

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

Center for Pacific War Studies

Fredericksburg, Texas

An Interview with

D. L. Misenheimer

Gold Hill, North Carolina

February 14, 2008

Sea Going Tug APR-77

Pulled Barges of Aviation Gas to Ulithi, Okinawa, Philippines

Destroy *Ward* Hit by Kamikaze, Towed to Bone Yard

After War to Yokosuka, Cleared Harbor

My name is Richard Misenhimer and today is February 14, 2008. I am interviewing Mr. D. L. "Sam" Misenheimer by telephone. His telephone number is area code 704-636-3903. His address is 9820 Stokes Ferry Road, Gold Hill, North Carolina 28071. This interview is in support of the National Museum of Pacific War, Center for Pacific War Studies, for the preservation of historical information related to World War II.

Mr. Misenhimer

Sam, I want to thank you for taking time to do this interview today and I want to thank you for your service to our country during World War II. Now the first thing I would like to do is get an alternative contact, a son or daughter or someone who would know where you are. We have found out that sometimes in two or three years we try to contact a Veteran and he has moved or something has happened. Do you have a son or daughter or someone that you might give us a name and phone number in case we can't reach you?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Randy Misenheimer. His phone number is 704-636-9864. His address is 9660 Stokes Ferry Road, Gold Hill, North Carolina 28071.

Mr. Misenhimer

Now the next thing I need to do is read to you this agreement with the Nimitz Museum. When I do these in person I give them to the man to read and sign but since this is by phone, let me read it to you to make sure it is okay. "Agreement Read." Is that okay?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Let me ask you first, what is your birth date?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

June 11, 1923.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where were you born?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Rowan County, North Carolina.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many total brothers and sisters did you have?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I have two brothers.

Mr. Misenhimer

I know that both of your brothers were in the service, weren't they?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

You grew up during the Depression. How did the Depression affect you and your family?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It was rough but we made it.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did your father do?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

He was a stonemason.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he able to keep working during most of the Depression?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you all have a garden or anything like that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go to school?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Rockwell.

Mr. Misenhimer

What year did you finish there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

1940.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that when you graduated?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

When did you go into the service?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know what year.

Mr. Misenheimer

How long after you finished high school was it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

About 2 ½ years.

Mr. Misenheimer

On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Where were you when you heard about it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I was at home. I heard it on the radio.

Mr. Misenheimer

What was your reaction? How did you feel that would affect you.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I didn't know. I just thought we were going to go.

Mr. Misenheimer

You were about 18 when that happened?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you went into the service, you went into the Navy, is that right?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you choose the Navy?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

They chose me. I worked in a shipyard for about 2 ½ years, I guess that's the reason why.

I trained with the frogs, the UDT's, for a little while down in Florida.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you went in sometime in probably 1943, would that be right?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

That's right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you go in at?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I went to Virginia for basic training.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that basic training. Tell me about that.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It wasn't bad. I didn't mind it.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some of the things you did?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Marched mostly.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a lot of inspections?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Oh yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any kind of weapons training while you were in basic training?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you shoot a rifle in training?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, a little bit.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you grow up hunting?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you knew how to use a gun before you went into the service?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

About how long was that training there in Virginia?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Six weeks.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finished there, then where did you go?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

To Florida.

Mr. Misenhimer

Tell me about that training down there, what was that like?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

That was just waiting around to see where I was going. Then they assigned me to the Navy. Then I was sent to Maine.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about training with the frogs? How was that? What did you do there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I didn't train with them a long time. They put me on the tugs.

Mr. Misenhimer

You went up to Maine, is that right?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Is that where you got on the tugs?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. Put the tug in commission.

Mr. Misenheimer

How did you travel up from Florida to Maine?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Railroad.

Mr. Misenheimer

How was that train trip?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It was okay.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you have a place to sleep, or did you sit up in a chair car, or what?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had a place to sleep, a hammock, on the train.

Mr. Misenheimer

What was the name of the tug that you went on?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

APR-77.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did it have a name?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. She was a seagoing salvage tug. She was a big tug. 160 ft long.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did it have in the way of engines?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Steam engine.

Mr. Misenhimer

One or two?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

One.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

How many screws?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

One.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was your job on the tug?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I was in the boiler room first and then I went back to the engine room.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was the tug being built when you joined it or had it already been finished?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It had already been finished.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did you happen to get assigned to a tug?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know. I reckon it was because I had worked in a shipyard.

Mr. Misenheimer

What did you do when you first joined the tug?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We took off to Norfolk, Virginia. Then we went back to Pennsylvania or somewhere and picked up some barges and started to Europe but then we hit a storm out there. Four of us tugs, we had to _____ and the barges on the other tugs tore loose or something.

Mr. Misenheimer

How many barges did you have?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Three.

Mr. Misenheimer

How big were these barges?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

They were big. They were loaded with aviation gas.

Mr. Misenheimer

All three of them?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

And you said there were four tugs of you going over there together?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Right.

Mr. Misenheimer

What time of year would this have been? Winter or summer or when?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I guess it was summer.

Mr. Misenheimer

I understand those storms can get pretty bad there in the North Atlantic.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes they do.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did any of the tugs sink? Or did they all make it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

They all made it.

Mr. Misenheimer

But the other three lost their barges?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes they lost their tows. We had to go back and hunt them all up. We went back in.

Mr. Misenheimer

So you all had to turn around and come back?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it pretty scary on that tug out there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. It was pretty rough.

Mr. Misenhimer

How big were the waves?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know, pretty big.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were they coming over the whole ship then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, they were coming over the back end.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got back to the States what did you do then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We took off to San Francisco. We went down through the Panama Canal.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was it to go through the Panama Canal?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It was alright.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it pretty interesting?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. You go into the locks. They go up and then you come back down on the other side.

Mr. Misenheimer

Were you up on the deck so you could see when you were going through?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Part of the time.

Mr. Misenheimer

I understand they have some kind of tugs or something on the side that helps pull the ship through.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you have liberty on either end of the canal?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes on both ends.

Mr. Misenheimer

How was that liberty?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It was alright.

Mr. Misenheimer

About how long did it take to go through the canal?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know, about a day.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got out, where did you go?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We went to San Diego and then we took off through the Pacific and went to Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you by yourself or with some other ships?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were by ourselves.

Mr. Misenhimer

You didn't have any kind of an escort or anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you got to Pearl Harbor, what did you do there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We went down where they had sunk those ships. We worked there for a couple of days.

Then we took off and went to Eniwetok.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were there in Pearl Harbor, what kind of work were you doing there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had to go over and watch the diver that was under a barge and the mud came in on him. We had to wash him out.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was he okay?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We had divers too.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were there still quite a few sunken ships there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, a bunch of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

That would have been when, 1943 or 1944?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

1943.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get a chance to take liberty in Honolulu or anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How was that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It was alright.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there much damage in the town of Honolulu?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No.

Mr. Misenheimer

But quite a few of the sunken ships were still there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes the *Arizona* and others.

Mr. Misenheimer

The *Oklahoma* had turned over, I know.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

And of course the *Arizona* was still there. Then you went to Eniwetok?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Were you by yourself going there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Were you ever threatened by enemy submarines or anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Well, after we left Eniwetok we went to Okinawa. There were two of us tugs in there and we had two destroyers with us.

Mr. Misenhimer

But that was after you left Eniwetok?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

But on the way to Eniwetok you were by yourself?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do in Eniwetok?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We took those barges with aviation gas.

Mr. Misenhimer

You mentioned Guadalcanal. Did you go to Guadalcanal?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We went down on the other side of Guadalcanal. I've forgotten what islands it was, the Russell Islands or something. We took barges down there.

Mr. Misenhimer

And this was after you went to Eniwetok?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Oh yes, it was after Okinawa.

Mr. Misenhimer

You picked up barges at Eniwetok and where did you take those to?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Okinawa. They were loaded with gasoline.

Mr. Misenheimer

Now the Invasion of Okinawa was April 1, 1945. Were you there then? Or when did you get to Okinawa?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. The main invasion there was mountains and then the beach. We had to pull those LST's off. We had to run on the picket line. We had so many ships out between there and Japan. The warship that got hit, we had to take it in to tow, the destroyer *Ward*. _____ the back deck off _____. We got it back in and they put it into dry dock. They had six people _____ back in the back end.

Mr. Misenheimer

So you all took the *Ward* in to dry dock?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had a dry dock _____ destroyer. Then we towed a _____ battleship to dry dock. It took several sections to put it together.

Mr. Misenheimer

Where did you bring that from?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I forget where we picked up that section.

Mr. Misenheimer

Now you took barges of aviation fuel to Okinawa, right?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Right.

Mr. Misenhimer

Where did you drop them off at?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We dropped them off there at Okinawa. We had to unload the tankers there and those three barges.

Mr. Misenhimer

So you would pull the barge from the tanker into the shore, then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, right. A suicide plane liked to have got that tanker one night. It just missed it. He made three passes over it. We were smoked in and he couldn't see. He came pretty close.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have antiaircraft guns on your tug?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. We just had 20mm's on the tug. Then when we went into Okinawa they told us, "You don't fire a shot at anything. You are a working craft. You are not a fighting craft. If you fire anything you will be court martialed." Then we found out that we didn't want to fire anything because they rode those tracers in.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you see quite a few ships get hit by kamikazes?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, a bunch of them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did a kamikaze ever come close to you?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

About 50 feet.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's pretty close.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

That was when he missed that tanker. We had a time getting loose from that tanker.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some other ships that you pulled into dry dock?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know. I guess a destroyer was the worst. Well we had a hospital ship. A suicide plane hit one. It pulled out about 4:00 in the evening going to sea and at night it turned the lights on. They weren't supposed to hit those hospital ships.

Mr. Misenhimer

What were some other things that happened?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Then we left Okinawa and went down below Guadalcanal. We took some more barges down there. They didn't have anything in them. They were just one barge put up on top of the other one. We had three strung out behind us. We got to the Philippines and then we headed to Japan. We got about halfway to Japan when it came over the radio that we had a secret weapon but we didn't know if we were going to use it. We said, "What's the use of having it, if you don't use it?"

Mr. Misenhimer

The island that you went down to below Guadalcanal, would that have been New Hebrides.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you at Okinawa?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were at Okinawa about 60 days I guess. They said it was secured in 45 days, but that wasn't quite true. We were sitting there, they had started letting the Merchant Marine tankers come in. They wouldn't let them come in while the combat was going on. One came in and dropped anchor near where we were at on the first invasion and about that time a shell fell on one side of it, between us and them. They lost about 50 people.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was that an artillery shell or was that a kamikaze?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I guess it was an artillery shell. Then we moved down to Naha, the capitol. They had another invasion down there and that was the worse than the first one. We didn't have as much equipment down there but we had ships shooting over us and you'd hear those shells go by. We were pulling those flat boats with tanks on them. The tanks had flame throwers on them. They would just blow that stuff out and they made a squealing sound.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get on shore at all?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had to work onshore.

Mr. Misenheimer

What kind of work did you do?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We got barges and LST's ready to pull off. That ship came in and shells hit it and then those destroyers moved in and really bombarded that mountain. Then here they came by and wanted to know if we wanted to go over there and stay. They wanted to go over there and see what was torn up. We said no, we didn't want to go. We had to work on the beach some anyway. It wasn't long before they came back and they shot five. They wanted to know if we had a doctor but we didn't have a doctor.

Mr. Misenheimer

So five of them got shot up there, huh?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes there were still some Japs up there in those hills.

Mr. Misenheimer

Were these Navy people or who was it that went up there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Navy.

Mr. Misenheimer

What were some other things that happened there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

At Okinawa?

Mr. Misenhimer

Yes sir.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know just what else went on. We made that first invasion. We pulled those LST's to where the mountain comes down. It kind made a beach. Then we went to Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenhimer

Your tug could pull a big load, couldn't it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. Our chain was 5 ½ inches through. It would really pull. We pulled a tanker at Eniwetok, us and another tug. We pulled the beach anchor out and ran a cable back to the beach. We thought we had that thing moving, then it was jumping. It would break suction. I guess that other tug had let it get slack and it took off and hit the end of it and broke its cable. That thing jumped back up on the beach (laugh).

Mr. Misenhimer

So the tanker was stuck on the beach?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you able to get him off then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. We had to leave him up there. When we came back through, he was still there. We pumped that oil out, old black oil all around there. It was just like

_____ . It makes a heck of a mess.

Mr. Misenhimer

There at Okinawa did you see many of our planes shoot down their planes?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. I saw some.

Mr. Misenhimer

What kind of planes did we have there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had the P-51's and P-47's.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Corsair?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had those too. They had those little Zero. That was a fine little plane.

Mr. Misenhimer

It caught on fire pretty easy I understand.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes it did and the wings would come off of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you see that happen?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. Those kamikazes were coming in there all the time. We had to be on the picket line.

We had so many ships in line between there and Japan and they were just so many miles apart. We had to be out there with them.

Mr. Misenhimer

Oh, you were on the picket line?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We had to fight the fires and take them into tow.

Mr. Misenhimer

You had big fire hoses and pumps on your ship, right?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We had them. I think we could pump 9,000 gallons a minute.

Mr. Misenhimer

That's quite a bit of water. How many hoses did you have you could shoot water out of?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had a manifold I think that we could hook up 20 hoses. But we didn't have the men to man that many hoses. You take a 2 ½ inch hose, one man can't hold that by himself. It had over 100 lbs of pressure.

Mr. Misenhimer

How many men were on your boat?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Sixty.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were you still in the engine room?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do in the engine room?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Maintain it and sit on the throttle. That steam tug didn't have controls up in the deckhouse. They were down there and you had an annunciator and you had to set the speed at what they called for.

Mr. Misenhimer

What was the top speed on that tug?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

12 knots. Slow tug.

Mr. Misenhimer

It took you quite a while to go from the States to Pearl Harbor or Pearl Harbor to Ulithi, didn't it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

23 days. We were 23 days coming back from Pearl Harbor. We had a big tow and we had two tugs pulling it.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said that you went to the Philippines. What did you do in the Philippines?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We just towed our barges in. We couldn't go up into town. We were outside. They had a place of about 20 acres where we would play ball and all. We had to stay out there.

Mr. Misenhimer

What part of the Philippines was that? Was it near Manila or Leyte?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were outside of Manila.

Mr. Misenheimer

Was the fighting still going on there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No, I don't think so. We could see Manila up there. There were so many ships that you couldn't hardly see it. Then about 4:00 the destroyer beside of us was making a little smoke and was taking off easy. The next morning, all of those ships were gone. They were going to Japan to bombard Japan. Then we took off.

Mr. Misenheimer

Took off for where?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Japan.

Mr. Misenheimer

You were headed for Japan?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We got about half way there and the news came over our radio that we had a secret weapon but they didn't know if we were going to use it or not. Then we went into Yokosuka, Japan. We cleaned up the harbor there. We had 18 prisoners. Each tug had 18 prisoners that we were working. After this, they committed suicide.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

All of them?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. The destroyer came in and hit a mine and a knocked a hole in it and bent the shaft and cracked where the ammo was. We went over to crank up some of their harbor tugs. We sent a barge over there with those 18 prisoners. We were going to unload some of the ammunition off of it. They set a fuse down in that barge and it went off and blew a hole in the barge. I believe there were 8 killed on top when we got there.

Mr. Misenheimer

Where did you get the prisoners from?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

There in Japan.

Mr. Misenheimer

They were supposed to be working for you then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

And you think they killed themselves on purpose?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. One of them set a fuse there, just twisted the fuse and it went off. Once you twisted the fuse, it would go off. It killed them all down in the hold. We got over there to the barge and in 7 minutes, I believe, it sunk and killed the rest of them. The little old Bosun Mate said, "Come over here and help me." I said, "Buddy, _____ I'm right behind you. I'm not _____."

Mr. Misenhimer

When they had the big surrender ceremony there in Tokyo Bay, were you there then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No we came in later. They sent us around to Nagasaki where they dropped the second bomb. There's a river that flows down through there. That's where the warehouses were built at. Man, it was horrible. We got some radiation, but it didn't hurt us. I didn't get to see Hiroshima.

Mr. Misenhimer

What else happened?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were there in Japan awhile and we cleaned up the harbor there at Yokosuka and then we went to Nagasaki. I've forgotten what the name of that place was that we went to one time.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there at Nagasaki?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were there three days. We cleaned up some radiation and washed that tug down for two days. We washed it all down.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they tell you anything about the radiation?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No but we had Geiger counters. We didn't know the danger of it.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was anybody from your ship injured from that radiation later on or anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know.

Mr. Misenhimer

Not that you know of.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I went to the VA and wanted to talk to them about it. They said, "Well, did it hurt you?" I said, "I don't know. What was it supposed to do?" They said, "If it hasn't hurt you by now, then you're okay."

Mr. Misenhimer

Then after Nagasaki, where did you go?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We went back into the Naval yard there at Yokosuka.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do there, this time?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Some salvage work on some of that stuff that had been sunk.

Mr. Misenhimer

Were these Japanese ships?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do with them?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know. We cleaned them up and that was it.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you didn't take them out into the deep water and sink them or anything like that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No, we just pulled them up.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Japanese rifles and stuff like that. Did you have any experience with them or anything.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. They gave us one. I've got a .30 Walther. They gave us one of those.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you didn't take any of them out into the water and dump them or anything like that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. If I had it to do over, I would have taken a sword. They worshiped those swords. They would take your head off in a minute.

Mr. Misenhimer

Could you have gotten a sword if you would have wanted one?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, I think so, a sword or a rifle.

Mr. Misenhimer

But you couldn't get both, though?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there at Yokosuka this time?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were only there for three days and then we went back to sea.

Mr. Misenhimer

Then where did you go?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Back into Japan somewhere. Then we went to another place. It was a place where a lot of soldiers went in to come home.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it somewhere close to Yokosuka?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

It wasn't Yokohama was it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. The old battleship _____ was in there, the Japanese battleship. I was in there for a little bit. I was on it a lot. We had to be beside the *New Jersey*. A storm came up or something.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was where, in the harbor there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. The old Japanese battle wagons were in there. They didn't have air conditioning like we did. Everything was canned. Little old cans, tomatoes, tangerines. We got a bunch of that stuff.

Mr. Misenhimer

Had this Japanese battleship been sunk or not?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No, but it had been hit all up and down the side.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was it still manned by the Japanese or just sitting there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. The Japanese _____ down here close to the river. We got the flag off of it. He was in there. I got a big set of binoculars off of that thing but I couldn't send them home. I had to turn them in.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you were on that ship, you were just looking around, right?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. When we were there cleaning the harbor, we had the run of the docks. Then they brought the Marines in and then they wouldn't let us go to these places. They had tunneled back up in the mountains. They didn't have a way to control the dampness in there.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have any contact with the civilian Japanese there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Oh yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

How were they? Were they friendly?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Some of them were and some of them were pretty desperate. We were all back up in the town where we were at.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they have any stores where you could buy anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Not much. This one guy, we went into his place, it was in his house. He did laundry. He heated his iron with charcoal. He could sure press our britches.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you have a dress uniform?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. I had the blues and then I had the whites. They had to run their cars on charcoal.

Mr. Misenhimer

How did that work?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

They would jump out and throw a couple of shovels of charcoal in there and that would to put-put-put down the road. Those cars looked like 1937 Chevrolets. They took the

truck bed off and put a charcoal burner back there. That's what he used for fuel.

Mr. Misenhimer

Was there a lot of damage to the houses and all there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

That one place did, mountains all around it. Those incendiary bombs and their houses burned down. Just rolling down the mountain. They were pretty bitter.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long were you there in Japan?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know, six months or so. We were working there all the time.

Mr. Misenhimer

Cleaning out the harbors, is that what you were doing?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, mostly. You know where the cranes were made? Chicago. They had a big plate on the side saying where it was made. Laid there with the overhead crane and one rolled off the barge. The thing rolled off. We had to pick it up and put it on the dock.

Mr. Misenhimer

That was a Japanese crane?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

You said that you got into some of those caves where they had machine shops?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

There were a whole bunch of those.

Mr. Misenheimer

I understand that a lot of those machines were made in the United States.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes they were, then.

Mr. Misenheimer

So they had them before the war, or whatever.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We sold them all as junk, or gave them to them or something. But they are top notch today, aren't they?

Mr. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't see why we don't put a tariff on those cars, as many as come in here. Our government ain't trying to do nothing for Chrysler. They did a little for General Motors, built all that stuff for them. The steel mills. Closed them down and built the most modern steel mills in the world for Japan.

Mr. Misenheimer

The advantage that Japan has is that everything they had was destroyed during the war so they had to build new. We still had ours so we just kept on using the same old ones.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know what we're going to do for another one.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you finally left Japan where did you go then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We went back to Okinawa and then to the Philippines and then we came home.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do in Okinawa this time?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We just anchored there mostly. We didn't have anything to do there.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Philippines? The same thing?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes and then to Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenhimer

How long did you stay at Pearl Harbor?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Maybe a month.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you do there, anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you get a lot of liberty there?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Some, yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Were they still salvaging any of the wrecks there or had they stopped that by then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

They were still working on that. Down there at Charleston they have an aircraft carrier down there and a destroyer there. The _____. We fought a fire on it and put it in dry dock. *(Tape side ended.)*

Mr. Misenheimer

Then when did you get back to the States?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know, sometime around August of 1946. We had two tugs pulling back a big _____ barge. That's when a big tsunami came down through there. We rolled 62 degree rolls.

Mr. Misenheimer

Where was that at?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Coming back to the States from Pearl Harbor.

Mr. Misenheimer

When were you finally discharged?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

In 1946.

Mr. Misenheimer

Probably in the late fall of 1946?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We came back through the Panama Canal and then up to New Orleans. I got discharged at New Orleans. They sold the tug to an oil company. I was the only man on there they offered a job to, and I don't know why. I guess something was wrong with my head because I didn't take it.

Mr. Misenheimer

Then did you go back home from there or what?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

On April 12, 1945 President Roosevelt died. Do you recall hearing about that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

What was the reaction to that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I thought about it but it didn't bother me.

Mr. Misenheimer

Just after that, Ernie Pyle was killed there at Okinawa. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. They sent us around there to help look for him. There was an old Japanese ship in

there and we tied up right beside it and _____ . The ones that were looking for him said, "If he would have listened to us, he wouldn't have gotten shot."

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you all find him?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No, we didn't but some of them did. He was a top notch reporter, wasn't he?

Mr. Misenheimer

Yes he was. There was a picture of him in the paper just last week, of his body. Did you see that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No.

Mr. Misenheimer

It was a photograph that had never been shown before. It showed his body laying there. Someone had stretched him out and put his hands across his chest and he was laying there.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Admiral Nimitz, do you know what General Swartzkoff said about him. He said, they had to let MacArthur feel like he was doing something but it was Nimitz that knew what was going on out there. At Midway, when that guy got sick, they had to put someone else in?

Mr. Misenheimer

Halsey had a bad rash and then they put in Spruance.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

See they were about 300 miles away from there but they didn't even try to defend the island.

Mr. Misenheimer

Right.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Then when we were over there the Japanese were sending their planes in there. They had those little PBV's spotting them and we struck a bunch of carriers.

Mr. Misenheimer

I think that's right. Now, what would you consider your most frightening time?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Okinawa, when we were beside that tanker, unloading that fuel, we were trying to get away from it. They were working us all the time, pulling LST's or something off. Unloading the fuel was the dangerous part. Those suicide planes didn't bother the LST's. They would just fly right over us and we could see which way the engine was firing.

Mr. Misenheimer

They were looking for something bigger, huh?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. They knew the barge was unloaded.

Mr. Misenheimer

What did you think of the officers that you had over you?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Some of them were pretty good and some of them weren't worth a damn.

Mr. Misenhimer

How about the Captain on your tugboat?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We had a great Captain. When they told him when those Japanese committed suicide, we had to go to court on the *New Jersey*. They said they were going to court martial him. He told them, "Then I'm going to get out of the Navy." They said, "If you're going to get out then we won't press charges. If you stay in, we will." I don't know why because we didn't have anything to do with them. He was a good Captain. He got off and then the Exec took over and he couldn't drive a car good (laugh). He couldn't handle that tug.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did they court martial your first Captain, then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No. He got out. When we got back to Pearl Harbor we picked up a new one. I don't remember what his name was. He could handle that thing, he was a harbor tug driver in Boston. He could really handle that thing.

Mr. Misenhimer

Would your tug turn pretty short?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

If you would back her down, she would turn right short.

Mr. Misenhimer

How as the morale on your ship?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

It was pretty good. We had an Exec and he was pretty rough. He would come down there

with white gloves on, inspecting your rooms. We would get a little liberty and couldn't take it. While we were going through the Panama Canal, when you pull up into fresh water, you are supposed to pump everything out. I was down there on the throttle and he kept calling for more power, more pressure, more pressure. All you wanted was 100 pounds on the nozzle. I've forgotten how much I had on it. But then those boys got tired and laid the hoses down and he started hollering to pick those hoses up and turn them on. He came down there and grabbed a hose and cut that thing on. When you turn it off, you can lay it down. He cut it on and it threw him all over that place. He hit the anchor winch and tore his pants and everything. It tore him all up and everybody was laughing at him.

Mr. Misenheimer

That was your executive, huh?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. They got rid of him before we went to Okinawa.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you get home with any souvenirs other than the rifle?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

No, that's all.

Mr. Misenheimer

Do you still have it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you ever see any USO shows?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, down there in Cuba.

Mr. Misenheimer

You were in Cuba?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes, we had to stop there to refuel at Guantanamo and we hit that when we came back on our way to New Orleans.

Mr. Misenheimer

Who did you see? Anybody famous in the USO show?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I don't know who the main one was. Those gals that were with them, the soldiers were really yelling.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you have any experience with the Red Cross?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Just on that hospital ship, that's all. We tied up to it and took it in tow. It got underway and it was faster than we were, so we had to cut loose. Then we were with an Invasion hospital ship. A suicide plane hit it and _____.

Mr. Misenheimer

When you were on that ship did you get your mail with any regularity?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes when we were close to harbor. But when we went down to Guadalcanal, that was 23 days going down there. We were supposed to get to go to Australia. They said, "Hook on

to those barges and take off, there is a typhoon coming down through there.” Man we hit that thing and the tail end went down and the _____ was right up in the bow. That tug wouldn’t even stay in there the way that thing was blowing. WE took water down the stack.

Mr. Misenhimer

Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes.

Mr. Misenhimer

What did you think of her?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

I didn’t think anything of her.

Mr. Misenhimer

I’ve heard she played good music.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes she did.

Mr. Misenhimer

When you crossed the equator did you have any kind of ceremony or anything?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. They made us, what did they call it?

Mr. Misenhimer

You were a polliwog and then they made a shellback out of you.

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

That's right. We had to go through that initiation. They put stuff down on the deck and made you crawl through it and they beat you with those things made out of canvas. I was a shellback.

Mr. Misenheimer

On May 8, 1945, German surrendered. Did you all hear about that?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Oh yes.

Mr. Misenheimer

Any reaction to it?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Yes. We were glad to see them shut it down.

Mr. Misenheimer

When Japan surrendered on August 15th. Where were you then?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

We were going to Japan but I don't think we were there yet.

Mr. Misenheimer

Did you have any kind of a celebration?

Mr. D. L. Misenheimer

Oh yes. We were in Sasebo. We had to had a pilot to take us in. Rocks on both sides.

He was a Captain in World War I. He was British.

(End of Interview)

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