

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
CLYDE STEPHENSON
Seagoing Marine and Radio Mechanic, Marine Corps, World War II.

2008

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Stephenson, Clyde, (1920-). Oral History Interview, 2008.

User Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 105 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 2 sound cassette (ca. 105 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Transcript: 0.1 linear ft. (1 folder).

Abstract:

Clyde Stephenson, a Milwaukee, Wisconsin native, discusses his service in the Marine Corps before and during World War II, including his experience during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Stephenson mentions growing up on a farm, attending Oshkosh State Teachers College, having difficulty finding a job, and enlisting in the Marines in January of 1940. He talks about boot camp and sea school in San Diego and assignment to the *USS California*, a flagship with Admiral Bill Pye in command. Stephenson describes Marine Corps duties aboard the battleship: manning the broadside guns, manning the gangway planks, and orderly duty. He talks about the cruise to Hawaii, the rotation of battleships to the States for repairs, limited firing practice, and uniforms. He talks about going back to Wisconsin on leave with Earl Wallen, a friend who was the first person from Green Bay to be killed in World War II, and Stephenson tells of presenting photographs of Wallen to Sullivan-Wallen American Legion Post 11. While on a night firing practice two weeks before the attack on Pearl Harbor, he recalls hearing about unknown submarines in the area and using live ammunition. The week before the attack, Stephenson talks about having rifle training at Fort Weaver (Hawaii) and requesting to spend the weekend there. He describes the morning of December 7: playing cards in his tent, hearing airplanes overhead, hearing explosions, and realizing the Japanese were attacking. Stephenson portrays getting a rifle from the armory and firing at enemy planes until the attack was over. After two days of patrolling roads and beaches, he tells of going to Ford Island, where the *California* had been tied up when it sunk. He discusses living conditions after the attack and salvaging the guns from his ship for use at West Loch. Stephenson talks about the dry dock repairs of the *California* and going to Bremerton (Washington) for further repairs. He relates hearing about Wallen's death. Stephenson speaks of radio school at Camp Lejeune (North Carolina), taking courses at Wright Junior College and the College of the Ozarks (Arkansas), and radio and radar school at the Naval Research Lab in Washington, D.C. Shipped out in late 1944 with Marine Air Group 11, VMF-114, he states he was in Peleliu when the war ended. Stephenson talks about duty as a tech sergeant repairing radios and IFF (Identification friend or foe) equipment on Corsair airplanes. He talks about getting orders to return to the States but being unable to find transportation until he hitched a ride on a plane. Stephenson tells of only having khaki clothing and catching pneumonia when his transport ship took a northern route home. Because the Navy hospital in San Diego was full, he explains he was housed in a monkey cage at the Balboa Zoo. He characterizes some of the admirals he worked for, including James Richardson, Bob Carney, Earl Stone (from Milwaukee), and Richard Byrd. After his discharge, Stephenson became an electrician and expanded his business, Town and Country Electric, with his sons. He

details the story of his brother, Glenwood Stephenson, who was killed in the service, and Clyde's contributions to a book (Operation Plum) about his brother's unit, the 27th Bombardment Group. Clyde mentions another brother who was in the Navy during World War II and who committed suicide while in the Pacific Theater. Stephenson describes going to an island with coconut trees to spot targets for practicing Corsairs, people collapsing in the intense heat, and dealing with a gnat infestation.

Biographical Sketch:

Stephenson (b.1920) served in the Marine Corps from 1940 to 1946. Born in Milwaukee, he moved to a farm in Arpin (Wisconsin) at age six and graduated from Oconto High School. After the war, Stephenson founded Town and Country Electric in Appleton (Wisconsin).

Interviewed by Bill Brewster, 2008
Transcription by John P. Danish, 2008
Checked and corrected by Joan Bruggink, 2011
Abstract written by Susan Krueger, 2011

Interview Transcript:

Bill: —with Clyde Stephenson, who served with the Marines during World War II, and the interview is being conducted at the house of Steve Hartshime, 223 Green Bay in Appleton, Wisconsin on the 26th of March, 2008, and the interviewer is Bill Brewster. How are you doing today, sir?

Clyde: Oh, very good, thank you.

Bill: Good. Now, we want to start with a little bit of your background. Year you were born and your home town?

Clyde: I was born in Milwaukee.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: And lived there until I was six years old and then my folks moved out of town and we lived on a couple of farms. And I graduated from high school at Oconto High School.

Bill: Okay. And the year you were born there?

Clyde: I was born in 1920.

Bill: 1920 in Milwaukee?

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: So you moved when you were six out to farms?

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: Where were they?

Clyde: One farm was at Arpin, Wisconsin and one was at Little Suamico, Wisconsin.

Bill: And that's where you were when you graduated from high school?

Clyde: Yeah. I went to Oconto High School.

Bill: Okay. Okay, and when did you graduate from there?

Clyde: 1938.

Bill: '38, okay. And so you did farming then?

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: Was that a dairy farm, or—

Clyde: Yeah, a dairy farm.

Bill: Okay. Okay. And then, so you graduated and then you went on to college?

Clyde: Yeah, I went down—I went to college at Oshkosh State Teachers College for '38 and '39. And then in January of '40 I joined the Marine Corps.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: I didn't have money to continue goin' to college and it's almost impossible to get a young guy to get a job because the Depression was still on and the jobs were pretty well taken up by married people and their families.

Bill: And there wasn't really any work for you back on the family farm?

Clyde: Well—no, the family moved off the farm and went back to Milwaukee.

Bill: Ah, okay.

Clyde: So I joined the Marine Corps in January of 1940. Yeah, '40.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: Is that thing going on?

Bill: Oh, sure.

Clyde: Okay, then.

Bill: Oh, I'm sorry. Well, where is it that you entered from?

Clyde: I joined at the recruiting office in Chicago and then they put me on a train to San Diego. And I went through the Marine base at San Diego through training and then the first, beside the boot camp, I went to what they had, a sea school for Marines that want to board ships. And that was a couple weeks' course, and I finished that course and then they—I graduated five—so the course was around the 1st of April. We were all taken on trucks up to San Pedro, California; at that time the fleet was still stationed in San Pedro, California.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And there must have been about a hundred Marines, and they scattered 'em out on through the different ships, the battleships and the aircraft carriers and that, and the large cruisers, all the Marine detachments on 'em, and two days after we went aboard, why the fleet moved out of San Pedro and headed for Pearl Harbor, and that's when they originally were based at Pearl Harbor, after that.

Bill: The training you went through, the basic training, how was that?

Clyde: Well, the basic training was the standard Marine basic training; they gave you a lot of—one on camping, there were a lot of close order drills, and you spent time at the rifle range. We were shooting, learning how to handle a gun or a rifle. And it was pretty much the standard basic. And then, then like I say, I went to—they had a sea school to familiarize you with being aboard ship for this—this whole group that I was in went aboard ship then.

Bill: They weren't really doing amphibious training, though, at that time?

Clyde: No, that was before. Ah, there was twelve of the fellas that were in the group that I was in went aboard the *USS California*, which is a battleship.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And the *California* had a larger amount of Marines aboard than most of 'em because it was the flagship. And they had a three-star Admiral aboard.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And he had, you know, a group of officers that—he was the commander of the battle force. He was the highest—at that time, he was the highest Admiral. A four-star Admiral was based at the submarine base in Pearl Harbor and his ship was the *USS Pennsylvania*, another battleship, but I don't remember he ever went on it on cruises because his main operating base was at the submarine base, the offices.

Bill: Which Admiral was that, that was on the *California*?

Clyde: That was a three-star Admiral, name of, Bill Pye, P-Y-E, and the Marine job aboard ship was at sea the battleship had five, five broadside guns on each side of it and the Marines manned the port side five guns.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And each gun would take about, oh, probably fifteen Marines to operate it.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: It was the old deal where the shell came separate and then a bag of powder and there was a couple of guys to operate the barrel up and down and sideways to target it. And they had guys up in the tower spotting for 'em, and it took a big crew to run one of those guns.

Bill: That wasn't in any turret; that was just in a tub?

Clyde: It was out in the open—or it was in a what they called a case bed or case bay [?], and it had a big slot with the barrel out that could move, you know, move the barrel any way you want to, but it was strictly a broadside, it was not an anti-aircraft gun.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: The deck above they had anti-aircraft guns which were manned by the sailors. But at sea that was the main job of the Marines, and when they're in port they manned the gangway planks for people coming on and off the ship and that and they had guard duty. And then they had orderly duty for—the Captain and the Executive Officer of the ship rated orderly service all day and so did the Admiral and his Chief of Staff, which was a Captain rating.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And so there was four of the main officers aboard ship that they had orderlies work for 'em and they were Marine orderlies. And their main job was running around doing whatever they wanted done, and particularly going up to the radio shack and carrying messages back and forth and so forth. That was the basic job of the Marine Corps on battleships.

Bill: How did you feel about that, coming out of Wisconsin? How was it as an experience?

Clyde: Well, you know, everything was a new experience because I don't think I'd been out of the state of Wisconsin before then.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: So, you know, everything was new for you, and a young guy, why, it was interesting; it was somethin' different. It was more interesting than milking a cow. [Bill laughs].

Bill: So then you did that initial cruise then; you went to California and did the initial cruise to Pearl Harbor?

Clyde: Yeah. Yeah, we pulled into Pearl Harbor and at that time there was still grass shacks along the channels with people living in them.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: It was real, you know, like you see it years ago, and it was a big change for Pearl Harbor because all of a sudden they had, you know, there was—well, like the time when the Japs hit, I think there was like a hundred and eighty different ships in the harbor.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And you can imagine, probably fifty-, seventy-five-thousand Marines and sailors all of a sudden were there, going all over the town and that; it was a big change. Business was good!

Bill: Right!

Clyde: Especially for some of the girls. [both laugh]. Well, that was all part of the deal.

Bill: So when is it that you got to Pearl then?

Clyde: We went on about a two or three weeks' cruise.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And then we ended up at Pearl Harbor, so it was probably about, ah, toward the end of April of 1940.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: Then when the ships were—those were a big change for the Navy because the Navy had all their Navy Yards that did work on the ships were basically Bremerton, Washington, San Diego and, ah, San Francisco. So there was always battleships—there was thirteen, no nine battleships in the Pacific Fleet and they were going back and forth all the time, one at a time, to get work done on 'em. So we'd go up—I think I was aboard battleships for three and a half years—

Bill: Hmm.

- Clyde: —and I think I made a half a dozen trips back and forth. They'd go back there and they'd go in the yard for maybe a month or two and they'd do a lot of work on it and then you'd go back with some other one that had come in and that was sort of the procedure of, during the peace time.
- Bill: Sure.
- Clyde: And, ah, that pretty well—
- Bill: So, that's what, for the balance of 1940 then, that's—
- Clyde: Well, we'd go out on cruises for a week or two at a time.
- Bill: Okay.
- Clyde: The Fleet would go out and they'd go out and do some firing, practice firing, and not a lot of firing because it was expensive to fire.
- Bill: Um-hmm.
- Clyde: And, ah, see the battleship, our battleship had four turrets on it with three fourteen-inch guns in each turret. So you had twelve fourteen-inch guns on board and, you know, and then all these broadside guns and then you had another ten five-inch anti-aircraft guns on the ship. So I think the main reason they didn't do a lot of shootin' was the cost of replacing the shells and that. You know, at that time the government was pretty tight with the money.
- Bill: Um-hmm.
- Clyde: And during the Depression times. But they'd have, they would have firing practice, I'd say, maybe twice a year and what they would do is, for the five-inch guns maybe a couple of miles away they'd have a tug out there and they'd have a foam barge with like a big billboard on it. And that thing was about a half a mile behind the tugboat and you'd shoot at that thing and they'd have spotters up in the tower to tell you how you were doin' and that, and that was the main way they practiced. The big fourteen-inch guns, you know, they would shoot their shells; I think they'd go about, a maximum of about twenty miles.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: And we weren't involved in them at all because that was all Navy.
- Bill: Sure.

Clyde: And—but they'd do some night firing and that. Well, that's, that's the way life pretty well went on the battleship up until the time of Pearl Harbor. Now *California* being a flagship had, ah, we had about ninety Marines on it, and normally you'd have about seventy, if you didn't have an Admiral.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: But he had a total of probably a hundred people between all his staff and so forth that went with him, and so that was the difference. I did a lot of orderly work—well, we all did: the orderly for the Chief Executive Officer, the Captain, the Admiral, and the Chief of Staff with the Admiral. I didn't do much for the Admiral because they had them in a different group and you'd sort of fill for guys and that, but my main, I orderlied mostly for the Captain of the ship and the Executive Officer.

Bill: Okay. And I'm kind of curious, what was your working uniform like at that time?

Clyde: It was mostly all khaki.

Bill: All khaki.

Clyde: Yeah. It—well, when you're in the States, wearing—when you're down in Hawaii it was always khaki; it's a warmer climate. But in the States it was dress blues if we were on duty, either doing your work or anything you're doing. It might have changed, depending on the weather, you know, summer or winter. But they—about the only Marines that wore dress blues back in those days were the [unintelligible] Marines and probably those around, well maybe in Washington, D.C. over there around the Capital and that.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: But, otherwise, ah, most of the Marines wore the green uniforms.

Bill: Forest Green.

Clyde: Like the one you've got over there.

Bill: Yeah, right.

Clyde: When I got off the ship then, I switched to the green uniform; that was more or less the regular Marine combat uniform, I mean, in that type of deal.

Bill: How much, then, in that year at Pearl, how much leave time did you have typically, for shore leave?

Clyde: Well, they had what they called a port and starboard watch; you'd have a leave every other day, or liberty.

Bill: Oh, okay.

Clyde: Or liberty. Liberty. Leave, you'd get, I think you were allowed, I don't know if it was a month's leave a year, total. A month's.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And you could take it in pieces, or—I don't think you could take it all at once. But I came home about—we were in San Francisco in the Navy Yard about two months before Pearl Harbor hit. We had some work done on the ship and I got a leave. I get back here to Wisconsin—another fella and I came back; he was from Green Bay. Then I think was back about ten days or two weeks, and then we went back. When we went back to the ship, the ship had moved from San Francisco. We went back and boarded at San Diego.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: Or, ah, at San Pedro, not San Diego. And the guy that I came back with on vacation was—ah, a month after that he was dead.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: He got killed at Pearl Harbor.

Bill: What was his name, do you remember?

Clyde: Earl Wallen; the post in Green Bay is named after him.

Bill: Ah, okay.

Clyde: The Sullivan-Wallen [American Legion] Post [11].

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: Sullivan was your first guy killed in World War I from Green Bay and Earl was the first guy in World War II that was killed; he was a real good friend of mine.

Bill: Okay. How do you spell his last name?

Clyde: Wallen, W-A-L-L-E-N.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: In fact, ah, Bob and I and my son—[chuckles], well it's kind of funny. Ah, I got a lot of, I do a lot of historical work and that—I've got probably a lot bigger library than Appleton [Wisconsin]; I must have a thousand books. And anyhow, I had some pictures of Earl Wallen and that and so one day I contacted the Green Bay Legion Post and talked to the guy, the head guy there; what do they call him?

Bill: Post Commander?

Clyde: Yeah, and they said, I said I had some, I had made up some plaques, some pretty good plaques, you know, about Earl Wallen. I had the history of him and how he got killed and everything and told them, you know, that we had that and we'd like to present it to them because the Post and the guy—I said I was in the Marine Corps with the guy and the guy says, "No, Wallen was in the Army," he says, "he wasn't in the Marine Corps." [Bill laughs] And I said to him, "Don't you have any pictures of him?" "Yeah, we've got a picture of him here." I says, "Go and look at the picture once." And he comes back and says, "Yeah, you're right; he was in the Marine Corps." [Bill laughs]

Bill: So then we took—Bob and I took the talk one night and presented three or four plaques like that, different stories about Pearl and that, so it was kind of interesting.

Clyde: Yeah, yeah, sounds like it.

Bill: Yeah. So the two of you, though, you were on that leave and went back to San Pedro?

Clyde: Yeah. And the ship went back to Pearl about a month before the Japs hit, and ah, so we were there when that happened.

Bill: And so in that month before there wasn't any anticipation at all, was there? Or was there?

Clyde: Well, about two weeks before we went on a night firing practice, and I don't know how many of them, there was a pretty good bunch of the ships. I don't know if all of them were out there or not. You know, they would, they had different groups; three battleships would be one group and another three and that. Sometimes they'd all go out, sometimes one group would go out. And we were out night-firing about two weeks or three

weeks before Pearl Harbor and we got a notice that there was some unknown submarines in the area—

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: —that were apparently watching what's going on, so—and that's the first time that had happened all the time I was aboard ship; I was aboard ship about a year and a half before this. They give orders to put all live ammunition on the guns.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And that was a big deal because all the ammunition was down in a hold and had to come up. They had like—what do you call it, elevators, going, you know, to bring 'em up.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: They had to bring the shells and the powder up separate and, ah, and um so then nothing happens when we went into port, then we had the—before we got into port we had to put all that back, back down into the compartment where they kept it, so that was kind of interesting. So then about a week before Pearl Harbor happened they had a group of Marines—there was about six or eight Marines from each of the battleships. They took us over to what they called Camp Weaver or Fort Weaver. It was right on the entrance to the harbor and they had the rifle range, Marine rifle range, and so we worked with instructors on the rifle range that week. The butts of the range were on the ocean so that all the shells went out in the ocean, so there wasn't any flyin' around anywheres.

Bill: That was the first week of December?

Clyde: Yeah. And, so, ah, what they did was, they would bring boatloads of sailors out there and we'd instruct them on shootin' small arms. Each of the battleships, they'd bring a load—they had those whale boats; you could bring about fifty guys on a whale boat. So there was, I think, there was eight battleships in the harbor at the time. And so they'd bring these whale boats out and unload the guys for the day and then they'd take 'em back, and the next day they'd bring out—so the Marines that were instructing—we all, they had some, some of these big, ah, pyramid tents with wood floors.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And they'd sleep, I think, about, I don't know, four, five, six guys, and so we lived in them during that week that we were instructing out there. And

so when Friday came, we were supposed to go back to the ships, and it was so nice out there, you know, in those tents and that, and it was out on the ground instead of sittin' on a ship all the time, so we requested to stay out there until Monday because we knew the ships weren't going to go out of harbor. So they give us permission, so we were all out there when the Japs hit us on December 7th.

Bill: Hmm. Hmm.

Clyde: Which was kind of a Marine dream because we had the armory there with all the guns, so when the Japs hit, why we headed for the armory, got the guns out and started peppering land, and the location of Fort Weaver is right outside of the channel as you come in. Have you been out to, ah—

Bill: No, I haven't.

Clyde: Well, they built the big air, ah, well, Hickam Field was right across there.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: And since then they built the airport; they built it out in the ocean in the shallow there, built the ground up. And so where Fort Weaver is, when you come in to land you come in right over, just maybe five-hundred feet over Fort Weaver.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: Now they call it Fort Smith. And it's the same Marine base as it was then; I've been out there a couple times. And they call it Fort Smith. So the thing was when the Japanese attacked us, it was, you know, just before 8 o'clock in the morning and um, ah, we, the guys in our tent—

Bill: You know I'm going to ask you to pause; I'm gonna flip this tape, alright?--[End of Tape One – Side One]

Bill: Okay, you were starting to describe December 7th.

Clyde: Yeah, on December 7th, when we were out at the Camp Weaver, when the Japs attacked that morning, the fellas in our tent had just finished breakfast and, and, ah, went back in the tent and we were playing cards; it was a Sunday morning.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And, ah, all of a sudden we heard a lot of airplanes overhead but we didn't pay much attention because we were, the spot we were in on one side of us

was Wheeler Air Base that the Marines used and the other side was Ford Island where the planes from the carriers come in and took off and landed there.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And then across the other side was, um, Hickam Field where all the bombers were. So we were kind of right in the center of all these three airfields.

Bill: So it wasn't unusual to hear aircraft?

Clyde: Yeah. And so we heard the air—we didn't pay much attention. But then all of a sudden, we heard mammoth explosions, which of course was the first torpedoes that hit.

Bill: Yeah.

Clyde: And we went outside and looked. Here are all these planes right overhead; probably five hundred feet over was the Japanese torpedo bombers.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And, ah, you know, they had this long torpedo underneath them and they had the big rising sun; it didn't take you long to figure out who they were.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: And, ah, the way the thing was, they come over us and they made their turn, and they had to come in low to drop the torpedoes to, to get on Battleship Row to get 'em, you know.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: So, so, you know right away we figured that, you know, there was a lot of talk about we were pretty close to goin' to war with the Japs, so the armory was maybe fifty or a hundred yards away from where our tents were, so we went over and got into the armory and got rifles and, ah, guns out and, ah, most guys went down to the butts which was where the targets were along on the shore there because—and it was a good place to—the butts was kinda built up; it was a good place to go and do your firing.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: So, ah, well, we did a lot of firing, you know, it was just—I just had the old single load 1903 Springfield rifle.

- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: Single-action. That was before—I don't even think they even had the Garand rifle yet.
- Bill: Yeah, I don't think so.
- Clyde: Yeah. They had a machine gun set-up there for practicing machine gun; they had some permanent, um, pedestals set up. They put the machine guns on those, but they were all locked so that you could only turn 'em a hundred and eighty degrees so you wouldn't be shooting in the buildings and that.
- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: So—and they could—and they could shoot up with 'em, and I don't remember exactly how many of those were active, but I know some of them were. But they have limited use because of the way they were built for, for—
- Bill: Targets.
- Clyde: Practice only.
- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: So, anyhow, we were out there until the thing was over with, a couple hours.
- Bill: Did any aircraft pay any attention to you? Were you strafed or—
- Clyde: Not really. I don't think they had the rifle range on their target list. [Bill laughs] But it give us a pretty good chance; we did a lot of firing at the Japs and, ah, there was planes went down here and there but, you know, there was, there got to be a lot of firing from the Navy. A lot of those ships had anti-aircraft guns—
- Bill: Sure.
- Clyde: —on and there was a lot of firing within probably fifteen minutes, a half an hour, so, you know, if a plane went down who knows who hit it.
- Bill: Sure.

- Clyde: And, ah, so that pretty well is what happened on that. And then after, after the couple hours was over, reported to the squad and nobody knew what's gonna happen, you know, so, so that night they were, they were—in our group there was about probably, maybe, maybe fifty or sixty Marines that were out there instructing because they had all these guys, Navy guys from the battleships they'd bring out, and so we set up patrols at night on the beach and on the roadways there.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: And, ah, so we're out there for about two days and then they came and picked us up, took us into Pearl Harbor, and, ah, the *California* was sunk right at the, the place they were tied up.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: They were tied up to Ford Island.
- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: And, ah, it took a couple of torpedoes and a couple of bombs hits and ah, so the thing sunk down in the mud and, ah, the top deck was just out of water and, ah, so the boats dumped us off there by the ship on the shore at Ford Island and they had set up a kind of like, it would be about like a picnic, a bunch of tables and that where they would feed the people and then they had everybody, had 'em check in so they'd know who was there and who was dead and missing, and, and, ah. This was about two days after. So then what they'd do, you checked in and they'd give you a blanket and, ah, I wanted to say, they had a kind of a chow line set up and you'd take care of feeding yourself. And, ah, where we was there was a—one of the hangers—Ford Island also had hangers for the PBY, those sea planes.
- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: And some of them were burnt, some of them were just bombed out and that, and, ah, for the next couple weeks we lived—well, everybody got a floor mat[?]. At night what you did, you'd lay down wherever you could with a blanket and sleep. And, ah, I slept—they had that partially bombed out hanger. During the daytime, why they had a thing, gang, they set up so you could get over on the ship and they started cleaning up everything on the top decks as best you could. And what happened, after that what happened was they had these ten five-inch anti-aircraft guns on the ship and they were out of water, you know. So they took—as far as what I was involved in, they took those guns off the ship and they set up at the entrance to the harbor in some little channels. They had one channel called

West Loch, and that's a pretty good-sized one, you know; it's probably, ah, maybe a mile or two long and a half a mile wide, and it was a place, they would, whenever they worked on a ship, ah, did any welding and that, they'd take all the ammunition off the ship and they'd put it on the, what you called a lighter, like a big barge, and they'd anchor it out in that West Loch out so in case anything blew up it wouldn't be doing damage.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: So they—on the beach there by West Loch they had some buildings where the Navy people lived, operated, that part of the Navy were. So they set up some concrete bases and they put those ten anti-aircraft guns off the *California* out there.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And then they had the Marines man those guns, and they set some tents up and we lived in the tents and we manned those guns during that period of time, which was kind of odd because they were all guns we'd never worked on before, they were all Navy guns.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: But they're an easier gun to operate; their actual shell they use looked just like a rifle shell.

Bill: Is that right?

Clyde: You know, it's all one complete shell.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: It was about that long and a five-inch diameter and we never fired 'em because they never had any anti-aircraft after that, but we were out there until the following June. The *California* was the first ship probably because it was a flagship that they salvaged out of the mud and took it into dry dock and they got it into good enough shape, rewound the generators and motors—

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: —that they could go back to Bremerton, Washington on its own.

Bill: Wow. That was quite—by June?

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: Well, the ship was—the ship, it was the newest battleship of the old battleship group. It was launched in 1921, and so they—it had two big generators to operate the ship and it had four props for, you know, propulsion of the ship.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And those four props were driven with electric motors, so what they did was—and they were all flooded, those motors, so they had to redo ‘em.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: So they rebuilt one of the generators and two of the motors and then they took the other two props off the ship so they wouldn’t be draggin’ because they weren’t using ‘em and laid them up on the deck in the back, and then when it was ready to go back to the States on its own, they pumped all the oil off it except enough to get back there because they were hauling oil out there all the time and a battleship normally carried about a million gallons of oil.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: So rather than haul the oil back to Bremerton, they pumped it all off so that, you know, so they just had enough to go back on. So when it went back the ship rode a lot higher; it rode about six feet higher than normal.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: And so they also, they got rid of about, I would say, half to three-quarters of the crews; they put ‘em on other ships, you know.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: And—but I was one of them that stayed with the ship. So I went back to the ship in June and the ship was gutted and rebuilt. It was in Bremerton, Washington in about a, probably in there about a year and a half.

Bill: Okay. You stayed with it that whole time?

Clyde: No. I got transferred off it, and—but the ship, when they got done with it, was almost like a brand new ship. It still had the—the fourteen-inch guns were the same, but they got rid of the broadside guns and they put batteries and batteries of anti-aircraft guns on it.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: Ah, but I got off it in, I think it was about October of '43.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: Okay. So you were with it, though, until that time?

Clyde: Yeah. It was all gutted when I got off it.

Bill: Hmm. Before we get too far, I just want to ask you a little further about December 7th. What kind of feelings did you fellas have at night? What was the mood of the people?

Clyde: Well, the feeling seemed to be everybody was pretty concerned that possibly the Japs were gonna try to land.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: That was the biggest thing. And the other thing was, they were kind of almost hyper about sabotage.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: All the Army—like fighter planes were all put tight to tight on the—so when the Japs hit it was a perfect deal for the Japs to blow them up because they were all right in a row. But they did that because they were afraid of, you know, the Japs—or the Hawaiian Islands is about, probably fifty-percent Japanese descent people and they were afraid of sabotage. And so without doubt the biggest thing that Kimmel and Short were concerned about was sabotage, more than anything else.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: So, I mean, we didn't know what was going on, nobody—then they put censorship on everything on top of it. So—actually, a guy didn't know what the hell was goin' on at all.

Bill: Sure. When did you find out that about Earl being killed?

Clyde: Well, when we got back to the ship, ah, a couple days after that and, of course, I'd been inquiring around. There were, there were—out of about ninety guys aboard the *California*, there was four Marines that got killed;

there was about a hundred were killed on the ship all together, but four Marines were killed. And I inquired around and, and, somebody told me that he went down below to help, ah, they lost their power, a lot of stuff, and they were hand bringing ammunition up. And so they had a crew of guys, he was one of 'em that went down there, and the ship got hit with a bomb right in the middle and, ah, that killed quite a few guys. When I got back, after a few days I went over to the Navy hospital looking for him. The hospital was about—well, right in the Navy yard there.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: It was probably, maybe, three or four blocks from where we were, and I went over there and I'd heard it was kind of a nightmare place because there were so many people there in beds and out on the porches and everywhere else. And I kept inquiring around but I couldn't get any information. But later on they found out that he was one of them that was killed.

Bill: Um.

Clyde: He got buried out at the cemetery out there. Then, ah—

Bill: So then you said you left the ship then in October of '43?

Clyde: I think it was October. For a while I worked in the Navy yard there; ah, we worked at the gates and at the [unintelligible].

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And they were down to a small skeleton crew by then. Practically I don't think they had a dozen Marines were left yet.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And they wanted to keep a few available, I guess, so that when the ship was done and they re-manned it, they'd want a few old timers there to show 'em how to run the thing.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: So I applied. I wanted to go to school to learn something because all I was, was just, you know, the guy with the gun and no job.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: And by that time I was a sergeant and—so then, I don't know. They gave me a bunch of tests in—so I qualified to go to the radio school, so they sent me down to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, as far as it could be on the other side of the United States [Bill laughs]. And I got down there, and that's the big Marine base on the east coast.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: And so the only thing they had for teaching there was for operators, radio operators, and I told the guy, I says, "Hell, I don't want to be a radio operator; I want to learn something." I didn't want to learn nothing about the damn radio school. So they sent a group of guys up to Chicago to radio school and I was sent up there to Wright Junior College.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And the Navy had a course, and we lived right in the some of the classrooms, they set up some bunks and that. And they had a four months' course there on basic electricity.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: So I took that course, and then after I finished that course, you had another short course, and there again, you lived in the school at Manly High School in Chicago; that was only about a three, three weeks' course. And then we finished that course and then I got sent—they have series of courses, you know, and then I got sent down to College of the Ozarks in Clarksville, Arkansas.

Bill: Oh, okay.

Clyde: And they had a four months' course there on radio. And that was the first, when I got in, actually introduced into radio. Well, when I finished that course, then they had the advanced course on radio and radar. At that time radar was pretty new; it was still just in its infancy compared to what it is today.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: So then I got shipped out to the Naval Research Lab in Washington DC. And I was there, I think, about seven months.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: And that was their top school the Navy had, and I graduated from that and I did pretty good in the school, and so—

- Bill: That was specifically radar, then, at that school?
- Clyde: Yeah, radio and radar, and sonar; it was all Navy shipboard equipment that we worked on and sonar, which is their underwater stuff.
- Bill: Um-hmm.
- Clyde: So then they had, you know, they had openings for different places and I got assigned to, got a job as an instructor at MIT.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: But I never got there. There was—out of our graduating class of about a hundred, there must have been close to a hundred guys graduated, there was about a dozen Marines.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: And that was right when all the—they were having all these battles out in the Pacific and the Marines were losing guys right and left, so they slammed the door: all Marines head for the Pacific.
- Bill: And this would be in '44?
- Clyde: Yeah, in, ah, late '44.
- Bill: Late '44.
- Clyde: Yeah, and so I got shipped out to Miramar in California; I got put in an aviation outfit out in a Corsairs squadron.
- Bill: Yes.
- Clyde: So then I got shipped down to Peleliu, and I was still down there when the war ended.
- Bill: Which squadron were you with?
- Clyde: I was in the MAG-11, that's Marine Air Group Eleven, and I was in the VMF-114. I was a Marine fighter, ah, squadron 114.
- Bill: What was your nickname?
- Clyde: They were the—their insignia was a dead man's hand, aces and eights; I don't know why they got that.

Bill: Huh.

Clyde: I don't know what the hell did they call it; I don't remember now.

Bill: Huh.

Clyde: But Peleliu had already been pretty well taken when I got there.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: And there was an island right next door to Peleliu called Bablethorp which had forty thousand Japs on it.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: When Peleliu was taken there was twelve thousand Japs; it was a fightin' fortress. And when they got done they had a little bunch of Japanese prisoners there, probably about, maybe forty or fifty of 'em out of the twelve thousand; the rest were all dead. And so next door they had this island, Bablethorpe; when the tide went out you could walk between these islands.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: You know, it was like the water was a couple of feet deep. But they were pretty well neutralized because they couldn't get supplies in or that, and they had [unintelligible] to stay alive. And our planes would bomb them just about every day just to fire and, ah, I don't know, it was a week or two after I got in the outfit the head guys, the major, got shot down and I seen where they found his airplane off the island about a year or so ago.

Bill: Really?

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: Huh.

Clyde: And—but I was still out there when the war ended. We were, you know, everybody out there was on stand-by, you know; we were gonna head for Japan when the time was right to hit 'em.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: Then of course, when they dropped the atomic bombs it was like Christmas for us. [Bill laughs] That was the end of the war.

Bill: Well, I'm going to switch here. **[End of Tape One - Side Two]**

Bill: So, now, your time in Peleliu you functioned as a radio operator for the squadron then?

Clyde: No, no, I was never a radio operator; I was a radio mechanic.

Bill: Oh, so you were working on—

Clyde: Yeah. We had, ah—

Bill: Okay, excuse me.

Clyde: We had what they call a radio shack there.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: It was like a tent built with some boards and that so it was, you know, it was kind of semi-permanent.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: We had wood workbenches and we would—you know, the planes had radio; there wasn't any radars on the Corsairs. But we took care of the radios, the IFF equipment: Identification of Friend or Foe—

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: —and the range stuff they use. Identification Friend or Foe is a little box about the size of a small radio, and what that was used for was when the planes would go out they would set a frequency on that.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And so then when the planes went out on their mission, when they came back they would turn this thing on so that the signal it put out let the base know that this was them comin' back.

Bill: Oh, okay.

Clyde: They could change the signal every day so that—

Bill: So it was for incoming aircraft to the base?

- Clyde: Yeah, so you wouldn't—you'd hear the aircraft coming, you wouldn't send somebody up to shoot 'em down.
- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: So this is what they call it, Identification of Friend or Foe.
- Bill: Got ya.
- Clyde: And then in that thing they always—when you got it all set to go they had a little deal about like a shotgun shell. You'd put it in there in case a guy hadda make a landing or that, he'd push a button and blow the thing up so that they couldn't learn the diagrams, in case they'd get the plane.
- Bill: Got ya.
- Clyde: So we serviced those, too, and the planes had two radios, one for low frequency and one for high frequency. The low frequency were like FM today; it's good for about thirty, forty, miles.
- Bill: Um-hmm.
- Clyde: And it went further than that, the curvature of the earth would affect it. And the other one was more like the AM. It had, it would give you a longer distance. And so I was the tech sergeant out there in this group. In the VMF-114 I was the, kind of like the head guy of that department.
- Bill: Hmm. Um-hmm, Um-hmm.
- Clyde: And that was a second pay, you know, tech sergeants?
- Bill: Yes.
- Clyde: The Marine Corps did away with that rating now and they call them all gunnery sergeants.
- Bill: Okay.
- Clyde: And their emblem used to be three up and then two down were straight across.
- Bill: Um.
- Clyde: And now they're all like a half circle.
- Bill: Right, right.

- Clyde: But they did away with the technical sergeant; everybody had their ratings as a gunnery sergeant.
- Bill: Okay.
- Clyde: I don't know why they did it. So that pretty well—we also did toward the end of the war, but after, when the war ended I was out there until, I think, late October. I had orders; I could go back to the States, couldn't get off the island because there was no transportation.
- Bill: Oh. [laughs]
- Clyde: But we also serviced all the planes later on. We serviced all the planes that came in and landed. There'd be British planes and Army planes and you name it, anything that landed.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: We would service them and so, like I say, I had my sea bag packed, I had my orders to go back to the States. I couldn't get any transportation. So one day there was a squadron, I don't know, three or four B-25s come in and landed and a twin engine bomber and Army and Air Force. I said to the guy, "Where are you going?" He says, "We're going to Guam." I says, "Geez, that's just where I want to go to catch my ship." I says, "You got extra room?" I says, "I got my orders and my sea bag; I can't get off the island." He says, "Yeah, you want a ride the back end of her, why help yourself." So I ran and got my sea bag out of the tent we was in and I told the guys at the radio shack there where we worked, I says, "Jeep will be out on the airfield there; one of you guys want to come and pick it up?" I says, "Good-bye." [Bill laughs] So I often thought if that damn plane would've went down on the way to Guam—it was about, I think it's about a three hour flight; it was about eight hundred miles, I think—If the plane went down, nobody would ever know what happened. Who the hell would have known?
- Bill: Okay. You didn't sign out?
- Clyde: No, I had my orders. I could go anytime I wanted to, if they had the transportation. So I got up to Guam and I had to wait about two weeks there to get on a ship. And so they had a transport ship I got on. When I was down in Peleliu, that's only seven degrees above the Equator and it's hotter than a bitch, and the only thing a guy ever wore there was shorts.
- Bill: Hmm.

- Clyde: And that's all I had was Khaki stuff. So then we went back and we got on a ship at Guam and they take that northern route, you know—I guess it's the shortest route—they get up damn near Alaska.
- Bill: Um-hmm.
- Clyde: And the ship went to San Diego and on the way over they'd shag you out on the deck during the day because they had a continuous feeding because there was so many guys on the ship, you know.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: And you'd take turns on the bunks to sleep. And so I got pneumonia.
- Bill: Huh.
- Clyde: I went to into sickbay and they took X-rays and said you've got pneumonia. So we got to San Diego, why they had some ambulances come and pick up the guys that were in sickbay. And so they got that big Navy hospital in San Diego and the thing was full and they took over part of this Balboa Zoo there; it's a real well-known zoo.
- Bill: Hmm, okay.
- Clyde: And so I ended up in a monkey cage. [Bill laughs] That was the best food I ever had in the six years I was in the Marine Corps.
- Bill: [laughing] In a monkey cage?
- Clyde: Yeah, it was really nice there. You know, it was in November and the weather is pretty good out there in San Diego in November. So I was there for a couple of weeks, and actually I wanted to get the hell out of there and head for home, but they wouldn't let me go. I was there for about two weeks before I finally got out of there. Then I had liberty coming yet, for leave, because I'd never took it. And I got home—see, when I went into the service I signed up for four years.
- Bill: Yeah.
- Clyde: Well, then when my four years was up it was in '44, early '44, and if I signed up two more years, I got three-hundred bucks.
- Bill: Huh.

- Clyde: And if I didn't sign up I still stayed in the service and got nothing. [Bill laughs] So I thought, you know, three-hundred bucks then was a lot of money.
- Bill: Sure.
- Clyde: So I signed up for the two years, two more years, so I couldn't get out until January of '46.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: So then when I come back I was in the hospital, then I got leave and I went home. But just to get the discharge—I was in the Marine aviation. They only had two bases: they had Miramar in California and they had Cherry Point in North Carolina, so I had to go out to Cherry Point just to go out there and get my discharge and come back. [Bill laughs] And that was such a stupid thing; they could have just mailed it to me. But that's the way it was. But that's about what happened to me.
- Bill: Sure. And are there any stories that stick out in your head, occurrences that happened along the way?
- Clyde: Oh, I don't know; it was—ah, one thing, yeah. I was around a lot of Admirals.
- Bill: Um-hmm.
- Clyde: In fact, I can tell you in the book who they all were. You know the Marines, of course, being with the flagship, there was an Admiral there all the time. But when we were in Pearl Harbor the head Admiral was, at the time when I first went out there, was a guy by the name of Richardson; he was the head of the fleet, James Richardson. Well, he was madder than hell at Roosevelt because he told him it was stupid to send the fleet out to Pearl Harbor. And so eventually Roosevelt fired him and he replaced him with Kimmel. Well, then they had another Admiral out there that was in charge of the Hawaiian Island group and his name was Admiral Block. Then there was Admiral Pye, he was a guy on our ship that I worked for some of the time.
- Bill: Right.
- Clyde: He was a three-star Admiral. Then it's funny how the first executive officer on the ship when I went on, his name was Bob Carney, and at that time he was a Commander in the Navy, three-stripe. Well, he was a hotshot. Everybody knew he'd go to the top, you know, and it ended up he was Chief of Naval Operations after the war.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: A four-star Admiral. I worked for him quite a bit, but at that time he was just an Admiral. Well then, the guy who replaced him as executive officer, kind of an interesting, his name was Earl Stone from Milwaukee.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: He's an Annapolis guy, you know? And later on he became, he was the first captain of the *USS Wisconsin* when it was launched.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: Yeah, and the guy I have coffee with every morning is—four or five days a week, four days a week—is named after him; it was his mother's cousin, [Bill laughs] Earl Christianson. You know Earl; he's named after Earl Stone.

Bill: Huh.

Clyde: It's funny—

Bill: Oh, Marie.

Clyde: —how things happen. Then, of course, there was Kimmel. And we would see him pretty often, because Pye was the next highest Admiral and he'd come over to our ship or back and forth and what. And then, who else? Oh, Nimitz; then Nimitz come out and he was the head Admiral after they fired Kimmel, all these guys. And then there was one more Admiral I ran into kind of accidentally when we went back to Bremerton and the ship got gutted and I was the sergeant in charge of the guard out there. One day this Admiral comes up and he wanted to look at the—you know, everybody had nametags, nobody could get on anything unless you had a permit, and here the guy comes up asks me if he can go aboard the ship and he was an Admiral. He just wanted to go more to look it over, he was visiting there. But his name was Admiral Byrd.

Bill: Oh!

Clyde: He was the guy that went to Antarctica and did all that. Yeah.

Bill: Huh.

Clyde: So I took and I gave him a tour of the ship, and at that time it was all tore apart then. But all these Admirals some way or another I got kind of

associated with them and I was just nobody, but at least I got to rub elbows with them.

Bill: What was it like associating with them?

Clyde: Well, I mean, you got used to it. I mean, when you worked with one Admiral and then you got to know him just like you know anybody you work for.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: And, I mean, you didn't give 'em any crap, I'll tell you that! [Bill laughs] Yes, sir; aye, aye, sir. But it was good training; I think it helped me a lot in life and in business.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: One thing, the Marines had a sort of a motto or policy, that *there is no such a thing as it can't be done*.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And always in life when I run into problems, I always have a philosophy of, there's gotta be—any job can be done in some different ways. I always figured there's two or three ways this job can be done and then I analyze it and figure out the best way to do it and go ahead and do it; but—

Bill: What did you do then after you got out of the Marines?

Clyde: Well, I went to work at Langstad Electric in Appleton as an apprentice electrician.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: Which was kind of stupid because, you know, I had the top training in electronics at the time and here I was going as just a basic electrician, wiring houses and buildings. But it was a different type of electricity, it was all power and stuff. You know, you run into cables that big around; aboard ship most of the stuff we worked on was like the thing you got there and it was an entirely different deal and I learned a lot there and I finished apprenticeship towards a four-year course. And then, since I worked there, I could see these old-time electricians and all's I could think of was God, is that me thirty, forty years from now?

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: You see a guy, I'd be workin' with him on the job, so I thought—so I went into business in '50, '52, I think it was. And then I was in the—well, I was in the electrical business on and off 'til my boys went into business and they grew the business pretty good. The business, this Town and Country Electric, is now the 16th largest in the country.

Bill: I'd say they grew it pretty good, yeah.

Clyde: Yeah. [Bill laughs] They got about sixteen hundred employees, they're in five states. So that's about what happened.

Bill: Now, Steve mentioned your brother?

Clyde: Yeah. I had two brothers that died in the service.

Bill: Two that died in service?

Clyde: Yeah.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: And I got a book that's coming out; in fact, I just gave it back to the author yesterday. They been working on a book about my oldest brother. He was, he graduated from West Point in 1940 and then he went in the Air Force. And in '41, '40 or '41, he was in a dive bomber squadron in training and then he got put in a transport group which were supplying ships, mostly two foot engine bombers and that, like B-25s and A-28s and that. And they were building them out on the west coast and he was flying 'em over to the east coast, then they were going over to Britain. And he did that for, I don't know, six months or so. He was in that but he was still sort of attached to this bomber group out of Savanna, Georgia. And then about a month before the war started, that outfit got orders to go to the Philippines and they left around the 1st of November. They left on a ship out of California and they arrived at the Philippines about two weeks before Pearl Harbor, but their planes never arrived. The planes got all torn down and shipped, you know, took the wings and everything off and they shipped them. They were in transit when the Japs hit and so they were—eventually the ships were diverted with the planes to Australia.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: So his outfit, there was about, close to about twelve hundred people in his outfit and they were out at Manila when the war hit. And what they did was, there was about, I think there was about, about seventy-five of the guys were pilots. So they all took a couple of old transport planes they had out there and flew about forty of the pilots to Australia and—but he wasn't

one of them that went. There was, there was four guys in the group that were West Point guys and I don't think any of them were sent over with the, were the ones that flew over. But, anyhow, he was put in charge of a group and they were in the Manila area, and of course, they moved pretty fast, you know, by the end of, by Christmas time.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: Why they were all heading for Bataan.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: Because the Japs that landed and then were heading for Manila from the north and the south; they went several—so anyhow, he was in charge of a group there and he ended up out on Bataan.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And he was put in charge of the Bataan Air Field and he worked for a general called General George and he was—General George was directly under MacArthur, and he was George's number one man.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: So, of course, they got all shagged into Bataan, all the Americans and a lot of the Filipinos and MacArthur was on Corregidor, the big island, the fortress.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: Well, they were getting the hell bombed out of 'em and the Japs were—they only had a handful of planes; every day they'd lose more planes. When they first went out there, they maybe had a dozen or so, and finally they got down to just a handful. He wasn't flying at all; he was in charge of the landing field. And so, at the end of January the submarine come in there with a load of ammunition and tied up at Corregidor and unloaded.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And when the thing left they took about a dozen pilots with them; my brother was one of them.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: He turned the airfield over to one of the other guys and he left on the submarine and he ended up down in Surabaya in the Dutch East Indies.

Bill: Okay.

Clyde: And at that time, the Dutch and the Americans were still in charge of it; that's where they had all the big oil fields and that's what the Japs were after. So he was down there and they were building an airfield; they had a couple of airfields, but they were building one near Surabaya and they put him in charge of that airfield. He was only there about three weeks and they got shagged out of there. He was one of the—he left the island. He was, I think, about the last B-17 that left the island.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And, ah, so he ended up down in Australia then. And MacArthur was already there in Australia by then and MacArthur was in the—I think it was in the Lennox Hotel in Brisbane he had his offices. And so my brother was sent over there and he was on staff of MacArthur.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: But he was only there a short time. And it's a long story, it goes on and on, but anyhow, they had these dive bomber planes and they were lousy planes, and all of a sudden they found out there was a bunch of brand new B-25s there, twin engine with the twin tail, you know?

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And they were Dutch—the Dutch had bought, I think it was two dozen of them. And they arrived, they were at the airport there, but nobody could fly 'em because the Dutch weren't trained in them yet. [Bill laughs] So these guys more or less stole them from the Dutch. [Bill laughs] They took over—this group of guys that he was with took over these planes, they learned how to fly them and there was a big ballyhoo about it with the Dutch, but they finally told the Dutch they'd bring some more out and—they were all brand new planes.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: And so they started flying those planes, and my brother was still on the staff with MacArthur. Well then they had—the same, exact same time that Doolittle flew over Japan, they had, ah, this group of B-25s flew up to one of the big islands south of Manila.

Bill: Hmm.

- Clyde: What the hell was that island? Anyhow, they flew up there with these—there was about a dozen of these twin engine planes and there also was a couple of, two or three, B-17s that flew with them. They called it—Royce was the head General; he flew with them. Royce's Raiders they called them. At that exact same time. They got very little publicity and they did a hell of a lot more damage than the other guys did.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: They sunk some ships and so forth there; well, it's fairly interesting. Well anyhow, my brother joined the group right after that happened and then he hadn't been flying at all and so he flew on one of these planes up to Guinea.
- Bill: New Guinea?
- Clyde: Yeah. And they went up on some—they were looking for the Japanese Fleet and—
- Bill: I'm going to flip this. **[End of Tape Two – Side One]** So we're talking about your oldest brother, and, ah, what was his name; I don't think we—
- Clyde: Glenwood.
- Bill: Lyewood?
- Clyde: Glenwood.
- Bill: Glenwood.
- Clyde: Yeah. Here I'll show you. Well, anyhow, he flew up on a mission up there and he ended up, plane come back and they hit the mountain and they were all killed.
- Bill: Um.
- Clyde: In Australia, up near Cairns, they call it "Cannes" here.
- Bill: Oh, okay.
- Clyde: And, ah, so basically, that's what happened.
- Bill: That was in '42?
- Clyde: Yeah. This one, here he is with my other brother; he died in the war, and he's dead now. He was a—and that's me.

Bill: Ah.

Clyde: And, ah, so anyhow, ah, it's quite a story. He was in the 27th Bombardment Group and when they reorganized it when they got to Australia; they called it the 3rd Bombardment. And so anyhow, I have all this—well, I told you I'm kind of a historian and I have all this information and my Dad was a kind of a guy, the same way, kind of never threw anything away, kept records and all that. He graduated in Milwaukee, the second year the Milwaukee School of Engineering was in business.

Bill: Ah.

Clyde: In 1908. And anyhow, I got to thinking it over and talking with different ones and decided that we had enough information there; I wrote up a kind of a book. But when I got done, I thought, you know, I read a lot of books and I can tell when I read a book whether the guy knows what the hell he's doing or not. [Bill laughs] And if it's an amateur or if he knows how to write, or you know.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: You could tell if you read enough books.

Bill: Yes.

Clyde: And the more I looked at mine I'd say, I was a real amateur. [both laugh] So somebody give me this guy's name, and he's a retired school teacher from Hortonville and he'd written—the reason I got to know him was he lives in Menasha and he's still—well, he's the same age as my oldest son; he's about sixty-four. And he had written—he had an uncle that was a prisoner of war in Japan.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: Died over there. And the guy—his uncle had the same name as he's got. And so he wrote the book and I learned a lot about books; well, you could learn a lot about it, too, because he's written several books, but, you know, he wasn't a real first class writer. And when he, you know—well, I don't know if you know anything about the book business.

Bill: No, I don't.

Clyde: There's really two ways you could write a book. You could write a book and take it over to Bonz's and they 'em "Here." "Yeah, sure we'll print

it for you, cost you so much. How many copies ya want?" And they'll print it and you bring your pick-up truck over and pick them up, put 'em in your garage and they'll probably be there for the next twenty years. [Bill laughs] That's one way to do it. But the way the guys do it, you know, you gotta like, if you got a—well, you see all these books comin' out with all these TV personalities. They're all making a lot of money on books.

Bill: Politicians, too.

Clyde: But they make it on their name, and so the way with the big book guys, they buy the book, the script from you, they do all the work, and then they pay you so much a copy or they make an agreement any way they want do it. If you're like Clinton, he got about eight or ten million dollars before he even wrote the book.

Bill: Yeah, that's a nice advance.

Clyde: Well, the same thing will all these, you see all these books; every guy that's on TV has got a book.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: You know, this O'Reilly and [unintelligible] they got two or three books out. A big money deal. Well, anyhow, it's hard if you're a nobody; it's hard to get anybody interested in your book. But we did, my, ah, this guy I've got, this Abe Martin, did the writing and then I got my oldest son, Larry, who's—he's just retiring, he's a heart surgeon, and he's the chief of cardiac surgery, Detroit Medical Center, and he had written about, probably a couple of hundred different articles and that, so he's pretty good at writing and that. And it so happened that he's the same age as Abe Martin is and Abe went to St. Mary's and he went to Appleton High and they know all kinds of guys, so they been working on it together, and I think they've got a good book out now.

Bill: Great.

Clyde: I furnished them probably half the stuff, the basic stuff, and then from there they did all the investigating and that. There's a lot of work in writing a historical book because—

Bill: Absolutely.

Clyde: —ah, you've gotta, everything has gotta be accurate, everything's got to be documented, where it came from.

Bill: Yes.

- Clyde: You know, you can't be stealing stuff without it gettin' okayed. And the same thing on the pictures and maps; whatever you use, you gotta know how to get it okayed if you can use it. So there's a lot of work. I went out to California in 1995 to interview one of the pilots, the guy that graduated from West Point with my brother. And there was four guys in the group that were West Pointer guys, and I think they're all dead now; the last of them, I think, died last year.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: But all of those guys—most of those guys are a little older than I am.
- Bill: Sure.
- Clyde: And—'cause they were officers in and, ah, had their college and that before. And there's still a few of 'em are still alive, but damn few of 'em. I went to one of their conventions about ten years ago and there was still quite a few guys there. But out of this group they had—I think they had two four-star generals and one three-star and a number of two-star generals that came out of this group he was in.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: But that's about the way the thing went in writing. Now that book would have been ready to publish; Texas A and M is going to publish it.
- Bill: Great.
- Clyde: And it was going to be published this spring, but they decided to wait 'til fall; they don't want to publish in the summertime because they said nobody reads in the summertime. [Bill laughs] Now everybody's on vacation or that. So I had the first actual script. They had scripts going back and forth for the last three or four years, but this is the first actual one that was printed as a book to be. Now when they get done my son and Abe Martin, the two guys that are writing it, they've got to get a couple of specialists to just look for flaws and that. They don't want to put a book out that's got one actual flaw in it.
- Bill: Sure.
- Clyde: And it's a lot of work, all the index and they got a chapter, er, several pages, quite a few pages where everything came from.
- Bill: Um-hmm.

- Clyde: And everything has gotta be as accurate as can be, and that's pretty tough because when they interview guys [laughs] on the same subject they get two different versions.
- Bill: Sure, sure.
- Clyde: So you gotta almost state that so and so said this and so and so said that because one kind of contradicts the other one. So it's been interesting.
- Bill: I'm curious, you said you lost another brother in World War II?
- Clyde: Yeah. He actually took his own life out.
- Bill: Sorry.
- Clyde: Yeah, he was, ah, he graduated out of Milwaukee, graduated from University of Wisconsin in engineering and he married a gal that he knew, you know, as a young guy in school and that. And he got a job out in California after—he married her during the war. He got a job out at California actually working in the same factory that was building these B-25s as an engineer. But then he got drafted in the service and he went into the Navy and he was in a, in a PBY squad.
- Bill: Hmm.
- Clyde: You know what that is?
- Bill: Yes.
- Clyde: Twin engine.
- Bill: Catalina.
- Clyde: Yeah, Catalina. And he was out at Kaneohe Bay in Hawaii at the time. When I went back overseas the second time when I went down to Peleliu I went on a transport and we stopped over in Oahu for a couple of days, or we probably went to Pearl Harbor or Honolulu, and at the time he was out at Kaneohe Bay. So he and I went over—he wanted me to go over and me show him where I was during Pearl Harbor and that, so we went over to Ford Island and had lunch over there and spent the day together and then I went on down to Peleliu. And in the meantime, later on his squadron got transferred; he was down in the Admiralty Islands and he was a lieutenant in the Navy. And it must have been June or July of '45, pretty close to the end of the war, a few months before, I got a message from home that he was dead, and I found out that he had taken his own life.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And never did get the details of what it was; he was an engineering officer with his squadron and the really sad situation, his wife had a little girl.

Bill: Hmm.

Clyde: And so that's the way it happened, When I was over in Pearl Harbor, after Pearl Harbor, before the ship went back to the States in April, that's when my other brother got killed, so I was over at Pearl Harbor over there, got notice one brother was killed and I was on Peleliu when I learned the other one's dead. So, you know, it was pretty rough.

Bill: I would think so.

Clyde: Oh, well, that's about the way it was.

Bill: Well.

Clyde: This picture that's on here, I might mention to you.

Bill: Yes.

Clyde: They had—ah, this is one of those Ducks, you know, that went from island to—

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: Well, I told you about that island of Bablethorpe where the Japs had forty-thousand, or they had forty-thousand—it was a pretty good-sized island. I'd say it's probably about as big as, maybe, Lake Winnebago.

Bill: Oh, okay.

Clyde: Well, they had forty-thousand Japs and then a lot of natives and that.

Bill: Right.

Clyde: So between that island there was other little islands around there; between where we were on Palau and Bablethorpe there was a couple of islands, and so they'd set targets up on them. One island, a little island, wasn't occupied; it was a beautiful little island, all coconut trees, nice sandy beach and that, and they'd set targets up on one corner of the island and it looked like a big billboard and then our Corsairs squad would come in and fire at it and then a few of us would go up there and we'd spot for 'em and tell 'em they're hittin' the target or what the hell was goin' on.

Bill: Um-hmm.

Clyde: So there'd probably be about four or five guys go up and a couple of 'em spotting and the other two we'd, would be—you know, we had rifles with because the Japs could walk down to those islands when the tide was low, so, you know, you didn't know if some Jap would pop up or not. And so we'd pack a lunch and go up there. I went up there several times, pack a lunch and go up there for the day. Actually, it was like going on vacation. [Bill laughs] And, ah, but coconut trees, coconuts; it was loaded with them.

Bill: Yeah.

Clyde: So that's how that picture happened to be taken.

Bill: You're traveling out—

Clyde: —out of the back end of one of those. But that's—the uniform of the day there was just a pair of shorts. It was so damn hot you had—every once in a while they would fall the guys out on the airfield and pin a bunch of medals on the guys, you know. And you stood out there for fifteen minutes the guys would start collapsing. [Bill laughs] It was so damn hot, so it didn't last very long. [Bill laughs] It would get, it would get to about a hundred and fifteen degrees.

Bill: That's warm.

Clyde: And then there was no air conditioning. One other thing that happened was we'd have tents then and later on—and then you'd have, ah, you know, just cots to lay on and you'd get these damn gnats, and they're so little. They were about a quarter the size of a mosquito but they were little black things and they'd get on you and they'd just bite like hell. So then they got, they had the DDT, and after one night of that the general—they had one general out there he'd get, he had a B-25 and they'd load that thing up and they sprayed the island. [Bill laughs] So then it would be pretty good for a week or two and they did the same thing again. [Bill laughs] But when they got the kitchen set up where they did the cooking, now they could make bread and the gnats were so damn many, you'd go to eat the bread and it looked like poppy seeds. [Bill laughs] But, you know, it was all baked in. After you had ate it, boy, you didn't think nothin' of it.

Bill: Extra protein.

Clyde: Yeah. But that's the way it was out there.

Bill: Sure.

Clyde: But, you know, you're young and that was just another way to live.

Bill: Sure. Well, I'd like to thank you for doing the interview. I really appreciate it.

Clyde: Do you have a card?

Bill: I do have a card and I will—

Clyde: 'Cause I have a hell of a time remembering guy's names if somebody asks you who it was tomorrow.

[End of Interview]