

**John A. Sidur
Narrator**

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Researcher**

**New York State Military Museum
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W.C : Sir for the record will you please state your full name and date and place of birth please?

J.S : John A. Sidur that's spelt SIDUR my date of birth is January 16, 1918

W.C: and whereabouts were you born?

J.S: Cohoes, Cohoes NY.

W.C: And did you attend school in Cohoes?

J.S: Yes .

W.C: And how far did

J.S: 11 grades I went .

W.C: All right and when did you join the National Guard ?

J.S: September 1940

W.C: And why did you pick the National Guard?

J.S: I figured it was like the army , I said I'd go in for a year and I'll be home. I wouldn't have to get caught in the 5 year draft.

W.C: Did you have any friends that were in the National Guard?

J.S: Oh yes a lot of them, I knew a lot of them.

W.C: Okay so, you joined the National Guard you started drilling at the Armory in Troy?

J.S: No No ..

W.C: Oh, I mean Cohoes and then you went away for Maneuvers?

J.S: No, I joined after they came back from Maneuvers, I didn't go on any Maneuvers.

W.C: Okay.

J.S: Once I joined in we got federalized and we went down to Alabama.

W.C: And what was life like down in Alabama?

J.S: They didn't like us to good.

W.C: No!

J.S: No we were Yankee's and they were Rebels.

W.C: (Laugh)

J.S: but we got along with them pretty good.

W.C: And how long were you in Alabama for?

J.S: Roughly 14 months.

W.C: 14 months, did you go on any maneuvers down in Alabama?

J.S: Yes, we went on one maneuver in Tennessee.

W.C: Umm Hum

J.S: for about a month and then we went to Arkansas and Louisiana big maneuvers down there.

W.C: Okay and what kind of training did you receive, was it mostly infantry?

J.S: It was all infantry yeah.

W.C: and when did you go over seas?

J.S: After they bombed Pearl Harbor we got shipped right out to California.

February or March of 1942.

W.C: So you went overseas in '42?

J.S: Yeah

W.C: How did, I would assume you went by ship.

J.S: Yes we went by a big English ship , The HMS Aquitania .

W.C: Oh the Aquitania?

J.S: Yep

W.C: did you get sea sick at all?

J.S: No but I didn't care for it though.

W.C: No, How was the food on board?

J.S: the food we didn't like.

W.C: No

J.S: we weren't use to English food.

W.C: do you recall approximately how long the trip was?

J.S: How long, I don't know it was a big ship a 4 stacker.

W.C: Umm Hum

J.S: That was the only 4 stacker left a float.

W.C: and where abouts did you go , I know you left out of California.

J.S: Yeah, we thought we were gonna go to Oahu in the Hawaiian Islands. But the Aquitania couldn't dock there , it had 40 foot drafts.

W.C: It was too big.

J.S: And they didn't have a channel deep enough . In Hilo Hawaii, that's were we wound up . But we went to Honolulu, we parked there. We thought we were getting off there but we wound up getting off one ship then right back up on another one a smaller one then they shipped us to the Island of Hawaii

W.C: Oh Okay and how long were you in Hawaii for?

J.S: about 7 months or So.

W.C: and was there more training to do in Hawaii?

J.S: We were on the move constantly . So the Japanese didn't know where we were.

W.C: Now what was Hawaii like back then?

J.S: Oh Hawaii was beautiful I loved Hawaii its an island with 5 volcano's on it 2 active ones Mauna-Loa and Kilauea. When we were there Mauna-Loa erupted.

W.C: Oh were you.

J.S: Yep , we blamed our young truck drivers, cause there was a Japanese school we were in and we blamed the truck drivers for backing up and knocking the day lights out of our placement. Come to find out it was the volcano 10 miles away.

W.C: Oh my goodness.

J.S: that erupted for 3 weeks

W.C: Were you in any immediate danger?

J.S: for that No. A Little bit to far away.

W.C: Now, during your time off did you ever go into Honolulu or any towns.

J.S: We went to Honolulu when we got transferred to Oahu that was after Pearl Harbor. But that was Hilo Hawaii. that's the name if port. Once we got transferred to Oahu but that's where we took training for our combat.

W.C: Did you get much time off , free time?

J.S: Yeah, but not much, if you were a good soldier you got a little more. If you

were high Falutin.

W.C: Did you have to pull a lot of Guard duty or KP?

J.S: Oh Yeah , always guard duty and KP .

W.C: And what rank were you at that time?

J.S: When I first went over I was a private first Günter, it was national Guard you couldn't get promoted.

W.C: Yeah all the senior fellows that had been in the unit held the ranks , right?

J.S: Right.

W.C: Now once you left Hawaii where did you go next?

J.S: We went to Saipan.

W.C: Okay that would have been in the Atlantic.

J.S: yeah after we left Oahu that's when we intergraded to Saipan the 2nd and 4th Marine Division and the 47th Army.

W.C: And you went to Saipan by Navy Ship?

J.S: yeah

W.C: Do you recall the name of the ship?

J.S: We had a convoy of 21 and 3 regiments 105th 106th and 165th each regiment had 7 ships . First 3 were taking each of the 3 battalions and 4 freighters for all the equipment that we had . So we had a convoy of 21 ships plus 5 destroyers.

W.C: Were you attacked at all on your way to Saipan.

J.S: Well, we weren't sure if we were or our destroyers they made a big loop and they were sending up duck charges they told us that there were Jap Submarines

there that they spotted but we never saw anything. But we never had any real problems.

W.C: Did you see any Japanese planes at all?

J.S: Going over No.

W.C: Alright so you landed on Saipan what was that landing like?

J.S: The official landing the 2nd and 4th Marine divisions were the prime target. And we were suppose to land 2 days after. They landed June 15th and we were suppose to land June 17th , on a diversionary so to take the pressure off the two divisions. Our convoy pulled in and we got surprised , Our convoys pulled in on the 15th late toward evening and the 2 marine divisions were still on shore. They didn't got anyplace they landed as far as we could see off the ships. But they made no advancements , a lot of problems , they had a lot of resistances. The ships were firing hitting ammo dumps and that . It was June 16th late at night we got orders to prepare to make landing. I said what the hell is this night time , we didn't know but all our landing barges must have been tied up to our ships . Each ship had troops so we got ready all the mats were dumped over board.

W.C: So you climbed down the nets?

J.S: But they called us off and we rested up then we got second orders for departure the same thing but nothing happened. Early just about .. It wasn't day break we made a landing we got the 3rd order and we went in and we landed in the 4th Marine Division there was no hesitation we had to get down and go straight in and I landed in the 4th Marine Division and 2 little marines young fellas

they were in the water up to their knees , they looked at us and they were so scared . The landing barges just went in we didn't care where we landed just as long as we made land. This other guy jumped up I didn't know where he came from he gave us a bottle of Saki we drank that , that was good wine then we took off to the right.

W.C: Initially when you landed you didn't encounter any kind of resistance?

J.S: No cause the Marines , we landed right into the Marines they wanted us on shore. We were suppose to go to Magazine bay But we never made it there we but landed right were the 4th marine division was.

W.C: and then immediately did you move forward at that point once everybody landed?

J.S: Oh we don't know cause we took off to the right and first we made contact with an anti aircraft gun, we had problems cause we had no heavy guns . So we didn't dispose of that till the next morning when we had tanks coming in and then we got rid of that.

W.C: Did you encounter any Japanese soldiers at that point?

J.S: Oh yeah

W.C: was that your first time under fire ?

J.S: yeah first time.

W.C: What was that like for you, was it scary?

J.S: Tell you what once your on the move your not scared , once you stop and wait that's when you get nervous . Once your on the move you forget about your

worries. Maybe I was scared , once you stop you have time to think where you are then your scared. Let me see I wanted to tell you something.

W.C: You were telling me about the anti aircraft battery that was taken out.

J.S: So we left those guys we just told them, we ain't gonna touch you and we took off to the right that was our orders to bear right and keep going until you make contact with the rest of the troops then we fought the anti aircraft gun.

That was a tough night. I didn't actually... my platoon wasn't involved we were right next to it. The next day we were heading to the Napaton Peninsula that was where we found out that's where we fought on the Napaton Peninsula But we get there to the Aslito Airfield. My Nephew he knows Aslito Airfield (His nephew sits side him not in camera view.) The Marine says they captured that already, they were no place around, who knows we hit the airport after.

W.C: Did you encounter any resistance at the airfield?

J.S: I think when we got there most of that was gone . We got there and got fired on by heavy artillery from the Napaton Peninsula. and we had to come back on our side. Then we see a air battle going on Japanese planes and American And while we were there all of a sudden the Jap plane was coming in for a landing, he was on fire and someone took a shot at him with a rifle. Evidently the pilot must have seen him cause he took off and made another circle to come in and I tell you he was so close to us we dove for cover. But I happen to hit right over a big boulder. They caught him at the end of the runway we was on fire. And they told us it was a 16 year old kid, the pilot.

W.C: So they captured the pilot?

J.S: I didn't see it but they captured the pilot. I did see one beautiful Japanese Zero. (Fighter plane) Just sitting in a regiment you know I was just like " Look at that beautiful thing there." Red circle around her. Where did we go after that. At my age I lose a lot of that stuff.

W.C: Napaton Peninsula.

J.S: Napaton Peninsula , and that's where we stood for a little while the Marines command says there were 200 Japanese and we had the Battalion of troops so we couldn't , we couldn't take it we got blamed right away. Who knows how many people that we lost . We couldn't dig into that much because there was a lot of shall and while we were advancing the navy had to have been part of the 1st Battalion. The navy started to fire onto the island there rounds were to short that bodies you could see being fired right up the hill.

W.C: So our people were killed by friendly fire.

J.S: Yep! I presume it was friendly fire; you couldn't tell whose ship it was but there were firing on our raid but they were firing to short. We got blamed for that too. The marines right away said the Battalion of men which was roughly 3000 of the 4th company can't take care of 200 and some people, We got blamed right away I can't remember how it ended. But anyway it fell once they found out, once they found is in Napasai , Where the big artillery piece came up and they found out they were on railroad tracks . They fired off 2 or 3 rounds and shoved it back into the holes. It was Camouflaged.

W.C: You mentioned the artillery piece going in and out of the mountain right.

J.S: Yeah that was out if the big mountain I forgot the name of it, But they found out that was where all the artillery was coming from. That's where we seen it when we got onto the airstrip right away they started to fire a couple rounds so we backed off than came back on. That's where we see the air battle. That was the only time I saw the Japanese and American planes fighting. Once they found out where our artillery and airplanes where they bombed it. That was Hell for us anytime we wanted anything we couldn't get it. We were too close to the 2nd marines division and too close to the 4th marine division. Artillery was denied all the time, who denied it who knew.

W.C: Moving forward did you encounter snipers at all?

J.S: Snipers? Only one place we had snipers they killed one of our men they talked about snipers but we never saw them. One place but that was before we got into the Banzai. We fought a little bit here a little bit there. We were up to one mountain pass and we couldn't get then out of the pass. One Japanese Artillery piece that had 2 heavy machine guns on each side we go to support and 2 tanks came up and they knocked out one of our tanks and we plled back because we couldn't advance up the hill. So we pulled off to the side and there was a little Chamorro what they called the natives came out with a big stick with a cross on it . He told us right here there's a path that would take us up to the top of the mountain pass. We run up there right into the artillery piece and 2 machine guns . And I forgot how many men there was , they didn't hear us

running up there we caught them by surprise.

W.C: So you were able to knock them out?

J.S: Yeah we knocked them out. And we got up on the mountain side one place was pretty steep and the other side was getting level. We get up there and we see Japanese on the other side. We start shooting at them. But we stayed there over night we had a lot of machine on fire But the Japs where they were we couldn't tell. We tried to get artillery we tried to get air support we didn't get any of it. They said the other forward observer for the artillery ... They said they could get their guns down so low. Artillery was too close they have to fire up. We wanted them to fire lower they got the artillery own but it was right over the trees you could see the trees moving. But the Japanese was down to low and the artillery was going above them. It wasn't doing us any good. Then we stayed there over night then they called us back to support some other division we practically had that mountain pass but we couldn't take it. So they called us off we went to help somebody else. I don't know if it was the 4th marines or the 2nd Marines, there was some kind of a problem.

W.C: How big was your group?

J.S: I don't know if the whole Battalion was there or not they were using us all over. But we had the mountain pass then lost it because they told us to back off, Then we fought a little with the 2nd Marines then with the 4th. But we were in a Valley all the time. Everytime we ran into machine guns, we called up for artillery to help us Artillery DENIED DENIED DENIED . We did alright after this. But we

got blamed for everything.

W.C: What about supplies, was your ammunition supply adequate?

J.S: WE had trucks that would keep bringing water and ammunition, Not Food.

That's the main thing for us troops on the front line. You could go a few days with out food.

W.C: What did you do for food?

J.S: We got sea rations when they brought them up to us. Sea rations they would give us 6 cans per day. We get 3 cans of meats and 3 cans of biscuits and that kind of jazz. But sometimes we didn't get that cause we didn't get feed for 3 or 4 days.

W.C: What was the weather like?

J.S: Weather wasn't bad when we were there. I wouldn't say it was bad.

W.C: Did you get any rain at all.

J.S: WE got rain later on. Finally we made it up the island. The island was getting narrow and we thought we were going to take over the 2nd marine division. They were all lined up so we knew we were going to relieve the marines on the front because the island was getting narrow so that's when we were called away then finally we got to the point where we were going to relieve the 4th Marine division. We ran right into a fortified camp. We were up on a hill and the Marines wanted us down there in a hurry to get us to the 2nd Marines. But we had this cave, and we had 2 Japanese guys from the Hawaiian Islands they didn't carry any guns or anything but they were smart. They walked right into

the cave and talked to the Japanese soldiers. They weren't going to give up. Our 2 came out and told us and then went back in and told them they had 5 minutes before we are going to shell them. Then they went back in and told them they had 3 minutes all of a sudden we heard screaming of woman and children. We told them to let the civilians out, they wouldn't let them out that was their protection so it came down to they blow they cave up. How many people were killed we don't know but that cave was closed. They exploded it with dynamite. Then from there we had to go, the marines wanted us to get down in be in front but we didn't know, and just before the Banzai they knew. So we get down there and find out that our 2nd battalion was quite a ways up the island. So we thought we were going to stay there for the night. But we get orders to get up and relieve the 2nd Battalion up in the front. It was quite a ways our Colonial came over and told us that this was a bad spot, But this is going to be a Banzai, so they gave us all the grenades that we wanted, boxes of ammunitions put them around our necks so we could have all the ammunition we wanted.

W.C: What kind of gun did you carry?

J.S: Me I carried a M1.

W.C: Carbine or Garand?

J.S: No no a Carbine and M1 are different Carbine is the small one.

W.C: Okay.

J.S: the ammunition from a M1 will not fit the carbine. So we had to go down there in a hurry we told them we had to go up and reinforce the 2nd Battalion .

We didn't know where in the hell we were. I don't know if we ate or not but that don't mean nothing when your on the front line. We got our ammunition and said we were not stopping for anything. That's what the orders were don't stop for nobody. You have to get up there and enforce the 2nd Battalion and we got up there and only one shot was fired. I don't know where it came form we didn't organize our front line we didn't have time it was getting dark. And there was a railroad going by where we were. Narrow Gates Railroad and the Japs were already there. We took our positions where our Colonial told us. We didn't know but they were around us someplace and that was on July 6th it started to rain, it poured all night so we tried to protect our rifles from mud. That was the place I lost my wallet it had 6 grenades in it. I didn't lose them I used them but I put my wallet in my grenade pouch to try to keep it from getting soaked but I lost it when we started pulling back. But that's when the Banzai started we were pulling back a little at a time And then we got to a place we didn't know cause we couldn't see anything. We got to a place where we could see the ocean. It was getting late in the afternoon.

W.C: This is before the Banzai.

J.S: This is during the Banzai , The Banzai started on the 7th, but this was on the 6th we were all sitting but we could hear them and the Banzai started on the 7th early morning we were soaked. So we had to keep pulling back one at a time cause they were massive people.

W.C: I heard that during that attack they sent women and civilians out

screaming and yelling first.

J.S: I seen everything, women and men mixed up everything we just kept shooting. Who ever got to close that's who got the bullet. Wew were doing pretty good then we got to the point that there were too many casualties. So we tried to hold back as much as we could. But we thought we could see the ocean and in the ocean we seen a destroyer going up. Somebody sent out a signal.You know you can send out A B C by hand communication between ship and somebody from our outfit was sending them back there was 20 Americans and 1 Jap sending them up but I never saw it. But that's what they said it was. They sent back word to get the Marines and landing barges and they had new barges that could go on land and water. And there Armor was good. We were getting mixed up with the Japanese and all of a sudden we got hit with artillery.

American Artillery, they said it was for the Japanese but we were on the frontline and we got hit with that. We lost quite a few men I got hit then but I got shrapnel from artillery on my hand not to bad.

W.C: Was this the first time you were wounded?

J.S: Yeah, of course I didn't pay no attention but it was ripped up.

W.C: So you were hit in the right arm?

J.S: Yeah , I see one of my buddies one of his arms were already hanging down drips dried off. So I ran to him and I grabbed him I see another fella and I called to him told him we had to get him out of here. SO I got one end of the rifle and he got the other end this is what I called placko. We grabbed him and started

walking I saw the sergeant or someone we were walking slow all of a sudden 2 Japs jumped out at the side of us. I said stop, Cause they had us you know. We were waiting to get killed these 2 Japs they weren't shooting at us and we couldn't figure out what was going on.

W.C: Were they pointing weapons at you?

J.S: I couldn't tell you if they were but they were waiting but they weren't shooting. I told my other bud lets start walking again , So we walked nice and slow and they let us go . So I thought those 2 guys wanted to surrender they were getting really knocked out from that Banzai. I didn't know if they wanted to quit they just let us go. So we got my buddy up to where the wounded people, we got him there and then there was a trench and we jumped in there, there were quite a few of our own men in that trench and all of a sudden there was this Jap officer that jumped up on top of the trench on the piling we didn't see him. He must have been laying there playing dead. And me and Bob were right next to one another. He got his pistol and he had it pointed at me and then other guy (Bob) back and forth but he wasn't shooting I don't know where my rifle was I couldn't see my rifle but he wasn't shooting either he was just looking at us pointing back and forth and somebody shot him from down in the trench and knocked him into the trench. But he wasn't trying to kills us. I think he was trying to surrender but we couldn't speak Japanese and he couldn't speak English, After that is when they spotted the ships they got signals going back and forth and they brought up the marines landing barges and they came right

up they took the wounded and came right back to where we relieved the marines and they came up 3 or 4 times they came up with the landing barges we put all our wounded on there Part of our Division I forget but were some troops that they brought up. Oh in the mean time there was another man wounded and I said we need 3 volunteers and 3 guys jumped up just like that and we took the guy up to the Marine area to put him on and ship him back down about the 4th time they came up there was practically nobody so I jumped on that one and went back down and that's where I was treated. But this guys never turned us in, he treated us but there was no record, That's why I couldn't get my purple hearts for that. I could have gotten it , Found our own medics , he called us over said let us get your names and treat you and you'll get your purple hearts and I said, " we are already treated." and the 3 of us took off farther back. We don't know what in the world happened the Banzai was over. When we got from here to here we don't know what happened.

Nephew: Spikey got bayoneted.

J.S: Spiky was already hurt I didn't know it was him He was laying in a like a ditch. I didn't know who it was but I didn't grab him I see our other buddy he didn't know what was happening his arm was like , probably the sleeve of his shirt was holding his arm up was it was ripped right off and we got there. Then we got on this path called Matapochee right where the cliff was going up and a cliff on the back side. We were there for a night and quite away and I Don't know how long we were there. But everyday we were going out on patrol

everyday patrol all over a honest cliff these Japanese tanks were camouflaged and our tanks broke up I don't know how many tanks were firing at one another and I see this little plant . I don't know I think it was Papaya there was a fruit up there. I figure while they were fighting I'm gonna get it I started up there to get the fruit and someone shot right over my head. I didn't get that fruit I didn't get nothing yet. I dropped down again , but then we get settled the tank battle was over with, They knocked the tanks out we got settled Every night somebody was shooting from that cliff over toward where we were. They never hit nobody but the bullets were coming down where we were it was like fighting the Indians ya know. Like a big circle but that's every morning out on patrol.

W.C: Now were you still a private at that point or were you promoted?

Nephew: Staff Sergeant

J.S: I don't know , but I ended up as a staff sergeant. So I had to be promoted somewhere along the line. I don't know where.

W.C: So you were basically a Platoon Sergeant?

J.S: Yeah

W.C: Okay

J.S: At the end of the battle that I was Platoon Sergeant. In the New Haberties and our Platoon Sergeant. I became a Platoon Sergeant because John White was still Sergeant. But he got hit you know they sent him to the hospital and then I was staff sergeant at the time so they advanced me to platoon Sergeant but I couldn't get the rank because he was still alive there was only so much rank.

W.C: Was he from Cohoes too?

J.S: Yeah we were there everyday out on patrol . We pulled into this one place that looked like a field hospital Japanese. At first we were getting fired at and we couldn't advance on it because we only had a few men so we called in for reinforcements. So we went right for where all the shooting was there was a hospital there full of cots one guy was laying in one and they pulled the blanket. I didn't know if he was Jap or American to me he looked American, where the 4th Marines were, when they were fighting before. I don't know where they took the guy I have no idea but then they yanked us off there and put us in the New Haberties Islands.

W.C: What was it like in New Haberties?

J.S: Hot , we didn't have no troubles there but the natives , natives were wild the natives were small men but the women, you would think I was exaggerating but it took 2 of us to get around her it was natural they were all big that way. There were big snakes I never seen a live one but I seen the scales. (I think he meant skins)

W.C: Like the python you mean like that kind of snake?

J.S: I don't know what you called it this snake It wouldn't kill you by the bite but it tangled around you.

W.C: Squeeze you?

J.S: Yeah Squeeze ya.

W.C: What about...

J.S: We were there for 6 months, we never had any trouble with them but we weren't aloud in land they said you'd never come out again, you'll never make it out.

W.C: What about Tropical diseases, like Malaria or dengue fever?

J.S: Yeah right next to us was like Malaria a big sign on the side near the woods with a fence and a big sign said Malaria Area. We never got Malaria cause every morning we'd get up fpr roll call there were 3 sergeants one said open your mouth and they'd throw a pill in the next guy would give you a drink of water and the last guy would have open your mouth roll your tongue around so you couldn't hide the pill and we got that for Malaria. Then we got another pill for strength not one of our men got Malaria.

Nephew: you got a disease on your foot that was treated remember.

J.S: that was later on , I don't know what that was.

W.C: Like jungle rot or something.

J.S: I don't know, that was at the end the Banzai was over with. When we were at the Cliff. We got ripped off the 1st and 2nd Battalion we got put on a what the hell was the name of that ship. You remember cause you read about the ship (John talking to his nephew) It was a merchant marine ship anyway. They brought us down to the New Haberties Islands. Maria Santos was the name of the island, got no food. Nothing to eat the captain of the ship I can't give you nothing said I gotta have food for my crew. I don't know where we got it but we were eating Ox Tongue and lamb for the next couple of weeks, Ox tongue for

breakfast we were there for about 6 months. Then we went up to fight in Okinawa I know I messed up a few things about the banzai, my mind is ...

W.C: What was it like landing on Okinawa?

J.S: There was no resistance, the main fighting force was 4 army men and 2 marines. But no resistance on landing. The Marines were up North up they didn't want the North they were all fortified to the southern part of the Island, So we were going up and down along the island because they were small islands and figured they might have artillery and fight our troops and we would have to land on a small island and try to squash that up. But we never had no trouble on the island we walked in there and the original landing there was no resistance but when you went South. But we ran into a resistance up North too but nothing compared to down in the southern. When we landed first thing done, drop your gas masks off we carried gas masks all the time. Especially going into the front with the gas masks we went right up to the front. So we ended up on Kakazu Ridge. My buddy he knows more about the islands then I do (talking about his Nephew) From reading. We were on the 1st Marine division back down from the North but no problems. They go up the roads they don't find out what is on the sides. And they took our place and I told the guy they started standing around there. I said don't stand there there's a machine gun firing up there. We don't know where the machine gun fire was yet. But they were big shots but the machine gun opens up and I know 3 or 4 guys that got killed. Marines they were right out in the open, they learned fast. I'm not going to go on more about

Saipan we were just patrolling after the Banzai the main fighting was suppose to be over.

W.C: Now you were wounded a second time right?

J.S: Oh Okinawa I was wounded a second time .

W.C: Where were you wounded?

J.S: Right in my thumb. A piece of shrapnel from artillery or something flying around. I couldn't get it out so I had to go to the medic. They said "we have to many casualties we can't do anything for you right now." I said , " guys I can't go back up in front I gotta have this out." they said, " what do you say we cut off your thumb?" I said , "NO NO NO."

W.C: Were they serious?

J.S: I don't know maybe. Finally they took it out. Then we were up in the Northern part when the fighting ended then we got word. Like me I was there all the time from the beginning one of the originals with the company. They were making plans , giving up on Okinawa they started making plans on going into Japan. But they figured 2 million casualties so that's when Truman said drop 'em. They dropped 2 Atomic bombs by that time I was already.... I knew I wasn't going to Japan. I already had orders I was going back to the states. I got transferred to another island Iwo Jima that's where we were a bunch of us when they dropped the 2 bombs. The 2nd bomb we had 3 suicide planes come in and attack the island , but that was it, it was 2 months on Iwo Jima. They dropped the 2nd bomb we got pulled off the island the same day.

W.C: Was there a lot of Celebration when you got word the war had ended?

J.S: Oh yeah everybody was happy but those suicide planes came in anyway.

W.C: They didn't hit the boat you were on or anything?

J.S: No we were on the island and they came in and hit the island.

W.C: Oh they just crashed into the island?

J.S: Yeah.

W.C: Okay.

J.S: They couldn't go back they didn't have enough gas, they had a one way ticket that way we lost a lot of ships . They go until they get shot down or they hit the ship.

W.C: So the war had ended then did you go back to the state immediately once the war ended?

J.S: Yeah , just as soon as they got a ship to put us on. Rough water kind of a strong storm, we had to wait until the storm was over, they put us on.

W.C: Were you in the typhoon at all?

J.S: Some parts of it yeah. I forgot the name of the ship but it was some kind of General we got put on there.

Tape switch -----

W.C: Full Division?

J.S: No our division went to Japan. But I wasn't going to go to Japan the government said that I was in there all the time.

W.C: Because of your points?

J.S: Yeah

W.C: So you had a lot of points?

J.S: Oh I don't know how many I had . I had too many of them.

W.C: Were you married during that time?

J.S: No

W.C: Okay alright.

J.S: I know I forgot to tell him , down in Okinawa when they told us about the point system we had a big screen And they were telling us how the point system was gonna work ya know and we get hit by mortar shells. Oh My God we got a whole slue of them. I don't know how many men got hit. Nobody got killed but they were all over the place. The next morning we had so many men going out on patrol the first thing we were gonna try and find where all the shells came from. And we found a fella we grabbed him right away. We were gonna take him back to get interrogated. I don't know where the woman came from, his girlfriend or his wife. She screamed got this far and put them on the truck and let them go back. It wouldn't have done any good to kill'em we wanted information. It was no picnic there.

W.C: No

J.S: Like I said if I had Spikey and Goop we would have found out from each one and would have had a bigger story, A good story. I can only tell you what my 2 eyes seen you know.

W.C: Umm Hum, Now where abouts did they discharge you from?

J.S: This is the end we weren't too far from shore maybe 3 days from landing we were suppose to land in San Francisco. And I didn't see a street in San Francisco. I never seen any of it when we first went to California we went to camp Pine for a month everyday we went out on some kind of Maneuvers we'd pack our barracks bags 3 on each side we were in tents. And we'd lay'em there and we'd come back everything was there for us. This one time when we were up there walking in line go around a bend there was a troop train waiting for us. We got on the troop train we got surprised.

W.C: Ah Hum.

J.S: And they took us right to the fort the next day we ended up in San Francisco port the SS Aquitania was waiting for us. All our barracks bags were all lined up on the docks while we were gone there they were prepared they grabbed everything and brought it down there. They called your name pick up your bags going up the ramps onto the ship. So I never got to see San Francisco. But we were suppose to land back in San Francisco we were 3 days maybe 4 days out we didn't know the 5th fleet was coming in but there was a freighter going out west and some guy got hurt he got hit when one of the cables broke he got hit bad and they didn't have no medical people on board. So we were the closest ship so we were told to turn around and head back to the ship we were another half a day to the ship and we heard he died so we turned around and came back in the mean time the 5th fleet went by us we were about 2 days out and they told us we had to go up to Seattle Washington where we landed. What a

reception we got , getting off the ship the first wack I seen dressed as a wack I don't know if she was passing out lolly pops that was our reception.

W.C: laugh

J.S: I only talked to her right there I forgot the name of the camp.

W.C: Probably fort Lewis.

J.S: No

W.C: It wasn't Fort Lewis Okay.

J.S: I can't think of the name we were only there a day and a half.

W.C: Ah Hum.

J.S: there was only time enough to get our trains from San Francisco to pick us up. And For a day and a half that was it.

W.C: Ah Hum.

J.S: trains came in and we jumped on the trains and took right off.

W.C: So you came back by train?

J.S: Yeah train but some people came back by airplane we came back by train.

W.C: And where did you go to NY City ?

J.S: Fort Dix , we got discharged out of Fort Dix.

W.C: out of Fort Dix. Okay.

J.S: I got discharged at Midnight all of a sudden we didn't know where the heck we were . How do we get out of here the 2 buses to pick us up . One guys said I don't know . I can't take you anyplace he told us where he was going but he says I can drop you off . I forgot what town it was there was railroad stations

and everything. He said there'll be a train going to New York he said you can sleep all the stations had benches . He said you can lay on there and when the train is coming people can wake you up and you can get on and It will take you right into NY. That's what we did. They took us there and dropped us off. Red caps wanted to take our suitcases, guys couldn't even pick it up. He said what do you have in there. We had all the junk we could possible fit.

W.C: Now you caught the train back from NY back to Cohoes or back to Albany?

J.S: Yeah that's where I made the mistake when we got into NY we didn't know get to the, what's the name of our station down in NY.

Nephew: Grand Central Station.

J.S: Yeah Grand Central Station we got out in New Jersey and grabbed a taxi. He said we got like 3 minutes before the train leaves for upstate NY we got to make it . No problem we got in and he went through those stop lights straight through. He passed everything in 3 minutes time we were in the station but we were lost we didn't know what to do we wanted to get cleaned up my uniform was all crinkled up I told my buddy "I'm not going home like this." So we put our stuff in this thing.

W.C: Oh one of the lockers?

J.S: yeah so we left and were walking down oh I don't know what street it was one of those high class restaurants and we walked in and there was a bar right there about 3 bartenders . We wanted to get a drink and they looked at us we looked like 2 bums. And they were not to friendly about giving us a drink. He

said we can't do this I finally asked how far do we have to go to get these uniforms pressed. The guys says go down to the end of this block , the block must have been a mile long. There's a place down there but we don't know if it is open or not. So we said Okay we took a walk down there I was pooped when we got down there we waited for this guy to open. He said I'd press it for you but I ain't got no steam up. He said if want to wait I'll get the steam up and I'll do it. We waited. But before we went down there they did serve us some kind of drink at this restaurant we were at. Down at the cleaners we got our uniforms and all our soverans sown on. We looked like a million bucks, the guy never charged us a penny.

W.C: No.

J.S: So we walked back up where we were , Oh those guys wanted to give us everything , I said we just want to get home. They gave us everything and anything we wanted . We got Western Union and sent a message home. That we were in NY. I told my people I'd by in Troy by a certain time. I didn't know the train ended in Albany, that train didn't go to Troy. It turned around and went back we were waiting in Albany. And my Parents are in Troy waiting for us . Finally they went home they didn't know what happened. Finally we got a bus or taxi and we went from the Albany station and went to Troy. I called my family and they came down and picked us.

W.C: How long had it been since you seen your family?

J.S: Five years

W.C: Five years?

J.S: No four years because I was home on 2 furloughs . When I was stationed in Alabama.

W.C: Did you have any other family members in the service at the time?

J.S: I don't know but they picked the service after that all our boys were in the service.

Nephew: one cousin was at Pearl Harbor.

J.S: Stephen was in the service but that was after the war.

W.C: So once you were discharged you came back home did you sign up for that. What did they call it. I think it was the 52 - 20 club. Where you got 20 dollars a week for 52 weeks?

J.S: Oh yeah I signed for that. The first thing I did was go down and see where my girlfriend was.

W.C: OH .

J.S: She was writing to me. I didn't see her for a long time. We know each other when we were kids then we lost track of one another. She found out I was in the service she wrote to me. Then we got back together cause I knew where she lived. So I headed down to see her right away. Found out she was single and I said good we courted for about 3 months and have been married for 64 years.

W.C: Wow ! Any Children?

J.S: No we weren't fortunate to have any.

W.C: Okay

J.S: paid a lot of money on doctor bills trying too.

W.C: Okay and did you join any veterans' organizations like the VFW or legion.

J.S: Oh yeah American Legion and that now I can't get there I ain't got no automobile.

W.C: did you stay in touch with any of the people you served with?

J.S: Oh yeah but most are dead now.

W.C: did you go back into the National Guard at all?

J.S: No.... I had enough

W.C: have you attended any of the reunions?

J.S: Some of the fellas went back they were trying to reorganize but then the 27th Division was dropped out. The 47th came to NY . The NY Division. Goob retired when he rejoined he stayed until he retired.

W.C: Do you have any good stories of Colonial O'Brian. Any encounters you might have had with him?

J.S: Colonial O'Brian that's the one that got killed.

W.C: Right.

J.S: He was a good man, can't say anything bad about him.

W.C: Ah Hum.

J.S: he was strict but he... No women around right . No bullshitting about anything. He told you he wanted things done and he was honest about it. A lot of people liked him, he was the one that lead us on the Banzai until he got killed.

W.C: You didn't happen to witness his death or anything?

J.S: No we were stretched out along the island, I didn't see him get killed He got killed along the railroad I think.

W.C: Alright is there anything we missed that you would like to touch on or add to this interview any stories?

J.S: Oh yeah we had a lot of good times.

Nephew: tell them how you made the liquor out of coconuts.

W.C: Yeah tell us about that.

J.S: I was in New Haberties Island on Espiritu Santos. We were looking for something to drink we didn't want water we had water. They wouldn't bring us anything. At first we couldn't get anything so we were in a coconut grove we decided we'd take a coconut and they have one eye that you can open it up. And we stole some yeast and raisins from the kitchen and put them in the opening and plugged it up and stuffed it under the tent. About 3 days later we decided we wanted some of it at first we didn't know how to get it out of there. So we got a stick I don't know who hit it or what the first coconut exploded. So we figured we'd try again. So we got another coconut and done the same this time we went to the kitchen and asked the cooks we wanted just a little bit not too much we put that in there and stuck it under the tent. That one we got out we took the thing off . We were like who was gonna try it, well here comes one of the natives and so we called him with sign language he nodded gave him a drink. I swear his eyes went right around in a circle he took off into the jungle we never saw him again.

Nephew: Good Stuff.

J.S: It probably killed him . All of a sudden we had this stuff in there whose gonna have a drink. We dumped the stuff out .

W.C: Wow!

Nephew: You gave another a white T-shirt.

J.S: Okay I'll tell you about that. He was about the friendliest one. Cause we didn't have much contact with them. They told us not to get involved with them. Cause we were right next to the jungle the rest of the island was jungle but these people were friendly. The Army has tan undershirts and the navy had white. When we were on the ship we bought some from the Navy. And this guy seen us with the white t-shirts and he kind of looked at us. So I gave him one of my shirts and he took it the next morning he come out showing off his white shirt. He thought he was a big shot with that white shirt on. He thought he was King Tut. We found out they were looking for silver half dollars we didn't have any. You ought to see what they can make a big tree stand up like that(Showing with his hands the height) maybe higher a big tree out of a half dollar they can strip that but it had to be silver.

W.C: Interesting.

J.S: But nobody had a silver half dollar

Nephew: tell about the Japanese prisoner you saw taken.

J.S: This was on Saipan we were coming up the island in the center of the island A Jap jumped out, Stark naked we would have got him if he was in uniform. He

was a Captain in the Japanese army. He jumped out and gave up. His private wouldn't give up He said he was educated in the University of Hawaii he spoke better English than we did.

W.C: What did you guys do with him?

J.S: I don't know we must have taken him back for interrogation I don't remember what happened to him.

W.C: Ah Hum.

J.S: See what happens when he brings things up (talking about his nephew) We need 2 or 3 guys to go from one to another and you get a bigger picture.

W.C: Well alright thank you so much for your interview.

J.S: I hope it wasn't bad.

W.C: No no It was excellent thank you again.

J.S: Thank you.