Wayne Haugh
Judge Fiorenzo V. Lopardo
John D. "Jack" Tanner
Russell Whipple
Veterans

Stephen Lopardo
Interviewer

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SL: Iwo Jima means Sulfur Island in Japanese. It is located 650 miles south of the Japanese home islands and is part of the Empire of Japan. Iwo Jima is approximately five miles long and is less than two miles wide at its widest part. On the south end of the island is Mount Suribachi, scene of the historic raising of the American flag and the most famous combat photograph of all time. During World War II the small island was perhaps the mostly heavily fortified fortress on earth, honeycombed with miles of underground tunnels, armed bunkers and defended by more than 22,000 Japanese troops sworn to die in combat rather than surrender. The invasion on February 19, 1945 was preceded by the largest naval bombardment in world history and it scarcely made a dent on the Japanese defenses. For the next 36 days, nearly 75,000 United States Marines were locked in an epic struggle to secure the island for use by American B29 bombers. In terms of ferocity and valor, the battle ranks with Gettysburg and Normandy in American history. In the 1,364 days from the Pearl Harbor attack to the Japanese surrender, with millions of Americans fighting on global battlefronts, 353 men received the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration for courage above and beyond the call of duty. Of these, 27 were for action on Iwo Jima, 13 posthumous. During these 36 days, 25,851 Americans, most of them in early teens and early twenties, suffered casualties of whom 6,800 were killed, died of wounds or were missing in action. The 21,000 Japanese garrison on this 8 ½ mile square island of volcanic sand—of them, approximately 1,000 were taken prisoner and more than 20,000 fought to their deaths. Iwo Jima in American hands meant that 24,751 Air Corps crewmen were saved from ditching disabled aircraft in the North Pacific with almost certain loss. By the war's end 2,251 emergency landings had been made on the island by the B29's super fort bombers. My name is Steve Lopardo. I have asked four Marine veterans from Iwo Jima to share their battlefield memories with us for posterity. They are: Russ Whipple, Jack Tanner, Wayne Haugh, and Fio Lopardo, who I'm proud to say is my father. This is their story.
First of all, I'd like to ask all of you to tell us who you are, where you came from, how long you'd been in the Marines, what outfit you were in. Why don't you go ahead Mr. Whipple?

RW: I started in the Marine Corps back in 1941—enlisted in Ohio. I was too old at that time to qualify for a commission although I had a degree from Springfield College at that time. But they would accept only up to the 25th year and I was just over the 25th year. I enlisted and went to Parris Island where I got my boot camp training and then ended up in Washington. I guess that was a brief stay because Pearl Harbor came shortly after I enlisted and we ended up on recruiting duty—they used everybody at the Marine Corps Schools—sent them out on recruiting duty so I ended up out in Texas for another few months until they upped the age limit to 27 for being eligible for a commission. So I applied and by then end of the following year I had my commission and signed up for the parachute troops. I basically spent my first years out in the South Pacific with the First Parachute Regiment. I was in the 3rd Battalion and it seemed that that was my story the rest of my career in the Marine Corps at least during World War II. We ended up out there—of course you know the trials of the Solomon Islands, Guadalcanal, Bougainville, Vella Lavella, Choiseul—and after the mopping up was done in the islands we returned of course to the States briefly and out to Kamuela where most of us were in the 5th Marine Division and ending up training there until Iwo Jima. And that is the point at which I guess we are mostly interested. I must confess I've put that in my background, I don't think and haven't dwelled on it or talked about it or attended any reunions through the years. I sort of buried that and I am here today to perhaps refresh my memory a bit. I can recall many things about that Iwo Jima invasion. I was there on D-Day and it was pretty much as shown on the map. I don't know whether there is a map that will be portrayed but we landed of course coming in over the beaches as has been shown on your map here. I must say it was a fantastic almost unbelievable adventure as was suggested in the reading by Steve, where we had the bombardment that was just out of this world. We were all on our own coming into the island for D-Day and as the dawn came up that day, we not only had a great deal by way of the aircraft going overhead and the bombardment by the many planes, but also the bombardment from the many ships and it seemed that by the time we were making our landing that there could be nothing left on that island. Course we learned very shortly afterwards that that was a great show but the island had been so well fortified and they were so well dug in, that it didn't seem to make much difference because as we came in and hit over the beaches, the Japanese were there in force and did fire and the resulting casualties were unbelievable.

SL: How old were you at the invasion and what was your rank?
RW: I was at the time 28 years old and had spent my first years in preparation not only at Kamuela in Hawaii but we had the entire 1st Parachute Regiment. You perhaps recall that was the basis for formation of the 5th Marine Division. We used the battalion of the parachute regiment to be the basis for each division in the 5th Marine Division.

SL: Mr. Tanner, why don't you tell us where you're from and what division you were in?
JDT: Well, we moved—our family—to San Diego in 1920. We're kind of a family of Marines; my Dad was with the Marines at Château-Thierry as a surgeon during World War I; my brother-in-law was killed in Guam; I have a son-in-law who was in the Marines at Khe Sanh; another brother-in-law who was with the Marines. So we've kind of been with Marines all along. I lived near the Marine Base all during the thirties in San Diego. I played football three years against the Marine Recruit Depot. In those days they had great football teams. I was drafted in 1941 but I didn't go on active duty with the Marines until early in '42. I went to Quantico, went through OCS and ROC, and was all set waiting for my orders to go to Guadalcanal with a platoon but at the last minute someone found out that I had had quite a bit of math in college so they put me in artillery school. Upon graduating from artillery school, I was assigned to Marine Corps School's Training Battery as an Instructor and we did shows for the high echelon that came down from Washington, DC. Also I trained Dutch Royal Marines and artillery to go fight with General Stilwell in Burma. Then, after a period of time, I was transferred to Camp Pendleton with the 5th Marine Division. I was a Commanding Officer at Baker Battery 1st Battalion 13th Marines. I had 75 pack howitzers. We did our last landing over by Las Colgas Beach on Camp Pendleton and the program was stopped because low and behold, on Highway 1, there was President Roosevelt with his son holding the door open. We were assigned to go to the 2nd Battalion 26th Marines it was, reinforced to go to Guam. They stopped the program right at that moment. We loaded up and went down to San Diego to go to Guam and on the berth next to us was Roosevelt who was going to Pearl Harbor to meet with MacArthur to see what the next action would be. We got to Pearl Harbor and they turned us around because Guam was pretty well secured by that time, just about, and we stayed there and trained where Russ was at Kamuela until it was time to go to Iwo. We left on an LST—that was a thirty day trip. We never saw a thing except a seagull for thirty days and on the landing we were supposed to come in pretty late being artillery—but things got so bad they called us in early. I was supposed to land on Red Beach Two, but there was no place to land with my amphibious ducks because there was so much litter—so many jeeps had blown up. So I had to go around a rock, which was called Futatsu Rock which was off shore for a couple of hundred yards, and come back in on Red Beach One. Of course as the sand here shows—it's black sand—it was very difficult to walk, particularly if you were wet and as we went up the hill with our howitzers we were being sniped at all the time and it was very difficult to lay the battery for direction. That night—of course that's another story.

SL: How old were you and what was your rank?
JDT: I was a Captain and 24 on the landing and 25 two days after the landing. I had a young Marine come up and he said, "It's a hell of a way to spend your 18th birthday, Captain". I said, "It's a hell of a way to spend your 25th, too".

SL: Mr. Haugh?
WH: Well, I joined the Marine Corps in 1938. After going through Boot Camp at Parris Island, I was assigned sea duty and I went on the USS Charleston and we then went down to Panama. We were part of what they called the Special Service Squadron, commonly known as the Banana Fleet. While I was down there I got transferred to a four stacker destroyer we had down there, the Tattnall, and—I can't think of the other destroyer—but it was the USS Charleston, the USS Erie, the Tattnall and this other destroyer. And there we patrolled all around Central America and we got involved—before we got into the war—in tracking German submarines and various German ships that were coming in and landing with 55 gallon drums of diesel fuel for their submarines to be refueled. I finished my tour there and went back to Quantico and went to ordnance school. Then I joined with the 4th Defense Battalion on Guantanamo Bay and stayed there until—I don't remember the month. We went from Guantanamo Bay directly over to Pearl Harbor and I arrived on Pearl Harbor on the first of December 1941. And of course we all know what happened on the 7th.

SL: Where were you on the 7th?
WH: We were in tents and as near as I can remember—and I don't remember what the direction was—we were down pretty far off from where the big tank farm was there at the yard. A lot of my friends were on liberty at the time and unfortunately I wasn't. We were sent down to the docks to see what we could do. And we were given 30 caliber machine guns which were, as you know, not very effective against any flying planes. I spent most of that day after the initial hit—I helped fish Sailors and Marines out of the Bay—out of the Harbor—and that was, for a young Marine, a young kid, that was pretty devastating.

SL: How old were you?
WH: About 21 years old. Then I got transferred from the 4th Defense Battalion and was sent to the 1st Defense Battalion and we were headed for Wake Island and we got diverted and went down to Palmyra Island. I don't remember how long I was there, but I came back to Pearl and there I got commissioned—a temporary commission—and was sent back to the States. I went to school, down here at Camp Matthews for a while, and then I went back to Quantico, and after Quantico I went to Camp Lejeune and we started to establish then at that time ammunition companies—this is when the first bunch of black Marines we had. We had white NCOs and the regular enlisted were all black Marines. Our Staff NCOs and the officers were all Caucasians. And I went from Quantico back to Pearl Harbor and we had set up there an annex to the [unclear] naval ammunition dump there and we had it out there at McCaw Valley. I went from there and, getting ready for the landing at Iwo, and I was pulled out and, at the very last minute, I was assigned to Headquarters Battalion 5th Marine Division

and we made the landing and I stayed on the island. I was responsible there for checking the bad lots of ammunition of which there were quite a few. I think shortly before Iwo they had a big problem with the 4th Division over on Maui, I think it was, with short rounds and I was sent over there and came back and that primarily was my job there. Although whenever I could join up—the beach was low, it was crowded—and wherever I could join up with anyone, why, I did so. But I immediately got called back and got chewed out. I lost one of my best friends there, Al [unclear], Chief Warrant Officer. He'd gone down to the dump ahead of me and he got killed on the way to the dump. And there it was pretty hard to find out where the front lines were because as our troops advanced they bypassed a lot of bunkers and what have you and the next thing you know they were getting fired on from the rear as well as from the front.

SL: What were your rank and your age?
WH: I was a First Lieutenant and let's see, 1945, I was between 24 and 25. April 20th was when I was born. I came back to the States and was assigned what they called Regimental Commander. I was a Captain at the time. As Regimental Commander, I retrained in Norfolk, Virginia and we had a prison population or a retraining command population—whatever you want to call it—of about 3,500 general court martial prisoners. There I had a temporary commission. That's when the Marine Corps was starting to cut back so I went back to Master Sergeant and, to make a long story short, I then was sent to China primarily supposedly to clean up some ammunition problems over there. I ended up being a Flight Chief for the engineer section of the 2nd Divisional Combat Service Group. And I was there when the Communists kicked us out of China. We were stationed there at Tsingtao. I came back here and went to Camp Pendleton and became the Supply Chief of the 1st Weapons Battalion, and when Korea broke out, why our Battalion was disbanded, and I was sent over to form up the nucleus of the 1st Marines. And I had a Major Vorries with me, Bill Vorries, and I took my whole office with me, and Colonel Porter—we set up the nucleus and I was responsible for ordering the supplies in for them and that was no small task because we were getting reserves from all over the country and nobody knew what they were bringing with them but we managed. As soon as the 1st Marines were formed, I got pulled back up to division headquarters as the Division Supply Chief and then we made the landing there at Incheon Wolmido and I served with them up through the Chosin Reservoir. My son was badly injured here in Fallbrook—he almost lost a leg because he got pinched between two cars—and I came back here on a humanitarian transfer and I was back here about four months and then I got recommissioned again. That's pretty much it.

SL: Judge Lopardo, tell us where you're from and your enlistment in the Marines.
FVL: I'm from Hoosick Falls, New York. It's a small town, about 5,000 people, thirty-three miles northeast of Albany, New York, about twelve miles southwest

of Bennington, Vermont, and about sixteen miles directly west of Williamstown, Massachusetts. I entered the Marine Corps in the summer of 1942 and I was called to duty in October 1942 and I was put in the OCS—Officer School—and I went to Quantico and started in October and finished up in December. I think it was late December or early January of '43. Then I was shipped to California, arrived here in about March 1943 and they didn't know what to do with us—there were eighteen of us. Just to show you how everything is so mechanized and was at that time, when I finished my Officer's School and was ready to be shipped out there were thirty-six of us who were standing around and they didn't know what to do with us. Some of the graduates were sent down to Camp Lejeune and they went right overseas to Guadalcanal. Thirty-six of us were assigned out here to California. When we landed, we landed at San Diego and they put us in a camp called Camp Elliott. You can still see some of the buildings there. They put us into a bachelor officer's club that first night. The next morning they called us out, told us to get in a line and to count off. Then they said, "Alright, all the odd numbers, step forward please, turn left and go over there and regroup where that big truck is and you will receive further orders." Well I was one of the people who had to stay back. They said, "Now the rest of you folks go in and get your gear and come back out." Well I got out a little bit early and I heard the Gunny Sergeant and a Master Sergeant say, "What the hell are we going to do with these people, what are we going to do with eighteen shavetails?" And they had no idea what to do. And finally one of them said, "Well, you know they have a new base up the road a ways." He said, "A new base, what's that?" And he said, "It's called Pendleton, Camp Pendleton, I think." He said, "Why don't we just send them up there?" So they put us in the back end of a truck and bid us adieu and we headed for Camp Pendleton. The other eighteen guys were sent to Guadalcanal. And my unlucky group was sent to Camp Pendleton and we started off at Lieutenant General Fegan's place and it was up on a side of a hill and his adjutant was a fellow named Laudenschlager. He said, "What are we going to do with you people?" We didn't know and he didn't know and he asked the General and the General said, "Put them someplace." And so they sent us out to BOQ 13 which was managed by a First Lieutenant and they called it a casual company and when we reached there, he said, "What the hell am I supposed to do with you?" And we said, "We don't know." He said, "Well, alright, I'll assign you a berth up at the BOQ and get you signed up so you get your money and then I'll see what happens." So we all ended up at the BOQ. That was in March of '43 and they lost us; they literally lost us in the Marine Corps from March of '43 until September of '43. Eighteen of us were poor little lost boys. We had to go on liberty all the time and dance with these girls who were sent down to help the poor troops who were fighting the war. This literally went on until about the first part of September when one morning a Lieutenant Colonel who lived over at 12 BOQ where all the old people were living came over to have breakfast at our BOQ 13. He came in and, I remember this very clearly, he sat down there, he had a newspaper and as he looked around, his mess boy was pouring coffee for him. He looked around

and he saw some women who were wearing Marine khakis and their shirts were awfully big and they were open and you could see that they weren't quite fully dressed. This Colonel says to the mess boy, "Messman, what are those women doing here?" And he kept pouring and he said, "What women, Sir?" He said, "That woman, and that woman, and that woman." He said, "I don't know, Sir." Well he had his breakfast and away he went back to 12. Well those women were people who had come up from Balboa Hospital to take care of all the poor forlorn Marines who were abandoned in 13 BOQ, I guess. And they just didn't get a ride back to their base. But boy, Monday morning Laudenschlager got some orders and all of us were spread out and half of us were sent to 12 BOQ to be with the old people and some of the old people were sent over to 13 so they could have the girls. We worked there then being Assistant Provost Marshal for a while and our job was to go down to where the General lived—he used to live in the Carlsbad Hotel—and most of us had the job, in series, of being what is called Assistant Provost Marshal and when I was Provost Marshal, my job was to make sure that all of the officers who had too much to drink were put on a jeep and sent back to Camp Pendleton so that the General would not be upset, and to keep the Marines from raising hell generally. Well anyway, finally the word came out—the 5th Division was going to be formed and all of us were going to be put in the 5th Division and I was put in the 28th Marines which was going to be commanded by Liversedge, Harry "the Horse" Liversedge, who was a very brave, hard-fighting Marine. He had just come back from overseas; he had been with Carlson and others; he got the 28th Regiment. I landed in his regiment. I was assigned to the 3rd Battalion and I was made the Company Commander of George Company and for several weeks I was in charge of that company—getting it ready for combat. Suddenly we received another group of paratroopers who were sent in—some of whom knew Liversedge, some of whom did not, but they had all had combat pretty much and I was immediately replaced because I was a junior Company Commander at the time. The person who took my place was Robert Carney, who was a Captain, and was the son of three-star Admiral. I ended up being assigned as a Company Commander of the Headquarters Company for that Battalion. Then we started getting ready to go overseas. We boarded sometime between September and October, I think it was. We all shipped out to Kamuela which was called Camp Tarawa and it's at the top of the Big Island—Hawaii—and it was the home of the Parker Ranch that at that time was the second largest cattle ranch in the whole United States. Then when we landed–since I was a Company Commander in headquarters they detached me and made me a Transport Quartermaster for the purpose of loading the ship to go to—well, we didn't know what the place was going to be yet—but to land in combat, and the ship that I had to load was the USS Lubbock. I was Company Commander and also Transport Quartermaster. My job was to see to it that everybody on the Lubbock was taken care of and all of the equipment was ready to go out with him when he went ashore and we had tanks, we had heavy equipment because we had artillery people with us, and we had air spotters with us. You see that ship was supposed

to be a fully prepared unit with infantry, with air support, artillery support and all other necessary personnel to be a fully organized unit. When we came right off the island, I had all my materiels put off deck and down, and we were told the night before by our terrible Terry McGovern—he was a Commodore—we received communication that the shore was sound and would take wheeled vehicles, so all of us prepared to have our jeeps go in, our artillery units to go in and ready to go. Well it turned out that when our jeeps landed, they went down to the hubs and in a matter of minutes that whole beach was cluttered and right above us to the left was Suribachi. They had big caves and in the caves they had artillery and they would roll out the artillery, blast the shoreline, roll back in and so on. In the meantime, we had the Navy, several cruisers; as a matter of fact, the New Yorker was right abreast of Suribachi and it was hit and it didn't roll over and it didn't go down front or back, it went straight down, straight down just as though someone had sat on it and shoved it down. It took a terrible beating for several days until we controlled Suribachi which was four days later. The fact that the shoreline was unable to take any wheeled vehicles completely stopped all of the offloading of materiel from ships. For example, from my ship the Lubbock, inland and other ships, including ships not only in the 5th Division but in the 4th Division. Now this didn't affect the 3rd Division because it was out on the water as a floating reserve and finally after about three to four days of this Commodore McGovern called us over to his ship and said, "I've got to get out of here, I've got work to do. We've got to get you people ashore and if we don't get you ashore, I can't get out of here." So he lined us up and he said, "Now you, which one do you have?", and I said, "The Lubbock." He said, "You look out there and you see that floating materiel right there?" What it was, was a bunch of square steel boxes and they were hitched together and he said, "You take all of your materiel and offload it onto that as fast as you can and when you get through, you go ashore." Well.

SL: So he wanted you to unload it onto the floating materiel and then take it to shore?
FVL: No, not take it ashore. I wasn't going to have any responsibility for it any more. When I turned it over, that was his. I was supposed to go ashore and he was going to have somebody else take care of that. He wanted to get his ships unloaded so that they could take off for another assignment. In the meantime, I was aboard that ship and I was unloading as fast as I could to get it onto those floating things, and materiel that wouldn't fit on those floating docks, I turned over to them. For example, I had two tanks, I had heavy equipment—I think it was a TD-14—and several other pieces of heavy equipment and I offloaded it into an LCT.

SL: Are you looking at an order? Show us your order.
FVL: Yes this is an order I received the night before we went ashore. We went ashore on the 19th of February and on the 18th I received this order from McGovern. We were having a terrible problem. He wanted me to offload all my

heavy materiel to an LCM which would give me approximately an inch and half from gunnel to gunnel and the ship was bouncing up and down. The LCM was bouncing up and down and we were supposed to load a tank—for example, offload it from our aft hold down into that thing—and I told him that was impossible, it couldn't be done. This went on for several days of fighting and finally he sent one of his aides in, who was a Captain in the Marine Corps. I took him in the aft hold and I showed him what I had and what I had to do. He said, "Oh you can't do that, we'll have to get you something bigger than that." That night I received this order.

SL: Read it to us.
FVL: The night before, so it's the evening of the 18th—It says, "Direct LCT 1289 which picks up two tanks from Bel Grove to proceed direct to Lubbock,"—that's mine—"After leaving Bel Grove and load following: one TD-9, one TD-14, one 2 ½ ton truck and two 300 gallon water carts. All of these vehicles are in hold five aft." And, I'll tell you, we were pretty happy people when we got that thing because it would have been one heck of a mess. Well anyway, we would offload that materiel and I don't know what he did with that. When I finished offloading all of that other materiel, jeeps and artillery and that sort of thing, and it was completely empty, I got clearance from the Captain of the ship—of the Lubbock—and he released me and I went ashore. By that time, the flag had already been raised and we had already received a copy of the small Time magazine that had the picture of the raising of the flag. And we had seen it for the first time. One of the things that I had happen to me that I don't think happened to very many people unless they were also TQMs, was that from that first day when we sent people ashore, the injured people would be assigned to various ships and several of them were assigned to my ship and people from my regiment, my battalion, who only a few minutes before had gone ashore to fight were coming back wounded—seriously wounded. I remember one person named Tom Mahoney—he was a lawyer from San Francisco—and he was a platoon leader in I Company, 3rd Battalion, 28th Marines. He came back and he was horribly, horribly wounded in the chest. They raised him from an LCM and when they got up to the gunnel, ready to bring him ashore to bring him onto deck, the thing slipped and he went flat down into the bottom of that LCM and he blew right open. Several of my friends who were injured were having a hard time and they would all tell what was happening. Then I went ashore and when I went ashore the first thing I had to do was report to my Battalion Commander. At that time we were directly north of Suribachi, the Battalion was all the way across from east to west.

SL: Hold that up and show us.
FVL: [holds up map of Iwo Jima and points] This is Suribachi, this is where we landed; then we went across and what happened was—I think the 1st Battalion was in reserve, the 2nd Battalion was going up one side and the 3rd Battalion was going up the other side and it happened that the 2nd Battalion was the one that

got to the top of Suribachi first and planted the flag and the 3rd Battalion didn't make it. After the flag had been planted, we started back down and started to get ready to go north and it was a very strange thing. As you know, Iwo Jima means Sulfur Island, and what was keeping the vehicles from being able to move was the fact that the sulfur couldn't take any weight. If you walked on it you'd go into it at least halfway up to your knees. At night, we made foxholes for our protection and we found out that the Japanese were dropping grenades into our foxholes and we looked out and every place we had a foxhole, there was a chimney of steam going up in the air. So when one of us would look out of the foxhole to find out what was going on, there were all these chimneys and we said, "Holy Toledo." It didn't take us very long; we decided to put out trip flares and we put them out, and when those little rascals hit the wire, up went the flare and they'd freeze and then we'd kill them. I shouldn't have said that. So they stopped getting away with that. And then after a little while we received orders to start going north.

SL: Let's talk more about the landing. Everyone came over in transport ships is that right?
JDT: No, I came over in an LST.

SL: What is an LST?
JDT: Landing Ship Tank. It held one battery of artillery.

SL: How many men were on these ships?
JDT: I don't know; we had 180 or 200.

FVL: But that's a transport, Jack.
JDT: No, LST. You are talking about an APA.
FVL: OK. Tell them what an APA is.
JDT: You tell them. I was never on one.
FVL: Well an APA was a Kaiser ship and it would hold approximately 1500 - 1600 and was about 550-600 feet long—and I don't know what its beam was—and its primary job was to get people from safe places to unsafe places.

SL: How far offshore were the ships when the invasion occurred?
FVL: I would probably know that because I was there. Those poor guys were going ashore with their eyes closed, not because they were afraid or anything, but because the water coming over just was entrenching everyone—getting wet and everything else, so they couldn't see, but I could see what was going in. Because when my people hit the shore I had to send somebody else in until they stopped me, so what they did is—get into a formation, like a "V" almost, and in they went.

SL: These are the little landing crafts?
FVL: Yes, well some of were LCVPs that carry about 36 and some were LCMs which were larger and carried more people and some of them were going in on

ducks which were amphibious and they would come out of the water and go onto shore and they could keep going.
JDT: Hopefully. Well, some went, some of them sank, some got stuck.
FVL: Some got stuck and couldn't go and everybody had to get out and get away. Those who went in in LCVPs would just jump off the minute it hit and run up.
JDT: You know what happened? That beach was very much like La Jolla Cove. It wasn't a gradual beach. You'd jump out ten feet out in the water and you were in over your head just like that. And being wet, you hit that sand, you just had one hundred pounds of sand dragging on you too—you couldn't move.

RW: From the troop transports we, as you suggested, formed up in units and went in in waves, of course, to the beach, and we did try to get and did get most of the personnel out at the beaches all right but the problem was getting from the beaches up to a position where you were reasonably protected. It was a very difficult thing to do as he suggested because there was so much clogged equipment on the beaches, to get up through to a safe position was very difficult and that's where they had a chance to really inflict a great number of casualties. So I think from the troop transports in, was pleasant enough, but once you hit the beaches again, then the real loss of personnel began.

FVL: That's never been really covered but that's a really good point. When they went, when people went in, they not only had the difficulty of getting up and continuing on, but if they didn't start getting up and they got hit, they'd lose their officers, they'd lose their Gunny Sergeants, and there wasn't anyone to take care of them. And yet they had to do something. And the miracle of it was that despite all of the losses... And, I saw for example some lieutenants who were platoon leaders who got hit and came back and they didn't have their platoons and they didn't have anyone to take care of them unless a sergeant just took over. And that's what they did—that's the miracle of it—they did that and they kept going and they got all the way across. I don't know how you guys did it.

WH: Well you had to bring your tractors in to actually pull some of this equipment out of the way, get it out of the way, because you were moving very slowly because of this big pile up of equipment. And, of course, they were looking right down our throats and you had no place to go—you were a sitting duck.

SL: How long did it take to get from the ships to the shore?
JDT: They had a line of departure and you had to report to a flagship, so to speak, and he'd set you off.

FVL: As a matter of fact, when you first went out, you didn't head in, you went to a rendezvous. For example, if we were going to land, I remember my people went off about 4:30-5:00 and they went out to a rendezvous and they just went around and around and around and pretty soon one outfit was dispatched, then

another outfit was dispatched, then another outfit , then another one, then another one, see like that. Isn't that right?
WH: Yes. One of the big problems was, though, when you went in by your waves, that wave was supposed to hit you unloading and you were supposed to move out of the way but, hell, then the other wave was right in on top of you. And then the other one was right on top of you.
JDT: Yeah, it didn't work out right.

SL: Mr. Whipple, you landed on the first day?
RW: I did. I wasn't in the very first wave. I don't recall how it worked out, but the 3rd Battalion 26th Marines came somewhere out into the morning and our difficulty was, as suggested here, getting across the beaches into a secure place where we could be moved up into position where we could move to the line of combat. Our job was to move across this narrow part of the island and take up positions up on the line behind the first wave that went across in. At that point, we did very well. We didn't lose too many casualties. When we began to lose casualties was when we began to move up to the first airport and we used the revetments where they kept the airplanes initially, and as long as we stayed in those little revetments that they had built to protect the aircraft, we did very well. We began to lose our greatest number of people when we moved up out of those revetments to get up to the airport itself. Then we used different foxholes at that point. I remember when we had our battalion command post if you could call it that. Actually there was no real area that we could work except going from shell hole to shell hole and we ended up in a shell hole just below the Airport No. 1—there was the Commanding Officer and his staff and I was Company Commander at that time and I had my own unit directly behind me. But I was coming up to one of those shell holes immediately below the airport when I stepped into one of the shell holes and we had an explosion that at that point killed our Commanding Officer, the Executive Officer, the Operations Officer, the G3, S3 and we lost all of our command at that point. I didn't realize it at the time. I came in and said, "Hey, this is too crowded for me." I got up out of the shell hole and said, "I'm digging a foxhole over here." I had hardly gotten out of that foxhole when a shell went right into that shell hole and killed almost the entire command for the Battalion. At this point I could see what happened and I thought I better get down and get a Corpsman or somebody up here to help out. Fortunately our Intelligence Officer was a pretty sharp Lieutenant who did contact the Regiment and tried to get some more people up. They in turn moved over to a bigger shell hole below Airport No. 1 and seemed to be all right for the time. That is the way you would quickly lose control of your units and we were literally standing, holding in place until we could get reorganized at the regimental area and send a new commanding officer up. At that point, we held pretty much in position and didn't have much to do except to protect ourselves. And this was probably long about D Plus 3, but it was the story of how life and how movement took place initially on the island of Iwo Jima. It was very difficult.

SL: Hold that map up and show us where you landed please.
RW: Well the landing for all units is marked here. [points to map] The 26th and the 5th Marine Division had the southern area here. We were pretty much below Mt Suribachi Yama which is the end of the island here and our landing took place across these beaches on this side. My Regiment, the 3rd Battalion came in at the lower part, moved across the island and went up on the west side.

SL: Mr. Tanner, show us where you landed if you remember.
JDT: I landed about the same place. We were about 100 yards apart obviously from the way we were talking. I was supposed to land on Red Beach 2, but the beach was so clogged with machinery that you couldn't get in. So I had to go out and come around and land on 1, which was not our beach, really. It was really closer to you [looks at RW], on the 26th Marines. My outfit supported the 2nd Battalion 27th Marines. That's all for the first day, anyway.

SL: You landed on the first day?
JDT: Yes.

SL: About what time of day did you land?
JDT: Oh, we got in around 1:00.

SL: Was it a non-stop process of materiel and personnel coming off the ship?
JDT: Well—pretty much what Russ said. You just did what you could. You had to play it by ear. All plans kind of went out the window. You just had to do what you could to survive and keep things going. That night, the first night, Colonel Robertson who was CO of the 2nd Battalion 27th Marines—he later became the Commanding Officer at Camp Pendleton—he was having problems with the enemy coming across Motoyama Airfield 1 and so he called for support from artillery. So we just fired at will—as many as we could pump out all the time.
RW: Pretty much hand to hand combat in many ways.

FVL: He was there three days trying to move. And actually they didn't start getting any of this equipment in until someone had the idea to get that metal stuff that they put down…
WH: Marston matting, or pure steel planking.
JDT: Yeah, landing mats.
FVL: Those airplane mats. They would put them down and we'd go ahead a little bit and put down some more and go ahead a little bit, until finally we got up here—south of that first airstrip that he's talking about. But that took an awful long time to do it. When I went ashore, I don't know the day—it was after the flag went up—it might have been the day after—when I went in, we could see all of that metal stuff there and they were beginning to move. They were able to move inland and also we had control of Suribachi and the thing that helped us a great

deal was ships on both sides shooting into those caves and blowing them apart and that's what helped us a lot.

SL: Mr. Haugh, what day did you land?
WH: I think about the third day, I'm not real positive on that anymore. The thing is—we think about making a landing and moving in real quick—you moved in yards; if you got a half a mile, or if you got one hundred yards, you were doing pretty darn good. Because they were dug in all over the island and of course we had not only volcanic ash that was such a problem, you had that brush in there where they were able to hide their bunkers and what have you. As our people moved forward you had to bypass some of these things and the next thing you know, they are not only fighting up front but you were getting fire from the rear.
FVL: That's when we had to blow up all of those caves that were hidden by the brush that he's talking about. We had to sneak up on the side and blow up those things so that they couldn't see us and couldn't shoot out at us. He's right, you'd move up a little bit and there were people shooting at you.
RW: It was almost a crawling job. You would make your way not only across the beach but into small shell holes mostly to get protection until you could find your way up and just a mass of people that we had there, literally. Marines moving our way up, edging yard by yard in a sense, until we finally overran the first airstrip. When that airstrip was gone, then we had a good move, as shown on the second line on this particular chart—it was almost as indicated in phases—here was in D-Day. The small space in here and it wasn't until D plus 5 that we got up to here. But literally, this was yard by yard as massive troops moved up the island to get near Airstrip No. 1 and that was the first big success. At that point I remember we had organized a little bit by D Plus 5 and we did have a headquarters established in one of the revetments where they normally kept the airplanes. We had protection enough there where we could get organized for the first time. This was after of course, we had lost our Commanding Officer who had been in this revetment below the airport. We moved up on the top to make another move up when all of them were killed. The problem of course was to keep protected because the aerial weapons that were used for anti-aircraft on these strips were turned around and faced down upon us. And they would use these anti-aircraft weapons and really point blank shoot at our positions below them and the airport was just far enough where we could see it. Unfortunately it also exposed them so that our aircraft and our weapons from ships could target in on them and that made it possible for us again to move up. But it was slow and the loss of personnel was unbelievable.

WH: To add a little levity here, while we are talking about all this other stuff… As we were down on the beach—the fourth day, I guess it was—I was talking to three other officers, and this young Lieutenant came up and was standing there listening to us. All of a sudden his helmet flopped off, and he reached down and he picked it up and we just looked at him and we kept on talking. He was

standing there holding it in his hand and he turned it around and turned it around and he saw a hole right through the damn helmet. Apparently what had happened—it hit one of the rivets that holds the headliner on—and it deflected it and the bullet had gone around. We didn't know that at the time, but it just grazed him coming out. He had a little burn site on the side of his head. When he saw that hole—we were kind of watching him, wondering what he was doing—his eyes got big and he said, "My God, I'm dead," and he fell over and fainted. We picked him up. That's all he had, just a little burn mark on his temple.

FVL: Would you believe that could happen twice? When I was up north when we captured that [unclear]—the fellow in charge in the comm section—he was Kuribayashi's either First Sergeant or Sergeant Major and he was in charge of the communication and he decided he was going to give up. Actually, I got a phone call from Candy Johnson, one of my platoon leaders, at about 5:00 in the morning and the first question I heard from him was, "Fio, are we taking prisoners?" I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "I've got a guy here that wants to give up and he's got his hands on his head and he doesn't have any clothes on. Oh, goddamn it! A bullet just went through my helmet; a bullet just went through my helmet." And he bent over and picked it up. I said, "What are you talking about, Candy?" He said, "A bullet hit the front of my thing, turned it all the way around and went out the back." He said, "I'm not hurt or anything like that, but that went right through my helmet and went right around my head." That's almost the same thing that happened to you.

RW: There are many things—I think I know that—I was moving up to set up the command post after we succeeded in getting the first airstrip. I was up along the edge and I moved up to Airstrip No. 2, but I had had probably a ricocheted bullet that hit into my jacket and I could feel it. It hurt—and the same thing, but it did not penetrate—it went around my side and actually burned and I grabbed it and ended up with a hot bullet in my hand.
FVL: Did you save it?
RW: I didn't save it. I should have; I thought afterward that was a funny thing. But many crazy things… But I'm sure that could have been one of our own bullets. I don't know, but it was a ricochet from someplace that didn't have the power to penetrate except to go through the shirt and burn on way around. It was lucky for many of us and those of us that are still here of course lived under the right star. I think we should probably have a little moment to pause and say we're grateful that we're here because so many that we remember so well, particularly on Iwo Jima, are gone.

FVL: I say that a million times. I had 243 people in my company and I had 249 casualties and some of them were hit three different times and I was one of eleven of them who never once was hit. Never once…

RW: I think that's the story for all of us. Unbelievable. I think there were over 1,000 when we went in, I think there were some 800 replacements and we came out with 386 people. That was the story for each of us.
FVL: As a matter of fact, I never even got to shoot a shot—never fired my weapon. I was too busy.

RW: I think that's true for so many of us. I remember going from the—I talked about getting organized enough in one of these revetments to actually move our battalion command post up to along the side of the Airstrip No. 2—at that point I had to clean up of course. There were a great many casualties, dead Marines, along the way and we had a few dead Japanese too, but the problem was—it was my job to set up the command post. I would look at the dead bodies, and think, "Oh my God, how do I do this? Let's get them cleaned up." And I said, "Come on, let's do this." And nobody wanted to touch them so I got in myself to try and clean up some of these bodies and I would take the arms and they would pull off and they would come apart. So we had to pick up ponchos, blankets or whatever we could and move them up as much as we could and roll as much as we could of the bodies into these ponchos and blankets and take them out—and of course, as was suggested, it's because the steam coming up through the volcanic ash literally steamed and cooked the casualties right in the foxholes or right on the ground where the steam seeped up through. It was a body by body maneuver to clean up enough of the space to get them out for the Graves Registration Bureau that would pick them up, sometimes days later. But for the most part they did keep moving back out to the collecting point where they had the casualties.
FVL: That's never been talked about–you knew it, we knew it; I don't think I've ever seen it in a book or any account, have you? I don't think so.
JDT: The steam, the first night I had a foxhole, I put my poncho in there, and tried to get in it but you couldn't—it was so hot—the rubber on the poncho would burn you. When you wanted to eat, you'd take your pork and egg yolks and just put it down and leave it there and it was hot in a minute.
RW: Lay down for a minute and the steam would burn you.

FVL: You said you had to set up the battalion command post for your company. Well, since I was a Company Commander of the Headquarters Company, that was my job, so every time that's first thing I had to do really when I got ashore. Then when we started to move up, I always had to go ahead and set up the command post because my guys wouldn't move in until we had it all set. One night, the first or second night there, I was supposed to have duty that night. I was trying to keep covered because if anyone was going to shoot I didn't want them to see my little old head and, my God, it was so hot my butt was almost cooked and I just had to keep moving from one side to the other. Did you notice that?
RW: Just like blowing through your sleeve with your breath and it gets hotter and hotter and the steam does that to you.

SL: Were any of you injured or hit during the battle?
WH: I wasn't. I had an order to lie in the foxhole the day the flag went up.
JDT: I was in a little different situation than the other people. I was all by myself on the island because the first day I lost my outfit as this picture shows, and we had direct hits on the Howitzers and on the ammunition.

SL: Show us the picture.
JDT: This is a picture which was in Life Magazine; this is one of my Howitzers left. A friend of mine had these amphibious ducks coming up here with 105's to support them. I think Easy Battery of your Battalion, the 28th Marines [looks at FVL], was here and we lost all communications. I had no communications. I had nothing. I had no one to give me the orders. I got hold of the First Sergeant, my Executive Officer, and I said when we blow a whistle we're going to retreat and advance in the opposite direction about seventy-five yards, which we did. We came over next to the 28th Marines probably right by George and Easy Battery. We came back there—my Executive Officer—and we both took our wallets out and took a look at our wives' pictures because we thought this was it and then we finally got communications and I had nothing left so they sent me—I went on my own with a radio operator and walked up to 2nd Battalion, 26th Marines, and I served with them most of the time. Once I was with Major Antonelli, in the 2nd Battalion, 27th, but most of the time I was with Joe Sayers with the 26th Marines. They had those casualties. They had people reporting into new people from the States. They didn't know who they were. So, if you belonged to this guy you put the friction tape this way on your helmet [makes a motion on forehead to show vertical line] and if you belonged to this guy you put the friction tape this way [makes a motion on forehead to show horizontal line]. You didn't know who he was but at least it told you who he belonged to. Being on your own was bad, because just going along with a radio operator and they had a lot of these spider traps on the front lines.

SL: What's a spider trap?
JDT: Like a manhole cover with a piece of brush on top of it—the Japanese soldier underneath it under the ground. All he had to do was move that aside and you're sitting in front of him and he could take shots at you. I was getting peppered. There was one fellow in front of me, he dove into a hole and just as he dove in he got a bullet right through his thigh all the way. I fell on top of him. I gave him sulfa drugs and wrapped him up and a Corpsman came and helped him. Then the next way up the trail we were peppered by gunfire—rifle fire—we couldn't figure out where it was coming from. It was a misty day. We looked over on the bank. There were a whole bunch of ponchos of dead Marines covered with ponchos. Well the Japanese had crawled in on top of the Marines and were firing at us and so we had to quickly take care of that. So there were a lot of these individual things that would come up and you didn't have a unit except you

worked with the headquarters of a certain battalion for firing missions or with company commanders and stuff—kind of a lonely situation.
FVL: The interesting part of it was that they were doing things that had never been done in "civilized" warfare before that.
RW: So many of them were so well dug in in good positions and had had time to really establish themselves in good positions and I know that we, moving up, had many of our men killed simply because the snipers were so well dug in that no one could quite pick them out and they would pick off individuals as they would come through. We lost one of our Company Commanders that way and of course, as I indicated, we lost the Commanding Officer of the Battalion, Colonel Trottey, the Executive Officer, Waters, and the three—all at one time just simply because they were dug in and they did get them particularly with the anti-aircraft weapons.
JDT: Well, I found out too that a lot of Japanese would take Marine clothing and put it on and they'd run by you and gee, you didn't know whether to shoot at them or not. You didn't want to kill one of your own men, but they were in Marine uniform you know. That got scary—when you couldn't fire at them because you were afraid you would kill one of your own men.

SL: Mr. Tanner would you hold up that picture again and point out Suribachi in the background and maybe explain what's in the foreground.
JDT: Well this is Mount Suribachi in the background and…

SL: It was on the top of that where the flag was raised – we'll talk about that later.
JDT: This here–I had four 75mm packed Howitzers, I got direct hits on two of them; all my ammunition went up. This friend of mine had 105mm Howitzers to support the 28th Marines. He was hit. His drivers were black army; they all ran for the beach. Left him sitting there. So he spent the first night where we were getting peppered that night. We were told to fire at will. And the next morning they knew where we were and we just got plastered with shorts and longs and pretty soon on target. And they just covered our area with mortars, just completely. Someone else mentioned someone was in a hole and they got hit in there. We had a lot of people of ours were in this big naval gunfire hole and the shells kept hitting in there and we lost our ordnance officer, our ammunition officer, core reserves and everything else there.

RW: And as we moved up even after they declared the island secured…
[laughter]
JDT: That was a laugh.
FVL: That was the worst thing ever on the 14th when they declared the island secured for about the tenth time. Carl Bachman was killed and they moved me off of the headquarters thing into being Company Commander of his company

and those fourteen days from the 14th until the 25th or 26th which was the last day—that was the hottest fire I'd seen.
JDT: Well the home front— politics—was giving them so much pressure to secure that island they said, "Let's secure it," and they secured it and it went on for two more weeks. [laughter]
RW: That was the third command post that we set up. We had good positions and were set up there. Actually at one of the Japanese gun positions where they were able to use their anti-aircraft weapon, we moved in on that and thought it was well secured. I think it was the second day early in the morning when up out of the ground one of these poles came—a Japanese with the white flag. But he was right there the entire time that we were moving in and he concealed himself very well in the underground tunnels but came up with the white flag on I think the second day we were in that command post. Right in our midst.

SL: So he'd been there all along?
RW: He'd been there the whole time.
FVL: Where were you when the first B29 landed; remember it came in and one of its engines was smoking black and it tipped?
RW: I can't tell you, I recall the story but at that…
FVL: I was wondering; I happened to be right near 1, just a little bit south of 1, and I saw it come in and I was just wondering by chance where you were at that time.
RW: I don't recall that incident. I recall talking about it.
FVL: Okay. Because I thought, you know everybody in this whole area just screamed and hollered when that thing came in because that's why we went in so that we could have a place for these people to land and there was one that was landing right in front of us and I was wondering where you were.
RW: I wasn't close enough to really observe.

SL: That was the first B29 that came down?
FVL: Yeah, the first B29.
JDT: Yeah, that was something.

SL: And it landed, and there were how many airports?
FVL: There was one there that we had to make serviceable and there was a second one here. [points on map] I don't think it was ever serviceable while we were there.
JDT: Not even the third one.
FVL: Well, there were three of them. The third one wasn't and the second one I don't think was either. Only the first one.
WH: 1 was the only one.

SL: Hold that map up and show us.

FVL: This is Airstrip No. 1—that is the only one that I think was ever serviceable. This is No. 2 that was not ever serviceable so far as I know and this is Airfield No. 3 and I don't think that was ever serviceable. Does anyone happen to remember where we were on March 14th when Howlin' Mad said, "We're secure, we're secure," and that was when we were losing so many people you couldn't believe it?
JDT: I was up around Nishi, back of this bank, there was big bluff up in here somewhere—I can't remember now—or was that Hill 362?
FVL: I think you were back a little farther.
JDT: Well, 362 was ahead of me.
RW: I don't recall exactly where I was but I know that we at that point were beginning to pick up a good many prisoners, many of them just laborers that were coming out; were hiding themselves because they didn't want to be exposed. But they weren't actually the Japanese soldiers. They were other people that had just been brought in to dig some of the tunnels and do the work and they would come out in platoons almost.
JDT: Korean laborers, too.

FVL: We're not going in order now, we're just jumping ahead. We were up someplace in the area that is called Airfield No. 3 and actually there was a high spot there between the ocean and that airfield.
SL: Show us.
FVL: [Pointing at map] Here's the ocean and here's the airfield and right in here there is a high spot. It was my day off. By that I mean my company was out of combat—not fighting—and two other people were in there. We were just sitting there looking out over the ocean and a lot of our ships were here because down here was kind of safe for the ships and they were apparently loading some materiel onto this ship. Pretty soon we heard a shell going over us from this area over this way and a shell landed in the water not very far from one of these ships and we figured that's that artillery piece behind us. Pretty soon another one; well this time they were over a little farther and you could see they were getting closer all the time on both sides. And, in a way we laughed, and in a way we didn't laugh, since we said, "They're going to get hit, they're going to get hit if they don't get out of there." Well they finally woke up and they put out a lot of fire and I never saw a ship go backward so fast in all my life and the last shot they took at it doggone near hit the bow. And it was funny. Can you imagine laughing at something like that?

SL: Let's talk about the flag raising. The flag was raised on February 23rd, D plus 3 or D plus 4?
GH: 4 days.
JDT: Thursday or Friday.

SL: What do you remember about the flag going up?

JDT: I remember because the night before it had drizzled. I was in the command post, the 2nd Battalion 26th Marines. It drizzled that night and everyone was getting up, shaking their ponchos out and trying to dry off. One of the fellows put the aerial up on his radio. It hadn't been camouflaged. The sun came up and hit it, and as soon as that hit, we caught it—it reflected—and they picked us up and we got just murdered with mortars. I got a mortar dug in my hole, the Colonel was hit, the Commanding Officer was hit, and several of the other guys were hit. I heard someone say, "Corpsman, Corpsman," and I looked around–this fellow was leaning against some of that brush and there wasn't anyone there to speak even; there wasn't that much left to the person. And then someone said, "Look, there's the flag, up on Suribachi." I turned around and way back there you could see it. And that did give us all an inspiration because things were at low ebb right then. We were just devastated by everything and that gave us enough to pick us up and go on. But, there weren't many left on the command post there. All the officers changed hands.

RW: I think the best part was that feeling that, "Hey, we don't have to worry about our back anymore." Most of us were rejected up the island and one of the things that we were afraid of was possible shells coming down. Of course there still were some snipers back there, but we felt now we could look ahead at getting up to the northern end of the island. It was a good feeling, but we didn't actually see it. I didn't.

FVL: Well, I didn't see it either. As a matter of fact, the first time I knew the flag was raised was when I saw that little pony issue of Time Magazine. It used to come out in the States, then they would fly them over to us and we would almost get them a couple of days after, remember that? And I saw that and I said, "Oh my God!" In a way, I figured, "Oh boy, at least behind us we're all right." But you know it wasn't so. Because at least when I went ashore, those people were throwing these grenades in our foxholes. They could sneak out of more places—you saw that.

JDT: The curious thing, too, was at night. They didn't know this operation was going to last so long. They thought it was going to last a week or ten days so the naval gunfire flares were limited. We finally only got three flares per hour per regimental front, which isn't much light. It was just eerie out there. We'd come above ground after dark and you'd hear groans and things like that with infiltrations of Japanese.

FVL: Did you notice that a lot of your troops were being killed by a shot in the forehead, a shot in the throat or in the mouth and the reason is because people were smoking, and every time they took a drag, it would shine, and those sons of guns were looking for that. Boy we lost a lot of them. We immediately issued an order that you can't smoke unless your head's underground or a poncho over your head.

RW: I know sometimes too, as you'd see one of those boys coming by that had a wound through the neck or something that had to be taken care of, that were

finding their way out, and you had that feeling, "He's gonna make it," and you'd think to yourself, "When does my turn come?" And those of us who were lucky didn't have a turn, but that was a constant thing.
JDT: Being alone like that, I was on a lot of trails and I'd see a lot of that coming by, being helped back to the rear, back down to the beach. One fellow I knew very well, he came by—his face was almost gone. He'd been a boxer so he had a pug nose. I never saw him later but some of my friends said they saw him later after plastic surgery and he really was a handsome man later on; they really fixed him up. His Dad, as a matter of fact, was a General. But there was a lot of that on the trail you'd see—wounded people—and you'd think, "God, I'm…" They'd say to me that they were the lucky ones because they were getting the hell out. I couldn't believe it—there was just nothing left. They were lucky, they thought because they could get out of there. I had one guy in our outfit put his foot up on the edge of a foxhole and shot his toes off to get out. He got a general court martial for that. But that's the way he got out of there, off the island.
WH: That's doing it the hard way.

SL: Now Mr. Tanner, you know Angelo Bertelli, the Notre Dame quarterback. Didn't he serve on Iwo Jima?
JDT: Yes he did. He was with the 3rd Marine Division. I was at the regimental command post of the 27th Marines. I think it was Colonel Wornham. We probably made 100 yards that day—which was a big advance, maybe too much. We pulled up, which left our right flank exposed. I think the 3rd Division was there and the General was very concerned about that—being exposed there on the right, so he called for a runner to come over so he could get out the word to give us some support. It happened to be Angelo Bertelli. The first time that I'd met him. Later we became very good friends and are today very good friends.

SL: He was probably a pretty good runner. [laughter]
JDT: Yeah, better passer than runner.

SL: Tell us a little bit about the Japanese fortifications, the tunnels, the pillboxes, and their defense structure.
JDT: Well, I had one right behind my location [points to map]; here there was one. We couldn't figure out what was going on because we thought we had secured the thing, but all the time we were getting sniper fire. All the time, we'd go inside and couldn't figure out where it was coming from. Later on we'd got into the bunker and there was a false wall between the outside wall and the inside wall, about this wide [hands indicate about a foot], where you could get inside and go down about ten feet and still see on the outside. For all outside or inside appearances, there was just no way anyone could be in there. And that's what was going on; a lot of them hiding that way.

RW: I think I mentioned the distance of one of them coming out of the bunker where they had an anti-aircraft weapon. Again, we'd been down in these holes before. We had gone into the webnet where they had secured themselves when the bombardments were going on. To look at it we were satisfied all was secure and well, but there were little places you don't see through the usual reconnaissance down through the web of underground revetments and caves. Somehow or other they eluded us and we had a great many people come out of the hills or the caves long after the island had been secured.
FVL: Well, as a matter of fact, the very last day I was there, March 26th or something like that, right down below Airstrip No. 1—right in here [points to map]—our regiment was here and we were going to go ashore that way. That night we slept through 250 Japanese who dug out.
WH: Banzai attack.
FVL: Yeah. Right next to the airport were a bunch of fliers. Some of them had come in on lamed B29s and others were troops and these 250 some-odd people busted out of their caves and went down to the tents and butchered… How many? Several hundred, well, 100-150 American troops in there that night. Those of us who just came out of the [unclear]–we just slept right through it—and the next day we just went ashore without knowing anything about it. Then we went onto our ship without knowing anything about it.
JDT: Those caves were fantastic—at the end of the thing around the 25th of March we formed a skirmish line actually, we practically held hands.
FVL: Where were you on the 25th?
JDT: We came back along in here. [points to map] We held hands practically. They found people coming up out of there the next year, even. In fact, they're still coming out.
FVL: Well, I'll tell you what I saw—we were up here past the 3rd Airfield and there's a big high abutment and we noticed we'd been getting shot at from the back, the left rear. Someone ordered fire to blow the whole side of this thing apart because they were shooting at us and I just happened to be standing right here where I could see it, here by the Airfield.

SL: There was a cliff?
FVL: It was a cliff, a great big cliff, and it looked like nothing but they decided they were going to blow and they were blowing it from the top because there were some holes that the Japanese were hiding in. So they blew it. When they did the whole front of this thing, it must have been as big as a football field in length and probably even, if you took it on its side, it was that way in height. The whole thing opened up and down it slid and there were several foxholes along the line and in each foxhole there were two Japanese face to face. What they use to do was crawl up out, shoot somebody and then get back in, and there they were. When the front went off it was just like they were standing still in air and almost [makes noise like explosion] down they came. They were…
WH: Cagey.

FVL: In caves. If you want to know about that sort of stuff, we can tell you some more… We decided after a while when we got up here, to use our flame throwers from tanks. Carl Bachman was CO of the How Company, 3rd Battalion and he was killed on the 14th of March, and I got his Company.

SL: You were promoted to Company Commander?
FVL: Well, I was already Company Commander, but of Headquarters Company; now I had a Rifle Company. And we were moving along this way and they gave me three tanks—I don't know how many pieces of artillery you guys would give us—and out we went. The tanks wouldn't go without the troops. That's sounds kind of funny, but they would go but they had to have the troops right alongside of them. You couldn't send one alone. They couldn't do that. They were harmless without protection so we had to be right alongside them. We'd go by the side and get behind them. We had the flame thrower—it went out about 250 feet, something like that. What we would do is look at something that looked like it was infested with Japanese and we would let them go. Finally that day, we had a good day for us; we went way out there and everybody was excited about it. They took their little airplanes and they dropped flares to find out how far we had gone out, and everybody else up until then had pulled back after they had gone out, and I said, "By God, we're not going to do it because at that point we were fighting twice all the time." So I made them hold and we held, and the next day when we went by there, there were all these Japanese guys that were hit by our flamethrowers and the flames killed them right the way they were. For example, if they were running like this [puts one hand forward] that's the way they died. Or if they had had their hands like this [puts arms apart with hands in air] that's the way they died. When you'd see them, there they were, the skin was burned off, but you could see their intestines and the whole works. That's the way it was. Then they pulled me off of there and put somebody else in my place and I was then put over into sort of a canyon over here.

SL: Show us.
FVL: [points to map] The canyon is over on the west side and it was west of Airfield No. 3. We were in there. Now somebody else was over here fighting where I had been fighting the day before, and I was holding, and there was a great big canyon across from where I was sitting up high. There was a canyon, sitting up high, another canyon. And those rascals were shooting out of the caves at us and so we got some bazookas and we dug ourselves in and all we had sticking out was the bazooka and we'd shoot straight across the canyon right into their caves and we kept doing that all morning. Pretty soon I'm looking down, and there's a fella all by himself, but he had his helmet on and he was talking with somebody and someone pointed up and pointed at me. So he walked up and said, "Say, I'm looking for your Company Commander." I said, "I'm the Company Commander." "Jeez," he said, "You're kind of young aren't you?" I said, "Well, not too young to be here, I guess." And we talked a little bit. He was right close. We were here

[points at map] and we were protected by my group here, and the other group here, and then here, but we were shooting at those people who were in the caves across the valley.

SL: Did any of you every go in any of the caves or pillboxes after they were secured?
JDT: Oh, I went into pillboxes, but not caves.

SL: What's a pillbox? Tell us about those.
JDT: Well we had several types. Our battalion, as a matter of fact, formed a fire direction center down in one. This was an underground one and you had to crawl in on your stomach, down a long narrow—if you had claustrophobia you'd never make it—and only one person at a time, just like a snake, you'd go down this long thing, get down to the end, then you'd turn left and then come out. Then you'd come into a little tiny room—with about 4 feet—I couldn't stand it—or maybe 5 feet high and about 8 feet square. That's where everyone was directing the fire from there. If anything ever lit on top of you, you'd all had it. I was glad to get out of some of those places. They were just…
FVL: Jeez, I don't know how you did that. I'd be scared.
JDT: My wife would never go. She has claustrophobia.

FVL: I'll tell you one and it ought to go off the record, because this is embarrassing. I got a call to come back to a battalion meeting of all the company commanders. And this pillbox was right outside, it was way down and what you had to do was bend down and get in and you had to leave your piece outside because if you had a misfire in there, that thing would go around and kill 16 people. So I put my little carbine out there and in we went and then the [unclear] what was going to happen next and this was what the General wanted and this was what Liversedge wanted and so on, so everybody went out and I had something else to say to the Commander. I came out and there was only one weapon left and it looked like my piece so I reached out and put it on and my runner was with me and he looked at me and he said, "Skipper that's not your piece." I said, "What?" He said, "That's not your piece." So we moved over to where my piece was and he took it and it didn't even have the ammunition in it. The magazine was empty and there wasn't even a round in the chamber. There I was walking around for a couple of weeks without… [laughter] See, I didn't say that. But that actually happened to me. Jeez, it was the craziest thing.
Well, this prisoner of war—here's his picture—his name was Taizo Sakai and the woman with him here is Sumiko Sakai, his wife, and the little child there, their niece or nephew. The backside is a picture of his wife. Remember I told you about Candy Johnson—the platoon leader from Texas that had a bullet go through his thing and turn around? Well, I told him, "Why you don't you send them back up here? We'll take them." It was about 5:30. So he came in and by this time they had some clothes on them and I tried to get the intelligence people

who supposedly could speak Japanese and nobody'd answer the phone. Here I was, and I said, "What the hell am I going to do now?" because if you can't get through to battalion, you can't get through to regiment. So he started talking Japanese to me and I couldn't talk to him and all of a sudden he said, "Parlez-vous français?" And I said, "Oui [unclear]" and we started talking in French. Here's my battle orders, the 7th of March. Holy Toledo, I was there longer than I thought I was. Well anyway, you look at this. I asked him how long he was here. He said, [in French, then translated] "More than three days," he was in the area. I asked him where he had been before and he said, [in French, then translated] "North China." See that's where he was. And then I asked him a question that had to do with some figures and jeez, he's got it all written here. I don't remember what it was and but then he wrote here, [in French, then translated] "Talk a little more slowly, if you please. " Over here, [in French, then translated] "Japan is conquered," he said. Then we were talking about various things, do you know about this, do you know about this, [in French, then translated] "Those papers don't come here to Iwo," he said, and I think that's about all. But anyway, while we were waiting for it to get light and those people to wake up, I used him to help me blast caves because they would come out before it became light and you could hear them. So I said to him, "Talk to them. Tell them to come out, and if they don't, tell them I'm going to blast them." He said, "They're crazy." [unclear]

SL: And you and he were speaking back and forth in French?
FVL: Yeah. "They're fanatics," he said, "They're fanatics," and so anyway, I got over here and he could hear them. He said, "They're going to die." I said, "Tell them to banzai and we're going to kill them." So at the end of the [unclear] cave here, then it dropped off a little bit, then it dropped like that, [unclear] one of those light machine guns–I set up all four of my machine guns aimed right into the thing [unclear]. They accommodated us real well. [unclear] We got all set up. He said, "Come out," and out they came and we just let go and got all of them, every one of them. He turned back and he said, "They're fanatics." Well, that went on several times. Well, finally it was getting to be kind of light and I called back to the battalion and battalion answered and I said, "Give me somebody in [unclear] section," and I told them why… [unclear] He told them a lot more because they could understand him in Japanese. [unclear] He had told me that he was the second major in the communications section and he started telling me all about where the guy was, they were here, they were there. [unclear] I asked him what he knew about Idima; by that time we knew we were [unclear] that's a little teeny island not very far from Iwo Jima and he said, "Don't go there; there's nothing there. Don't go there."

SL: These are your notes from interviewing the prisoners?
JDT: I'd save that, Fio. That's a collector's item—for your family too.

SL: Tell us what that is on the front–it says your battle orders of what date?
FVL: Headquarters, 5th Marine Division, 7th March 1945, Top Secret. What the heck are you doing with this? This is an order for withdrawal from target—getting ready to go home on March 7th.
JDT: A bit premature there weren't you? [Laughing]

SL: You actually left on March 26th?
FVL: 25th or 26th, wasn't it?
JDT: Yeah, I got aboard ship because the guys jumping off at the end of Kitano Point up here or wherever it was—the sharks were just thick all around and I got them back [unclear] ship out here and one of the sailors had a great big hook and put it on a big rope and threw it over the edge and, just like that, a shark almost pulled him over the edge.

FVL: Well, what was it, the 25th or 26th?
JDT: I think it was the 26th. I'm going to have to review notes, now. I can't remember—it was fifty years ago. [laughing]

FVL: You saw this didn't you? Haven't you seen this?
JDT: No, I haven't seen those.

SL: Hold them up so the camera can see.
JDT: [Holds up photographs] That's typical. [unclear] Who took these? Did you take these—did you have a camera? Who had a camera?
FVL: No, no, no, I didn't. Here's what happened. When we weren't up front on our turn—let's say we had one hot day up there, or two days, and then they'd pull us out and put somebody else in. Then we would have to do stuff like this. We'd run around and blow them up. You know they'd send us up a whole truckload of Bangalore torpedoes and we'd shove them into the caves.
JDT: This picture was taken out of a bunker by a photographer inside looking out through it. He wasn't out there while taking this.
FVL: When we didn't go in any caves, what we do is push the stuff in and then what we would do is blow them up by using the flame from the flame throwers in the tanks that would go 250 feet or so. We'd shoot at them, and boom!—blown up. And these are pictures of that kind of work that we did here. [shows photographs to camera] You can see the smoke up there and see we're blowing one there, and then we're back here and then these other two are where we had blown caves.
WH: This gives you a good idea of the difference in the terrain, with the rocks, the post, the volcanic ash.

SL: Mr. Whipple, let's see your photograph. When was that taken?
RW: 1945.
SL: Probably just got back from Iwo Jima.

JDT: Yeah, it says middle of July 1945.

SL: Who's this good looking young man here? [holds up photograph]
FVL: That's right after I got my commission which was sometime either in February or early part of March and I had gone home to say goodbye to my folks, my mother, because I was going to go to California and I didn't know what was going to happen. How did I know I was going to get stuck with all those women, you know? And so I had this picture taken and I was getting on a bus in Albany on my way to my little hometown of Hoosick Falls and the bus driver said, "What's that uniform?" and I said, "How's that?" "What's that uniform? Is it St Johns Academy?" He thought I was a student at St. John's Academy. I said, "No, it's the Marine Corps."
JDT: I had the same situation coming from Quantico to Pendleton. I stopped in Phoenix to get a pair of shoes. He thought I was in the Salvation Army. And just hadn't seen it.
FVL: They didn't even know what the war was about.

SL: Did you encounter any other Japanese prisoners while you were on the island?
RW: Only one that came up in their CP; he was picked up almost immediately.

SL: How would you categorize the Japanese that you were fighting against? What kind of fighters were they?
WH: Very resourceful fighters.
FVL: Yeah.
RW: Very resourceful, very fanatic, never—of course could they count on anything that would be normal I guess. Hand to hand combat—we saw very little of them except when we were shooting at them.
FVL: Exactly, exactly.
JST: And no fear of anything.
RW: Apparently no fear, from our point of view.
WH: Well, I think their belief in the emperor was such that it was an honor if you got killed; why you went to heaven or wherever they go.

JDT: One thing we hadn't bring up–did you have any contact with any of the Navajos?
FVL: Yes, that was really, really great.
JDT: Break the code.
FVL: That was mostly before we got way up North. It was down here and they were absolutely without fear.

SL: These were American Navajos who were in the Marine Corps?
FVL: Yes, and for example when we moved ahead what we would have to do is get all our wire out and get wire out to a platoon here, a platoon here, a platoon

here, to a company out here. In addition we had the 300s, those big radios, as well as the walkie-talkies. You couldn't always have somebody with a big 300 on his back running down to the platoon or another company. So what you did is connect them up with wire and they'd have this little wire thing about this big [shows with hands about 4 inches round] with a handle on it and one end of it would be connected to the battalion and the other was on this round gadget. They would hold on to it like this [demonstrates by showing holding gadget in right hand and running slowly] and they'd go running and they'd go running and they weren't afraid of anything. And they'd get out to where they were supposed to be and then they'd check in to let us know and we'd talk back and forth and pretty soon if there were some Japanese on the line you could tell. And pretty soon they'd be talking like this and we said, "What the hell is going on?" [laughing] I didn't know that that's what they were saying. Strangely enough, you would think that when they heard these people talking they would at least say, "Well, this is what it is and we're going to cut the wire." Do you know other people may have had instances of wire being cut but I don't remember wire being cut once when I was in charge of the headquarters company and I had to set up the battalion post.

SL: What was the wire for? Why were the Navajos involved?
FVL: Well, before we used Navajos—and this started way back in Guadalcanal didn't it?
WH: Yes.
FVL: The Japanese had a lot of people who could speak English. As a matter of fact, they were raised in America or trained in America or educated in America and they could speak English. And so they'd connect down to one of the wires and they could hear what the people were saying back and forth, and doggone it, if they didn't find out exactly what we were going to do and when. Until someone got the bright idea that we've got to do something else. I don't know who it was, but someone came up with the idea—let's use the Indians because they couldn't translate the Navajo. So we'd just tell them what to do. Some of these guys were so damn brave you couldn't believe it. They'd just [unclear] and away they'd go, brrrr, and they had one guy out there hearing and another guy down here hearing, and they'd translate and the Japanese were madder than hell. But I don't remember, at least on Iwo Jima, I don't think we used them anywhere near as much.
RW: In the South Pacific, I know they were very valuable.
FVL: Yes in the South Pacific. I know we had them.

JDT: Did you have any Dobermans with you? Some of the outfits had Dobermans. I know Ernie Pyle, I have a picture of him, he came on the island—he was a famous war correspondent later killed on Okinawa.
FVL: I don't even know whether we had to use those people.
JDT: Well to sniff out the caves.

FVL: We had them, the Navajos there, but I don't know that we could use them because we weren't all that far apart for one thing and if they had somebody who could talk on a 300 they could have that same person, a Navajo, at the receiving end just getting the stuff, you see. But at Guadalcanal, they had more distance, didn't they, and they had to be careful. I don't think we had that.
JDT: We were so close; you didn't even have to whisper.
RW: This was unusual…
FVL: It was completely different.
RW: …in the history of warfare to have that kind of an operation.

SL: What was unusual about it?
RW: The fact that you poured so many people into such a small island against such a strongly fortified position. Literally, it was just a matter of overrunning with manpower.
JDT: Over 80,000 there on the island, wasn't it?
RW: And you just couldn't believe that kind of closeness in any kind of warfare. You were shoulder to shoulder, and literally face to face combat. You didn't have the feeling—it was such contrast from the South Pacific, for example, where we were doing island fighting, where we were taking patrols and going out into the hills trying to guide ourselves and our positions primarily by streams or by hilltops and seeing literally never an opponent, a Japanese, unless we were surprised by some patrol or snipers that were out there. But, here, this was literally shoulder to shoulder with your own people, foxhole to foxhole, and always somebody up in front that you were least expecting to be confronted by. You didn't know where the next shot was coming from. Until finally you overran caves and you'd clean them up literally inch by inch, yard by yard, before in a mass of people really moving across an island that was dug in and fortified. It was just unbelievable to have that kind of confrontation. There was no other place have you had this mass of people put into such a small point.

FVL: Did any of you folks see any of the Navahos running wire? Now I look back and I don't know that I saw them run wire.
JDT: I didn't myself.
WH: I know they used them but I didn't see them.
FVL: I saw them on radios. You know, I did see them carrying wire but that doesn't mean anything. They could have carried wire just to go from me to my platoon, for example, one of my platoons or something like that because we never knew when a radio was going to work or not work.
RW: I recall a good many comments about them when we were down in the South Pacific, but I don't recall anything on Iwo Jima.
FVL: I saw them there. One of them raised the flag—Ira Hayes. He was there. He raised the flag. There were several others there.
JDT: I think he was a Pima, wasn't he?
FVL: I don't know.

WH: I believe he was.
JDT: He wasn't a Navajo; I think he was a Pima, but, same deal.

SL: Did you have air support during the battle?
JDT: There was a little bit early on. There didn't seem to be too much. I think it was beforehand.
FVL: Well, at the beginning there was.
JDT: We had some of our own observation planes, VMO's, biplanes. One of my friends was shot down during observation over enemy lines of our own people.
FVL: But they didn't use those until we had control of Suribachi.

SL: Did the Navy remain around the island during the fighting?
FVL: Only for a limited period of time.
JDT: It kind of disappeared.
FVL: It disappeared, it disappeared.
JDT: All I saw was Red Cross ships, taking them back to Guam, offshore, the wounded.
RW: Only in the first couple of days, I think, then little by little they began to move out.

SL: There were hospital ships offshore?
RW: Yes.

SL: And the wounded would be evacuated out to the ships?
WH: Because we had to have them—they were so close, they saved a lot of lives that way.
RW: I think they continued with supply ships and the hospital ships, but the battleships, the cruisers, destroyers, all departed.

SL: What about Navy Corpsmen—they served with the Marines?
FVL: Oh they were great, they were gods and angels. I'll tell you they didn't have one bit of fear.
JDT: They were not even armed. They just went out and did their job.
FVL: And they did it. They did it. What I would like to say for the record is what I was telling these folks earlier. I wrote up only one person for the Congressional Medal of Honor and it was this little Corpsman. We were pretty close to our own front line and somebody got hit, and he went running up there and he went across the front line and he got down there and he was ministering to him. And he turned around and he started to lift him up, and just about the time he started to lift him up, he got hit and down he went, and he started up again and he got hit again. He called a fellow who was Jack's spotter. He was a spotter for a small airplane that was spotting places for us to drop artillery. He went running out there and he picked this—it was obvious by this time that the fellow that the Corpsmen went out to save was all shot up—he was dead. And so

this Johnson reached over and picked up this Corpsman, picked him up, and started to run back, and he got hit and down he went. He came back up again and he got hit again. And this time both of them were dead. But that Corpsman, that Corpsman, just wouldn't stop—he just wouldn't stop. He had to bind this guy up to stop him from bleeding—we were close enough to see that. And then he wanted to get him back and my God, he wouldn't give up. And those sons of guns apparently thought that wasn't very important, I mean it was too common I guess. They wouldn't give him the Congressional Medal of Honor; they gave him the Navy Cross, which is the second highest. But boy I'll tell you, I'll tell you…
WH: A lot of them were the real heroes.
FVL: The bravest people I've ever seen.
WH: I think there was more instances of where one Marine or a Corpsman threw themselves where a grenade came in—he threw himself over the grenade so his buddies didn't get killed. I think there were more instances of that than in all the rest of the battles I know of put together.
FVL: I know, I'll tell you, say what you want and I know that I was a Marine and I'm just so proud of the Marines from what I see, but the truth of the matter is when those people were in combat they were brave people. I didn't see anybody running away. I saw one guy—he had an A4—a little light machine gun, air cooled machine gun and it was about maybe the 29th to 30th day which means we had still about five or six more days to go. Mac, his name was McLaughlin, and he turned around and he was walking back and he had this thing over his shoulder which meant he hadn't fired it because if it was hot, it would have burned him, and he was walking back and I looked at him and I said, "Mac, where are you going?" He said, "I can't do it anymore, do what you want, but I can't do this anymore. I'm going back." And I just couldn't see myself arresting him or grabbing him or anything else, so I said, "Go get some rest." And he went back. Now that's the only one I saw with my own eyes. But, I saw another little thing. A fellow by the name of Corporal Larkin. I had three platoons and one of my platoon leaders was a Corporal. My officers were gone. [emotional] And I had to make him a platoon leader because we lost all the officers and we had to jump off and I said, "All right, we go, go" and he jumped off. He fell to the deck and he pounded and he said, "I can't do it, I just can't do it." So, I got hold of my Gunny Sergeant who I was using as an officer really, kind of an assistant company commander sort of, and then I said, "Who's close to him?" and he answered and I said, "Go see, see if he's all right." He said, "He's gone. He can't do anything." So, I said, "Will you take the platoon?" He said he would, and that was it. Those were the only two. Sure felt sorry for poor Larkin. [emotional]

JDT: It was tough to get hold of the families, writing letters to the widows and so forth. Always got nice letters back from them.
RW: I never had to accompany or be one to go out and tell the part of the family that some one of the relatives or family was gone, but I always felt sorry for the person who had to do that. That was a difficult assignment.

JDT: Tough job.
RW: I guess this is a good time, I think, to say a word of thanks for all of us—we're lucky, the four of us here probably represent—I don't know how many of them are gone out there—people that will never leave memory, or as is the case here, the memory of somebody that was there and is gone. We're lucky and I don't know if we have any way of commemorating, maybe a word of silence or something. But, how, how are we the lucky ones, why?
WH: Well, you never know unless you've been there, you can't tell. I remember an instance right here in Fallbrook where I overreacted. I used to belong to the Ritchie Club; I think you all know the Ritchie Club. Maybe you were there at that time Russ; I don't think you were physically present. They were angry at the Marines—something had happened and the Marines were being bad mouthed. And we had our meeting and then we had our little program. So I decided, well, I'm going to let them see what the Marines went through. So I got a picture, a training film on Iwo Jima which was actual footage during the fighting and I showed it. Better than half the people had to walk out, they got sick, they just couldn't take it. I just cut the film off. But I didn't hear them bad mouthing the Marines any more.
RW: I wasn't there. Sorry, I wasn't there.

[talking back and forth about photographs]
FVL: Remember I showed you this picture. [looks at photographs] It was to counterpoint… Well actually my only claim to fame was the fact that I was the last Company Commander to fight. We finished there and then we came out back and went down below the airstrip and that was it. But right after they declared this thing secure there at Kitano Point, General Hermle wanted us all to have our picture taken together and this is an actually the 3rd Battalion, 28th Marines with a few people from regiment. [holds up photograph of eight Marines on Iwo Jima] This is a fellow by the name of Parker Storts; he was Executive Officer of the George Company which was handled by Bob Carney, the Admiral's son. Carney's not here. This is a fellow by the name of Petros who was Executive Officer to the Battalion Commander and he was a Major.
WH: Petros just died recently, didn't he?
FVL: Oh, did he, really? How far did he get?
WH: Major General.
FVL: He was a wonderful guy, very bright, very nice. This is me. This is Liversedge, Colonel Liversedge. This is Hermle right here; he was the number 2 in the 5th Division. This is Smoke, who was our Battalion Commander. This is the Company Commander of I Company. Rice, I think.
RW: Misty Rice?
FVL: Misty Rice. He was Company Commander of I Company. This is Captain Spangler who was our 3rd officer in our Battalion, Battalion 3 Officer.

RW: You mentioned Bob Carney. I'm trying to ring the bell on him. I went through ROTC with him. We went through our parachute training together down in [unclear]. He was with us in the South Pacific with the parachute regiment.
FVL: He and a good bunch of these other people—remember they disbanded the parachute people and they brought them back and a big part of them were in the 5th Division.
RW: Yes they used the battalion to form the regiments for each of the…

SL: Where was this photograph taken?
FVL: [holds up photograph] This was taken, this is Kitano Point. Back right up in here, near all of this stuff, there was a big high spot. So we climbed up to that high spot and they took these pictures.
RW: Was that the end of March then?
FVL: I tell you what it was; it was the very last day that we fought after we secured the island, had that picture, and then we came back and we headed back to right here [points to photograph], down on the southwest side of Airstrip No. 1. We were right practically on the water line. Between us, though, and the strip was the tent camp of all of the flyboys. Now some of them, a good many of them, I guess came down in their B29s and they were there until they finished fixing their B29s so they could take off. Other people were there to help run the facility and that sort of thing and these people, these Japanese, had the whole thing planned, the whole thing was networked with caves. They were down below. They could go from here [points to map of Iwo Jima] all the way up to here, going through this network, and they broke out.
JDT: We used to hear the noise at night and we thought they were driving trucks underneath us. That was the word that got around originally.
FVL: Well, it was amazing how they got away with it. Anyway, they broke out and almost every one of them had a sabre, and they slashed open the tents and they killed a whole host of Americans. All fellows who went down there in my outfit were sound asleep—our whole battalion, as a matter of fact was sound asleep—and we didn't know anything about it until just before we were ready to leave and people were telling us, "Did you hear about this, did you hear about that?" And then they put us on—I think it was the President Adams—was the vessel that took us away. We went back to Hawaii then.
JDT: We came back by Okinawa on Easter Sunday.
FVL: Oh you did?
RW: I put so much out without doing reading or reviewing. Most of it is gone.

SL: While we have this board out—why don't you show us and tell us about these smaller photographs around the side.
FVL: Well, I'll tell you what they are. I told you I was a Transport Quartermaster. [points to photograph] That's the fellow who loads the ship and all of these pictures are me working with people who worked for me as a Transport Quartermaster. I don't know how much you know about it, but what a

Transport Quartermaster does is, he takes over the ship, and the Captain just has his people making sure you are not doing anything crazy. He takes over the ship, loads it according to certain plans, and he has to load it in such a way so that the last thing that is going on is going to be the first thing that goes off and that's how we got so mixed up when we were offloading. A lot of stuff they needed and they couldn't have because we couldn't get it ashore.

SL: What is that aerial photograph that you are holding?
FVL: This is a photograph of Kitano Point. They showed me—they had a map—and they showed me where my area was going to be—right here—and I started right about at the top of those lines and fought down to the water. I didn't know that they were jumping off into the water.
JDT: Yes, some committed suicide.
FVL: They did? I didn't know that.

SL: These were your actual battle orders and it says here this is an oblique photo taken at 1600 hours on 21 March 1945 from an altitude of 2,200 feet, and this was given you to you as part of the operation to secure that canyon?
FVL: Yes, that's right. We were the last people to actually fight before it was officially secured. And then we came back and an interesting thing happened. My first Lieutenant Commander was Shepherd, a fellow by the name of Shepherd and they used to call him Old Skinhead Shepherd.
JDT: I worked one day with him, at the beginning of the operation.
FVL: Well, okay, he actually had been replaced about March 11th or 12th because he kept telling Liversedge that it wouldn't do any good, you can't have a ravine running this way and go across the fire, the[unclear] fire, because it would just kill you. So we would have this artillery roll out at about 5:00 and the minute it stopped, the Japanese would be ready for us and we'd go and they'd shoot out from the caves at us and they'd just kill us, and finally we had to hold it here, go around to the top of it and go on down. Well, anyway once we had the island secured, Shepherd was given back his command and he took charge immediately after this photograph. The big photograph, you'll notice he's not in it. Well, when we headed down, then he was given back his command for the purpose of taking us down to go aboard ship. And that was not an indication of disgrace to him—he just thought it wasn't right to do it, and I know Marines are supposed to do what they are told to do, but he just couldn't do it, he just could not do it. And when Smoke took over and said, "All right, we're going to go," we lost a whole bunch of people; we lost a whole bunch of people, two or three days. Finally, we had to stop and do it a different way. So anyway, that's the way it was.

SL: Any memories of the voyage home, or was the home back to Hawaii?
FVL: Home was back to Hawaii.
RW: Back to Hawaii, coming home.

JDT: We'd meet for Bronze Stars, Silver Stars, sitting there, who's going to get what, more of a political thing. In other words, you give me one; I'll give you one, that kind of stuff. Then I came back. We were just off Okinawa Easter Sunday—that was April 3, 1945—got to Pearl Harbor on the 13th of April and pulled up along the dock there in a little skiff, and a guy said, "Truman's President. Roosevelt just died." I think that was the 13th of April '45. That's all I remember about the return trip.
FVL: I was on board ship coming back to my island, Kamuela, when we heard that.
JDT: Well, I'd lost 35 pounds all by myself, looking for a piece of candy or something laying on a trail and I'd lost 35 pounds. So I made up my mind, I was going to eat, eat, eat before I got back to Pearl Harbor and I ate so much, I got sick.
FVL: So, when you stop to think about it, how you were alone all that time, you're just lucky you didn't look like a Japanese.
JDT: Well, I was with Marines. But I was alone, on my own, to do whatever I wanted to do.
FVL: For how much of the time?
JDT: All the time.
FVL: The whole time?
JDT: Except for four days. After this happened, I went up for five days, came back to battalion headquarters, and there was a culvert. I went into this culvert and I felt kind of sleepy, and I woke up and I thought I had been asleep for a week. It had only been two hours. And it was time to go back to the front lines again. And I took off. That was it. From then on I was with the 27th or the 26th.

SL: What kind of food did they have?
[laughter]
JDT: Well, all I ever had was pork and egg yolks in sulfur warming it up. The big deal was if you would ever find hot dogs and beans in a can.
WH: C-rations.
JDT: Yes.
FVL: Eggs, I never heard of eggs.
JDT: Eggs yolks and pork.
RW: Ham rations.
JDT: Anything tasted pretty good.
RW: I think everybody was pretty thin coming off the island. It was good to get aboard ship—the food was pretty good.

FVL: One thing I'll have to say, when I went aboard ship I got in a spot that had about eight officers sleeping in it, and I was on the bottom and I fell asleep and I didn't wake up probably for 24 or 36 hours. And after that—I had my Exec Officer running it—and we'd meet each other aboard ship walking, taking exercise and so on, and if we could have canned the feelings, the expressions that

people exchanged and how they talked to each other, we'd never have people fighting each other. Did you notice that? Everyone just seemed to think, "Boy, thanks for what you did for me, thanks for what you did for me."
JDT: My ship was full of wounded down below, too, in the hold. All you had to do was go down there and you'd felt how lucky you were yourself.
WH: I know I was angry when I got back, when I got to Maui. Then I went over to Oahu again and back to the 10th Ammunition Company. And I hated that. I wanted to stay with the Division. [unclear] Then I got sent back to Maui with the 18 3rd Battalion. That's when they were trying to bring the 4th Division back so fast. Cates still had the Division and they made me a Supply Officer. I'd never been a Supply Officer before. And they hadn't gone back into formal accountability but they were sure pointing in that direction at that time. And they started shipping all the ordnance equipment down and they started opening up the boxes to check them out and you'd have a box of BARs and you'd open it up and find a couple of broken bayonets and steel helmets in there. And the Ordnance Officer, I forget his name now, 4th Division, we went round and round and round. Cates got into it and I really got my butt chewed out, believe me.
JDT: Cates was quite a guy. Speaking of General Hermle—he finally moved to La Mesa. Do you know whatever happened to him?
FVL: He was Dean of the USD Law School. Did you know that?
JDT: No, but he went down there and started growing avocados too.
FVL: Yes, but he was the Dean of the Law School at the University of San Diego.
JDT: He'd wander around up on the front lines without a helmet, with just a carbine and he had an aide by him. He was crazy; he was not supposed to be up there. That's for other people.
FVL: I didn't see him with an aide and I didn't see him with a carbine, he just had his hands in his pockets…
JDT: And showed up.

RW: When it was all over I think there was a relaxation aboard ship, as was suggested, where you were comfortable at the same time, you had the feeling that it was done, and that you could sort of sit back and think a little bit about what took place. It was not a tense period. Going over it was all tense—all expectation. Coming back you could let everything out, so to speak. The comments were about what had happened, how it had happened, talked about some of the people who were gone, some of the people you were going to write up for citations and just feeling that it's over, and how grateful you were—what was ahead couldn't be other than good; you were looking forward to getting back.

SL: I know that I have the picture of Kitano Point hanging in my office and I look at it almost every day. When I feel I have some great problem, I look up at that picture and I realize I don't have any problems at all. Do any of you have any memories you'd care to share about how the battles changed you for the better and life lessons that you've brought through life after having served there?

JDT: I think it made a man out of everybody because you learned to roll with the punches and also you learned that life meant an awful lot and it also meant that you helped your fellow man to survive too.
RW: I think you had the feeling that to have survived or come through, you reached a point of numbness but you knew that you couldn't let it get to you; you had to somehow or other go on and do what you had to do without really thinking about it because there was no place where you could begin feeling sorry for yourself or to worry about the details because it was there and you did what you had to do and it was only when it was all over that you could finally let go. But I think anybody in combat reached that point with people dying beside you or being blown up or whatever it was. You couldn't let it get to you—otherwise I don't think you would have survived. I think you arrived at that point where those things couldn't bother you; you had to go along and keep going. I think it was once it was all over, I think more than at any other time, we reached that point where you could…
FVL: I would like to add just a little something to that, not only could you not let go, but you would appreciate the fact that that fellow who just had to go around the corner to do something, not knowing what was there, put his life on the line right then and there and five minutes after he was told to go around that corner he was dead and you couldn't help but be thankful and appreciative of what he did for you. And you didn't feel sorry for yourself because he did it for him and you and everybody else—you had to do it too and we were very appreciative of the fact that everybody was so willing to put up their lives. I thought that was just great.
JDT: I noticed, you take the big rough and tumble football players sometimes, but you didn't have to be big—some of the bravest guys were the were the little tiny guys in boot camp or over here at Pendleton who were the real heroes and who really put their life out on a limb there.
WH: Well you certainly had an appreciation for people and the closeness, the camaraderie that developed that I don't think anyone who hasn't been through it will ever know it.
FVL: That's right.
JDT: I think that's what the Marine Corps is all about—there's no one else like it. There's nothing else like it.
WH: That's one of the reasons why the Corpsmen were so great because they had Marine Corps training to go along with their medical training and they were…
FVL: They were wonderful.
WH: You couldn't ask for anything better.

SL: Mr. Whipple, why don't you tell us what you did after Iwo Jima.
RW: I think the first break I got I took five days leave and went over to the Milano Hotel in Waikiki and took a deep breath and let the rest of the world go by. [laughter] And little by little, why, I think I sort of put myself together and

the world together, but it was a getting away from it all. Ultimately I got out as soon as I could. We of course got ready to go back over to the occupation forces in Japan, and I think we remember well that that was an unusual experience also, but it was a more relaxing experience—one that you could face and do with a kind of confidence that you didn't dwell on when you were in combat. But I got out as soon as I could. I wasn't in Japan too long; I think only two or three weeks. I got my points up where I could come back to the States and I got out as soon as I could. And was out for some— not quite two years and a job opened up in Boston for an Informational Services Officer. I had been trained somewhat in that and I ended up going back into the service after not quite two years. So I put in 22 years. And it was a great experience being back in; it was very different. I had almost five years on what they call the CAD program—Continuous Active Duty—year by year just doing a job in the Marines Corps Reserve and Recruiting District, and worked off a Master's Degree in Public Relations, and thought I'd get back out but the Korean War came along and I couldn't get out. By the time the Korean War was over I decided well, I'd put in for a regular commission and did that, and was accepted and went back in as a Captain, and got a promotion later to Major and I retired as a Major. So it was a line of least resistance in a way for me. I took what came and did what I had to do and sort of moved on. Of course, I ended up here with you guys and I am delighted to be here with you today, and I hope that maybe we'll have a chance to get together on something other than Iwo Jima because that's one thing I've sort of buried. I have not participated in reunions or gone to any of the military get-togethers with the exception of one, and that was two years ago down in San Diego when I attended the Marine Parachute Regiment reunion down there. They have one every year, but I had never gone to one. But this was one, I thought well, they're there; I'll go down. And I've never been to one since. And this was a sort of a looking back at something I sort of buried for many years. And I haven't thought much about it. I tried to keep it out of my system, because they're not things you dwell on, they're things you get away from, for me anyway. But it was, I wouldn't say refreshing, but it's something that maybe we need to come back to on occasion and reflect a little bit about what it means.

SL: Mr. Tanner?
JDT: After Iwo, we came back to Hawaii and almost immediately we started training for
Operation Olympic—the main landing on Kyushu. So we were training for that all along up until the time we loaded the ship in Hedo to get ready to go, and that night I took my radio operator up on the Saddle—the lava beds up between Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea to check out the radio. When we picked it up, the bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima and they said that no one could go in there for at least four or five years because of the radiation. Well of course that turned out to be... So almost immediately then the ship was loaded, orders were scurried around in a hurry, and so instead of going for a military landing we went

for an occupational landing and went into Sasebo. I think that's where you went. [looks at FVL]
FVL: Yes, that's where I landed.
JDT: I was in Sasebo for a while and then we went down to Izahawa which was a kamikaze air base where they made all the coverings for the wings of the kamikaze airplanes. I was there and I was in Nagasaki for a while and then I became Executive Officer of 2nd Battalion 2nd Marine Division because all my people came home on points. I didn't have points— I was a regular officer, professional. They said, "Now we're going to China for four years," and I said, "Not me." [laughing] I couldn't get out—you couldn't resign your commission—there was no such a thing as resigning and my senior officers didn't want me to get out so every time an order went in they'd kick it back to Pearl Harbor because he had the adjutant make a little mistake and the orders got kicked back. So finally about the third time I said, "I want to get out. " I had to separate from the service, no reserve, no nothing, just entirely separate. Finally after, well let's see, that was in July of '46 I got word from Vandergrift, "Okay." So I came home. They told me to report into the recruit depot at San Diego and if I didn't get orders before the 4th of July to report back again—if I didn't get my separation papers. On the third of July I got my papers.
FVL: What was it that Vandegrift signed?
JDT: Well, if I didn't get my separation…
FVL: No, when did you first go, when did he first say..?
JDT: That was in April '46 and then after I got out of the service, I really wanted to get back in again. They said, "No, you'd have to go to the bottom of all the second lieutenants and you'd lose thousands of numbers," so I forgot that. And then people, when I was in Fallbrook, said, "You ought to take advantage of being next to Pendleton and go to the PX." I said, "Well I'll go back in the reserve." I just missed it–I was going to go back in and Korea broke out. I would have been Battalion Commander 105 Howitzer Battalion up in Chavez Ravine where the Dodgers Stadium is today. So, I got out of that. Anyway, one of the fellows who worked for you [points at FVL], Pete Mulraney, had Easy Battery I think, supporting the 2nd Battalion 28th. He became Commanding Officer of the 12th Marine Regiment in Korea, so some of my friends worked with your battalions. So that's the history of mine.

SL: My Haugh?
WH: Well, I covered a little bit where I went back to Oahu and then went over to Maui with the 18 3rd Battalion and then finally when I came back to the States. You know, it's funny, four of us got back here at the same time, and Lou Daze, he was a First Lieutenant then—any of you remember him?
JDT: Daze?
WH: Lou Daze.
JDT: [spells] D-A-Z-E? Was he a tile man?
WH: He retired as a Colonel. Becky Daze was his wife.

JDT: I think I know…
RW: Yeah, I know him.
JDT: He was one that came back. We all headed east—you couldn't get a plane, you couldn't get a train, you couldn't get a bus. So we hired a car to take the four of us back to the East Coast and that was quite interesting because rationing was still in effect. We had more flat tires and we finally ended up—we had to cut the bead off of one tire and stuff it inside of another one so we could get to a point and, I don't remember this Indian reservation, but it was somewhere in Arizona that we stopped because we had three flat tires and these people took us in. I've lost track of them over the years, but they fed us, bed us down, and sometime early that next morning the manager there went into town somewhere. He had connections because he came back with four brand new tires and they wouldn't take a penny from us except exactly what the tires cost. I got back to the States there and I went first to Philadelphia Navy Yard—we had the Disciplinary Barracks there and that closed and then I went to Norfolk to the Retraining Command and that's where I really had a scare because I walked into that thing and they said, "You're the Regimental Commander," and I said, " What?" [laughing] "You're going to be in charge of all the prisoners," and that was a funny time because they were running two or three escapes a week.
FVL: Where was this?
WH: In Norfolk, Virginia. Bob Hyatt was the Commanding Officer and so I stayed there—I had a temporary commission—until they had cutbacks and I reverted back to Master Sergeant. Along about that time, I had too much time in to get out, so I went to Lejeune and the next thing I know I'm on my way to China. Because of my ordnance background, they had some munitions problems over there in Tsingtao—that was in WESTPAC—so I was sent over, but I never did have a problem with any ammunition but then I got assigned as the Engineer Supply Officer of the 2nd Provisional Combat Service Group and I stayed there and I had my family over there with me. Then when the Communists moved into Tsingtao, I put my wife aboard ship—they were fighting on the airstrip, about twelve miles away and I was on the last ship that got out.

SL: When was that?
WH: About 1949 I think it was that we got back here to the States and I was stationed here at Pendleton. We brought our stuff back and my Supply Officer took off on leave and I got stuck with disbanding the group and that's when I got real acquainted with General Erskine—where they had the amphibious museum here—AMPHEX and what have you, the ducks sitting out there—that's where I had all the gear packed that we brought back from China and we were trying to turn them into the depot and Erskine wanted that stuff turned in right now and they couldn't take it as fast as I could give it to them. I got called up there and I got lit on and I defended myself and the next thing I know they got called in. Well anyhow, the materiel got in, and then I went to Special Weapons Battalion which I mentioned before. Then when Korea broke out, why the Special

Weapons Battalion was disbanded and I was sent over to set up the supply for 1st Marines. There were just two officers and that was Chesty Puller and Bill Vorhees at that time, and when that was finished, why I got sent up to Division and then, of course, along came Korea and I went to Korea up to the Reservoir. Shortly after that, my son got hurt and I got sent back to the States and then I got commissioned. Then I got sent to Japan 3rd Division—the occupation—not the occupation there but we were sent there and then we moved on down to Okinawa and then I came back and my twenty years were in and I decided to retire which I did. I went to work for the Marine Corps at Philadelphia at the Supply Depot at the engineers supply there and I worked for them for a few years and then I transferred to the Defense Supply Agency and I set up the Distribution System for the Defense Supply Agency. If you don't know what that is, they took over control of all the common items for all the services and they were responsible for and we had the construction items, engineer-type items, but that was a misnomer. I think there I helped the Marine Corps more during Vietnam than if I had been in the Marine Corps because I was able to get items that they needed very desperately in a hurry and I started there in Supply and I ended up the Deputy Director of Procurement. And then I finally retired from there in '74 and I've been out here ever since.

SL: Judge Lopardo, what did you do after Iwo Jima?
FVL: Well the first thing we did was get some time off. We all headed for the same place that he did, the Milano, for about a couple of weeks. I ran into a fellow by the name of Jimmy McPoland. Did you know Jimmy? Well I was going down this way and he was up on top of the hill going that way. He was a Second Lieutenant just turned first. I was a senior First, supposedly ready for captain. He stopped me and he said, "Did you get your commission?" and I said, "What are you talking about?" and he said, "Well, I understand that you're going to be spot raised to Captain and I'm going to be spot raised to Captain for what we did when we went down." I said, "Wee!" So I went back and my Battalion Commander—the guy who didn't want to go down to the water and made me to go down to the water—he put the kibosh on it. His Battalion Commander was a fellow by the name of Feegan; he got his appointment to Captain and I didn't get anything. So anyway that's the first thing that happened. So anyhow, I did have my company and that was great because it was a wonderful experience and my people really thought I was a pretty good. I'll give you an example. We got our replacements in and we were getting ready for the next operation, whatever it was, and these new guys were pretty salty and I was kind of strict. I was working them pretty hard and a couple of them starting mouthing off about that little pipsqueak up there in the tent—the big tent, we were living in a tent—and my people got a hold of them and got them all in a corner and said, "Don't you talk badly about him; if you do we'll just kill you." Of course they wouldn't do that, but they didn't let any of them sound off and say anything bad about me because we had that same common—having worked together in combat and they knew

that whatever we had, worked, it worked for them and it worked for me and I felt just great. And I figured, "Oh boy, I'm going to become Company Commander and I won't have to worry anymore." Well, guess what happened. A guy by the name of Tie, a nice guy, a Major of all things, was transferred to our Battalion. Guess what he got—he got my company, because I'm only a senior First Lieutenant and he gets my company. Well anyway, so they made me Assistant Operations Officer—well, there's no such thing on the chart as that so I ended up being the Operations Officer and Old Spangler had a lot of fun. Well, then they dropped the bombs. We were told in the 3rd Battalion 28th Marines that we were the only Battalion that was combat loaded because we didn't know whether Japan was serious or not and we landed at Sasebo. Maybe, were we on the same ship? [looks at JDT] I wonder what ship was it, do you know?
JDT: I went to Sasebo on a … gee, what was I on, I can't remember. I know we got to the end of the harbor and there was an opening like a [unclear], very narrow and no one knew how to get in there and they sent out a pilot for us and I thought, "Well, this guy's expendable, you know." As we went through the area, we kind of held our breath. And we finally got inside. There were ships all around, Japanese ships; we were there the first day I know and then we had to go in and [unclear] some warehouses…
FVL: Were there a lot of Japanese around?
JDT: Yes.
FVL: You must have landed either before we did or after.
JDT: We were the first group that went through.
FVL: Because when we went in, all we saw was those great big sixteen inchers on the pier there.
JDT: I remember that.
FVL: Remember that? And no people.

SL: Sixteen inch guns?
FVL: Yes. And no people.
JDT: No people until we got to shore and then there were some.
FVL: Well, I'm trying to say there weren't any when we went in. There were no Japanese on the dirt, on land—none, none—for two or three days and then they started coming in out of the hills. So I was just wondering. Well anyway, I guess we weren't the only people who were [unclear].

SL: This is on mainland Japan?
JDT: Yes.

SL: And about when did you show up?
WH: September.
JDT: The 14th, somewhere around there.
FVL: Something like that. September. And our battalion was stationed there at Sasebo or whatever they called it, and then moved us up to Fukuoka and then out

of Fukuoka they sent us to the Men's Club up in Moji. We were in charge of all of their high power stuff, their electric lights and all that stuff and the Battalion Commander by this time was Smoke again. He didn't do very much but have a lot of fun and the Operations Officer—he was having a lot of fun—and they said, "Let's make Lopardo do it," so I was the guy who had all the work to do and we had some very interesting experiences up there. And I want to tell you the funniest one. We had a guy named Schmidt—he was in the comm section—and those guys used to go up to the whorehouses and all at once there's a big hoo-rah-rah outside and I'm the Operations Officer and nobody else is there and I was wondering what was the matter. There was a bunch of prostitutes and they had this one girl with them, and she started talking and the translator said, "There's a man who came to see her last night from here and he stole her kimono." Well I was about to kick her ass out and guess what—the Battalion Commander Smoke shows up and he said, "What's this all about?" So I told him, and I said, "I think I'll just kick their asses out—the hell with them." I said, "I don't see any reason why we ought to believe them at this stage of the game." He said, "Oh, no, let's have some fun." So we made the whole headquarters group fall out and he had these women walk up the ranks to see which one it was and there were about five or six prostitutes and they got to Schmidt and she said, "Ah, ah, so," and she threw her arms around him and she hugged him and she hugged him and she wouldn't let go; she wouldn't let go. Well it turned out he didn't steal anything—she liked what she got from him to such an extent that she wanted to marry him and take him back to where she worked and support him. Honest to God, that's the truth. And you can imagine the kind of life that guy had to live after that. That's exactly what happened. Well, anyway, we'd been there for a while and then we came back down ready to go home. We came back down and we went down to Nagasaki to see where the second bomb was dropped and all that sort of stuff. By the way, you went there, didn't you? [points at JDT]

JDT: Yes.

FVL: Did you see right in the middle of the whole thing—this one chimney? Did you see that one?

JDT: Everything looked like an old erector set.

FVL: Yes, everything had been shoved off to the side—everything.

JDT: Even shadows on the pavement where a person had been [unclear].

FVL: But that thing didn't go—I was wondering if I was the only one who saw that.

JDT: No, I saw that.

FVL: Well, anyway, so then it was time—my points were enough—it was time to go home. We got aboard ship and guess what? We got in a big typhoon. Oh God, remember that, and he was in that trough.

JDT: I was with Bertelli in that typhoon.

FVL: Was it the President Adams?

JDT: No, I was on the head of the minelayers in all the Pacific and I woke up one morning and went out on deck and I looked out, and I said, "That looks familiar."

It was Suribachi. This guy, this Admiral, had wanted to see Iwo Jima, so he'd gone 800 miles out of his way just to circle the island. By that time the Army, or whoever, had shaved a lot off from the top of Suribachi—it was down about 100 feet or more off the top. It looked funny because they had radar up on it.
FVL: Well anyway, this guy—he's in the trough. Well it went so far over that he was shipping water on each side. And not only that, but you know those big reefers that they have in those wardrobes that are strapped on with metal? Those came right off, came right off, and finally someone got to him and we went straight into it instead of…
JDT: I'll never forget that trip back because Bertelli was a good Catholic and I had another guy in there who was kind of an atheist who was with us. So between the two—and that was the time that Lloyd Douglas had The Robe and they argued over it and argued about religion—Bert and I didn't have any troops in but during that typhoon everything had to be secured to the bulkhead and all you could get to eat was maybe a sandwich or a glass of water because there was no cooking. I'll tell you, I thought we were going to go over several times.
FVL: So did we and I can't understand why the guy was in trough as long as he was and we finally ended up in the China Sea and that was all right by comparison. Well anyway, then we landed and they got me out of there just as fast as they could. By this time it was about, maybe the end of December or something like that, and somehow I got stuck with the duty—I still was called the Transport Quartermaster, see? I was over at Camp Pendleton ready to be out, but we were not permitted to leave the ship until the ship was unloaded. So we got out there and there—out here in San Diego were a whole bunch of men, they were the union–the Longshoreman. They had a whole big bunch of them there and we were not going to be permitted to leave and go to Pendleton unless that ship was unloaded because that skipper wanted to get the hell out and go someplace else. The guy in charge was a Commander of the United States and he was in charge of these people and he said, "It's going to take us three or four days to unload this thing." I said, "Oh, that's crazy—we can unload that thing real fast." And he said, "No, no, you can't." And so I went up and talked to the skipper and he knew me because I had loaded the ship. And I told him what we had. And he said, "You want to unload the ship? You watch." So he gets to the Commander and he said, "Why can't we unload this ship?" He said, "They belong to a union and its going to be so and so, and it's going to take so long—it's going to be about three or three and a half days." He said, "I don't think so, tell your people to sit down." And he said to me, "Now Lieutenant, can you unload this ship?" I said, "Yes sir," and I got my troops and I said, "This is what the situation is—if they do it, it's going to take us three, three and a half days. If we do it, we ought to be able to do it in less time that it took us to load to come here." And we started in the morning and by evening we were finished. I had those boots going left and right like you can't see it and it was coming down, and we were all through before the end of the day and we were on our way into Camp Pendleton and those union people didn't like us very much. When we got to Camp

Pendleton, they washed me out. It was very, very quick—it only took a matter of minutes. I said, "What the hell am I going to do now? I can't go to law school because it's too cold back there and there's a lot of snow." So I decided to go over to SC and see if I couldn't get a Master's Degree in International Relations because I had taken several languages and I could handle them pretty well. I thought it would be a nice idea that I could go back to law school and take International law and between having a Master's from SC and International Law from Harvard—why that would be great. I said, "How long is it going to take?" He said, "A year and a half, a year and a half residence." I said, "Oh jeez, I have to go back to law school in September, I can't do that." And they said, "Well that's what you have to do—you have all these subjects that you have to take." Well guess what, just by chance, the stuff that I had to take—the courses that I had to take, I could take in the daytime and in the nighttime and, you know, I could get everything done in nine months. I'd be taking double courses—all the day courses and all the night courses. So I walked in and there was this lady there and I said, "Now I have to take all these courses, right?" and she marked them up and I said, "Yes, yes," and she said, "Yes, yes, yes" and I said, "How about this?" "Yes, yes," and I said, "If I take all those courses then I can get my Masters, can't I?" And she said, "Yes." She signed me up. Yes, sir, boy, and that was it. I got the GI going and so I got started. Nobody knew that I was taking a double course—all day and all night. I didn't have any trouble at all. So they found out that I was doing a double course and I couldn't do that. And I said, "You promised me, you promised me and I've been taking all of these courses, you've got to do it. I'm going to go back to Harvard Law School in September-October. You have to let me do that," and so they said, "Well don't tell anybody." So I finished my courses, but guess what—my thesis was going to be the Development of International Understanding through the Use of the U.S. Radio. That was the radio program we had going to all the countries, remember, and the OWI was running it. Well what happened was this. I had for my thesis—I had the part before the war and I had the part after the war, but I didn't have what the OWI did, so they promised me at SC that if we wrote to the OWI with their influence that I would get that material. So I wrote to them and they said, "We shut down the OWI—the State Department has it." And so, I wrote to the State Department and the State Department said, "Oh, that's classified stuff, we can't let you have it." I said, "My God, how am I going to get my degree? I worked hard and I've done all of this stuff. I've got the beginning and I've got the end but I don't have the middle and now what am I going to do? It's too late to start another thesis because I have to go back and do law school," and they said, "Gee, isn't that too bad?" And so I never got my Master's Degree, but I finished all of the requirements and everything else. Well then I went back to law school and that was a factory by this time—all the GIs were there and it was just completely different from what is was back in 1941 when I first went there before the war. So I went back and started in late September or early October 1946—January '46 I got back. So I started in September or October of '46 and in September of '48 I

had gone through two years of law school and so I graduated in September and I came out and I got a job here in LA practicing law and then here I am. I practiced in LA for thirteen years and I came down to Escondido and I practiced there for ten years and then I was a judge from 1971 until 1987 and I've been a rent-a-judge ever since.
JDT: Rent-a-judge. [laughing]
FVL: So, that's what happened.

SL: Let me ask you —a few memories of the occupation of Japan—what did you think of the Japanese people after the war?
JDT: I must have been in a different typhoon than you [looking at FVL] because I came home after you did.
FVL: Oh you did? I landed in December of '45.
JDT: No, I came home in the Spring of '46. We got into the same type of typhoon. I was in Sasebo at the We Powder Dump, it's called, and we'd take all the ammunition back in caves and put them on pallets and load them up on ship and take them out to sea and dump them. That was one of our big projects. Also in that spearhead book there, wherever it is—in one of the sections on the occupation—there's a picture of a Swiss watchmaker down in Nagasaki whose name was Zillig and I was on a patrol way up in the hills outside of Sasebo one day and I knocked on this door. We were supposed to go into anything but shrines; you couldn't take anything out of a shrine but anyplace else including schools—confiscate anything that had to do with warfare, pictures of battleship, guns or anything like that. I went up to this one place and knocked on the door and this little Japanese lady comes up [unclear] and we went in the house and here's this old fellow sitting on the floor. His picture's in there. He'd been taken by the Japanese from Nagasaki and put in internment camp so I reported to headquarters and they went up and got him and some other outfit got all the credit for it, but he's in there. Then one night from Sasebo I finally was transferred down to the 2nd Marine Division at a place called Izahaya which is outside of Nagasaki where they had all the coverings for the kamikaze airplanes. One of the first nights we were there—my CO was from the south—and on New Year's Eve he put the confederate flag up. Boy, this little village went bananas because they thought it was the Russian flag. And after the war they were afraid that Russia was going to take them over. So it was a hard time calming them all down. Then I got appointed to a Board of Investigations by the Commanding General to investigate a loss of an amphibious duck carrying beer from the south of town in the southern part of Kyushu—the most southern part of Kyushu—over to an island. It never arrived on the other island and there were seven men in it. One fellow washed ashore all bitten up by fish—the others we never knew what happened. So I was headed up to do that. I went down to this island and of course the Japanese police were not very cooperative. This was right close after the end of the war and we were down there for—oh it seemed like months. I was head of the Board of Investigations. Then I became the Recorder of the Board,

where I asked a question and then I'd answer it and have to write it down—doing everything you know. It turned out that one of the Marine officers on this boat that went over became a defendant because he didn't have anyone put life jackets on and they all went down. They were afraid to go down and look around because of mines still in this area and so finally they concluded it must have been a whirlpool. So I had to spend days and days in Nagasaki drawing up all the reports to go to headquarters because it became a very involved thing with the families and everything else—why did this happen and to this day, no one ever... I've got all the transcripts at home. They're this thick—very interesting to read. So, that was my experience in Nagasaki, spending so much time there.

SL: Was there any fear of radiation at that point in Nagasaki?
JDT: There could have been but no one thought about it. Until this day my wife still wonders because the effects—I went into several hospitals and all the little kids were all bandaged and bound up, and as I said, you could still see the outline of a person on the cement sidewalk and things like that—where they'd been.

RW: My experience was rather brief there—I had points so I was there for a small time in Nagasaki—as a matter of fact as a Senior Patrol Officer and I had my headquarters there and my police chief's office and they were very cooperative and they bowed and bend and brought tea in on the hour and I would take my patrols and go out through the streets and make sure that the Marines were behaving themselves and make sure that the curfew was enforced and that they were back where they were supposed to be at night. Of course, there were always some who would swim across the river and get in, but for the most part I didn't have any specific occasions to apprehend anybody and the people, as I saw them, were very, very pleasant, very nice and trying to please and do what they could do to make things work out well. My impression at that time is that they were very submissive and very willing to do what they had to do and no unusual experiences that I could report. I was glad to leave on time and I was given a rifle at the time I left and while I was back with the Battalion, why we did a great deal by way of reviewing the equipment that was being disposed of, including the weapons which we received when we went out, and I think it was just a very pleasant experience with the Japanese at that time—a different way of life.

WH: I wasn't in the occupation.

FVL: I forgot to tell you something. When we were on Iwo Jima, all I could think of was, "We have an adversary here that we don't see 90 per cent of the time. Oh, we might see a few of them, but we don't see them very often," and all I could think of was, "We've got to kill as many as we can as fast as we can so we can get the hell home," and that's all I could think about, and I was wondering what kind of an experience it was going to be in Japan. I didn't have any idea. But after I got there and I saw how they cooperated and I ran into so many

American Japanese who were over there, like Mary Yamaguchi who used to work for Ito's Grocery up in Glendale, and so many other people, that I got to respect them because although they fought as hard as they could fight and they sure tried to kill us and they didn't like us very much, the fact remains they were keeping their bargain—no riots, no anything. Boy, it was just fine and I was very glad to have that experience at the end of the war because I would have had a very, very bitter feeling about them.

JDT: I had a good experience with them too except for some young people I had in my jeep and I got out my little dictionary trying to find directions to somewhere and I was trying to get the Japanese out, and they'd laugh, and pretty soon they'd come back, and they said, "You go down there one block and turn to the left," and I said, "Why didn't you tell me that in the first place?" [laughing]

FVL: I'd like to tell one thing about what happened to me in Los Angeles. Well, after I came out and started to practice law, the war started—Korean—and I said, "What the hell am I going to do?" I was a Major in the Reserve and all my buddies who had stayed in the active Reserve were going out—they were looking for people. So I decided to call and the fellow who was in charge of the Los Angeles area was Skinhead Shepherd—the guy who had been my commander and I identified myself. "Oh, what do you want there, Lopardo?" I said, "Well, I've been practicing law now and I'd like to have my number changed to law instead of infantry." The one thing I didn't want to do was to go out there and fight in the dirt. So he said, "Oh yeah, well let me just tell you something there Major Lopardo, it so happens that we know what you can do in war but we don't know what kind of lawyer you are." Well that's not true because he had me doing all kinds of court-martials left and right and all over the place. But anyway, that's what he said. He said, "No, that's what you're going to be." "God," I said, "That's terrible because all my friends were going overseas, just left and right." I decided to find out, I said, 'By the way, what's my MOS?" He said, "Just a minute, I'll find out." Guess what I was—radiological warfare—[laughing] and guess how I got that? When I was at Camp Pendleton waiting to get into an outfit, they decided to send three of us up to a chemical warfare school at Camp Beale outside of Marysville. So when I was getting out since I didn't have a company and they didn't have a TO for an Operations Officer and they had to find something for me to put there so they said, "Aha, look at this—Radiology and Chemical Warfare-that's what we'll put." And that's what they made me. Okay now, when I found that out I said, "This is just great." So I waited a couple of days and I called back up there to Skinhead's place and I said, "Say I've got an MOS in here and I'm just wondering what my chances are—if I can be lucky enough to be able to get into this thing." So I told him. And he said, "Let me see. There's not a chance in the world. He said, "Good God, you've already got the rank of a Major, what are they going to be using… Hell, we've got so many of these people who are doing this already for regiments and divisions. We've got so many of these people here there's no way in the world we'll ever call you. You just go sit on your fanny and cool off—there's no way in the world." I said, "Gee whiz, isn't that a shame?" and

that's why I didn't get to go and everybody else did. That's why I didn't get to get to Korea.

SL: What was your time that you spent in Nagasaki when you where there?
FVL: Oh, we used to drive around and I used to go in the hospitals and talk to the doctors and see these people and all, and I don't how long, Steve.

SL: Let me ask the four of you a question. You fought on Iwo Jima against the Japanese and three of you were in the occupation forces and several of you visited Nagasaki. Was it necessary to drop the bomb to end the war?
FVL: I want to yes in a hurry, damn right.
JDT: I think there'd been at least 150,000 of us killed.
WH: Oh, more than that. They figured a million casualties.
JDT: I had what I called—a fellow that when I was in Izahaya—this kamikaze airbase on Kyushu—he was a Japanese Royal Marine that had to be 6'2 or above. He was a big sucker and he'd been the official beheader in Manchuria and it finally turned out—I got talking to him. He had a mortar platoon which was going to be on the beach defending the same beach that my little outfit was going to land on and I woke up in a sweat one night dreaming about this guy and I got up looking around for him—since he told me about his official beheader. Those hillsides were so terraced and they could just shoot down on you—much more than Suribachi.
FVL: Much more than anything in Europe.
JDT: And I went into schools and little kids over in the corner—kindergarten—they had these alley-oop clubs with these big spikes on them. All the kids in grammar school—everyone was ready to fight.
FVL: What do you think? [points at RW]
RW: There's no question. There's nothing that was so great when we heard and we got up in the middle of the night when the atomic bomb was dropped and everybody literally among our Battalion was up to celebrate. We had coca colas and we had rum and coke. We looked forward actually to the occupation. When I was in Japan too—I did go down—and I don't recall what I saw in Nagasaki or Hiroshima but the leveling of that in spite of the fact that it was leveled with the exception of those few chimneys that were sturdy enough to withstand it. I think without the atomic bomb we never would have had that feeling of submission that we needed to eliminate them.
JDT: We wouldn't be here today without it.
FVL: I'll tell you something else too. If you look at the amount of ordinary demolition bombing that we were throwing at the Japanese and the Germans and so on, and saw how much we destroyed with demolition bombing and how many people we killed and how damaged they were who weren't killed, and then compare that to the bomb, it's really a lot worse than the bomb. It's a lot worse than the bomb. What difference does it make if they use demolition bombing to

kill a million people over a period of six months or if they kill the same number of people in fifteen minutes?
JDT: Well the incendiary bombs in Tokyo alone were bad.
FVL: And it was a terrible thing. That's the one thing I have to say. One of the things that I was impressed by was the fact that the people—when they first saw us, they'd go, "Ohhhhh"—they were afraid of those bombs coming over every night and dropping them, every night and dropping, every night and dropping. I was telling you about Mary Yamaguchi who was from Glendale and I talked to her about this and she said, "Actually this was so bad, that I think if this war didn't end within six months of when it did, everybody would be crazy in these areas where you were dropping these bombs." There were just…

SL: Demolition bombs?
FVL: Yes. You could drive for miles and see all these cities burn and [unclear] every night you could see these airplanes, every night, every night.
[unclear]

SL: Any other memories of Iwo Jima?
RW: I'd like to say I appreciate being a part of this.
JDT: Great idea.
[unclear]
FVL: I learned a lot. You people had different experiences.
[unclear]