Charles M. Jacobs
Narrator

Michael Aikey
Interviewer
Wayne Clark
Videographer

Interviewed on August 8, 2001
Latham, New York

MA: We are interviewing Mr. Charles M. Jacobs at Latham Headquarters. It's August 8, 2001. The interviewer is Michael Aikey and the videographer is Wayne Clark. Mr. Jacobs, where were you born?
CMJ: I was born in Troy, New York on December 29, 1922. I went to public school in Troy and I went to high school in Troy and I played football and basketball there. And I got into this war because I had to get into it.

MA: When did you enlist?
CMJ: I enlisted on January 21, 1942 in Albany, New York. I lived in Troy and there was no Marine station in Troy and I had to come to Albany to enlist. The way I got into this thing−I was a member of a Greek fraternity in high school that had chapters in Albany, Troy, Schenectady, and Hudson, New York. On December 7th my group from Troy−six of us−went down to Hudson for a joint meeting with the Hudson, New York boys. On the way back I was driving the car−it was my friend's 1931 Plymouth−and on the way back one of the fellas said, "Turn the radio on." So I turned the radio on and we heard a little of what they call today elevator music, Benny Goodman and so forth. The program was interrupted and the announcement came through that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor, there were many casualties, our Navy was shot up pretty badly and the next day the President was going to declare war on the Japanese. To make matters worse, one of the boys with us had a brother and the brother was stationed at Pearl Harbor. Of course he was beside himself with fear and anxiety over what had happened to his brother and it was about three weeks before he found out that his brother was uninjured.

I went home that night and my folks were still up and they asked me if I heard the news and I said, "Yes," and they said, What are you going to do?" and I said, " Well, I feel like I have to do something." I was taking a PG course at Troy High School to try to get a scholarship, which I never got, and I said to my folks that I would probably just end school right now and sign up at the Marine Corps. And my mother said, "Why do you want to join the Marines?" Because she knew what kind of an outfit it was because her brother had run away from home and joined the Marines when he was a young man. He

went from an enlisted man−he became a captain in WWII. He was practically blind and he was running the officers' mess in Quantico, Virginia. So I wrote him a letter and I said, "I'm thinking of joining the Marines now that the war has started," and he wrote me back and said, "I can't do anything for you." I wasn't really interested in him doing anything for me; I was just interested in what his opinion was, and no matter what it was I went down to Albany and I signed up at the Marine Corps Recruitment Office in Albany, New York. It was on probably the 10th or the 12th of January. As time went on, we passed the time of day−I left school, I told my coach and my teachers that I was all through. I had my diploma from June and I was going into the Marines. And on the 21st of January my family−my brother, my mother, my father−got on a bus and we went from Troy to Albany. It was a very, very sad day because I left my family and I didn't see them again for over two years

MA: Was this your first time away from home?
CMJ: Yes, for any length of time. You know I had been to New York for a long weekend. But I had never been away from home before. I was eighteen years old at the time and on the 29th I was nineteen, but when I left home I was actually nineteen years old. They put me on a train. I had a ticket that they gave me and they sent me down to Parris Island, South Carolina for boot camp. Now, I was in very good physical condition. I was completely unprepared for boot camp. I was never subjected to harsh discipline by my parents; I never had any harsh discipline from any of my teachers because I usually did what they told me to do. When I got to the Marine Corps it didn't make any difference what you were, or who you were, or how they felt−they really busted you up pretty good. I realized later the reason for this−the reason they worked on us like this−was so that we would be an army that was disciplined that could go in and fight a battle, because they no longer did battles where they had masses of soldiers going trying to knock somebody out. It was a little more finessed. And you have to have people who will obey officers−who will obey non-commissioned officers−so this is the reason for that harsh treatment. We had to say, "Sir," to everybody, everybody, on the base at Parris Island and Platoon 122−even the guy that did the cooking, or anybody. "Yes, Sir," "No, Sir," we had to say, and salute. But that got us ready for what came later.

Well, we did our stint at Parris Island. We were there five weeks−they taught us close order drill, they taught us bayonetting, they taught us weaponry, they gave us a rifle and wouldn't give us any ammunition yet, but they gave us a rifle. We had to know how to field strip it, we had to learn how to fight with bayonets and they taught us how to kill people with our bare hands or with a knife. It was all things that I wasn't used to−this kind of thing. I was brought up in a decent home and there was never any talk of killing anybody, and all of a sudden from a nice young man I became a guy who wanted to kill somebody. And this is what I was taught in the Marines and that was what I had to do.

MA: What did you think about it at the time?
CMJ: At the time I was little shocked. But I realized that this was what I had to do because I did sign up, I am a Marine and if the Marines have to do the fighting this way,

this is the way I'm going to do it. And so we trained at Parris Island for that five weeks and about three days before Easter in April 1942 they told us to pack our gear; we were going to be transferred and we were going down to join a regiment. So they sent us to Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. They assigned me to A Company, 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, 1st Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force−the United States now being in a State of War. And I finally had my assignment. I must mention I tried to get into the Marine Air Corps but I wasn't accepted. I had to become a grunt, just a regular Mud Marine.

MA: Once you left Parris Island, though, did the treatment get better?
CMJ: Oh yes. Once we left Parris Island, we saluted everybody we saw, and everybody we saw, except the officers, said, "It's not necessary to salute−only officers−you don't have to salute enlisted men." We felt more like Marines then. They do tell you in the Marine Corps that you're the toughest guy on the street. Of course it's not true, but we thought it was. We got to Camp Lejeune and there we started some real serious training−boat landings, invasions, jujitsu. We did a lot of hiking, we did a lot of squabbling amongst each other and we finally figured we turned out probably halfway decent Marines. Then after a couple of months or a little bit less, one officer came into our tent and said, "Pack up your gear, we're leaving." "Where are we going, Sir?" "I can't tell you that because I don't know either. Pack up your gear. We're leaving in twenty-four hours."

Twenty-four hours later we were down in Norfolk, Virginia waiting to get on a boat. It was there that I saw one of my first signs of Jim Crowism which really set me to thinking as good as this country is, there's some things wrong with it. I had a buddy who was from Georgia and we got on the ship and we were given twelve hours leave or twenty-four hours leave. We had to be back by midnight because we were going to sail. So we got on a streetcar, my friend Hig and I, and I got on the car and there was a big heavy black man sitting in a seat all by himself and there was a very, very drop-dead gorgeous black girl sitting right in front of him. Of course, they weren't blacks then, they were Negroes. I sat down next to the black guy. I pointed to the other seat. "Here, sit there." He had funny look on his face like he was ready to kill me. And finally we got off the trolley car and he says, "Don't you ever have me sit next to a black girl like that ever." Only he didn't say black girl. I never heard that "N" word in my house. He finally got over his mad, though, but that was the first taste I had of Jim Crow.

MA: What did you think of it?
CMJ: I thought it stunk if you want to know the truth. It's not a way to treat people−very bad. I grew up playing basketball on a high school team, and football too, with a bunch of black guys and we smoked cigarettes with each other. They were all good guys. I had nothing against them. We weren't social friends, but I wasn't social friends with some other guys. We were all good friends. We got off the trolley car and we had a few beers. They weren't supposed to serve us, but they did. There were no girls around because there were so many sailors and Marines. So we went back to the ship and we

boarded ship. The next day the ship took off around Cape Hatteras−one of the roughest pieces of water I ever saw. Guys were losing their breakfast and I think their lunch from the day before. It was pretty rough. Fortunately it didn't bother me too much. I was able to eat and control everything. We went down through the Panama Canal and that was an interesting experience because you go on one level and the boat comes up and then you are talking to people on the dock. It was very, very nice. The food on board the ship wasn't too great. I walked into my bunk that was right on the water line and all I could think of was if a torpedo comes through this boat I am going to be blown to smithereens. And I figured to myself later, "What am I worrying about because I'll never know the difference."

We got to where we were going−we were going to British Samoa. British Samoa was the next place that the Japanese were going to hit according to what the brass thought. So we were there to defend British Samoa. And we got there and we trained, and we trained, and we trained, and they had a rifle range and we learned how to use our rifles better, we learned how to field strip them blind, we learned machine gunnery, we learned as many aspects of the war as they could teach us, and of course fox hole digging was my number one preference. We were pretty good at that.

MA: So you were a rifleman in a rifle company?
CMJ: At that time I was a rifleman. On Guadalcanal I had a rifle grenade, if you know what a rifle grenade is, and many people don't know. It's a rifle with a groove you put on the top and you put the grenade in and you put it on the ground and you pull the trigger and the thing comes out and goes over the hill and kills everybody on the other side theoretically. I never did get to fire it, but I did have it, and I did know how to use it. I used it, but I never fired it in combat.

MA: You were in British Samoa. That's not quite like Troy. What was British Samoa like?
CMJ: British Samoa was like forty years behind the times. We went into a department store once−of course there wasn't much to buy. There were natives there−they wore the lavalavas around them. They had some very strange toilet habits, but we put up with that. But they were okay; we didn't have any problem with them. We did have one Captain we had a lot of problems with though. He was allegedly part of the Vitol Oil Company− I don't know if he was or not. He was about six foot seven and he had a stride that was very, very wide and going up the hill the fellows at the bottom, at the back, they just couldn't keep up. And he gave us a bad time because we were doing this. I had the privilege of serving under a man by the name of Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, who was a Marine Corps legend, and he wasn't even in the war yet. While this guy was berating us, Chesty came down and berated him. He let him have both barrels. When it came time to leave this island paradise, this Captain was gone−he went someplace else. When we left that island, we were going into combat. In August we were on British Samoa. You see, we had been 1st Division but when we came to Samoa we were detached and we became the 3rd Marine Brigade. That was what we operated under with the whole regiment−

called the 3rd Marine Brigade−because we had other people attached to us. We got put on ships and we didn't know where we were going, but we had a pretty good idea because we heard the rest of the division had invaded Guadalcanal because that's where the Japanese were and that was their last stronghold, the last one they took. And I remember going on the ship and going over the ladder and we hit the beach. And of course there wasn't anybody shooting at us because the Marines had a little base there and I can remember very distinctly and I have to regress now… My father ran a dress factory in Troy and he had a lady working for him by the name of Mrs. Mulhalick, a very lovely old lady, and she brought her grandson up. Her grandson joined the Marines and he was a Sergeant. I never knew him, never met him, never knew what he looked like. As we were marching up to the lines, there was another group coming out. They hollered to us, "Where are you guys from? What are you?" We said, "We're A17. What are you?" "We're D25." Whatever they were. And I hollered out, "Do you know a guy by the name of Bill Mulhalick?" Some guy hollers, "Yeah, he got killed last night." That was the first real meaning of what a war is.

So we went up and they gave us the airport to guard. I guess they didn't trust us on the line yet. So we guarded the airport and we asked, "What's out there?" "Well, nothing." "What do you mean nothing? Japs out there?" "Of course. If anybody's out there, shoot him." Fortunately nothing happened. The next day we were put in another position, moved up to the lines, and we were told to dig holes. So we dug our foxholes and I thought I had a foxhole about four feet deep. About two o'clock in the morning, we hear a "putt, putt, putt, putt, putt." It was the Japanese version of a Piper Cub, but we called them Washing Machine Charlie. Washing Machine Charlie came over and he would drop flares and light the place up like daylight and he would drop two or three of those and then he would drop a few little bombs and then he'd go away. He was harmless. He didn't hurt anybody or not too many. But the bad thing was, out in the bay, ten miles or nine miles out, was a Japanese cruiser, and he was throwing shells at us and that was the first time in my life that I was ever petrified. I was so scared my knees were knocking. This is something that you get over. So I dug my hole deeper. I thought I had it about eight feet deep. I woke up the next morning−it was only this deep [gestures with fingers to show less than 1 foot]. If a shell had landed near me I would have been gone. So the next day we started on patrols. We had various, sometimes we were just on a reconnaissance patrol, sometimes we were on a combat patrol, we did all kinds of patrols, and we got into firefights and guys got hurt, a lot of people got killed.

And after a while, you don't get used to it. One of the first Marines that I knew that got killed was a guy by the name of Beamer. I don't know where he was from, but he went out in the woods to take care of some business, out into the jungle not far from our lines, and one of the guys saw movement out there, one of the Marines, and shot him. He died, he was dead. The war was beginning to come home to me now−that people have to die.

MA: What were living conditions like on Guadalcanal?

CMJ: Living conditions on Guadalcanal were pretty rugged; there were no tents. We slept on the ground or in pup tents if we had a chance; most of the time we just slept on the ground. The food was abominable. We had no line of communication to get food or ammunition. It was very weak, the line was, and the food that we ate was sometimes Japanese rice and that was wormy, but somebody said, "Don't worry about the worms−they're protein." Living conditions were not good, but, hey, we didn't think anything of it−this was a war. And on this one patrol, we went out−it was a combat patrol−of course we ran into problems. We ran into trouble, we ran into the Japanese and we were having quite a fight and fortunately we kicked them out, we got them to run. My friend Higginbotham got shot, he didn't get killed, he got shot, but strangely he left Guadalcanal. I never heard from him again. He never wrote a letter. I never saw him again. Yet, we were pretty good friends. After the fight I went around to see who got hurt. They had a little sort of a field hospital for the guys that got hurt and weren't dead. So I went over. There was this friend of mine, a guy by the name of Ro. He was lying on his stomach. I said, "Where did you get hit?" He said, "I got hit in the butt." I said, "Oh, that's good, you'll get to go home." He looked at me kind of funny, quizzically, and said, "Yeah." So I went to sleep that night and nothing ever happened. It was quiet after that. I woke up the next morning to see how Ro was, and somebody said he died during the night. I said, "What did he die from?" The Corpsman told me, "He wasn't only shot in the rear end, he had three bullet holes in his stomach and he died." So friends of mine were beginning to have some problems. Higginbotham left, he was gone. I made friends with other people. As time went on we started to get illnesses−jaundice, malaria, dysentery−we all got it. We all got malaria. This is the scourge that makes you practically useless while you have it, but when they manage to bring your fever down and break it, you're okay.

But I will tell you about the big fiasco. I said I served under Colonel−he became a Colonel; he finally became a Lieutenant General−Puller. At that time he was a Lieutenant Colonel. He was our Battalion Commander and he was away at a divisional meeting with whoever−I don't know. The man in charge was a fellow by the name of Major Rogers. He was from Washington, D.C. He was in the reserve. In my mind, he wasn't too bright, because when he went into combat he had his Major's insignia on; he had shiny boots and a clean uniform. Anyhow, we were back in R&R coming off some patrol and the word came down that the Japanese were coming up the beach and company strength−somebody go stop them. So who got it? A Company got it. So we all−they put us on Higgins boats and we went out and made the landing. Now this is significant to the story because when Higgins boats wait for you out in the bay they go like this in a circle. And when one breaks off all the others follow. We made our landing, we took the high ground; we didn't dig holes because there wasn't time. The Japanese were coming up; we're taking shots at them, and we discovered that there's not a company down there, there's a whole battalion. And we're a company of probably only 120 of us left. We were in big trouble. So we called for some artillery fire. Of course the artillery was 75, they only go three or four miles. The shells were landing among the Marines and not among the Japanese. We were getting it from our own men, from our

own artillery, and we were getting it from the Japanese. So, somebody said, "We better get the hell out of here. We're in trouble." The first one to get killed was the Major. He was walking around with those fancy boots on and the insignia; he took a shot right away. There was a young guy−I don't know from what company, he was a signalman−he got up on a stump and signaled the boats in the bay with the wigwag and they wouldn't come in. They stayed out there. I think he got a Navy Cross, because they were shooting at him, but nobody hit him. On the way down, we were all scared now. Not scared to the point of panic, but we were trapped, we were going to get annihilated. There were just too many of them. So as I was running down towards the beach there was this Marine off to my left. I don't know who he was−he was probably a machine gun company. I was here and a hand grenade went off and blew up. It hit me in the leg and knocked me−just like somebody threw a body block on me and knocked me right off my feet and on my face−and I crawled over and looked at him and he was gone. He was dead. So I figured I had to get to the beach. I did the best I could. I looked down at my leg and I said "I wonder if it's still there." So I pulled up my pant leg and there was a little tiny hole in my leg and there was one hole in my pants. So I figured it's a small piece. I got up to try to run and I couldn't. I had to crawl and hop and everything else. I finally got to the beach and we set up a perimeter. Meanwhile, those boats were still circling around in the harbor. We had a perimeter up. The Japanese were attacking us lightly. I don't know why, we must have been holding them off pretty good. A young fellow by the name of Hittit−I don't know where he was from−stripped bare naked and swam out to the boats. They pulled him on board and he said, "Thanks for picking me up. Now go in and get the rest of the guys." I swear this is the truth. They said, "No, there's too much shooting going on there." This was a war. He picked up a pipe wrench and he said to the coxswain on that boat, "If you don't go in and get those men, you're going to get killed." The boats went around like this and came in and picked us up and brought us…

One of my worst enemies, yet one of the best soldiers I ever knew, was a man by the name of Anthony P. Malinowski. He was my Platoon Sergeant. For one reason or another which I don't want to go into, he and I didn't like each other. Well, the truth is he didn't like me because of my religion, and I didn't like him because he didn't like me. So I got all the good details−digging the trenches, desk duty and everything bad he could give me. But I would follow him into hell because he was a good soldier, so I figure I got a better chance of living. He was a hero. He came down to the beach and he had a BAR which is a Browning Automatic Rifle, which is a multi−it shoots a lot of bullets. He was shooting that, fighting the Japanese and he got hit in the chest kind of hard. Before he fell down he gave the BAR to somebody else. Another kid from New Mexico, we called him Tex-Mex, he was one of these dark skinned guys, probably Indian descent from New Mexico, real nice guy, good looking guy, good kid, nice boy, had a lot of fun. He got shot in the legs. He got beat up pretty badly. He said, "Give me a BAR and give me some ammo and I'll hold them back." And I guess he did because we got out. I never saw this guy again. So we assumed that he got killed too. Once we got in the water I was having trouble. My leg was numb. I finally got myself pulled up and into the Higgins

boat. My Company Commander crawls up on the Higgins boat and he's got his 45 in his hand and puts his hands up on the gunnel of the boat. And, "Boom," his pistol went off and he shoots himself in the hand. So, I thought that was pretty sad. But that wasn't the saddest part. He got onto the boat by himself and he got in and goes and he sits down over on the opposite side from me and there was a BAR sitting there and it had been shot, fired. It was hot and he sat on it with wet clothes. He jumped two feet up in the air. I laughed. He said he was going to court martial me. I said, "Well there's no charge," and I didn't worry about it and he didn't. So anyhow they took us back to the base and I said, "Hey, this is great. I'm alive. Maybe I'll go home." They took me back to the base. I couldn't get off the boat. I couldn't walk. So a couple of Corpsmen came up and took me under the arms and brought me and put me down on a stretcher. I had given my jacket to somebody because he was cold. Now, it's dark so I'm getting cold. I said to the Corpsman, "Can you get a blanket? I'm cold." And he says, "Yeah." So he went and got a blanket and he threw it over me. I was laying there under the blanket. Some guy came over and kicked the stretcher and said, "This guy's dead." "No, I'm not." I sat up. "I'm not dead." "Oh, go to the hospital." So they took me to the hospital. The doctor examined me and looked at my leg and he said, "Well, that doesn't look like much. I said, "It hurts." He said, "We'll give you something for the pain." And he said, "Nothing in there now." I said, "When did it come out?" He said, "Well it bounced out." And I said, "It bounced out where?" And well he said, "It went out the same hole." I knew he was lying to me. They were so hard up for men they had to keep me there. I couldn't walk. They kept me in the hospital about ten days. Ten days later I got out and my legs were swollen up and I could hardly walk from the sulfur drugs. And I went back to duty. And I missed out on one of the best shoots I ever missed out on. It was a wonderful shoot. The boys sat on the side of the hill and shot them all. Shot all the Japs who were trying to get out. We had them trapped. I wasn't even there. I couldn't walk. My Captain told me to stay home. Stayed back at the base.

After that I went from bad to worse. I got malaria, I got jaundice, and my leg started to get infected. I had a knot in my groin as big as your fist. Come December, I couldn't even stand up. I couldn't even sit up. I went from 175 pounds to about 125 and I was in very bad shape. So they said to me, "You're relieved of duty. We'll take you down to the beach." They took me down to the beach. I don't know what I was waiting for. And I woke up one morning and there out in the bay was a beautiful big white ship. It was a hospital ship. Some Corpsmen came down and said, "Do you need some help?" and I said, "Yes, I can't walk." So they took me and brought me right into sick bay on the hospital ship and they unwrapped my wound. I had gauze around my wound and I swear as they pulled the gauze off it stuck to the scab, which wasn't really scabbed over, it was just a little scabby. They pulled it and the blood shot twenty feet across the room. He said, "My God, what happened to you?" I said, "I got hit with a piece of something−hand grenade." He said, "Why didn't they take it out?" "They told me it bounced out." He said, "That's ridiculous. We'll fix you up." So that night on the ship I got another attack of malaria. I had 104.5−at 108 you're probably dead. But they broke the fever and I was okay the next day. I was weak but I was all right. They started a [unclear] and they sent

me to a hospital in Wellington, New Zealand. Nice country, nice people. I was in the hospital and I started to get better because they had taken the shrapnel out of my leg. The sinews and tendons were all wrapped around it. It was only a little piece but once they took that out, about ten days later, the bump in my groin−that went down−and I was feeling pretty good. So I was walking on the base one day. This was the Naval Hospital of course because everybody knows the Marines are part of the Navy, even our Corpsmen are Sailors. They didn't like it but they were ours. I noticed on the bulletin board was a sign−any Jewish serviceman who wanted to spend the Passover holiday with some New Zealand people−report to the chaplain. So I reported to the chaplain. I think he was a Baptist. And he brought me [unclear]. But he said, "I will send you to a rabbi who will assign you to a family." I said, "Okay." So I got my pass and everything and I went down to see this rabbi and I knocked on the door of the address he gave me and a man comes up−a big tall man−and he had his collar on backwards. I looked at him and said. "Gee Father, I'm sorry I must be in the wrong house." He said, "No, I'm Rabbi So and So; you're in the right house." I said, "Why the collar?" He said, "In the British Isles, the British possessions, all clergymen wear their collar this way." I said, "Okay, I can live with that. "So we got talking and the second thing he said to me after my name is, "Where are you from?" "Well, I'm from a small town in upstate New York. You probably never heard of it." This is down in Wellington, New Zealand. He said, "Where?" I said, "Troy." Oh, he said, "Troy New York," and his eyes lit up. He said, "Do you know Rabbi Geffen?" I said, "Sure, he was my rabbi. He prepared me for my bar mitzvah." He said, "I'm the man who talked him into becoming a rabbi. I'm going to give you a good home to go to." I said, "Great." So he sent me over to #6 Park Street, Thorndon, Wellington, New Zealand, to a man by the name of Jack Meltzer. He was a barrister−a lawyer−he was a lawyer for all the policeman in the country of New Zealand when they got into civil trouble. And he had a very nice home. It was 1942. He had a nice home; he had a wife, he had a sister-in-law and a mother-in-law and a daughter. Very nice people. The first thing he said to me was, "Do you want a shot of Dewar's [emphasis last syllable]?" I didn't know what Dewar's was. I said, "What's Dewar's?" He said, "Scotch." I said, "Oh, Dewar's [emphasis first syllable]?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Okay, we'll call it Dewar's [emphasis last syllable]." So we had Passover−very nice−we had a Passover service. I went down to breakfast the next morning. I sat down and they gave me some toast and they gave me an egg and I knew that eggs were impossible to get−very, very difficult. They got maybe one egg a week a person, maybe, if they could get them. I said, "Gee I don't want this egg, I get eggs all the time. Please, somebody else eat it." "You're our guest, you eat it." I choked it down; believe me it was hard going down. And it was very nice. They said, "Why don't you come back next week−the end of the holiday."

They were so nice to me I decided that there was something I had to do for them. I knew, because they had told me, that canned fruit was absolutely impossible to obtain in New Zealand in 1942. They just couldn't get any canned pineapple, peaches, pears, anything, it was just unavailable. So I went back to the base and said I got to figure out a way to get them some canned fruit. And I really didn't know how to go about it because it

involved theft. So I went down to the commissary and I looked around and nobody's around and there's a whole case of pineapple sitting there, canned pineapple, So I took that and I ran with it under my arms back to where my sea bag was, my duffle bag, and I threw it in my duffle bag. If I ever got an inspection, I would probably have gotten imprisoned or something. But it didn't happen that way. When I took that to them, they thought that I had given them a bar of gold. They were so happy. Then a short time later I was sent back to my outfit on an LST to Melbourne, Australia, and it was a different outfit. I was sent back to the same company, I was in the same platoon, I was in the same squad, but I didn't know anybody−maybe three guys−it had turned over so much with illness, disease, killed, wounded. But I made some new friends and we made the Cape Gloucester landing and it was much the same as Guadalcanal, there was fighting and there was killing and there was dying. Everybody knows that this is what happens in a war.

And after Cape Gloucester they sent us to a place called the Russell Islands. This was a small group of islands. I don't even know much about them. But they had a bulletin board. I'm a man of bulletin boards−the bulletin board got me to the Meltzers and got me two other things. I went to the bulletin board and there's a big notice and it said, "All Marines with so many points can go back to the United States." Oh, I said, "How many points do I have?" And I read it out, what I had and what was required. I had, I think it was, eighty-six points and the requirement was like sixty. So I was number two on the list. They put me on another ship and sent me back to San Francisco and Camp Pendleton and back to Albany. Years ago the city of Troy had a Niagara Mohawk coke plant−I don't know if anybody remembers it−but there was a smell from that−there was a terrible smell in South Troy and in that taxi cab going home, I smelled it and I knew I was home. So I had thirty days home. I had thirty days leave. I had a good time. I only got malaria once and put in for an extension of leave. They gave me ten more days.

I reported back to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. I was checked in by a Sergeant who was taking the role and he said, "Jacobs, Charles Jacobs?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Are you Chuckie Jacobs from Troy?" And I said, "Yeah." He said I'm Ikie Ring." I didn't even recognize the guy. We played baseball against each other. He played for the tough guys from downtown. I played for the tough guys from up above. He said, "I have a good job for you." I said, "Gee, thanks. What is it?" He said, "Just report to me every day." So every day I reported to him. He said, "Get lost." Great duty. Great duty. So anyhow I was scheduled to go back overseas. Now, I'm not a fool−I figure the chances of coming out alive this time are little or none, or slim, or maybe−you know, who knows. But I figured I still wanted to serve my country. I wasn't going to fight it. I was going to go. I came to a bulletin board. There on the bulletin board it said, "Any service personnel, any Marines, who think they want to go to college and become an officer−must be a high school graduate−report to so and so." I scooted right down there. I told them I'd like to become an officer. They said, "You've got to take an IQ test." I figured this is the end. But I took the IQ test and I failed it. They said, "You were so close, you only missed by one point, why don't you take it again?" I took it again and I

sailed right through it. I passed it and the Marine Corps sent me to Colgate University and now I'm going to become an officer and a gentleman. And everything went fine at Colgate University. I got a military education. I got a year in. Then one day we're standing in the chow line waiting to go to chow. We were all in uniform−we're still Marines−and there was a newspaper published that said the atom bomb has been dropped on Japan and mass destruction. So me with my big mouth, I said, "I'll bet the war's over in ten days." So, one guy up there said, "I'll kiss your ass if it is." So I said, "Huh." Ten days later the war is over, and I was up in my room getting ready to go to class or doing something. The next thing I know there is a ruckus in the hall and here comes the whole company in and they grabbed me. I said, "What do you want?" "Come on with us." They took me downstairs and they got the guy that said he would kiss and brought him downstairs and they took my pants off and he had to kiss it. This is a true story. I had a picture of it which I kept, but my mother had a flood in her cellar and it's all gone.

The war ended. I was glad and I went to Bainbridge, Maryland and got discharged, and the last thing I remember going through the discharge line−going through all the papers they have, you know the military has 9,000 papers−there was a guy sitting over at a little desk, a Marine all by himself, and he gives me the finger. Not that one, this one [indicates index finger]. "Come here." I guess he gave it to everybody. I walked over and said, "What can I do for you? I'm getting discharged," and he said, "Would you like to join the reserves?" I said, "Absolutely not." He said, "Well, if another war erupts?" I said, "If another war erupts and my country needs me, I will be the first one to volunteer. I don't want to be in the reserves." Of course this is 1946 and in 1950 we had Korea. I guess that's the end of my war stories. I have some other ones but I don't want to bore you.

MA: How was being Jewish–how did that affect you in the service?
CMJ: Being Jewish has never affected me to any great extent. I always knew that we, the Jews, are a minority in this country and we have to give up some of the things that we cherish−not all of them, just some of them−to be able to get along in this country as human beings, and most of us do this. It hasn't affected me at all−only in two instances, the one with my Platoon Sergeant and then there was another instance; no sense in even going through it because he was a vicious guy and he was also a coward. Malinowski was a hero, I didn't like him, but he was a hero. It really wasn't a factor.

MA: There wasn't much discrimination?
CMJ: Oh, I'm sure there was discrimination. There were a lot of guys that didn't like me but nobody ever really showed it and a lot of guys did like me. So, I found that out when I was going to school, that you've got to be what you are and just do the best you can. I got along with 98% of the people that I came in contact with. Because that's the way I was trained. My father said, "Don't insult anybody." I only do when I have to.

MA: Is your religion what made you more sensitive to what you saw in the South?

CMJ: Yes, that had something to do with it. Sure. There was another Jim Crow incident. I was going on a train and we had to stop in Washington. When I got off the train, everybody on it was white. And I got on the other train−because we had to change trains−and I remembered my ditty bag was on the train, so I ran back and the other train was all black−all black people. I looked around and I said, "I left something here," and some guy said, "Is that it right there?" and I said, "Yeah, thank you very much, Sir." And he looked at me as if I said something wrong. I was just being polite. He was a guy. He was black guy, but he was a guy. I never discriminated against people in any way. It was a very memorable war. It was the greatest experience of my life. I was taught early−I realized early, in the beginning, when you go to war, it's not your job to die for your country, it's your job to see that the other guy dies for his country, and we won. We saved democracy; we saved the world.

MA: What did you think of the Japanese?
CMJ: Having come in contact with them on several occasions, I thought that they were not too bright, some of them, some of them were very smart. I thought that they were animals in some cases−maybe that's a little harsh term−but they did some awful jobs on some friends of mine and the one guy who was a captive of the Japanese. They actually had him on the block to cut his head off. They didn't, fortunately, but they did a lot of them. We had one Marine go out on a patrol and he got separated from his group, or separated from his squad or whatever, and the Japanese captured him. We found him on the wire the next day with his hands and his legs cut off. Which I didn't think was very nice. Shoot him, shoot him. Don't do this; don't mutilate a guy. For a long, long time I had a resentment against the Japanese. I wouldn't buy a Japanese car. Today things have changed. The people who live in Japan today are not the same people. I figure maybe I killed their grandfather, you know. They're different people. I have even forgiven the Germans because they are not the same people that were so miserable to us. But this country was so good to us, so good to my family. One great-grandfather came over from Germany in 1850 or 1860 or somewhere around there and another one came over in 1880 and we found a haven here and it's been a pretty nice country.

MA: I'm going to mention a name from Troy and see what kind of a reaction you get. Mame Fay?
CMJ: I never met her. I know who she was. She had a little establishment on 6th Avenue in Troy, right in back of Gaynor's. You know who she was? Yes, you can mention her. I never met her. I was never in her establishment.

MA: But it's a name that, I guess, that guys from halfway across the world you mention it and oh, Troy…
CMJ: Well let me tell you another story. When I was 12 years old I was walking down Broadway and a guy came up to me and said, "Hey kid, do you know where the line is," and I said, "Yes, two blocks over that way." I didn't know what it was, but I knew where it was. I had a cousin in the children's dress business and these girls used to come in and buy clothes from him, expensive clothes. They had money. So when the war broke out,

RPI put a stop to it. There were never any more whorehouses in Troy−that's what they tell me; I don't know.

MA: Now you really never mentioned why you joined, why the Marines?
CMJ: Well, I know the Marines fight and I wanted to fight. I wanted to go to Germany and bust a few heads over there. Course I never got my way because we were sent to the South Pacific. My uncle had been a Marine. I much admired him and his integrity and his honor and he came from a Private−became a Captain. And it was a prestigious outfit and I just wanted to be a Marine; I didn't want to be a Soldier. But we were soldiers, you know. Do you know why the Marines, what was the reason for the Marines? Okay, I'll take you back to the eighteenth century. Back in eighteenth century they had sailing ships and the idea when you had a sailing ship was to grapple them with these grappling hooks and pull them together and board them and kill everybody on board and take the ship and win the battle. The Marines were up in the crow's nest, up in the sails on the bars. The Marines were the sharpshooters and they used to shoot the officers of the enemy so they had no leadership. That was their first purpose. Their second purpose was to go ashore and fight shore battles for the Navy. That's why the Marines were started back in the eighteenth century. I wanted to go into an outfit that I thought was good tough outfit. The blue uniform didn't bother me too much. I do have a picture of my Blues though. Here's my Blues. [Shows picture of himself in Dress Blues]

MA: Handsome young man.
CMJ: Oh yeah, good looking. I'll tell you a story about that. See the ears? The photographer who was taking this picture was a friend of mine. He kept looking at me and looking at me and looking at me and he didn't know what to do. I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "Something's not right." I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "I know what it is." And he took two pieces of adhesive tape, put them back to back, and stuck them behind my ears so my ears were flat. Because you notice my ears are not flat. So I looked pretty good there. Here's a picture when I came home. It's a picture of my father, my mother and my brother. They are all gone now, every one of them. [Shows Times Record article with picture, "Troy Marine Back Home after Being Wounded by JAPS"] It was written up by a guy by the name of George Yamin of the Times Record. And here's a picture they took of me with my mortar over on Cape Gloucester. [Holds up newspaper photo]

MA: So you were a mortarman on Cape Gloucester?
CMJ: I was a mortarman, I was a BAR man and I was also a rifle grenadier. I did it all. I did shoot the mortar.

MA: How was that?
CMJ: That was pretty interesting because you could lay back behind the lines a little bit. Course they could always break in too. I remember one incident; we had a spotter. There are things in the back of the mortar called increments. And you pull them off if you wanted to go a short distance, and you leave them on if you wanted to go a long

distance−so many increments, so many feet. I used to know all that. I don't know it anymore. Our spotter told us what to do. We did it. I dropped one in. I was the assistant. I dropped one in and he said, "Bullseye." There were three Japanese soldiers running along like that and we hit right in the middle of them−got them all.

MA: 60 millimeter mortar?
CMJ: 60 millimeter. The 81's are the big ones. These were the little ones.

MA: What was the difference between Cape Gloucester and Guadalcanal, in terms of feel…?
CMJ: In Cape Gloucester we were much more organized: we had back up, we had people to bring in food, people to bring in ammunition, they brought fresh troops in. And when we went to Guadalcanal, the Marines were−I wouldn't say we saved them−but they were in very tough shape because we were reinforcements. We were a whole regiment. We were reinforcements. In Cape Gloucester we went in as a big unit. We had lots of help. It was a much easier combat, the food was better, we had more time off because we had more people.

MA: Any recreation?
CMJ: Yeah, we had some recreation. At one time over on New Zealand the Marines had a football team. There was a guy by the name of Crazy Legs Hirsch−he used to play for Notre Dame I think. He played for them. We used to go down and watch that. We used to play softball. Over on Samoa we boxed. We put the gloves on with the Samoan guys and this guy kept telling me he's a champion, he's a champion. He kept coming at me. He said, "Take it easy, take it easy. I'm taking it easy on you." He hit me. I was never a boxer but I knew a little bit about it, so I hauled off and I feinted him one way and he took the feint and I hit him in the jaw and knocked him right on his [unclear]. He got up and ran away. That was the end of that fight.

There was a guy by the name of Flynn. Another guy and I were fooling around in the tent. We were wrestling. We knocked his rifle over. In the Marine Corps the rifle is your God. You keep it clean at all times. It's the first thing you clean when you come off the field before you clean yourself. This is an important thing−you've got to keep it working. So I knocked his rifle off on the ground. This guy Flynn said, "Clean it." So I said, "Okay," and I picked it up and wiped it off. I said, "That's good enough." He said, "No, it's not. I said, "Yes it is." So we started fooling around again, this other guy and myself, and knocked the rifle off again. "Now pick it up and clean it and take it apart." I said, "No, I won't take it apart. You want to make something out of it, come on outside." He was only a little guy about 135 pounds. I was 170. I could kill him. He said, "No, no." I thought he was scared of me. I felt pretty good. Went back to my tent. A couple of days later I'm reading Ring magazine. You know what Ring magazine is? I'm thumbing through the pages and there he is, Irish Frankie Flynn, Number 7 Welterweight in the country. I'm going to take him? So I ran over to his tent. I said, "Is that you?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "Why didn't you take me outside? You would have killed me."

He said, "No I can't. If a fighter hits somebody−these are weapons−and they hurt him, they are in big trouble. That's why I didn't go out with you." I said, "Now I know. Thanks for not going out." So a couple of days later we were putting the gloves on and he said, "You want to put them on with me?" I said, "Yeah, under conditions," and he said, "What are the conditions?" I said, "That you don't get too cute." He said, "Don't worry; I just want to practice bobbing and weaving." So we put them on and I was swinging at him and I was missing like crazy, and all of a sudden he bobbed when he should have weaved and I caught him with a left hook. He came at me and then he stopped and he smiled and he said it was a good shot. On Guadalcanal he was out on patrol and he got shot in the back and he lost the use of his legs. And I felt so sad for Frankie Flynn. He was from Buffalo, New York. A nice guy; we were good friends after a while.

MA: Ever go to any reunions?
CMJ: No, there was one two years ago. A guy called me up. I said, "Yeah, I'll go." He said, "I'll call and give you the information." He never called. I didn't know where he was from. So I never went to any reunions.

MA: How were replacements initially treated−guys coming in to fill up line units?
CMJ: They were treated okay. What I resented a little bit, not a lot but a little bit, when I went back to my outfit after I got hurt, I went back to Australia, and here's this Sergeant, this Corporal and I'm still a buck Private and I have combat experience and these guys just got out of boot camp. But it worked out all right. I'd decided that there's no sense in getting all excited about it. So I just let it go. I thought it was rather strange. But I cooperated with everybody. Because when you have an army, you have to fight and have cooperation.

MA: So you eventually made Corporal?
CMJ: I made Corporal on a discharge. The day I was discharged they made me a Corporal which was very nice and they gave me some money and sent me home.

MA: So after the war what did you do? You came home?
CMJ: After the war I came home. I met my wife. I got out in January. The following spring I met my wife and the following year in '47 I got married, went to Union College in Schenectady and got my Bachelor's degree.

MA: GI bill?
CMJ: Of course. It was the only way I could get to college. Two things I appreciate about WWII−I was able to get a college education and I didn't get killed. Those are the two things that I really feel good about. And we were married in 1947 out in a resort out here−Nassau. We've had three children and each child has two children of theirs, so I have six grandchildren. I went to work for a liquor wholesaler and I eventually became a sales manager. I've had a pretty good life. I can't argue too much.

MA: Any general thoughts looking back at your military career?
CMJ: Well, my military career was a career for me of necessity. I had to go to war because I felt it was my duty as a citizen and a patriot of this country to go to war. And I still think war is not the big answer. I think war is a terrible thing−is it Sherman or somebody said, "It's hell," but it's more than hell. Hell's nice compared to war. You have to live in a muddy foxhole and dirty clothes and see your friends get shot. It's really a very uncouth, unfair and undignified way of life and if we could eliminate wars I think we would all be better off. But I don't know if there's any way to do it. I don't know how. If I did I'd make a lot of money.

MA: Thank you very much, Mr. Jacobs, this went very well.
CMJ: I want to thank you and I want to thank the Governor and I want to thank the people of New York for paying for this. I hope someday down the line somebody looks at this and sees it and says it did them some good and they were happy to read it.

MA: Well, I look at them frequently and I learn things every time.
CMJ: I am sure you do.