

**Horace Finkle  
Veteran**

**Kevin Hoffman  
Interviewer**

**Interviewed on December 30, 2008  
Hudson Falls, NY**

Kevin Hoffman    K  
Horace Finkle    H

**K:** Mr. Finkle, Where and when were you born?

**H:** Well I was born in Glens Falls hospital, March 21; 1926... that's a long time ago.

**K:** Ok, during the great depression, can you describe how your family got along?

**H:** That was in the 30's, I honestly couldn't tell you kid. Actually I was only 4 years old. We had something to eat I remember that, but nothing that I can really recall.

**K:** did you receive a high school diploma?

**H:** I did.

**K:** from what high school?

**H:** [Unclear] Central School.

**K:** Were you drafted into the war or volunteered?

**H:** I enlisted.

**K:** Why?

**H:** ... [Unclear] thing to do. I Graduated from school in the spring and next February I enlisted. Patriotic I would call it, I don't know, goofy (laughter)... A lot of us did.

**K:** What was your branch and job in world war two?

**H:** I was in the Navy Air Force, I was a combat air crew, 24 liberator, bomber, and privateer at [Unclear] which is another Navy ship wing.

**K:** What did you have to do?

**H:** What was my job?

**K:** Yes.

**H:** Well as the first [Unclear] aircraft. I was a turret gunner working with two .50 caliber machine guns and radar operator.

**K:** What was your ship called?

**H:** B24 liberator, it was an airplane. The B24 was a plane bomber.

**K:** Can you describe your feelings on December 7, 1941?

**H:** What was on that date again?

**K:** The day that Pearl Harbor was bombed, what were your feelings?

**H:** ... Anger I would say. I was with my buddies from the service, we went out to the theatre in Glens Falls. They stopped the movie and broadcasted what was happening, we got up and left ticked off, we were not happy.

**K:** Because you entered in 1944, what were your feelings about the war in the first two years the U.S. were involved?

**H:** It was just a job that you had to do, and we did it.

**K:** Where were you positioned in world war two, where did you fight?

**H:** Come again Kevin?

**K:** Where were you in world war 2?

**H:** South pacific.

**K:** Yes, like where specifically, places?

**H:** Our type of drill bombing we were all over the south pacific, is where we were. And I guess in (Unclear)...We patrolled so well and we pretty well covered it. We bombed Tinian south band? Iwo Jima, Okinawa, Peleliu? We were down there for the most a little bit. After the war was over we went to Okinawa. We had gone fully male then and went to Shang Hai China. You know just goofing off. Basically.

**K:** Okay, can you describe your time in Peleliu?

**H:** Boring, yeah we were just all patrol workers. We didn't fight every day. But we had 11 planes in our squadron so we would fight once every 11 days. Quite frequently we would fly a cruiser for each day. It's hard to tell. You just go flying whenever you are told. That's all. And as a Lewiston man we didn't have much to say, if we wanted to or not. We were just going to go. That's all. Our pilot was lieutenant of commander, he was like the boss of squadron. He was a quell out of water, which helped us out considerably.

**K:** Do you remember when you went there?

**H:** No... Honestly I can't remember. Latter part of 1945, as I've said before, it's been 60 years since I've been out. I'm forgetting all this stuff. I'm trying to remember it now and I can't bring it up.

**K:** What about your time in Iwo Jima?

**H:** We were up there about four or five different times. We were at the air strip up there. We would fight up there for about 10 days or something like that. I can't remember on that one either. But then we would go back up to Tinian for a little R&R... Rest and Relaxation. Then we go over to another island to make sure all the Japanese air strips were secured. We would take over and then take off from their then we would patrol all around the pacific whatever area the boss would come up with that's where we patrolled. And it was a patrol binding squadron, that's what it is. You shoot a few people and you blow up a few.

**K:** Was there anything, could you describe your time in Okinawa

**H:** Basically it was all the same...ahhh. End up near bay air where general Buckner got killed and there was an air strip there and we would just hop right off of that and (Unclear)... We went to find government help from Okinawa Shang Hai China... The good kind. There was so much there.

**K:** Okinawa is known to have the most casualties in all of the Pacific wars.

**H:** Iwo Jima is up there too.

**K:** Yes, did you ever see any combat? Or anything?

**H:** Well from the air that's what we say. We were shooting and banging. Never got shot... Well just once but it was no big deal. Where I got hit my pants cover it up. Right in the ass.

**K:** Okay, um...What did you think of the Japanese? Like now or then?

**H:** I have the same feeling that I have now for them. I hated them. I still to this day can't stand them. What they did. Primary, cause my wife's brother was killed. Uhh, something come up and he was on the destroyer escort USS Underhill and they were going down to the loop. I can't remember what island it was now anyways. More R&R. Some of the boys from Okinawa were going down there for rest anyways. A sub came up from underneath them. Blew the ship right in two. Right through the middle. Stanley was and eventually is in there. Not good. So I still don't like 'em.

**K:** Okay, so how close did you ever come to the Japanese?

**H:** Live ones or dead ones? The dead japs from me to you. I have a rifle downstairs. The live ones were farther away no one cared.

**K:** Did you ever see any commanders?

**H:** See what?

**K:** Commanders?

**H:** Uh yes, I'd say so. Well I guess not (Unclear)... Pilot is a lieutenant of chief is in each squadron. He held as much water as anyone else there. (Unclear)

**K:** So what was going through your mind during combat?

**H:** Keep your head down so it doesn't get shot off. I guess. Shoot first is what we tried to do. And during combat whites battle station was fort Cup Neck. Kurt was a gunner. And we had 6 turrets on the plane that was my favorite place. And you see them coming at you and you shoot 'em down before they shoot you. So that was it.

**K:** Um, How often did you think of your family?

**H:** Daily.

**K:** Yes?

**H:** Yes. I was one with my wife Shirley It made me think of my family and her's you know it was just something to do.

**K:** What was your motivation to keep going?

**H:** I guess it was the job. We knew we had to do it.

**K:** Were there ever times you felt like giving up?

**H:** No.

**K:** Never?

**H:** Nope.

**K:** Were you ever wounded?

**H:** Yes that one time that I mentioned earlier.

**K:** What was your opinion on Truman's decision about the bomb?

**H:** I guess you could say I was for it. ( Unclear) There was gonna be a lot of boys out there getting killed if they lived in Japan. But you know the Japs are over their.. But the Atomic Bomb took care of that. They gave up. And I was glad to see it.

**K:** Would you support using it again if we had to?

**H:** In that situation yes.

**K:** Were you ever near the USS. Franklin?

**H:** Not that I know of. It could have been down underneath us somewhere. But I... I don't know. The USS. Franklin was never afloat was it.

**K:** The USS. Franklin was famous for never going down.

**H:** I would say no Kevin, that's a no.

**K:** Do you ever have either fond or unpleasant memories from the war?

**H:** Well like I mentioned that was the end of it right there. I tried not to think about it anymore.

**K:** Did you ever go to any reunions? Would you ever go to any?

**H:** No I never did. The Squadron had reunions and most of them were out in the west coast. I didn't have the finances to go up there. No I didn't go.

**K:** What was your most striking memory of World War 2?

**H:** The day I got discharged.

**K:** Can you describe what happened?

**H:** I came from Myrtle Beach, Long Island, I didn't come from the west coast and I went through the procedures and stayed overnight in Albany. (unclear) I was a real happy boy.

**K:** How old were you?

**H:** Well see...I must have been, maybe... 22 or 21... 21 I guess. Or maybe I was 17...I think I was only 20.(unclear)

**K:** You were in the war for how many years?

**H:** I was in service since February 44 and I got out May of 46.

**K:** Other than getting discharged do you have any other memorable experiences?

**H:** Any particular time?

**K:** No anytime in your entire experience.

**H:** When I was out from discharge I was out at Okinawa and the discharge has a point system and once all my (unclear)... The squadron had disbanded it at the time and we went to a place down in Okinawa... Anyways they were shipping us back to the United States and we were there about a month until we were due for discharge and I know one morning we were under siege and I picked up a pair of binoculars and (unclear) I was looking out at the ocean to see if any ships were coming in. And one came in and it was for quarantine. Some contagious disease. That was the ship we were supposed to come back on and well that eliminated that. Maybe a week or so later another ship came in pretty quickly and we heard boom boom boom. It was a Jap ship and they had taken

care of that. The ship did come and a few of them came out. All of them had half the time we had all of us. We loaded up all the gear that we could carry and get loaded back up on that ship. It was on its way back to the states. We hit San Francisco to begin with, then we came back up the northern route and got hit with a terrific storm. But we finally made it back in one piece . So that was a good feeling. To have your feet on dry land. To feel you're safe. Those are our dreams.

**K:** When the war ended, where were you?

**H:** Well I was out in the south Pacific. I can't remember where exactly I was at the time... I can't remember that Kevin.

**K:** You were just happy?

**H:**Yes.

**K:** Alright I think that's it thank you.

**H:** Praise the Lord!