ships were workable and working well. And then the first ship we went to, Guadalcanal—and there, that took about a year and a half while we were down at Guadal[canal], and being down there.

McIntosh: So after you brought whatever you brought to Guadalcanal, why did you stay? I mean, what were you doing?

Parshalle: Well, we were—we, you know, Henderson Field's right over there.

McIntosh: Yeah.

Parshalle: And so, what—what we would—we went down and we—of course, we brought stuff, food and all, god knows what, all the—everything we were carrying. But we had the Seabees, and they use—they just put a pontoon out there, and then they put a scramble (??) on the side, and they go to the side there. So we were there discharging, so that they could get ready for doing their sand shading departure.

McIntosh: After you got rid of all those things, and all those people, then what? Why did you stay there in Guadalcanal?

Parshalle: Well, in Guadal[canal]—well, Henderson was working okay, anyways—that happened. What had happened, is the island was secured, theoretically, but classically, they came around again.

McIntosh: I understand, but I don't understand why your ship was empty now. Why would you stay there? Wouldn't you—

Parshalle: It wasn't empty. It was—our hatches, you mean?

McIntosh: Well, you brought all your cargo. There was no reason to stay.

Parshalle: Well, the other thing is, there were stanchions on the tweens. And then they had a rack for that, and a canvas. We probably—that was called a bitt, it was some bitt! It was just a terrible thing. And we had all of those guys, because we had—we had about eighty or ninety guys there from the ship—the merchant ship. And then we had all these guys from the Seabees.

McIntosh: You were bringing them to Guadalcanal?

Parshalle: Yeah.

McIntosh: After you brought them there, then what did you do?

Parshalle: From Guadal[canal], we went to Guam.

McIntosh: Uh-huh.

Parshalle: And so we went up there, and we tied up—it's north, you go up north from there. I tied up there. And at that, I put the—I put the gangway down, and I walked down to the bottom—the gangway, at Guam. And here's Dick Jaeckel, from Hollywood High School. [laughs] If you ever saw it, a long time later, it was called *Guadalcanal Diary*. And he was the—some kid that was scared, you know, or something. He was a good friend of mine. He's dead now. He died not too long ago.

McIntosh: Jaeckel?

Parshalle: Dick Jaeckel.

McIntosh: Yeah, I remember—I remember Gregory Peck shooting him in *The Gunfighter*. I enjoyed that.

Parshalle: Well, something else. Yeah. But Dick had—

McIntosh: He wasn't one of my favorites.

Parshalle: He worked—he got stuff—he got—he got—

McIntosh: I saw him in a lot of movies.

Parshalle: Sure.

McIntosh: Snotty little kid, that's all. Same part he played in every one of those movies.

Parshalle: Oh, well.

McIntosh: Dirty little kid.

Parshalle: Yeah, well, he's—anyway, he's a good guy. He was on the gym team with me, and he was a good friend.

McIntosh: What did you—did you bring supplies from Guam back to the United States?

Parshalle: At Guam, we went over there, and did we get taken over! There were a lot of people killed, there were a lot of—everything was blasted all to hell there. And all the coconut trees were all down, everything was down. And with that, the admiral decided—there was some talk that maybe they were—the Japs were going to try and grab Australia. And so we went—we went there to Guam, and he said, “You go on up to the Floridas [the Florida Islands, just north of Guadalcanal], go up to the Floridas—there's a canal there, and load your ammunition.” At that point, that was a second

ship; it was a Victory ship we had gotten. It was an ammo carrier. When we went over there in this canal then, we went up through there. Of course, a big ship like that couldn't get in the little canal.

McIntosh: Mm-hmm.

Parshalle: We—we set us up there, around in that area, though. And so—and then—

McIntosh: You spent a lot of time carrying ammunition?

Parshalle: Well, on the Victory ship, yeah. But we got—we got the first—there were 500 new Victory ships made, and we had got—we got the first one, I think. Again, the Navy, you know, was there, and the thing—everything—the gun tubs were there, and all that stuff was there. And so at that point, one—

McIntosh: What was your duty aboard ship?

Parshalle: I was a navigator.

McIntosh: Just navigating.

Parshalle: Yeah.

McIntosh: Same ship, same the second time, too.

Parshalle: Sure, all through—I was used the whole time.

McIntosh: I see. What in—did you take any special precautions with the ammo on board?

Parshalle: Well, I'll—I'll tell you a story about the ammunition. We went over to the—we went up—admiral left Guadalcanal and—and set up in New Caledonia as his place. So if you go up there to Guadal[canal], you get—they call them "Torpedo Junction." And the Jap subs used to lay up—lay out there. And I can tell you a story about one of the kids that got hit too, there, by a torpedo. Anyways, at that point, we got up and we went in, and the guy's—the captain's name was Joseph Lala. And he had the Brazil Victory. And so, we went in that thing, and we—we were loaded with ammunition. We picked up the ammunition from San Francisco, and then we went on out. And when we got out there, and we'd been out there, and he said, "Go up to the Floridas, and put the ammunition over there—or, pick it up." No, he said, that's right, he said, "Pick it up. Put all that stuff—" They had a dump there, on the Floridas. So we got over there, and when we looked at what he said was a canal, it's just a little—is about as wide as *that*, [laughs] you know. And I told Lala, I said, "We're light now,

you know. You can almost see the ground there, going through this place.” And he said, “Well—” He says—I said, “I know we got to take a look at it. There’s nothing we can do about it.” And he said, “Let’s—let’s get it. You said—you get down on the bank, there, and I’ll get up the bank on the other side. And then go along.” We [were] just walking along there, and holler. He saw this thing, it was so shallow. So at that point, when we started going a little further, the propeller started throwing mud up through the—up the outside—out through the outside. And the mud was going all over the place, flying around. And at that point, the—that was something else. Here was all this mud. Now, then, the next thing is—well, now you go back, and we loaded—we loaded this whole group of ammunition, and that stuff, and—that they had on the—sitting there, on the island there. So they put that in there, in their thing that pushed us down more. And we got [the] chief engineer, and said, “We got a problem here.” [laughs] It’s—because we were [inaudible] all that mud was flying out there and stuff. And he said, “Just tie everything down. Everything down, ready to go, all the power you can cut.” Anyway, if the wheel goes, you know it’s only good, fifty—fifty percent work of it anyways. But anyways, we kicked it out. [laughs] We—we dug the canal. We dug the canal. We got out of there. And then we went on this Victory ship. And then we went to—we went up to Saipan. And you know, Saipan, Tinian. And in Saipan, we tied up there. And then the action started. What happened at that time was that the ship was tied up there. We were tied up there. We had a red flag, showing we were an ammunition ferry. It was showing on our ship. We tied—tied up. And then—

McIntosh: Tied up to what?

Parshalle: There was—

McIntosh: There was a dock?

Parshalle: There was a dock—docking possibility there.

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: There—there was—to get in there, you had to get in like this, and get over here, and then it was just up here, like—

McIntosh: They let the ammunition ships dock up to that dock?

Parshalle: Yes. Yeah, we went—that’s where we went with it. We went over there, and we were sitting there, and then there’s a big—**[huge drop in audio, inaudible for less than a minute]**. All of a sudden, I was standing there at noon one day. These guys—I had seen a bunch of the bombers leave in the morning. They left, so it was all quiet there. And I was up in the bridge,

and I—I looked over there, and I was standing there. And a Zero went “Ssht!” and went in front of us. So what the hell is going on? So anyways, well, nothing—they didn’t do anything, you know, nothing’s going on. They flew around, and then this is the turkey shoot start. What happened, was these—these planes were going around and around and around. Go around the island, around here. And they were firing. We had gun [inaudible] right there, and we were firing, and the Japs were trying to destroy all of the bombers. And that was the first piece of American land that ever had bombed Tokyo. That’s what happened, and these guys were absolutely coo-coo. They were flying by, and I think they were loaded with sake or something, they must have been. One guy flying around there goes, “This is way too heavy!” and then—they started shooting. Everything started shooting, and they were shooting, and all of this stuff—and our gunners were trying to do something, all the people we had on our ship. And at that point, the—the—all of the bullets and stuff went—the steel cables on the boom

McIntosh: Oh, my!

Parshalle: They hit the—they hit the seal (??) and broke that, and the boom came down and went “wham-o” [laughs] on the hatch there, right on the hatch there. And on this—this is a sideline where that—at that point, we—in the—in the afternoon late, we—we went up and we cleaned it. About two little Japanese, and a boom [laughs] but this—these thing kept going around, going around, and going around. And after so many—

McIntosh: Did you shoot them down?

Parshalle: Huh?

McIntosh: Did you shoot it down?

Parshalle: Oh—shoot what down?

McIntosh: Japs?

Parshalle: We couldn’t—they—our gunners, they couldn’t—what was it with the air field, we weren’t on top of the air field there. The guys that were really shooting the best, at the Zeros were the Marines. They were really—there were regular, you know, Army gunners, too. But those guys were really, they [inaudible]—well, what happened apparently—probably the Mamu (??) in Japan wasn’t going to have American land coming over there—ship coming over. And these guys were just set up. They were flying—some of them were flying right into our planes there, fly by and smash everything up, everything blown up there, and blowing up, and—

McIntosh: What were you doing when all this was going on?

Parshalle: I was—I was staying very, [laughs] very low to—you know, I was keeping—I was on the bridge at the—this thing was going around.

McIntosh: What was your specific duty when you were in port?

Parshalle: What was my duty?

McIntosh: In port. Seeing as you didn't have to do any [inaudible].

Parshalle: My duty was that I didn't want to get shot.

McIntosh: Well, that's—

Parshalle: These people were firing all over the place. So I got—I just got—I was on the bridge, and I just went down below noon (??) there, and—

McIntosh: Was your ship hit?

Parshalle: It was pounding everywhere.

McIntosh: Was your ship hit by any bullets?

Parshalle: Oh, yeah.

McIntosh: I'm surprised it didn't blow up your ship full of ammunition.

Parshalle: Well, they didn't, because—see, you forgot. What we—we had—we were light at that point. We didn't have any ammo in.

McIntosh: Oh, that's good.

Parshalle: So, yes. [laughs] It's very good. And so, anyways, they—what happened finally—I told a guy at the John club [slang for men's gym or bathroom] one day, "I think there was around—there must have been a dozen Zeros going around here." And—and he said, "Gerry, it was more than that." I said, "How many?" He said, "159." I said, "You're coo-coo!" That's—it must have been the Emperor of Japan. That must have been their entire thing that they had—the fighters. And at that point, I said, "How do you—what do you mean? How do you know that?" And he said, "I was on a carrier. And all this stuff out here [inaudible]."

McIntosh: How many more was that out there?

Parshalle: And so—159 was right. That’s what—the number of Zeros there were on that thing.

McIntosh: On what thing?

Parshalle: On the carrier. They counted—they counted 159 Zeros, and shot them down. [inaudible]

McIntosh: Shot [inaudible]

Parshalle: Going around, going around, going around, going around.

McIntosh: Shot three hundred and some down.

Parshalle: I saw one Japanese guy land in Tinian, that was, [laughs] it’s the only time I saw one where—there had an air field over there. And they landed there [laughs]—only one plane.

McIntosh: So where else did you go in the Pacific?

Parshalle: Well, after that—something else: I got my life saved. What happened—when we took off from Saipan, and we got into enormous waves and stuff, when—when going down there. And the first thing, just the last—Tinian there—there was a big place down here, there’s a cliff. And what was happening, is that the Japanese, not—not the fighters or anything—

McIntosh: Oh, I know about all of this—

Parshalle: They went all the way around, they went all around that thing, and they took their families down there and everything. And they jumped off, and when you—when we went by, we could see all of that stuff, right there. You know, where they were—

McIntosh: It’s a well-known story.

Parshalle: Anyways—well, on we went, and we went around there, and the ship was pounding, just unbelievable. It would come down on that, because the ship was shorter than the waves, so then “boom,” and the ship would go “oop, joop, zoop, zoop,” like this, you know, my God, break the ship in the middle and everything. So Lala—Joe Lala, the captain, he said, “Fill up the number-one hatch, go to [inaudible] fill it with water, to get the bow down, so can we at least get in there?” We go down there, and now on the starboard side, just on the main deck there, we had put in a bunch of creosoted high wings, with—and then we had chains over the thing. And it was just chained down, everything’s fine there, as far as we know, so we

got down there. Well then, here comes this thing, going *this*—“boom.” And we hit a battering ram. These things came loose from that, and—

McIntosh: Oh, my.

Parshalle: Then they hit the bulkhead first, then they come back and hit the mid-ship house, and careened back and forth. They were going back and—

McIntosh: Destroying the ship.

Parshalle: It was just whamming on both sides—they were doing that. So, I’m a genius, of course, so I decided I would get a wrench or something like that, and get over there, and take up on that thing, and try and take up on one and secure that thing, because we’re going to have big trouble. So I got over there, and there was a man by the name of Fenn Oin Short (??)—“Shorty,” they called him, big man, “Shorty.” And he was one of the officers—deck officers. And he had climbed over and hung onto the—this was on the lower boat level, and he had done some old steelish (??) stuff hanging on there. And he had put his foot on it, and hooked—and then he hooked here. And I was coming around, because what happened—the next thing, when I got in it the first time I got in there, here comes the water over the top, and I’m washing clear over to the mid-ship house. And this thing was going back and forth. And Shorty reached down—I had a leather jacket on, and Shorty reached down—he reached way down, like that, and he got a hold of the back of my collar there, and he flipped me [laughs]—flipped me right over the rail, he did. You know, there, and I landed right there. And I didn’t really think much—I didn’t realize that he had saved my life. [laughs] You know, I—

McIntosh: Oh.

Parshalle: I said, “Thanks a lot, Shorty!” [laughs]

McIntosh: Okay.

Parshalle: Yeah, that would’ve mashed me!

McIntosh: Yeah.

Parshalle: On that deal. So that was the—one of the things that happened there.

McIntosh: How many trips did you have to [inaudible]—how many trips?

Parshalle: Well, you mean, from the port—from San Francisco, out, out, out?

McIntosh: Right.

Parshalle: Well, it was a year and a half in Guadal[canal] that we were out there. Do you know who “Washing Machine” Charlie was [The nickname given by U.S. Army and Marine soldiers to Japanese enemy aircraft which performed nightly air raids over Guadalcanal. The name comes from the sounds made by the Japanese bombers and aircraft, sounding like washing machines]? All right, he was coming around there. Were you there?

McIntosh: No.

Parshalle: He was coming around there, and he’s coming around there, and he knew the [inaudible]. You couldn’t hit him, you know—there was no way you could hit him with the guns we had. We couldn’t get him. He knew if he got up this high, he was in fat city. He would just go around—and he used to go around and [inaudible] everybody [inaudible]. Start to get dark, and everybody started to go around in a circle. He was going around there, going around. He’d drop a fifty-pound bomb every so often, about 400 or 150,000 or whoever guys we had on Guadal[canal], bombing all night. And we were out in the stream, and at that point, we got all these ships, and you can’t have any light, you can’t see anything. There was no way—you can’t signal anything. There was no way. You can just radio—actually, you couldn’t do anything. We couldn’t—we couldn’t talk to each other. We had all these ships sinking around all of the place, so everybody was just like *this*, trying to watch everything and holler and stuff like that. It’s all we could do. So we were—that was the real problem up in that area, you know, when that—when that came up. So Washing Machine never got—we never got him. You know, you couldn’t see him. You could hear him, just up above from us; you could hear the engines starting there—the Jap engines starting over there, you could hear them from our—we can hear that. And that’s—that’s when they—then “Old Charlie” would come up there and there’d go “Charlie” again. And that happened a couple of times when we were in Guadal[canal]. That was his big—

McIntosh: I’ve heard many stories about him. A lot of the guys I’ve interviewed [inaudible]. Tell me what else you did at Guadalcanal. You sat there a year and a half.

Parshalle: To go down to sea, San—see, a year and a half to go to where we were down at Guadal[canal]. Then we went—we went down there, and we then—we brought in—this is the Seabees, now, they—we—we—

McIntosh: What did you bring back from there? I guess that’s what I’m trying to find out.

Parshalle: Well, all the gear from the Seabees that Seabees needed. You know, they—

McIntosh: Brought it back to the United States?

Parshalle: Huh?

McIntosh: You brought it back to the United States?

Parshalle: No, we took them—we took the Sea Bees to Guadalcanal.

McIntosh: Right. Then what did you do?

Parshalle: After that, there was—we had a pontoon and I told you and stuff. And we had all these people, were in there. And we had brought up all these steel matting things out of there, out of the ship. And so, at that point, the next thing—I went down—let's see—I went down. And I was a gymnast. And the lines were out at—up, down to the pontoon, things from the hull up here, the bridge, right up in this area. And so I just—I just thought I'll just go down one of those ropes and then I'll get one and take a swim over there and look around. So I went over there—went over there and I walked—I swam over. And then I walked over there, and there was a pillbox machine gun. What the hell was that doing right over there? And I moved in, and there was a very young man there—was there. And I said, “Oh, gee, you have a nice place there. You got a nice thing on the machine.” I said, “Why do you have the machine gun there this time? I thought it was over.” He says, “No, they came around again. So now we have to do this. We have this—” And I said, “Well, where do you stay?” And he said, “I just stay in that pillbox.” It's where he is. And so, can—I said, “Can I take a look?” And he said, “Sure.” And I looked in, and inside, everything he had stashed in there, all the way, were those comic books. [laughs] He must have had ten million comic books that he put around on the inboard side of it—place with this very young boy, was there with his machine gun. Just—that was his assignment, down there. So— [pause in recording]. After that—let's see—okay. So we went—the Admiral sent us to New Caledonia, went down there.

McIntosh: You got some more supplies?

Parshalle: Well, he—you know—I—he—I think he chickened out. He left. He went to New Caledonia, from where he had set up, you know—in New Caledonia, instead of sticking in there, in the other—and at that point, we went down to New Caledonia, and got some stuff out of there. They had stuff there. What had happened is—Vichy had occurred. And so, in San Francisco, before we left that time, we took—we took this guy out. His name was Viroyi, who was a French guy, and he was the commander of the island. And so—he—he was there, and, see—he was what—what's called a *lieutenant de vaisseau*, in French, meaning he's the Mammo (??)

with the—running the island here, New Caledonia. And then from New Caledonia, back we go to Guadal[canal]. So we go up to Guadal[canal].

McIntosh: What's the purpose of that?

Parshalle: Well, we were going north. We were—we were leaving from New Caledonia, and we were going to Guadalcanal. So when we went up—we went up there, we had this ship then, and this [laughs]—this was another one. So here we are, and when we were secured then, after that, when we went in and we put the ammunition in our ship and that stuff and all of that stuff, but—when the captain has put that water in there—there was a lot of bilge in there. Then, and so—that was another problem. Because what happened is—pounding didn't seem like a perfect idea. So what happened—so the captain, Lala, said, "Well, let—pump that bilge—pump that water out of here." They couldn't do it. It was all—it was like logging time, and you know—something like that. Everything was this mush. So you couldn't suck out any water out of there at all. We were stuck with that water for quite a while. Anyways, that was one of the poor ideas that occurred [laughs] that didn't work. But we didn't—the ship didn't break up, so that was something. And Shorty saved me—and that was worth something.

McIntosh: [inaudible]

Parshalle: Worth something to *me*. And so then—let's see, where do we go after that? We had been—we had been stripped at Guam. They took all of our stuff. They took everything, because of all the separate [inaudible] certainly, when I saw Jaeckel that time—[coughs] come down that. So here we are, with Captain Elwood P. Miller. And we're—now we're down to New Caledonia—we go down there. And to get in there, you can come in this way okay pretty well. The pilot was there. And then you go over this way, when you go over that way, to the south more, there was a—clearly a wide, wide area in there, coming in this way. And there was a ship there, a McCormack ship—Moore-McCormack Company was the name of the ship. And the name of the ship that they had there was the Mormacgull was there. And they were tied up over there, and the arrangement we were going to have, was we were going to get water. We needed water at the ship. So—put hoses over the time, and then pump them (??) when we had water in the ship. That was the idea. So we went over there. [coughs] So we only—the pilot took over. He fascinated me on both sides of this—on the both sides of his leg here—were butterflies. He had tattooed butterflies on the backside of his pilot leg [inaudible]. So anyways, [coughs] we were—we were going along, and Captain Miller was there [coughs]. Excuse me. And [coughs]—should get some water. [pause in recording] The pilot said, "No, it won't turn. The ship won't turn enough. That's not enough—so it won't work." And Captain Miller said,

“I can do that. I’ll do that.” Course, the captain can always call the pilot and take it. So Miller turned around and over there, and pull ahead, and return around, pull ahead down there. And the Mormacgull was sitting there, [laughs] and we come around there, and we come around there, and we hit the Mormacgull. We hit it, and it was—there were blacks who were working on cargo on that ship. And we—the balkhall when Bill Clunker to (??) the Captain, “We’re going to hit that ship! We’re going to hit it!” And so here we go. He said—Miller said, “I know it, goddamn it.” [laughs] He said—and he—and we hit him.

McIntosh: Your stern hit his—his—

Parshalle: It came around. We hit him—we hit him with—we never got turned around. See, the idea was to come around and stop there. And what happened is—we went “Bang-o.” And we hit it. And Miller—and you should have seen it. When it hit, all of these people that—that were in the cargo, discharging stuff and all of that stuff in there, they were jumping out on the water, they were jumping around everywhere, they—going around. And there were so many of them got on the gangway, that all of the gear broke. The place broke everywhere, the line broke. Everything broke, and the gangway went down right there [laughs]. That was a crash down there. And Captain Miller said, “Put a lifeboat down there.” And he said, “Go over and see where the captain if there’s any damage.” [laughs] I said—I said, “Captain Miller, I—I think he’s going to be very mad about what has happened here!” And he said, “Well you just—you just get over there!” That’s—so I went over there. And this guy was just red in the face. He was just furious! And besides that, it—bent in—his—that ship’s starboard side there, because it was those old ships that were around there that have—there were—out there to get coke—they use coconut stuff. **[End of Tape One, Side One]** Stuff that they have—they tie up these schooners—used to tie up—oh, is that bother—

McIntosh: Yeah, right [inaudible]—

Parshalle: [inaudible] trimming—

McIntosh: I understand what’s happening—[pause in recording]

Parshalle: Bill Clunker said, “Captain, you’re going to hit this ship.”

McIntosh: Right.

Parshalle: And—
[Break in Recording]

McIntosh: Right, so what did the other captain have to say?

Parshalle: The pilot? You're talking—

McIntosh: You said you had to go talk to the other—

Parshalle: Captain—

McIntosh: Captain. Your captain sent you over to talk to him.

Parshalle: Oh, yes.

McIntosh: What did he have to say?

Parshalle: That's—that's where I was. I had to go over there with the lifeboat, and go over and see that guy. And he was just hilarious.

McIntosh: Angry.

Parshalle: He was just upset.

McIntosh: So, what did you do about it?

Parshalle: We wrecked his ship over that—

McIntosh: But you didn't ruin it.

Parshalle: And it was a real big dent on the—on the starboard side of their ship. And they knew right away that they'd have to go to Australia with that. And they had it fixed and all of that stuff. So he was really upset. And—so that was Captain Miller's concept of—

McIntosh: Captain didn't go and apologize personally? He should have.

Parshalle: No, he sent me! [laughs]

McIntosh: I know it. But he should have gone over.

Parshalle: Well, I don't know about that. I—

McIntosh: I do.

Parshalle: I don't think he's alive now. There's no good of arguing with him. That's what he told me to do. So that's what he has done—he did me with the lifeboat a couple of times. So anyways, on that—there was the excitement in New Caledonia there, and we got out of that place, and we're—we're coming back at that point. And that—[coughs] that was called, "Torpedo

Junction,” going up there. And we—we were headed—we had a guard, I think a destroyer of some sort—was there, following with us, to secure us. And we got a message, just a light message, telling us we can no longer—we can no longer have a naval vessel. We must go—and then they turned around and left us. [laughs] The guys who were going to protect us there, they turned around and left. And I said, “They’re *kidding*. Those guys are *kidding*.” [laughs] And they weren’t kidding. So that happened there.

McIntosh: The Marines were expendable now.

Parshalle: Yeah.

McIntosh: They’re trying to do you in.

Parshalle: So—well, another—this—this goes on almost to the Farallons one time, but when we came down—and we were—we were coming, we had all these people, we had all the Seabees, everybody—it was—it was going to be Christmas night when we get there. And we’re going along there, and all of a sudden there’s a gun flare, “Sshh!” One—one shot only, fired over there—over the water there. And I don’t think we were any further, maybe up to the Farallons, would be the most—and we—so then there was a big discussion, about what we were going to do. Can’t we—we can’t turn a light on—

McIntosh: Is that considered a distress signal?

Parshalle: Huh?

McIntosh: Is that a distress signal?

Parshalle: Yeah, that’s what it was. [laughs] So there was a long discussion about—would we turn the lights on to see what’s out there or not. Because the war was still on, you know, it could be somebody hitting there—hit us. So with—so with that, Miller decided to turn—we had a big light—and put a light over there. And it was an airplane over there, with pontoons and the things there stick down over there, this airplane.

McIntosh: PBYS [An American Flying Boat with pontoons, used by U.S. Military Services in the 1930s and ’40s].

Parshalle: PBY, that’s what it was. And with their two guys in there. There was a pilot and a radio operator. And so they were over there, and they had fired that thing—

McIntosh: Right.

Parshalle: Over the top. So Captain Miller said—

McIntosh: Yeah.

Parshalle: “Put down—” [laughs] “Put down the boat! Put down the boat and go over there. Go over there!” So I’m—it wasn’t that rough—the water wasn’t that rough, but it was fairly rough to go over there. So I—I had the chief engineer, myself, and a guy on the bow. But you know those half—half-pieces that go on the side of the hull, and that’s so that if you tied up on the thing, you wouldn’t—the water would go down—straight down by a pier somewhere.

McIntosh: Yeah.

Parshalle: So [coughs] we got—we got that in there, but we went in here, and we got caught on the lifeboat [laughs] on—on those half-rounds. You know, they just go “bump.”

McIntosh: On the side of the PBY?

Parshalle: Huh?

McIntosh: On the side of the—

Parshalle: No, no. I was just getting down—they told me to go get them. So here I’m going, down to the lifeboat, and I’m right up against the hull there. And I—

McIntosh: Your ship.

Parshalle: And—and so the lifeboat is going “whoop, whoop” like this. It’s hooking on to those—and so the guy on the bow got hit on the head. He got hit there because it was a big metal thing with a—from the thing. And he’s—

McIntosh: You’re going to have to be rescued.

Parshalle: He’s—he’s—he’s conked out at that point, but we—the motor was still running, so like—the guy just—the bow—I went over. He okay, and then—so I went around there, and I thought, well, what I’ll do is this—because what was going on, the front end of the support of the aircraft engine of that thing was flopping. It was going like *that*. So [coughs] waves were just, you know, modestly, but not much—so I got over there, and I got over there, all the way over there. I was—I don’t know how far it was, maybe two miles from—I don’t know how many, three miles or whatever it was.

McIntosh: You guys find a port?

Parshalle: But they turned the lights on. They turned the lights on, so we could see it. So I went over there, and I got over there, and I thought, well, what I'll do is I'll go back to the stern of the plane, and I'll go over there, and then I'll—and then I can just get the—at those two guys there, you see. Well, what it was, the pilot told me, he said, “This guy is so sick, he can't even talk.” Just terribly seasick on the—something got—really got him sick. And so he said, “I've got to him out of there.” And he said, “I'll get out of there.” I said, “All right.” So I came around this way, and I came around here, and a plane was here. And then looked, and the plane wing went down like that, and I went like that way, and the bow [laughs] of the lifeboat was on top of the wing. So I thought, oh, god, I totally got—goes sir (??), go backward—go, we got to get off of this thing. And we finally got off the wing, and then we got back around. I came around that time, and then the pilot grabbed this line like *this* and threw it up there, and got one of our lines. And he—he had the line then, and then I just secured there, and hung on to that, and then he got this guy finally out of this thing. It was in that covered place there, in that airplane frame. And he got it out of there, the sick guy. And then we got him over to—we got him over to the place, then we got him to the boat there, and in between there, and we got him, and I—

McIntosh: You got both of them back.

Parshalle: Yeah, we got—we got both of them back. Then they took us back to the ship, and at that point, they—the guys on the ship, Captain Miller, turned all these lights on, on there. And we were blinded. [laughs] We couldn't see. All this light was coming at us. We couldn't see. “Where are we?” There's all of these things that they had put on to see that airplane at the time. Everything we owned there, they had it going. So that was there. And I finally got there, and I put a Jacob's ladder, laid it down, to climb up there from the stern—to do that. So we're going up. So first we got—the pilot got up, and then they pushed up this other guy who was sick, and that stuff, and each time, they gave the guy a little—some brandy, a little tiny brandy in a glass.

McIntosh: Each time? Each time what?

Parshalle: Each time the guy would come out. They were going to—do the—give the guy something—brandy there, to wake up their—their sick—the pilot got it anyways.

McIntosh: After then you got him aboard ship?

Parshalle: Then there was a doctor—there was a doctor—there’s—next to that. And the—of course, the guy with the—he took the bottle of brandy, but he didn’t use anything for that. And so I came up, and he said, “You—you’re too young to—” [laughs] “to—the brandy!” I said, “Wait a minute! I’m the guy that went all the way around here. I climbed all the way up here. What do you do—what do you do—I didn’t even get any—I didn’t get my little brandy things there!” So—but the guy was a wonderful, wonderful doctor, who turned—he was very—it was—because I was—I was always gone. My mother, you know—I was 100 % never there for three and a half years. And at that point, he had written a letter—that doctor had written a letter to my mother, about—if you can imagine—that was a decent thing. I didn’t—she didn’t know—she didn’t know anything about it. On the deal on the one I told you, where this—this kid who was from Kings Point, and he was over there on this ship, and a torpedo hit him. And just in that same area, between New Caledonia to there, and—and it hit him. And—so the ship went down, and there was a lifeboat there—they had a lifeboat. And a Jap sub—sub rose and they took a machine gun out there, the Japs did, and they mounted it on top of the sub, and they strafed the lifeboat, which it just—unbelievable to kill people like that! Well, they didn’t kill everybody—they didn’t kill everybody. But long along after that, then I didn’t know what we had (??) at the end of it, everything was that. And I was walking out of—I tied up at San Francisco, and I was walking along on Market Street, and here comes this—is that kid. And the kid said, “My God!” He said, “I understood that your ship went down, and all hands lost.” And I thought, “Oh my God, what if they told my mother that [laughs] I was dead!” You know, and I thought, “Oh, my—that would really be something!” So I didn’t—I didn’t—I talked very quickly [inaudible] to him. I said, “I’ll be back in a minute.” And I whistled out there, and got a telephone, and called my mother. And she said, “Oh, hello, dear. When are you going to come and see me?” [laughs] And so, “I ask you, how are you?” And he says, “I’m—I,” he said, “I got a terrible pain in my head.” And I said, “What’s—what’s wrong?” He said—well, that—he’s the one that told me that they fired—that sub. And he—he said, “I’ve got a metal plate in my head now, on the side. And it hurts all the time.”

McIntosh: So after you finished this time, you got back—did you just get out of the Merchant Marine right away, or did you—?

Parshalle: No, I kept going. Everything’s going and, like I said, three and a half years.

McIntosh: But then after you got home, then you—

Parshalle: The next thing that happened—I didn’t get home—what happened—after three and a half years, I tied up, and the officer procurement guy was up

there. And I went up there, and I say, “I quit. Three and a half years, I’ve never been ashore. For three and a half years, I’ve been in the whole time. The war’s over, the war’s over here, and I’m quitting. I leave now!” And he says, “You’re not going anywhere.” [laughs] He said, “You’re going—you’re going to stay on the ship.” And I said, “Are you out of your mind? What are you telling me?” He said, “You’re going to stay there, and I’m going to tell you—I’ll put you on active duty.” That’s what he told me. And I said, “Well [inaudible]” I said, “What’s the matter with you? Why—why do I—look at all those guys you’re letting out of there.” And he said, “We’ve got people all over the Pacific, and they have to be picked up, on all these different islands, and all over the place. They got to be picked up.” So lucky me, [laughs] I have to stay! And for six—

McIntosh: You weren’t a member. You were still in the Merchant Marine. They couldn’t keep you if you didn’t want to.

Parshalle: I was—I was a Reserve officer, for goodness sakes. You know, I was Navy—Navy Reserve. This guy nailed me. Anyways, so then, here we go, zip-a-dee-doo-dah. And I went up to—clear up the—when we got over, we started to go north. And all of the horn mines that were in there were breaking off over there, so you couldn’t go out closer to Japan on that end. You couldn’t go over there because it’s—but the gunners were just having a [inaudible]—they [inaudible]

McIntosh: [inaudible]

Parshalle: They’re sitting out in the—in the gun tubs, and they were firing at these horn mines and having a big—firing these things all the time to blow those up, which was beneficial, because we didn’t have that fancy gear. We—the thing—our—our man—machine only ran fifty miles.

McIntosh: So you generally—then your duty was to go and bring people back?

Parshalle: That’s what I did.

McIntosh: You did then—hospital patients and people who were in prison camps, too?

Parshalle: No. No. Nuh-uh. We got—what happened when we got up toward Qingdao [Tsingtao] at that time, we went in the Gulf of Bohai, up in that area. And the Chinese guys came over—over, and we put the gangway down. And he said—he wanted—would we give us—his—our garbage to him. So he was out there, and they had little pieces of clock (??) and stuff, and they were picking—they go picking through all the garbage, and that’s because those people were hungry.

McIntosh: How did you have to deal with the Chinese? [inaudible]

Parshalle: At that time, no—remember, they were one of our fellows there. It was *China*.

McIntosh: Yes, I know.

Parshalle: So they got in there, and then they had that thing, and then they had about two or three guys with them, on that gunboat. So they were tying up there. So we had—they showed up again, and he said, “That’s it!” Because they’re all over the place. And we got rid of those people, and they went on. And—so that was—that was the end of that deal. And then we went to Yokosuka, the—which—Japanese naval yard.

McIntosh: [inaudible]

Parshalle: All right. We went there. Well, if you walked in there the first time, you would see there’s a statue thing up there, of a Japanese armored guy there. And that guy—and I’m walking by, and there was a sign on this one. It’s a Japanese there, “Hello, American sailor! Hello, American soldier!” [laughs] The sign said, “Welcome, American soldiers!” What—what did they say? “Gifts and girls for all your friends.” [laughs] This guy—the war was over about fifteen weeks or something, the guy’s out there peddling stuff! [laughs]

McIntosh: For his sister!

Parshalle: [laughs] Anyways, but then they said, “Okay, you can go to Tokyo. You can go, from there.” So I got on, I walked out of there, and there’s a train—there’s a—they had a train up there. So they said, “You can stay in the main streets, don’t go any—any—on the sides, on the corner, anything like that. Just on the main street is all. And then [coughs] you can just go to Tokyo, and then come right back down. It’s a fast train.” They say—okay. And then I’m like, my uniform on, my khaki uniform, and I was looking great. And I walked in there, and I walked in where—the train place to get in there—you go in there. I got in there, [coughs] and closed—closed the back door of that thing—I closed it. And it was glass part there, and I closed that, and the train went away. And I looked there, and every one of those people that were in the carriage were Japanese. I was in the wrong—[laughs] the wrong train. It was the Japanese train, not the military train. I had been—and I thought, “Oh my God!” And I backed—I put my back—to this, I put my back to the thing, and I—and they’re all looking at me down there, all the way down there, and they’re all looking at me like *this*. And I figure, what is going to happen now? They’re going to—

McIntosh: That's probably what they were sayin'.

Parshalle: They're going to eat me alive there. They're going to get me. So I was sitting there, and I just backed up like *this*, and an old geisha came in—white face, all the stuff on it, and her stuff on it, old. And she started walking toward me and she took the people who were right by me there, in the back there, and gave them a message: pop skee (??), get out of there. Which they did, they got up there, so they did two things—and this little table there. So we're sitting there, and she comes walking, and she's going [makes some sort of clapping sound] like this. Well, that—what does that mean? You know, fists, she was doing that. And I walked in, and she's—then finally, she got right up to me, and she said, “Hearts.” And she had cards to play Hearts. Cards! Oh! [claps] I'd give her \$100 to stick around and get rid of these other people. So [laughs]—so I escaped then, and—the Hearts there, was Lady Gishu [mispronunciation of Japanese word, “geisha” or “geiko”]. The lady saved me. She looked—she was about 190 miles old.

McIntosh: So when did you have to finish traveling now?

Parshalle: All right. Now, I came out of there, and—let's see, after that, we went back—we went back to San Francisco at that point in time. And when we got in, I called up—I called a sorority—girls' sorority, to call my girlfriend, Janet Lee Paul (??), from Hollywood High School. So I called up, and the girls—the girl. “Swear to God!” she said. I said, “Is Janet Lee Paul there?” And she said, “No, she's not here.” And I said, “Well, will she be back? Do you think she'll back later this afternoon?” And [coughs] she said, “No, I don't—I don't think she will be back at all. She—she married a guy.” [laughs] That was the end of that one. And I had these two guys lined up, one of which was in front of one of these Lana Turner-looking girls, a beautiful girl. And I was—I turned around—these two guys—and I said, “Never mind, never mind!” And then I turned around, and I said, “It's all over! It's all over!” [laughs] That was it. So then, that was—I only came ashore in two—two weeks. And so, from there, I walked over to UCLA, and said, “Well, I want to—I want to start the enlisting (??) now.” And she said—the people said, “Oh, all right. What kind of work do you do?” And I said, “Well, I—I can do Morse [code]. I can repair a broken gyroscope . I can read about (??) the sky to see where you go, I know about there. And I even have a thing that says that I—for barrage balloon—being a (??) barrage balloon.” And I had all these things, you know. And these people were going, “What is this? What have we got for this guy?” So they gave me five units there.

McIntosh: Credit?

Parshalle: Credit, so that I could stay. So I had—I had saved the whole time for \$5000. And I gave my mother \$1000. And then the—I—I then went out with that deal. I had—I got out of UCLA—paid for it.

McIntosh: Yeah. You used your G.I. Bill then.

Parshalle: No. I never got—

McIntosh: That’s right. You didn’t get it.

Parshalle: I didn’t get anything.

McIntosh: That’s right. Excuse me, I should have known that.

Parshalle: Yeah. So the—the—that part of the thing was that there I was at UCLA.

McIntosh: When did you finish—when did you finish there?

Parshalle: Well, [coughs] we—Donna and I were married there, in—

McIntosh: When did you finish UCLA?

Parshalle: Well, I mean—’49.

McIntosh: ’49.

Parshalle: Yeah.

McIntosh: And then you went into business?

Parshalle: Yep. I’ve got a whole thing there on that piece of paper, you can see. And that—that tells what happened. So another girl from Hollywood High School, Helen Saracen (??), she said, “Oh, you ought to meet that girl, Donna—Donna, over there. She’s a nice girl. You’d like her.” Donna—that was her name. So [laughs] Helen guided me over to Donna, and so I sang behind, with a rose—the rose of Phi Psi, in the back—you go in the back. And we sang to the girls, and all of that stuff. And so then we were married.

McIntosh: That’s all it took.

Parshalle: Huh?

McIntosh: That’s all it took—one song, and you’re married.

Parshalle: Yeah, we—well—[laughs] I don't think that—that was the—the Phi Psi chorus was better—they were much better singers. But we got up there, we all stood up there, and everybody—all the guys came, everybody came and sang, helped me sing. And the girls—some of the girls came and sang, too, about the red rose of Phi Psi. And that's how that connection came on with Donna, after here—Helen. And then we were married, and we lived in San Diego. And then I had a son, and we had another son. They're both six feet high. I've been—I've had a problem. I've had a problem about that, because every time they take a picture of us, I'm down below them. So I told them—they took me to a fishing deal in Lake Cutlass (??) recently, and they took me—they took me to that. And Donna took a picture there. And here I was down there, and these guys were *here*. So I said, "I've got a new deal here. Each time, I can do this: all I do—I'll go somewhere where there's a step, and just stand on the step, and have—put your sons out there." So I was at the same level with these guys. So they're fine.

McIntosh: How did you get to Milwaukee?

Parshalle: Well, that's another good thing. I was president of all of Canada, of Sunbeam Corporation. In 1950, I had run across a friend of mine, who said, "Gerry, they're looking—they're looking for job—guys to go selling up in the West Coast there. And it's a little company. It's just starting now and you can do that. So I had—I had gotten a job to sell fire engines. That's a very hard thing to do, sell a fire engine. But I sold one fire engine. And the people way up in the mountains there, there was no fire engine or fire station, and they bought a fire engine with a pumper up there. I sold that. And so, I ran across this friend, John Connelly, this friend of mine, and said, well, John said—well, Donna and I were playing tennis, in Burbank. And Donna was working in Burbank, at the school there, and teaching there. She was a secretary [inaudible]. Anyways, with that kind of a deal, John said, "Well, how do you like this job you have about—this fire engine thing?" I said, "Oh, it's terrible. It's a lousy job. That's—but I get paid, so I got to do something. I need the money. I don't have any money." So he said, "Well, there's—that's just a little company. There's a little company down there doing this. Their name is Sunbeam. Sunbeam, they're going to call them. They sell mixers and toasters and electric shavers and things like this." And he said, "I'm almost sure I can get you a job with that. I'm going to get to—so he hauled me over to a guy, John Francis Ryan, a great big guy, and he was here, he had control over hiring. And we were hired. I was hired. So we lived in San Diego then, up in the hills there (??) So we were up there, and life was beautiful, and that's when we [inaudible] son, baby there, and then the other baby came [inaudible]. And everything (??) were going good. But I began to go up at Sunbeam. I began to—there was a guy by the name of Bob Gwynn (??), and he was—he was the top of the board. And I think, you know, I can

look at it now, at my age now, that Bob—he—he trained me to do that, what he did with all the things he did with me. So the way I came from—I had been—I had taken over all the Canadian work over there, in Toronto. We lived for five years in Toronto. And when I came down, I came to Milwaukee. The reason I came to Milwaukee is the Oster Company had been purchased by Sunbeam Corporation. And so Gwynn—Gwynn called me in Toronto, and he said, “Come down, you got to come down and be president of the Oster Company. Do that, and you run that one.” So I went down there, and I was president [laughs] of the Oster Company. So that was just another company. I was—I was also a president—president of all these other things. They got a whole thing in there. Said the guy—

McIntosh: I’ve got to read that before we get going.

Parshalle: Okay.

McIntosh: Yeah.

Parshalle: Anyways, that whole thing. So I—the thing—but Gwynn was a—is a—was a wonderful man. And he—he decided—I didn’t know what he was doing, you know, but he just kept—so we—I thought in San Diego, we had a sales meeting one time, going on in a hotel there. And all these other guys that came down to the sales meeting said, “When are you going to leave, Gerry? This is a nice place here in San Diego. Why don’t you get out of here, to do this?” Well, of course, I didn’t want to leave. I loved it. You know, I was born in Hollywood. I was married. So anyways, that—that burned out some. [coughs] But Gwynn began to train me—train me and get me other—other businesses. Buy this business, buy that business, do this, and go up there, go up to these different places. And I had twelve different corporations, all of them. And this—this also had me selling and marketing, was another thing they had. Those people—they had people who had accumulated merchandise, and wait until they wanted it. Then they would go, and I had to get involved. It would draw more people to purchase other things, other stores, department stores, things like that. So that was—that’s how we got to Milwaukee from Canada.

McIntosh: Yeah. So you been here how long?

Parshalle: And they thought—they thought—when I arrived, they thought I was a Canadian. [laughs] They thought I was a Canadian.

McIntosh: How long have you been here?

Parshalle: Here? Oh—

McIntosh: In Milwaukee.

Parshalle: Probably thirty-five.

McIntosh: Thirty-five years?

Parshalle: We showed up on—[inaudible] we were—it was four years there, that we—five years that we were in Toronto. And we had—I got involved in a thing, kind of a young presidents' organization. And I had been told about the YPO, and I joined YPO in Toronto. And that was a good thing, because I—all of a sudden, I was from—I didn't know anybody. And all of a sudden, I—I knew about seventy people in YPO, and we were all married, so even the wives knew the wives on that thing. So—

McIntosh: A good deal.

Parshalle: That was a—that was a good deal, the match, and the transition to where I wound up. So then, here we were in—in Seattle, because what happened, I called, in—from Toronto, to—and said—the membership—who's the membership chairman in YPO down there in the Milwaukee area, and so forth. And this guy said, "Yeah, yeah, I think I can fix you up." Because I have a brother that lives up there and so forth. And that's—so that's how I got into YPO, and I was—it was—I was not a Canadian.

McIntosh: That's wonderful.

Parshalle: I came down.

McIntosh: Okay, sir. Thank you.

Parshalle: Are we through?

McIntosh: You are through.

Parshalle: You just beginning? Or just ending?

McIntosh: Just ending.

Parshalle: All right, just a minute—

McIntosh: Thank you.

[End of Recording]