

Wisconsin Veterans Museum
Research Center

Transcript of an
Oral History Interview with
Dean S. Voight
World War II, 2nd Marine Raider Battalion
1995

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Voight, Dean S., (1922-). Oral History Interview, 1995.

User Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 50 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Master Copy: 1 sound cassette (ca. 50 min.), analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

Abstract

Dean Voight, a Medford, Wis. veteran, discusses his World War II service with Carlton's Raiders, the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion, in the Pacific theater. He talks about enlisting in anger over the attack on Pearl Harbor, decision to join the Marine Corps, Marine Corps boot camp at San Diego, and joining Carlton's Raiders. Voight describes the role of Raider battalions, learning hand to hand combat techniques, and deployment overseas. He describes the major campaigns in which he was involved including the Makin Island Raid, Guadalcanal, Midway, and Iwo Jima. Voight touches upon drinking while in the service including the different ways soldiers made their own alcoholic beverages with items they found at bases. He provides an interesting discussion on the family-like connection between men in the Raider Battalion and the way this relationship was continued after the war. He evaluates the change in this once the Raider Battalions were disbanded and the members joined Marine Divisions. Voight details the battle of Iwo Jima where he served as a Platoon Sergeant. His account includes the problems landing on the beach, being wounded and returning to combat, and being evacuated to Guam after his second wounding. He talks about depression related to his wound, difficulty finding work after the war, attempts to get a higher disability payment, and receiving help from the AmVets to get a thirty percent disability payment.

Biographical Sketch

Voight (b. June 19, 1922) served in the Pacific theater of operations with the Marine Raiders and the 5th Marine Division. He was wounded in the fighting for Iwo Jima, and discharged from service in 1946 after achieving the rank of Sergeant.

Interviewed by Mark Van Ells, Wisconsin Veterans Museum Archivist, 1995.

Transcribed by WDVA Staff, 1998.

Transcription edited by Jackie Mulhern and Abigail Miller, 2003.

- Mark: Today's date is October 30th, 1995. This is Mark Van Ells, Archivist, Wisconsin Veterans Museum, doing an oral history interview this afternoon via telephone with Mr. Dean Voight of Medford, Wisconsin, a veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps in World War II.
- Mark: Good afternoon. Thanks for taking the time to talk to me today. I appreciate it. I suppose we should start at the top as they say. Why don't you tell me a little bit about where you were born and raised and what you were doing prior to your entry into the military.
- Voight: I was born in Monticello, Iowa and then my mother and dad came to Chicago and resided there afterwards and I worked for the GT&W Railroad when I signed up in the Marine Corps.
- Mark: What does GT&W stand for?
- Voight: Grand Trunk Western, Canadian National.
- Mark: I had never heard of that one before so I was kind of curious about it. This was during the Depression. Did you have trouble finding this job at all? I mean, a lot of guys couldn't find work.
- Voight: No. I didn't have any trouble.
- Mark: I see. So you signed up before Pearl Harbor. I'm interested in what prompted you to join the military.
- Voight: I signed up right after Pearl Harbor.
- Mark: I see. Your discharge is right here. When, if you would, tell me your recollection of the event of Pearl Harbor and what it was about that that made you enlist and why the Marine Corps in particular.
- Voight: I just hated the idea of anybody attacking the USA in that way. I thought I wanted to retaliate. Pearl Harbor revenger you might call it.
- Mark: Did the attack come as a shock to you?
- Voight: Yes, it did.
- Mark: Did you watch foreign affairs and think, "Well, gee, maybe they're going to attack?" or were you completely blind?
- Voight: No. I didn't have any idea that they were going to attack. To me it was just a sneak attack.

- Mark: So describe the scene as you are going through the recruiting station. I mean, were there a lot of other Pearl Harbor avengers such as yourself signing up at the time? Just describe the scene for me.
- Voight: Well, there was nothing to describe. I just decided to go down and sign up. My dad went with me and my dad had been a personal friend of Gene Clooney's and he was going to try to sign me up in the Navy. We met him in the hallway and Gene said "Send him here. I'll put him in the Navy and make an officer out of him." I said, "Nope. I'm going in the Marine Corps." There's a little story that went along with it but I wouldn't want to repeat it.
- Mark: You can if you like.
- Voight: Well, he just said that he would rather have a sister in the cat house than he would a son the Navy.
- Mark: I've heard a lot worse than that.
- Voight: Anyway, then we signed up in the Marine Corps and that's about all there was to it and they told me they'd hold me over until after the first of the year before I went in.
- Mark: I was going to have you describe your entry into basic training and into the military. I joined the Air Force 40 years later. It was a much different experience, but there are many things that are probably the same. I remember a lot of screaming and yelling and the Drill Sgt. And all those sorts of things.
- Voight: Oh ya, that was regular boot camp.
- Mark: So when it came time to report, where did you report to?
- Voight: San Diego.
- Mark: You went there by train I would assume.
- Voight: Right.
- Mark: And what did you find when you got there?
- Voight: Well, I was pretty soused.
- Mark: Is that right?

- Voight: I met another fellow on the train, Roger Davenport and we signed up together and he said that he was from a small town in Wisconsin and he wanted a friend that he thought knew pretty much what life was like. He was from a small town and he figured I was from a big city so we pal'd up and we're still pretty good friends. Then we went into this base and we were both pretty well soused up and we just slept on an old mattress on a – no blankets or nothing until the next morning and then they started to give us the run around about what our future was going to be like, that we no longer had a family, we belonged to Uncle Sam and all that hog wash and that we were going to be in boot camp and we were going to be in such and such a camp and that was in San Diego and we went to the boot camp together and it was a new experience for me.
- Mark: Was it tough? The Marine Corps makes a big deal out of
- Voight: Well, ya. You imagine you had to brush the floor with a toothbrush and do 1500 up and on shoulders when you'd done a thing that was a little bit wrong and they put sand in your pockets and make you march if you left anything at all in your pockets at all if you ever put your hands in them. They had a lot of little dirty tricks they pulled on you. It was rough. They wanted to find out how much you could take without blowing your stack.
- Mark: Were there some guys who couldn't take much?
- Voight: There were some of them that couldn't take it, ya.
- Mark: They washed out. So what sort of training did this entail? How much time was devoted to shooting weapons? How much time was devoted to making
- Voight: Oh, we went through the regular training plan. I mean, we did a lot of marching and we went through basic training as far as firing weapons was concerned and we did quite a bit of firing, just 03 rifle and then later on we got the M1 rifle.
- Mark: This training lasted about how long?
- Voight: I think it was six weeks.
- Mark: I suppose in a place like that you came across a lot of different people from different backgrounds, different parts of the country, that sort of thing. How did all that go?
- Voight: All right. You get climatized to things like that. It's a little hard sometimes for, of course you didn't have any, we had a bunch of hill

billy's and we had a bunch of them from Chicago, a bunch from Iowa, it was pretty well mixed up and you learned to get along.

Mark: So after San Diego then,

Voight: After boot camp.

Mark: Ya.

Voight: Well after boot camp I tried to get into aircraft welding. I'd been a welder for the railroad previous to that and I didn't have the education to get it. Because everything in the Marine Corps when they wanted infantry men why they just, nobody ever passed anything until they got their infantry men, that's all. You could be a truck driver back here and they wouldn't give you a job as a truck driver there. They wanted infantry men.

Mark: So that's what you ended up.

Voight: Well, I got a little bit disgusted with the way they were pushed around so I said, "Sign me up with Carlton's Raiders.

Mark: I was going to ask how you got into the Raider Battalion.

Voight: Well, that's how I got into it. Jim Roosevelt interviewed me and he asked me if I could do this and do that and if I could swim with a 90 lb. pack on my back and I said, "Can you?" and he says, "Yup." I said "Well, I can do anything you can do." He said, "You're in." That was all there was to it.

Mark: I've got to tell you I'm not terribly familiar with the role of the Raiders in the Pacific theater in general. So, what's the difference between a Raider and a regular Marine soldier.

Voight: It's sort of a suicide battalion. You made beach entries previous to any other and we made the Makin Island raid, that's what that was. That was to withdraw the enemy from Guadalcanal and we snuck in there on submarines and went in on rubber boats and attacked the island. The idea was to attack and get them all shook up and then move out. We couldn't get off and so they had to pull the subs around the other side and then they got us off. I got off the rubber boat by – well, the breakers were about 25 feet high. You couldn't get over them. We kept going down until we found a break in the breakers and then we slid back through and kept weaving and bobbing until we got back to the submarine.

Mark: That was at Makin?

- Voight: That was the Makin Island Raid, ya. Then we towed the sub. What the problem was and we offered to bring a rope and pull the guys off but he said "No." He said they're such a swell bunch of guys he's going to go around the other side and beach the craft if he had to get them off and that's what he did. He was a good sub commander. That was the Nautilus and the Argonaut. They're both sunk now.
- Mark: I'd like to maybe backtrack a little bit if I could. I'm interested in your actual deployment overseas and how you were transported to the South Pacific and where did you go and I'm sure you had to go through some staging areas and probably some more training before.
- Voight: Oh ya. When you join the Raider Battalion we had another three months training there. They taught us hand-to-hand combat and how to use machine guns and just about every type of weapon that there was. I got into demolitions.
- Mark: Was that in San Diego too?
- Voight: Ya. Jacques Farm in San Diego. It was between San Diego and Los Angeles and they called it Jacques Farm.
- Mark: So when it came time to leave for overseas you went over – you left from San Diego I would imagine.
- Voight: Ya. But we worked when we were in San Diego, we worked off of tin cans and made rubber boat landings on San Clemente and other areas you know.
- Mark: All those areas that were probably fairly sparsely inhabited and are now all suburbs or something.
- Voight: Right. Then after they figured we got our training, then we got on a boat and they took us overseas and we went to Hawaii and we worked off of Hawaii. We got more training there. A lot of marching. A lot of climbing hills and mountains and sliding down ropes and rappelling and all this stuff. Because we were going to go back in. Their plans were for us to go into Guadalcanal and go in behind the lines and get the Japs that were behind the lines. They were infiltrating the air field and throwing shells at the air field. They trained us for that plus other types of things. Then we made the Makin Island Raid and then went back to Hawaii and then they trained us again for Guadalcanal.
- Mark: How was that operation – was it different than the Makin Raid or was it pretty much the same?

Voight: No. The Makin Raid was just a one night stand. We were supposed to get in and get out.

Mark: Sort of get the Japanese off the island.

Voight: Right. Guadalcanal was – I forgot to tell you about Midway ‘cause I was on Midway too. There most of what we did was we got the beach ready for invasion and put in land mines and stuff like that and the Nips never came. A few planes come over but they stopped them before they made the landing. Then after that of course we went to Makin and after that, Guadalcanal. Guadalcanal we were supposed to go back in the mountains back in behind and find this gun that was giving them all the troubles on the airport and kill all these Nips that had been harassing them after the main battle.

Mark: As for this gun, I’m interested in the sort of intelligence you had about it. It had obviously been firing and everything.

Voight: It had been firing at the airport.

Mark: But as for it’s location and the size and that sort of thing, how much

Voight: They moved it around all the time. The Japs--the Japs had taken it and carried it up into the mountains in parts and then assembled it there. They kept moving it around. They had tricks like that. They used to float them on a barge on Bougainville and then move them up and down the river. That way you could never get a fix on them. That’s what they did there too. They moved it around and they had it in such a spot that were pretty hard for anybody to get at without coming up through the mountains in behind.

Mark: So when it came time to make the landing and go get this gun, did you have difficulties finding it or was it--

Voight: Ya. We went clear on the other side of the island. I think it was Empress Augustus Bay where they let us in and then we marched all the way across the whole island and clear up to the airport and on the way we ran into Nips and had to do away with them, you know. It was a long lengthy battle. I’ve got a whole bunch of history on it someplace. You know when you have--when you go in as many campaigns like I’ve been in five different campaigns, they kind of merge together and you get them screwed up if you don’t have some kind of--well, that’s just like I got through [unintelligible] I jumped Midway.

Mark: That’s what a lot of the guys will tell me. Sometimes they all blend together. Depends on the person.

- Voight: Well, I had so many different platoons and so many different companies that I belonged to that even people you get mixed up on who was where and what was on what. On Iwo Jima I lost so many guys that I was a platoon sergeant there that I can't even remember who was in it. I remember a few odds and ends but not – we lost so many they brought in more people, more people, I ended up with three originals and they I had machine gun companies blended in and everything else. But anyway, after Guadalcanal, then we went to Bougainville and that was another type of a battle. We were going back in the jungles and pushing the Japs back all the time. We made the beach head there.
- Mark: As you mention these engagements also blend together. Were there some that stand out in particular? Either for their voracity or?
- Voight: For voracity, I would think Iwo Jima stood out. Then Guadalcanal stood out because of Sgt. Maj. Voozu. You've probably heard of him?
- Mark: No I haven't.
- Voight: Well, he was a native chieftain there on Guadalcanal that gave us his people. Well, that's a long story. OK. The Japs had caught him first and they had tied him up and tried to give him the death of 1,000 cuts. Nicking at him with a bayonet. Then he got away and we picked him up and we brought him back and then he says, "Well, you helped me, now I'll help you." He gave us his people to help us carry our gear back in the jungle etc.
- Mark: How important was that? I mean 'cause you were operating as a small unit.
- Voight: Rather important because they had information where the Japs were and everything else. It was very helpful. Of course his people were – they could put a 50 lb can of bacon on their head and carry it for hours and hours and hours without stopping. They didn't know pain. They were wonderful.
- Mark: It must have been quite an exotic site too for a kid from Wisconsin.
- Voight: Well ya when you see head hunters with bones in their nose. That's what they were. They'd been head hunters.
- Mark: I'll get to Iwo Jima but before we do that, I'm interested in some of the activities that you may have done when you weren't in combat. Did you go back to Hawaii to a base camp and do more training?

- Voight: We went back to Hawaii after Makin Island and they gave us a little retreat at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel and I was with a couple of submarine buddies and we pulled some pranks. We changed clothes. I went out as a Navy man and he went out as a Marine and my buddy was about 5'7" and I was 6'2" so we looked like a couple of raggedy-assed people! But we got caught but they didn't do anything to us because they were so proud of us for beating the Japs on Makin Island. It was a lot of fun. Then we went back and did a lot of more work with them off the submarines, just more training 'cause they figure you're going to have other campaigns and such. Of course, we didn't. But we still did the training.
- Mark: If you were in Hawaii it's fairly modern. There were things to do to occupy your free time but if you were in say New Guinea or someplace like that what sort of activities would you do to occupy your time when you weren't in combat?
- Voight: Get drunk on butterfly rum! We went to New Caledonia after that and we got a liberty maybe once a month or something like that and you'd go into town and drink a few beers and get a little high and there was no – well there were French people there and we did make some friends with the French people there. The same way on Hawaii. When I was on Hawaii I made friends with some people there. In fact, I went with a girl there and almost married her. But then that plan changed after Makin Island because I wouldn't write her a letter or anything because I didn't know what was going to happen next with the kind of outfit I was with you didn't know where you were going to be or anything. And, you didn't want to pass any information.
- Mark: What is butterfly rum? I haven't heard that term yet.
- Voight: That's made out of kerosene and anything else you can find so that you can get alcoholic.
- Mark: So this is just homemade stuff.
- Voight: Ya, homemade stuff. We used to call it butterfly rum, raisin jack, cherry jack and potato alcohol, anything they can make booze out of. Shoe polish, boil it down.
- Mark: Was that sort of thing fairly common? If you watch MASH on television for example, they do that. But I mean a lot of the veterans I spoke to, they didn't do that sort of thing.
- Voight: I guess they weren't in the Marine Corps then because we used to take torpedo juice, what we called torpedo juice that was the alcohol they used on the torpedoes to fire them, mixed. We used to strain it through bread

and get the alcohol out of it and get the pink color out of it so that it was drinkable and you wouldn't kill yourself and make booze out of that and make booze out of raisin jack, raisins, coconuts, anything you could get. There was always somebody that had an angle figured out.

Mark: Good old Yankee ingenuity.

Voight: Right.

Mark: As for the guys in the Marine Corps, as the war went on and the Marine Corps got larger as the other services and a lot more people were ending up in the service, I'm interested to know your reactions to having watched the Marine Corps change over that time. Did you notice that different kinds of people were getting into the Marine Corps or the personnel stay pretty consistent over time?

Voight: No the way it was with us in the Raider Battalion, they were a close-knit bunch and when the Raider Battalion broke up and went back and formed a 5th Marine Division that's when I noticed the change. The Raider Battalion we were close knit and we were just like all brothers. I mean "My life is yours and your life is mine". We're still that way to this day, as far as that goes. The rest of them, what's left of them. Then when we come back after Bougainville, then they broke up the Raider Battalion and then they formed the 5th Marine Division. A buddy of mine, his name is Waltz, Bill Waltz he was a Congressional Medal of Honor winner. We met each other in the Raider Battalion and then we went back and when they reformed the 5th Marine Division, he asked for me to help him. He was a Platoon Sergeant and I was a Buck Sergeant and he wanted me in his platoon and so then we reformed and we trained to make the 5th Marine Division. Most of the trainees for the 5th Maine Division were ex-raiders. Mike Nolan, James Roosevelt, they were all ex-raiders.

Mark: As for the average guys coming in, could you tell if they were draftees or enlistees?

Voight: When the 5th Marine Division formed, there were a lot of draftees and they had different attitudes, but they come around.

Mark: Was it a challenge getting the 5th Marine organized and training them? What sort of problems

Voight: Well you got people that have never seen action. See, most of us guys had already been on a few campaigns at least one or two campaigns and of course they had different ideas. They thought that the government owed them because they were drafted. But they come around after a while. I don't know how it would have been in the Army. That I couldn't answer

because it's a different outfit altogether. The ways of training and everything else in the Marine Corps are different than the Army. So I can't answer how they would be, but these guys were different and we had to shape them up and make them think our way.

Mark: Of course you were a little more of an elite unit than the average.

Voight: Ya. They looked up to us because of our backgrounds you know.

Mark: So this process of getting the 5th Marine organized, how long did it take? I mean, when were you ready to go into combat?

Voight: Oh I think that took about three months there and then we went over to Hilo, Hawaii and did some more work over there. The main island. The first time we were on Pearl Harbor and the next time we went over to Hilo and we did some training there with the 5th Marine Division. Then we got them shaped up and then we thought we were going to go to Guam, but then part of the Raiders that were in my original outfit, some of them trained different Marine divisions and they went into Guam and they held that until Iwo and we trained from the time we broke up until the time we went to Iwo Jima.

Mark: So Iwo Jima was the first 5th Marine Division action.

Voight: Right.

Mark: I suppose it's time to talk about that battle then. Describe to me if you would, going to Iwo Jima, I suppose you had moved up in the NCO ranks by now.

Voight: No. I was still a Buck Sergeant, but then

Mark: That's higher than a lot of guys were.

Voight: That's where Red Walch and I we were together on this island and then he got killed and that's where he got his Congressional Medal of Honor from. He'd jumped on a grenade that a Jap had thrown and I got the Jap from quite a ways away. I seen him when he was throwing the grenade. He jumped on the grenade to save his squad but he didn't quite make it. Most of them were killed too. Then I took over his job as Platoon Leader and became a Platoon Sergeant, then my Lieutenant got moved. He had to go down to the CP and write up for this Congressional Medal so I took over his platoon. He had to go and sign this kid up for the Congressional Medal you know. That took some time and I took over his platoon and I was wounded the first time and it was minor. I had the demolition pack blow up on my back. I was crawling up on the airport and when it

exploded, that sand was so soft it was just like cotton and the compression pushed me down, knocked me out but didn't do any bad damage to my back except that I got a pretty good sized scar and a cyst – I've still got the cyst on my back. I didn't have any officers to run the platoon so I had to go back to duty. They asked me if I thought I could make it and I told them I could and so I went back to duty and then I stepped on a land mine and got blown up in the air, knocked the guts out of me a little bit, but I come out of that all right and then after I lost my platoon sergeant and lost the lieutenant and then I took over and then I got a gunshot wound so that took me out.

Mark: This was how long into the battle? I know it lasted a few weeks.

Voight: It lasted a little longer than that. Maybe one day before they called it secure, then I got shot.

Mark: So you went pretty much through the whole—

Voight: I went through the whole battle except for the last two days I think. The mop-up I didn't get in on because that's when I was in the hospital. I was in the hospital in Guam and then they sent me to Aila Heights and then they sent me to Oakno, California and then Great Lakes Naval Training Center.

Mark: I suppose that journey took a long time.

Voight: Well, you know where I was shot and it took half of my sex life away from me. Maybe three-quarters.

Mark: I want to go back to the battle a little bit. Before the battle. I'm interested in staging for it and your initial landing on the beach.

Voight: I can recall the initial landing and the staging. We were all aboard big transports and then we got into LCI's, Landing Craft Infantry, and then we went ashore and the shoreline was nothing but volcanic ash. You couldn't walk in it. You couldn't run in it. You had to swim. Now that sounds funny, but that's the truth. You couldn't move very fast because you had to like dog-paddle through the sand in order to get up. The whole shore was that way and it was even softer than regular sand on our beaches. It was just ash, volcanic ash.

Mark: Was this something that you had--

Voight: We hadn't planned on it we hadn't figured it was going to happen. Never figured it was going to be that way. The tanks and stuff couldn't even get on the beach because they got bogged down. It was just that soft stuff.

Finally, we did get up on there and then it was a slow battle from there on. Because we could only move inches at a time.

Mark: So after you were hit then, the one that knocked you out. I'm interested in the medical care that you received.

Voight: That's where the problem was. I can never convince anybody. I've only been awarded a Purple Heart and the Gold Star and I've been wounded three times and they only had two of them recorded and they only had one recorded actually. Because how can you, in battle, keep track of all this stuff that's going on? So I don't even know what – I think the Army took care of me when I had the demolition pack blow up on my back. It was not Marines. It was either Navy or Army that took care of me, I don't recall. In the heat of the battle who cares! All you want to do is get patched up and get back to your outfit, that's the only people you know. That's your brothers, your sisters, your mothers, you know. So you're not concerned. You just want to get back and you assume that they are doing their work, which they didn't. They didn't even have any record of it. They didn't even know the demolition pack went up on my back. Then I got back and I didn't have it anymore. All I had was a shoulder strap. So then they knew that something had happened, but I was back on duty so "OK. Forget it."

Mark: The wound had knocked you out then.

Voight: It took me out of action and that's when I got the gun-shot wound in the scrotum. I always preached to my boys, "Never go back – always keep pushing forward because the medics will come behind." It didn't always work that way. I mean a lot of times the medics never got there and I had my platoon lined up and I was moving into this big mountainous crater where the Japs were at and they were shooting out of these caves at us. We were going to move into that and I heard this guy holler "Dean!" so I went back to get him and he'd been gut shot and he was a little bit shorter than I was. When I stooped down to pick him up, then they got me but I didn't even know I was hit. I carried him all the way back to the medics, put him down at the medics and started to head for my outfit and they hollered, "Hey, come back here!". I asked them what was the matter and they said I was all full of blood, that I must have been shot too. I said, "No. I was carrying him and I got his blood on me." They said, "No, you ain't." Then they sat me down and looked at me and they said, "Now, what do you think?" I said, "Oh, my God!" And, I was just married. That's when they took me back, 'cause I couldn't do no more then.

Mark: You were taken back to Guam then?

- Voight: I was left there on the island one night and the next morning they flew me into Guam 'cause then had to do some work on me right away otherwise they'd have lost me.
- Mark: I would say there had to be some surgery going on.
- Voight: You bet.
- Mark: That was on Iwo Jima then.
- Voight: There was some minor surgery done on Iwo Jima and at Guam they did the major surgery. Then they had to do some plastic surgery and Ailla Heights and never could complete it – it had to be in stages all the way along. You had to heal so far and they told me they were going to fix me up like brand new. Well, they sure lied like Hell. But anyway then they got me back to Oak Knoll and then they decided that they didn't have what they needed so then they sent me to Great Lakes. I was supposed to stay there for four months before they did some more plastic surgery on me. Well, they never did complete the job properly.
- Mark: So when the war ended the Japanese surrendered you were--
- Voight: I was in the hospital.
- Mark: In Hawaii or Great Lakes?
- Voight: Great Lakes.
- Mark: Do you recall your reaction to it?
- Voight: When Germany surrendered, we were overseas and we were on Iwo when that happened and we reacted to that. You could see tracer bullets fired all over and everything else. Then when the Japanese surrendered, I don't think I was with it. I was in a different world. I never intended to come back home.
- Mark: You were finally discharged from the service then in January of 1946?
- Voight: Right. At the convenience of the government.
- Mark: That's what they all said. I'm interested in some of the post-war adjustments, readjustments that you had to make. Obviously you had some medical adjustments to make.
- Voight: You betcha! A lot of them, about six years.

- Mark: So you must have had some considerable contact with the VA . Was it the Army doctors?
- Voight: No, it was in the Marine Corps – mostly Naval.
- Mark: As you mentioned, they didn't do the job to your satisfaction while you were actually in the Marine Corps. After the war did that change at all as you continued to get--?
- Voight: After the war I had to go back every so often for sounds so that I could urinate. They had to run a rod through me and clean me out. That was about a year it took altogether and then I had to go to my own private doctors after that if I wanted to have a family. They wouldn't do anything for me. That took me five years.
- Mark: On this form I had you fill out you mentioned depression and anxiety after the war. I don't want to pry too much, but I found a lot of veterans face--
- Voight: Mine was a little different. My depression was the fact that I could not perform sexually. Wouldn't that give anybody a little depression and lots of anxiety? Then Uncle Sam when you ask him for help, says, "Why? I'll give you 10% for scar tissue, 5% for the loss of a testicle and we'll give you 10% for this" and then cry like Hell if you wanted more. You fought and fought for everything, and I wouldn't have got it if I hadn't contacted Amvet wanted to sell me some insurance and in order to sell me the insurance, I told them "You fight for me and I'll fight for you." He said, "I'll do the best I can" and raised 10% so it's who you know and so on.
- Mark: I was going to ask about veterans organizations so I suppose we can just go with the AmVets thing now then.
- Voight: This was just the guy who sold me insurance and you got it too. He pushed through and wrote up a story and they give me 15 more percent. Then I went to the government because I couldn't get into anything. I was only getting about \$30 a month and I didn't think that was enough because I paid for all my own doctor bills for five years out of my own pocket. Uncle Sam didn't help me. I figured that what happened to me was worth a hell of a lot more than they ever gave me and I think anybody would. That's depressing when you go and you offer your life for your country and they do damage to you like that and then they won't come back and help you. Then I got a couple of lawyers that said they would help me. They didn't help me. "Where were you wounded?" I said I was wounded on Iwo Jima. Well they didn't have any bars there you must have got hit in the head, you didn't get shot. You didn't have a demolition pack blow up on your back, called me a liar. Wouldn't that make you depressed?

- Mark: Um, huh. But the AmVets were helpful to you.
- Voight: The AmVets were only helpful because I bought insurance from them. That's the reason they helped me. They got me an extra 10-15%. Then I joined the American Legion and all they did was hem and haw around and didn't do nothing. Then I went with the VFW. They couldn't do nothing for me either. The only guy that helped me more than anybody else was Dave Zeen. At least he tried. I went down to the VA with him and they said "Well, you gotta have proof of all these injuries." I said, "What more proof do you want? I got a Purple Heart, I got a Gold Star, you can see the scars on me." "Well, we don't know that you didn't get them in a bar fight." I said, "On Iwo Jima? There wasn't a building on Iwo Jima. There wasn't even a shack. There wasn't even an outhouse."
- Mark: Now Dave Zeen was a relatively young guy, Vietnam era veteran. These travails went on for years and years and years I take it. Even today, I get the impression.
- Voight: Ya. I give up trying. I got a 30 some percent disability and I got a buddy that got shot in the shoulder. He gets 100% disability. He can work and do anything else. It went right straight through his shoulder blade. So what's this they say to you. Well why should I have been depressed? Now I've outgrown it. To Hell with it. I ain't got that many more years to go anyway.
- Mark: I suppose we should move on to some other topics.
- Voight: Ya. If you would be interested in any of the guys I served with. Bill Watts, he's the Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Jim Roosevelt, Evans F. Carlson.
- Mark: I take it you stay in contact with quite a few of your Marine Corps friends.
- Voight: Most of the Raider Battalion. Because they were cool.
- Mark: Is this something that you did since the war or did you re-establish these contacts later in life.
- Voight: You always try to keep in contact, but now the one guy that I lost for 40 years was the guy that I went in the service with, that's Roger Davenport. And, I've been looking for him for years, I figured that I could find him 'cause his dad had a creamery. After 40 years had past, he had wrote the Raider Battalion, he finally figured that's where he'd have to get in touch with me. Then they called me of maybe 40 years later. They sent me a letter and said that somebody had been trying to get in touch with me, but they wouldn't give him my address because they figured maybe he was a

skip tracer, but they got his address and phone number. So then I called him and he happened to be in Wausau and he come over and that was 40 years later and then we've went to Florida together and so on and so forth after that.

Mark: Are there reunions of Raiders? Organized sorts of reunions and that sort of thing or do you just stay in touch?

Voight: Oh, ya. We have reunions every two years. I don't go to them because I can't afford it. I've went to two of them. They had one in Minnesota last year. I thought I was gonna go to but something came up and I couldn't make it.

Mark: Some of the other post-war adjustments. For example, finding work and finding a place to live and those sorts of things.

Voight: When I come back from overseas, my lieutenant wrote his dad, who had a machine shop in Chicago and he says, "I have a guy here that can fix watches, fix guns, repair anything there is and I would like to know if he wants to come to work for you if you will consider it." When I came back I couldn't go back to the railroad. The railroad was good to me while I was in there, they sent me checks even after I was in the Marine Corps for quite a while, but then when I come back I was supposed to be able to go back within 90 days and get my old job back.

Mark: Right. What happened?

Voight: Well, when I went to the hospital I had to go in there and have them check me out and the time that I was in the hospital had kept me past the date that I could get back to the job. I'd been too long so they wouldn't accept me anymore. Went over my 100 days or something. Because I couldn't. I was in the hospital. Then this guy that I was telling you about, Lt. O'Reilly, his father hired me.

Mark: Did that work out well?

Voight: Well, it worked out. He had a machine shop, it worked out well while I was working for him and then he had to retool and he borrowed money from me and never paid me back. Then I went to work for Morey Construction Company in Chicago.

Mark: But you seem to be able to find work without too much difficulty. There were a lot of vets on the job market at the time.

- Voight: I would lie like Hell. I could do anything you can do. That's the way I put it. They doubted my word until I got to work and then they found out I could do it. So I didn't have any trouble. But, as I say, I lied.
- Mark: I've think we've covered all my standard questions here. Is there anything you'd like to add?
- Voight: Not that I can think of unless you're interested in any of the guys I served with.
- Mark: Well if you want to tell my about them – especially if they're from the state here.
- Voight: From Wisconsin, I can't tell you many of them.
- Mark: I'm interested in some of the Raiders 'cause they're kind of an unusual group.
- Voight: Well, Jim Roosevelt was one of them and Evans F. Carlson, King Kong Nolan, he was a professional boxer.
- Mark: That's quite a nickname.
- Voight: They called him King Kong Nolan. Mike Nolan was his name. Bill Walsh was the Congressional Medal of Honor winner, Frank O'Reilly, he was the Lt., and Doc Keyes, he's a contractor in Indiana now, and Chief was an Indian chief in New Mexico, Bill Quintana, Bob Wolinski was a Congressman, but he passed away just lately. Stormy Sexton, he's still around and he's the President of the Marine Raider Battalion Club.
- Mark: So all these guys, how did they get in the Raiders so far as you know anyway?
- Voight: About the same way I did. Bill Walsh was a feisty little Irishman from Boston and he just liked it rough and ready so that's why he signed up for the Battalion.
- Mark: So these guys were probably a little more tough than the average Marine.
- Voight: Bill Walsh was about about 5'7", light build, but ornery. And Brian Cork, he was another one, his father was President of Rand McNally. He's in Chicago, he's a Chicago boy. Frank O'Reilly is in Chicago. That's about it.
- Mark: Sounds quite interesting.

Voight: Well, if I had you here I could show you papers and some souvenirs and stuff like that that I still have but you ain't here! [Laughs]

Mark: So that would be difficult. I thank you for taking some time out of your schedule to talk to me.

Voight: I hope it done some good for what you want.

Mark: Absolutely! Very, very interesting. You're the first Marine Raider I've ever spoken to.

Voight: There isn't very many of them left.

Mark: No, not too many at all. We're kind of low on Marine Corps, actually. They're smaller than the Army, but--

Voight: They almost became an Army. When you get so many companies, regiments and divisions then you become an army. It would be the Marine Army though.

Mark: That doesn't make too much sense though.

Voight: No.

[End of Interview]