

**John Carney
Narrator**

**Unknown Interviewers
Hudson Falls High School**

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John Carney JC
Interviewer IN

IN: Do you remember when Hitler came to power? Did that have any effect on you?

JC: Hitler, Yes. He was a very bad man, you could see that for a long. Little did we know that he was going to cause all of the trouble that we got involved in. In the beginning, he was the man that ran it all. He got power, built up a huge army and was going to conquer the world. He was just about to conquer Europe but the United States got involved. He hadn't thoroughly beaten England, but it was pretty bad. I was not in that part of the world at that time, I was in the Pacific.

IN: Where were you on December 7, 1941, do you remember?

JC: I was over in Vermont working in a factory but I was home that weekend (in Lake George) I was outside and I came in and I heard on the radio about Pearl Harbor and the attack. I didn't get involved in anything until October of 1943.

IN: What did you do once you got involved?

JC: Well, I was drafted and then a month later I was inducted (October 1943). We had to go to Rutland for a Physical and some tests but then I was drafted on the 15th of November and shipped off to any army fort in Massachusetts. I was only there 3 or 4 days and they gave us uniforms and all that stuff. Then I was shipped off to Texas (Camp Barclay) and from there I was in a training unit for about three months (basic training) then I was shipped to El Paso for medical training. I was trained as a dental technician. I spent three months there. I graduated and then we were sent off to another school and took more training there. We went to another army depot in California (around San Francisco) we were there awhile and then they gave us a couple of weeks vacation to visit home and come back again. Then we were on the ship (a large group of medics) to New Guinea. We were there for about a month. This was all a process for getting ready to invade the Hawaiian Islands. We went to the northern part of New Guinea to fuel up and merge with another flotilla of ships. We went from there to Boonville, they were still fighting the Japanese but they were beginning to disperse. We were there about a month and put us on the ship and we started heading towards the Philippines. Navy ships and scout planes joined us. We saw Japanese planes fly out and our planes would come and shoot them down real quick. We went to the main island and landed in the Indian Gulf and at the bay (about 20 miles long) it was full of ships and we were all up on the decks

of our ships and watching. There was a gun post on top of one of the mountains, it was disabled but it got firing again. The big battleship was not too far from us, and they were moving a bunch of the 16 inch guns and they hit the gun post on the top of the mountain. We got up the next morning and saw a boat next to us that wasn't there the last night. It was standing straight up and the battleship was nowhere to be seen. The Japanese were under boxes floating along trying to hide. They had charges on them and were trying to blow the ships. My bunk was right along the water level but I never heard a thing that night. We went ashore the next morning, there was a guy on the beach getting a haircut and there was not much other activities. We moved inland, and the citizens gave us pineapple and wanted cigarettes if we had any. We went about 12 miles in and slept on the open ground that next night and I woke up the next morning. There was a pino sitting next to us rolling dice. We went marching later towards manila. They loaded us in trucks. We were right near park field when they had us get out and on the road and there was a Japanese tank up near the end of the road. They started firing towards us so we got in the rice patties at the side of the road. I was following another soldier when I got shot in the back. That was the extent of my combat at that time. I got back to the aid station and they shipped me back to the clearing station. They dressed my wound and cut out the bad part and sent me to a field hospital. I was there for a week until I asked if I could go back to my regiment. They said OK and by the time I got back to them we were getting ready for the battle of all cities in Manila. We had quite a few wounded that time. The battle went on for 6-7 days. There was a lot of destruction but I was lucky because I didn't have any more problems. I was in the 145th regiment, 37th division. We walked for about 2-3 days, we were going up the mountainside. We were about to go up one of the peaks, when the Japanese attacked us and split our regiment in two. They had a machine gun at the top and shot anyone who went towards them. We decided to wait for the next day before trying to bring them down. During the night, there were many wounded who kept yelling for medics. We went out to get those fellas and bring them in. There was a lot of danger but we got them back in. We were there for 4-5 days and they had brought in food for us. They finally got some big guns in there and were able to take down both sets of Japanese on the top of the mountain. We left a detachment of the regiment there and the rest of us were sent to do Police duty in manila. I got set up as an assistant dentist. After that, we went 15 miles to the big island to do another big consolidation with other armies.

IN: What did you feel about the atomic bomb?

JC: Greatest thing that ever happened. We would have got slaughtered up there and would have inevitably won but that bomb took care of everything really quickly. Millions of us were saved because of that. There would have been thousands and thousands of casualties.

IN: Do you remember what you were doing when you found out that the war ended?

JC: Yes, we were up in garrison. The Japanese that were left scattered off the roads and let us go through. Some would surrender and others would fight to the death. Most of them surrendered. There was a parachute group and they had a small fight when they

came down but most of the Japanese knew that they were beat. But, we were lucky we didn't have to go near the bomb because that was where we were headed.

IN: Was it hard to re-adjust back into society in America?

JC: No. The war was over. There were a lot of volunteers and a lot of us that were drafted. I had just got married and had my first son so I wasn't anxious to get into any war. They had a draft then that started a year after the United States got into the war. Being in the medics made a big difference. You weren't in the thick of it most of the time.

IN: Is there anything that you would like students to remember about world war 2 and the world war 2 generation?

JC: Don't get into another one. These things that are going on now in Iraq are small potatoes compared to that. We lost a lot of ships and a lot of people but were able to move ahead. It isn't fun. There are some of those that like it but they are the minority.

IN: Did your wife know what was going on while you were in the war?

JC: Somewhat. My wife and I were both catholic. After talking to a priest two or three times while we were over in New Guinea I found out that he knew my wife through her brother who was also a priest. He was going back home because he was only over there for a short time. He visited my wife and her family and told them that he had seen me and that we had talked. She knew I was in the 37th division so when it was in the papers she knew where I was. They didn't want you to write because then they would know where you were and you could be captured.

IN: How did you feel about the enemy and how do you feel about them today?

JC: I have a bad back because of them. I wouldn't buy a Japanese car for that reason.

IN: Do you recall your feelings when FDR died?

JC: He wasn't a friend of mine anyway. It took from 1929 to 1948 before they started to make any progress here in this country. It was depression during that time, a lot more than you see now. It was about 25% of the people.

IN: Do you remember anything else about the great depression?

JC: Well, I was born in 1919 so I was old enough to know and I can remember that they were making big progress in Europe when I was still in High School. I remember some students saying how they thought the Germans were great because they were winning so much. People started asking them what they were going to do if the Germans came to the United States and they didn't have any plans. All the National Guard was equipped with World War 1 equipment. And they told everyone on the first draft that we weren't training to fight a war because everyone thought it wasn't going to happen. We were lucky. We were going without butter. Lots of stuff like that.

IN: Did you ever feel like giving up? What motivated you?

JC: No, I never felt like giving up. You just go and do it because everyone else has to. Part of it was that everyone had part of his or her family in the service. I had two brothers and 2 out of the 3 were enlisted. My other brother was rejected because of a heart condition.

IN: Was your brother in Europe or in the Pacific?

JC: No, he was in the Air Force in England. He flew into Germany in a B-17 (he was the co-pilot) they were shot down coming back after a bombing tour. They were bombing factories in Germany and got shot there and there was some damage to the plane. The plane was deteriorating so they had to land in Belgium. There were people that found them there and hid them and got them back to England. They were never used again. They sent him and the rest of his crew back to the United States for a rest and they were going to go back but it ended up that they didn't have to. They discharged him and the others during the summer of 1945. They were still in the service but didn't have to go anywhere.

IN: And you were discharged after him?

JC: I got out Christmas Day in 1945. The war was over and we landed in San Francisco. I thought I'd freeze to death because it was so cold there but it turned out I was coming down with Malaria. It was probably a month before we were able to go home. It was 2-3 days in San Francisco before they ordered us on the train to go back to where we were inducted. Myself and the other medic got bronze stars and the two rifleman that were acting as guards for us got silver stars. Fort Devens in Massachusetts was where we were inducted and discharged.

IN: What was it like when you got back? Was everyone excited to see you?

JC: Well yes, when we got back to Fort Devens they made the effort to get us out by Christmas Day. My wife drove all the way out in a snowstorm to come and get me. They gave us aptitude tests while we were there and I wanted to become a mechanic for the Air Force but they were only looking for medics at that time. Then I went to Duke and was going to be a dentist but I didn't have the background for it.

IN: Is there anything else you'd like to share?

JC: Glad I went, glad I got back. Everybody else says the same. It's a great experience. I was in pretty good shape when I got back. I only have a bad back and still struggle with that. In combat, you don't get a chance to think too much but after you get a chance to think a lot about what happened. My wife and child were with her folks while I was gone and they were glad to have them there. I enjoy watching the documentaries on the war because you see things that were much worse than anything that you've gone through. I got to be a T5, which is one step above private.