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An interview with Louis John Schott
San Antonio, Texas
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This is Doctor James Lindley (JL). This is August 28, 2010. I am interviewing Mr. Louis John Schott (LS) in San Antonio, Texas at the reunion for the First Marine Division. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies Archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War, the Texas Historical Commission for the Preservation of Historical Information related to the National Museum of the Pacific War. Good morning, Mr. Schott. Thank you so much for taking your time to give us your story. Please start by again, telling us your name, where you were born, and a little bit about yourself and how you became a Marine in the Second World War.

LS: First of all, my name is Louis John Schott. I'm a Colonel, retired from the United States Marine Corps Reserve. I was born in Atlantic City, New Jersey on August 10, 1920. I went to school in that area and went to grammar school and high school. Then I went to LaSalle College, and it's now LaSalle University, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. That's when I decided that I would join the Marine Corps.

JL: What did you study?

LS: My major was in accounting. So I got a Bachelor's of Science degree in accounting. I guess it was my junior year at LaSalle and I was the captain goalie on the college ice hockey team. So on December 6, 1941 we played Georgetown University in Washington. The next day was Sunday, December 7th. So we were waiting in the lobby in the hotel for our transportation back to Philadelphia on December 7th. Of course, no television in those days, but the radio was on and we heard about Pearl Harbor. So then our transportation came and we're all talking about what we're going to do. Are we going to stay in school? Are we going to finish up and go in the service and so forth. So I knew they had a Platoon Leader's program – the Marine Corps did at school. I thought, "Well, I think I'll go that way. I'll join the Platoon Leader's Program." Which it didn't guarantee, but I had a good sense of being able to get my degree before I went. So I swore into the Marine Corps Reserve in July of 1942 and then I took a summer semester because I really was hot to trot. I wanted to get in the Marine Corps and take part in the war. That worked out pretty well for me, but that meant I would be graduated from the school in December '42. I was to be graduated at the end of December. So all my professors made up special finals for me so I could get my degree before I went on active duty. I wasn't there for the graduation; my father had to go to graduation to accept my diploma, but I was in boot camp at Parrish Island. I was one of the few Officers who went through that program that had to go to boot camp before we went to Quantico. Prior to that and not too long after that, the candidates would go right to Quantico. But I'm glad I had the Marine Corps boot camp experience. So anyway, I went to boot camp and from there to Quantico and then for Officer's training there. After that I was sent to Camp Lejeune. My military occupation specialty was 0302 which was an Infantry Officer. So at Camp Lejeune I joined a Replacement Battalion which is just as the name implies. We were sent overseas and we were fed out to various divisions of the Marine Corps as replacements. So anyway, I joined the First Marine Division after they were through Guadalcanal. In fact, they were on New Britain, the Battle of New Britain. So I did not go ashore with them in the initial landing. I joined the division right after they had taken the air field on New Britain at Cape Gloucester. So I was assigned a Platoon Leader of B Company, First Battalion, Fifth Marines. So I had that Platoon all through the New Britain campaign. The New Britain campaign was

relatively [low] as far as casualties were concerned. Probably the lowest amount of casualties of all the three operations that I was in. And also lower than of course, Guadalcanal, which I did not make. We fought under terrible conditions there. Nothing but rain and mud and humidity. You couldn't stay dry. You had a lot of skin problem and dengue fever and malaria and so forth. Mostly they had us fighting the Japanese. It was just a real terrible place. We had a lot of people who were on the sick list and so forth. The casualties, I believe the numbers were, now not exact, but I would say it totaled maybe about 2,000 casualties or something in the whole division through the whole campaign. Now that's where, you know, Rabaul was on one tip of that island. I guess it would be the western tip of the island. That was a big Japanese logistics center, training center, and they also had quite an airfield facility there. I believe they also had some dockings, you know for their ships. But we were able to cut them off. We didn't have to go in and take Rabaul. So we neutralized them which a real break for us. It made the operation a lot easier with respect to the fighting aspects. So anyway, I had a rifle platoon and it was a series of reconnaissance patrols and sometimes they would turn into combat patrols and so forth. It'd maybe start out as a platoon fight and then we'd wind up in new company fire. And sometimes that's routine. So that's where I guess you'd say I was brought up. Living on there. I didn't get in but in the sense, was getting the experience. We went back to a terrible place, the stage for the next operation was almost an advantage to a burden. That was an island, Pavuvu. I guess it was part of the Solomons. It was something like about 26 or 27 nautical miles from Guadalcanal. And on this island was nothing but big coconut plantation, really. We had no place to train. We had to build a camp for ourselves and we were certainly in no physical condition to do that kind of thing. We were supposed to be there to train and re-fit and set the stage for our next operation. But anyway, we did it and incidentally that place, the rats would be running over your sack at night. We had to cut down coconut trees to set up areas where we could put up pyramidal tents and so forth. So we spent a lot of our time just building the camp. And then our training areas were quite limited because it was swampy and so it was a very bad place. We stayed there for the operation on Peleliu. So I was still in B Company, Fifth Marine, so I still had the same platoon, and I took that platoon to Peleliu. We landed the first day on Peleliu. And Peleliu was a little island that was in the central Pacific. And it was about two miles wide at its widest point and maybe about five miles long. It was shaped like a lobster claw. The first marine regiment was the First Marines. Landed to our left. And the Seventh Marines were on our right. We came at the center. They had an airfield on Peleliu. It was a garrison of about 10,000 Japanese and this little island was estimated, maybe ten square miles. It was a solid rock. It had some very rugged terrain. It had the airfield, and then on the northern part of the island it had some very rugged terrain. The topography was pretty rugged. It had all these ridges, the draws, running in all kinds of direction. And the Japanese had built out all these ridges and they had hospital operation in there, they had mess halls, they had barracks. I mean it was... I remember when we were getting going to the target, we were on the ship, and I remember getting my platoon up on the weather deck and saying, "From the intelligence we have, this should be a very short operation. I expect us to take this island in around 72 hours." But I want you people to know that at that time we had two Browning automatic rifles in every squad. So six BARs. I sent out that the BAR man can't see them. Well somebody picked up that BAR and I said, well we have six people left. I need six BARs. I got hit the 11th day at the battle. I had a little more than six, but I didn't have much more left. I had less than half that platoon left. Out of 44. There was some historian that said arguably it was the most costly battle of the war in terms of casualties per square foot or

however you want to measure. So the 11 days I led the platoon, the 11 days that I was there, we went ashore, we got about 215 yards out I guess the first day. We were just fighting inch by inch. They were pre-registered on every square inch of that. They said the Japanese had been there since about 1920 I believe. They got the island in some kind of a deal from the Germans. It seems to me they were just digging and building all these fortified positions and so forth for all that time. It was bloody. The First Marines regiment, believe it or not, after about a week they were no longer effectively a force. We crossed the airfield on the second day. Prior to our crossing the Japanese must have attacked in mass across the airfield. We had just gotten our tanks to shore. So we were going back and it was like a turkey shoot for us. We loved it because we got rid of all of our tanks, and then we had to cross the airfield and that was quite a deal because they were still on the high ground. They had mutually supporting fortified positions into these holes. And they had one place higher, one down the draws and so forth. You couldn't get naval gun fire in on them because of the topography and they were gun firing, they had a straight line of sight trajectory. So about the only thing we'd get in was the mortar fire because they were high trajectory weapons. We used a lot of flamethrowers and satchel chargers and that kind of thing. It was pretty hairy stuff. After about, the time we left, we knew that we were going to take the island, but at what cost. At that time, the Japanese, they were just fighting a war of attrition. They were to take as many of us as they could, knowing that they were going to lose the battle. So that's what the situation was there.

I made three operations, and they just had kind of a destructional impact on me. For the fears, it was just the ferocity of the battles and such an intense period of time. It took maybe about five weeks really to secure the island. So the last half of the battle, the airfield was taken so you could take aircraft in. The Japanese still had a lot of people left, because the naval gunfire didn't do too much good because they couldn't penetrate these ridges and we couldn't get them in there. The Japanese as well, had artillery pieces that they had on tracks. And they had steel doors over the atmosphere. They were all pre-registered. They would take them out of these tracks and they'd fired their concentrations before we could even get counter fire in on them, they'd roll 'em back again. So we had to do it the hard way and just go and get 'em.

JL: Tell us about crossing the airfield, when you did it.

LS: Crossing the airfield, we drew a lot of fire. We were completely exposed because they were up on the high ground. And we took a lot of casualties. I couldn't give you a percentage, but it was quite an experience for me.

JL: What time of the day did you cross?

LS: It was in the morning hours. I would say, I can't recall the exact time but I think it was probably around 9:00 in the morning or something like that. That area of time. And I don't think it took us more than an hour or so to get across. Overall I think it went very well. We knew we were going to take casualties.

Now the First Marines were over on our left. They were really in a bad spot. They were not part of that. The Fifth Marines took the airport. The Seventh Marines were over to our right. And their landing beach and their landing area of responsibility was infested with swampy areas and that kind of thing. So they lost contact with each other. They got shot at pretty good too. Well, we all did. So after 11 days from personal experience I can't tell you too much more. After we took the airfield we went into reserve. We were in reserve for about three days and then we went up to the northern part of the island, passed through the lines of the First Marines, and we went up to the north west quadrant, I remember it was a great concentration of them in there, and that's where I got hit. It was one in the series of what was called the "five sisters".

So after that I was on the hospital ship relief and then I worked in the Fleet Hospital, Noumea. It was the Fleet Hospital 108. And I was on the hospital for a couple months. In the meantime coming down with malaria a few times. I probably had it, I don't know how many, eight or ten or so bouts with malaria while I was in there. In the hospital a couple months and then I was released from the hospital and I got orders back to the Battalion. After the Peleliu Campaign the division was sent back to of all places, that rat hole of Pavuvu where we were before. But at least we didn't have to build the camp. The camp was already there at that place. So I was in the hospital a couple of months, then I got an attack of malaria on the way back, the ship was going to go to Guadalcanal and from there we'd go by smaller boat over to Pavuvu. So I got another bout of malaria on the ship, I was coming back with a buddy and he said, "You ought to turn into the sick bay when we get there." And I said, "No, I'll just tough it out when I get back because you know, I just wanna get back to the battalion." So I was too weak to carry my sea bag that I had. So I asked him if he would carry it for me, which he did. But in the meantime he got in touch with the Corpsmen and they turned me into the hospital. So I'm in the hospital in Guadalcanal and I'm in and out of delirium and getting chills and fever and that kind of thing, and I was in the hospital for about two weeks there. Along comes a guy and he has a bandage around his head. It looked like [indiscernible] you know? So I looked up at him and I didn't know whether I was in delirium again or not. I said, "You're Dwight Core!" And he says, "Yes, I am." And I said, "You're supposed to be dead." He got hit on the day on the beach. He had half his skull blown off of him by mortar shell. And he says, "Well I ain't dead." So that was quite an experience seeing him because I thought I'd seen a ghost. Another good buddy of mine got a medal of honor. He was caught in a row. He threw himself on a hand grenade. He was a lieutenant. He threw himself on a hand grenade, it was a lock house on the beach. One of the Japanese at this lock house, he just laid out eight of us, his troopers, and threw himself on it. He lived. He's the only guy to ever live to take that and live. He lived to be quite an old guy. I didn't see his injury, I assumed it was something else. But they told me you could see his brain pulsating. So these guys did some pretty good work here. In fact the Navy did some pretty good work for us. So that's a little aside from the battle itself.

I never, I'm completely awed at these young troopers that we had in the Marine Corps. And I'm sure the other services as well had theirs. But these kids were just magnificent. I think the most dangerous weapon we had was a 17 year old kid with a rifle. So anyway, after a couple of months I got out of the hospital at Guadalcanal and I got back to the battalion. When I got back they made me Company Commander at headquarters. I wasn't too happy with that. I wanted a rifle company. But anyway I got

the headquarters company. I got that in Okinawa. We were one of the assault companies on Okinawa as well. So I took headquarters company ashore. And then during the course of the battle to be, Company Commander, A Company, Fifth Marines was wounded very severely. He was a real fine officer. Julian Dusenbury. So all the time I was kind of complaining to the battalion Commander, "I want to get back in the Rifle Company. I don't want this type of stuff." So he says, "Okay, now you are bitching and moaning and you wanna get yourself back in the Rifle Company? Now's your chance." He said, "You take A Company." So I got A Company. I had it through the rest of Okinawa. And then when Okinawa was over and we were staging for Japan. And I saw exactly where I was going to take A Company in Japan. Which was on the main island of Japan, right in Tokyo Bay area. And I knew there were six Marine divisions plus about twice as many Army guys which would be a huge operation. And until the Battle of Muzo, I had a brother in the Navy. And he was the Chief Ship Fitter on an LST. So we managed to get together a couple of times. I said to him, "This is the last time we're gonna see each other." You feel like you start out real high, chips stacked in a poker game and you see them go down, down, down. Not as many old friends and familiar faces around anymore. So I thought this just can't continue. I just can't have this kind of luck. But anyway, not too long after that the atomic bomb was dropped.

But now, on Okinawa, which we landed in the assault waves. We landed, our right flank was running right side of the Bishi Yellow River. The Seventh Army Division was on the other side. And that was the Yellow River. Now the Sixth Marine Division was to our left. Now they wheeled to their left and they took the northern part of the island. We went right across the island. And we secured that. With relative ease we hardly had a handful of casualties in the whole division I guess. Meanwhile the Army was down in the south part of Okinawa. And I think the Army had the 7th Army Division, the 77th Army Division and the 96th or the 27th. No, the 96th and the 27th had half of that southern sector. The others two Army divisions had the other sector. 27th and 96th were a little bit older. So we, the 6th Marines division had already secured the northern end. First rank divisions had crossed and taken the central part. We relieved the two Army divisions. So the company that I had was A Company. That was the company that I took over. We took Shuri Castle. Captain Dusenbury was Company Commander at that time. I came as his Executive Officer. He didn't have the flag to put up, but he had the confederate flag in his pack. He said, "Well we don't have the national colors, but this will have to do!" So we raised the confederate flag. Well we got in a little problem over that because we really wanted the Army sector to take the castle. They were supposed to take it. But they weren't, for one reason or another, I guess there was a reason, they were held up. In the meantime we were getting a lot, drawing a lot of fire from there. And we weren't going to sit there and take that. So we went over in the Army division. We had intruded in their area and we took it. And after we took it they were quite disturbed about it. But that was for somebody else to worry about. We took it. So then somebody complained about us raising the stars and bars. So General del Valle said, "They're the ones that took it. They can raise any damn thing they want." So that put an end to that. So from there we fought through Wana Draw, Shuri Castle. And we went over the unapproved line. But then, we were taking a lot of casualties on Okinawa. We took, really during the course of the battle, we took more casualties than we took in Pelelui but that was over the course of about three months. It wasn't very concentrated. Whereas in Pelelui we took a lot of casualties in such a short time there. Anyway, we went on my campaign called it, the designation

we gave this ridge on Okinawa - it was right near where General Butler was killed. Down the southern tip of the island, near the area where the Japanese were kinda like in a cul-de-sac. And a lot of them were jumping off the cliff into the sea. And that was really as I recall, I might be wrong, but I think that was really the last big firefight on Okinawa. That was where Dusenbury, the Company Commander, got hit. And he tried to get up this ridge; he tried about three times. Up, back, regroup, back again. So, poor thing, that's when I got the company. So I tried to get up there a couple of times. We couldn't get up there. I thought, "Well this is absolutely ridiculous. We've got to come up with a new plan here." So I thought, "Well if I can get some tanks." It was something like you'd charge the light brigade, we'd wing up this draw. There are ridges across the draw. It was high ground on our right and our left and in front. So we were down in the hole. So I thought, "Well if I can get around that ridge with some tank infantry teams, clear out some of those tunnels they're in back there and neutralize that, then maybe we could get up on that ridge." So with some artillery mortar fire and some air strikes and tank infantry teams, I moved over that ridge. In back of the ridge that we were going to take, and we got up on that ridge. And that was about the last battle, I think at the Okinawa Campaign. So then we went back to an area and we set that up as a staging area for Japan. Then the bomb was dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and that was that.

We went into North China. We didn't go to Japan. We went to North China to take one of the Japanese back to Japan and then also to occupy North China. That's when Chiang, Mao Tse-tung were still fighting. Chiang was on his last legs. We were kind of like a buffer in there. I think really what we did, we bought him some time so he could get over to Formosa which is now Taiwan. And establishes his Chinese-type government up there. And I was there about three months and then it was time for me to go home. I was out there about 28 months by that time. Hadn't gotten home. Now in China, we had some guys who got in some firefights there, too. Most of them with the Chinese Communists. It was because they wanted to get some goodies, our supplies, our beets, our bullets if you will. And it was the port town of Taku which is probably, as I recall, oh maybe about 150 miles south of Peking. We were up around Tianjin, Peking, Xiantao. Up in the northern area, not too far from the great wall. The main supply route was a railroad that ran from that port town up north. So we'd had to put orders from the rifle company to the rifle platoons on these trains. And these communist Chinese, they would block the railroad. They would attack the train. We had some guys who were killed over there. Not a great number, but it was kind of a harassment kind of thing. I was only there about three months, then I came back home. I think I covered many stories. To tell you the truth, I've been talking so much. I told you about my friend that was in the Air Force. He didn't come back. We have five girls. Three of 'em are here with me on this trip. I've been married for 62 years. And thanks to the good Lord I'm here talking here right now.

JL: That's wonderful. Let me ask a few questions to help clarify some things. Maybe you can shed some light on. One of the things that was an important aspect of our successes in the Pacific was the intelligence. The intelligence that we derived not only from a few of the captured individuals, there weren't many of those, but some. But also intelligence that was acquired because of our ability to break the codes. The Japanese codes. In your experience, in your leadership role, were you given access to

any of the intelligence that helped you at any of the battles that you were involved in? Can you tell us anything about that?

LS: Well I frankly was not too impressed with the theater intelligence, but of course we had people that knew the waters and they knew the geography and so forth. And that was all there. But I think some of the order of battle information was not too good. Particularly on Peleliu. They told us it was going to be a 72 hour operation. And we got the pre-landing preparation flyers, naval gun fires were two or three days before we landed. Air strikes and so forth. They saturated the island. But I don't know, I would be surprised if they killed more than a half a dozen Japanese. They were all holed up in the tunnels. When it's all over they'd come out, we'd come out again. So I don't think they destroyed any of the personnel, any of the material, any of their weapons.

JL: During these battles, were you supplied with any information that might have been acquired by captured Japanese? Was there any of those, during any of your experiences?

LS: No, not really.

JL: Were you aware of, or did you have access to any of the code talkers?

LS: We had code talkers with us.

JL: Can you talk about some of that experience?

LS: Only superficially. I knew we had them, I knew them. They were Navajos, I believe. We only had maybe a couple of them in a battalion. They communicated from battalion to regiment to division. We didn't have any internally at the rifle company levels. So all their communications were higher and middle. They were great outside. Because you could send stuff in the clear, because it went only in Navajo. And nobody in the world is going to figure out what they're saying. And of course, they were all "Chief", everyone was "Chief". But they were great. They did a tremendous job. I stayed in the reserve, in the active reserve, and so I made O6 for Colonel. So I thought, well, I fooled them six times, so I can't do it again. So then I went in the retired reserve. As you probably know, a retired reserve is a retirement act.

JL: Tell us about some of the honors you received.

LS: Well let's see. I got a bronze star. I was recommended for a silver star, but it was broken down and it was a bronze star. It really didn't bother me at all because I came out with my body in one piece. But I got a purple heart, I had four battle stars. All of that action and two presidential citations.

JL: Tell us about the bronze star.

LS: Well the bronze star I got after the Company Commander was hit and I stepped in to what I think was the last firefight in Okinawa. I got it for that. Because I exposed myself a little bit to hostile fire and so forth. I didn't do anything - I thought if I got a medal for this I should of got it a lot more for some other stuff! <laughing>. Anyway, that's the way things go. But the best reward I got was the good Lord getting me through that mess. That was really the award I got. So then after I got back I stayed in the active reserve. I had the sea bag packed several times along the way. I was not called back for any operations after WWII, primarily because I had a little bit too much rank then. By the time Korea came along I was up for Major. They didn't need Field Grade Officers. They needed Company Commanders and Platoon Leaders. Had I been commissioned two weeks later than I was, I'd have been back in Korea. Involuntarily. Two weeks would have held me back. I volunteered to go back to Korea but I couldn't be assured of - I only wanted to go back if I could be integrated into the regular Corps. I didn't want to go back and forth between civilian life and active duty. So I would have gone back if I'd have been able to be assured of being able to integrate into the regular Corps. They couldn't give me that assurance at that time. But I did this thing in the active reserve.

JL: Any humorous things happen to you that you'd like to share with us?

LS: Yeah, I was thinking of Peleliu and we were talking about how wonderful those kids were. I remember that we were under severe fire. Forest fire, water fire, artillery, so on and so forth. And you couldn't dig a hole there. It was just solid rock. So I had two of my troopers and these kids are in the prone position, trying to get just as flat on that ground as they could. So one kid says to the other one, "Do you have a fingernail file on you?" They're head down, flat down on the ground. The kid reaches in his back pocket as says, "Wait a minute. Yeah I got one back here." So I'm thinking, "Why in the world would he want a fingernail file? And how in the world would this kid...would he want to carry a fingernail file with him?" So under the circumstances with all this going on I thought it was pretty funny in retrospect. He wanted a fingernail file and the other kid had it! And of course I remember little things like, this kid comes to me and we're aboard ship and they needed their mess kit when they went to the chow line. He said, "I don't have a mess kit". I said, "Well why don't you have a mess kit? You were issued a mess kit." He said, "I got so sick," he said, "I didn't think I'd ever be able to eat again!" He said, "I threw it overboard!" You know, little things like that. I guess there were a lot of other things that I have forgotten. But that good old fingernail file. There's another little innocent conversation between a couple of them when we were in combat. The stuff was hitting the fan as they say. And one kid says to the other, he wanted a cigarette. Did he have any cigarettes? So the other kid drew up a coffin nail and he said, "Yeah sure." There were several little incidents like that. I had Ernie Pyle came over from Europe. You know he did most of his work in Europe, practically all of it. But he wanted to make an operation with the Marines. So he came with us, with the First Marine Division at Okinawa. And, in fact, he was on the same ship that I was and I used to see this guy in the war room all the time drinking coffee. He never had anything to say to anybody. He's kind of a loner. And as it happened he spent most of his time with my company. And the last story that he ever filed was a story about my Company Clerk. And he didn't bother with any of the officers at all. The only conversations he had, that is, at least while I was exposed to the man, his only conversations were with enlisted people. So my Company Clerk was a detective, boy. His name was Marvin Clayton. His nickname was "Bird-dog". Bird-

dog Clayton. And he was a real colorful guy. And this was the kind of a guy he buddied up with. So I saw Bird-dog here with a couple of these reunions and I never saw the article that Ernie put on file. As I said, that was the last one he did file. You know, he went over to Iejima. He left us and went off to a little island off Okinawa. Iejima. Hardly any opposition at all but he did get hit by a sniper there right between the eyes. But I was really impressed with him though. He was an enlisted man's journalist. Something like Bill Mauldin was over in Europe. So I really didn't get to know him and other than that I don't know him. He avoided the officers like a plague.

JL: One of the things that many of the men that I've interviewed have said, others who were at Peleliu, especially the men who were at Tarawa, and to some extent those that were at Iwo Jima, that despite the fact that they were under intense fire, they rarely if ever saw the enemy. What was your experience?

LS: Well I would say the same thing. You very, very seldom saw 'em. That is a lie. We saw a lot of 'em dead. You know, you become a different person when you're out there too. Your whole persona changes after a while. And not for the good. You find yourself, your whole character changes; well, your basic, inane character is the same. But in some ways, you change. It's a hard thing to describe. I guess maybe we get more of the animal instinct. Survival. That's why I think maybe a lot of these guys, when they came back home had problems readjusting. But I know I was a different person when I was out there. And I really am. Yeah. But that's all a matter of degree.

JL: The landing at Peleliu, did you receive much fire from the island as you were actually making the landing?

LS: Oh, terrible. Terrible. We had LVTs that get in. Much like Tarawa. We had some cases where mortar shells would hit the LVTs and just demolish the whole thing before they got ashore. The bodies laying in the surf. That was a very odd beach. As I say they were there for what, over twenty years! Getting ready for this. And they were pre-registered, all their heavy stuff, all pre-registered on every inch of the beaches.

JL: Some of the people that I have interviewed noticed as they were coming in, glass fishing floats that were, they had placed them so they knew the range. And by seeing where the boats were in reference to the different colored fishing floats.

LS: Yeah, they were pre-registered on them.

JL: Did you notice any of those?

LS: I, no. No, to be honest that's the first I've heard of that. But they were probably there. They had these reports from different people and I'm sure they were there. But I never noticed. Of course, you know they were great for putting underwater obstacles in the surf and so forth. And actually I would guess that our underwater demolition teams were probably really the birth of the SEALs today. The

Navy and Marine Corps, underwater demolition people and would go in, recon the beaches and the surf. They'd come in on small boats off submarines and do their thing. Sometime they would go up some of these hard obstacles that were under the surface. We learned a lot from every operation. Somethings you learn, you just can't do anything about. But we did get some; we did learn as we went along. You know, to fight a little smarter. But you know when you have 10,000 enemy, you put 20,000 ashore. That's a pretty low ratio for an attacking force in an amphibious operation too. I might add that three to one is a minimum by the book. Now they had about a three to one advantage on Iwo. I think Iwo and Peleliu were very, very comparable. The topography, they were both volcanic islands. They were both islands where they had been dug in and fortified well before the attack. And limited area where anything that landed there, somebody's gonna get hit. You couldn't disperse because of limited area. So I think there were great similarities there but now there we had three divisions that landed there. So we did have the Third, Fourth, and Fifth divisions. We had one division was an Army division reserve at Peleliu. And we didn't call that whole Army division into the battle. We only called one regiment in. I think it was the 321st or the 81st Army division. Because they came in around maybe the second week, second or third week of the battle. They came in just about 11 days after the battle on the day I got hit. They performed well.

JL: What was the experience you had when you got hit?

LS: Well I got good attention. I got back to our battalion aid station. By jeep, I went to the division medical company that was set up. Went to the hospital ship relief. And then relief took me to New Caledonia to Fleet House Route 108. I had, I was very bristled when I got hit. I had so many closer ones that didn't hit me. I mean I had artillery shells that knocked the breath out of me. I've had grenades that I could reach out and touch but I just happened to be able to get down on the deck and all the dispersion went over me and so forth. I did things and thought I'd never be able to catch my breath again from the concussion and - not put down a scratch. And this was a mortar shell that must have been 50 yards away! And at the time, I was setting up in defensive position for the night. We did the D in for the night. And I was pointing out the field of fire for a machine and I was scratching myself under the armpit. I got hit here. Right in between where the femur and fractured and stuff. I lost quite a bit of blood, but anyway. If I wasn't scratching that little louse or whatever it was under my armpit I guess it could have been a very different story. Fate works in strange ways, I'll tell you.

JL: Yes. Any other stories you'd like to share with us?

LS: Well I, not really any stories. I guess there's some impressions that I've had and stayed with me all my life. And what a privilege it has been for me to be a part of this group of men. I can't, it's hard to envision anybody else, how men can rise to some occasions when horror, sheer horror situations and handle it like these young Marines that I was with did. And anyways, it's magnificent. I firmly believe you had some units in the Army and all the services. Some were better than others. I don't think it makes a darn bit of difference between these different bodies of men. So any difference, I think was a degree of leadership. Non-commissioned Officers and the Junior Officers.

JL: One other question for you. What kind of thoughts did you have about the end of the war and the way it ended?

LS: I was shocked. An atomic bomb, I mean this is stuff you read about in science fiction. We were as surprised as the Japanese were. It was quite a secret. Two great secrets of the war were breaking the Japanese code, the German code, and I think the atomic bomb.

JL: Right. Exactly.

LS: And they were real major factors. Had we landed in Japan, now from what I've read a million times over, and I've read a lot of stuff. I read a lot of books, a lot of articles. And I read, I don't know if it was in a John Hersey book, where if we had landed in Japan, they had estimated casualties something like 300,000 in the first month. Of our casualties alone. Something like 200,000 the next month and so on. They had cast so many purple hearts in anticipation of casualties from the Japanese invasion that they didn't have to cast any more for all of Korea. All of Vietnam, they still might have some left. They cast them but they didn't have to use those, thank God.

JL: In the preparations that you were doing for the invasion of Japan, did you see any evidence of, there were many hospitals that were being constructed in preparation for this. Did you see any of that?

LS: No, no. The only thing that I saw, and only Company Commanders and above, were in on this piece, were they had relief maps and they showed us exactly where we were going to take our units in the assault. So this was at the very, very beginning of the, I guess there was more planning at a higher level going on. Of course there was. Because they had all the analyst designated. All the assault units designated and the beaches assigned. So I'm sure the general maneuver so forth, but that didn't get down below the Company Commander level. And even at that it was very sketchy. It was just really at the beginning. Because this was right before, it wasn't too long after the Battle of Okinawa was over that we got that far. And I couldn't disclose any of that to our troops at that point. So information that I personally had, this was probably what most had was very, very sketchy. Not very detailed.

JL: Let me ask you some questions about your China experience. What was your impression when you landed in China and what you were seeing? What level of activity were you observing, or have had happened in the areas where you were?

LS: Now you mean between maybe the Chinese Communist and the Mao Tse-tung?

JL: Right, the Japanese, this was an area where the Japanese had not been. Is that correct? Or they had been there?

LS: Oh, they had been there.

JL: They had been there. So what did you see that the Japanese had done? Or were you part of the group that, there were a number of Japanese that were being repatriated.

LS: Yes.

JL: So that's what you, were you involved with that?

LS: No, I was not involved in the repatriation but it was going on. We were really occupying troops. I remember coming into China and coming in by train from Taku, to that port town I told you about up in Peking. We came to the train station and all the platforms were just packed with Chinese people. Thousands and thousands of them. Hip-hip hooray and all this kind of thing they were saying. And waving American flags. We had a great reception there. But the people there would not talk too much. I would ask them, you know at that time we'd go in and we could get what you'd call a "number one boy" which was like a personal valet. Well, we would get one maybe for every two officers for \$1.50 a month we'd pay them. They would get 10% on anything we bought. Whether it was a bunch of items of clothes or jewelry, whatever we wanted. You asked them what to bid, they would get the deal for us, they would get 10% from the vendor. They would come in the morning, they would stay there and sit there in the corner and they cleaned up the quarters and so forth. They wouldn't go home until you sent them home. If you forgot to tell them, "Go home," they'd be there all night. And it was strictly an agrarian economy. And what amazes me today is to see them as one of the premier industrial countries of the world now, seeing that period of time. But the ordinary Chinese person you'd go and talk to would not talk about the political situation and the war. "What do you think of Mao?" And you'd just see a little smile on his face. "What do you think of Chiang?" Same thing. They were afraid to say anything. And at that time there were still warlords there. They had their own little armies. And Chiang's Army did not have a good reputation among the people from what I gathered. That he would get, he wouldn't get the brightest if you will. Apparently they had a system where the elder in the village would select who was going to go. So he's not going to send the guy with the most potential because he was a producer, right? So he would send the guy who, you know, wasn't doing too much for the village, right? Send him to the Army. So as a result they didn't have the best quality. And I think Mao was in better shape in that respect because they had a cause.

JL: During all of your experiences, did you have any opportunity to see Nimitz or any of the other ranking officers of our officers?

LS: Let's see. No, I really didn't. I had contact with a lot of Marine officers who are historical figures, but, you know, in general people like Del Valle and Luwald and people like that. But you know when you get up into Commander in Chief Pacific and that kind of thing, I was pretty way down the line, you know, when you're a mutt breed you don't associate with those people <laughing>.

JL: Well occasionally they did come in into the field. There were several episodes where...

LS: You wouldn't see many where we were. Yeah. You know, not at that level.

JL: Any other stories you may like to share?

LS: Well I don't know. I really can't think of too much more I can elaborate on really, about my personal experiences. I said I did love the Marine Corps and I still do. I was like a fish out of water in all the years I was in the Reserves. But that's water under the bridge too. As my wife was a one-time loser I thought maybe it was the best thing that I didn't go, for her sake. Because I thought that in one respect if I did go back it would be maybe a little bit selfish on my part 'cause I'm putting her in a position where she could be a two-time loser. So I think there's reason for everything and so forth. But I'm sure there are other things that happened along the lines that might be interesting to some people, I just wish that I could think of some other things that I've experienced, but at the moment nothing occurs to me.

JL: Well we certainly want to thank you for taking the time to share with us your stories. And I certainly want to thank you for your service to our country. We're indeed indebted to the people of your generation for the great sacrifice that you made. The people of your generation not only endured the problems of the great depression, but then had to save our country. And we are certainly appreciative of the sacrifice that you made.

LS: Well thank you for those kind words and, I know that a lot of people gave an awful lot but we got something out of it too. It made us better people I think. I think it made us better people, so, we got something from it too. The good and the bad.

JL: Alright. Well thank you very much.

LS: My pleasure.

JL: This is a continuation of the interview with Mr. Louis John Schott. Go ahead.

LS: There was one fellow that I knew, he was a fellow lieutenant, and he was a Mustang. He was an enlisted man, got a field commission. His name was Clark L. Kaltenbaugh and he served on Guadalcanal. He served in every operation in the first marine division during the war. One of the few people that did that. I can name all four of them. And when he was on Guadalcanal he was an enlisted man and he was supposed to be on the famous Goettge patrols if you've ever heard of that. So he was supposed to be one of the people on that patrol. I think there were about 28 or so of them. And he was pulled off at the last minute. And as I recall on that patrol, everybody, only one survivor I believe of that patrol. All the rest were killed. So the story goes that Clark Kaltenbaugh swore that he would get a Japanese for every one of those guys. So he was with us in the same battalion I was on Okinawa. And he got about 40 himself at one time. He came across a cave there, he started throwing smoke grenades in there in the aperture. The Japanese started filing out. And as they were coming out, he had an automatic weapon. I can't remember exactly what weapon it was but it was an automatic weapon. And as they were coming out, he shot 'em. And he had a count of 40 I think. And I thought that I was really sorry that - he was written up, there was a story about him in the old Collier's magazine. The title of the story

was Account Closed - CLK, Clark L. Kaltenbaugh. And it gave a little bio on Kaltenbaugh and so forth and it featured that event where he got all those Japanese. But I thought that might be an interesting story. These things come to you, you know. Buried back there in the computer somewhere.

JL: During your experiences, did you capture any Japanese?

LS: A few, I would say. I do have to admit that sometimes it's just a matter of practicality if you were on a patrol and if you take a prisoner, he could be more of a problem than an asset. So therefore...

JL: You don't take him.

LS: Yeah. Then other times, you might get one, he tell you to take him back to the CP and now this guy might be able to tell us some stuff that will be helpful to us and so forth. And then you can share that round [indescribable]. The kid comes back and doesn't try to run away. So the mindset was among us not to take prisoners to be perfectly honest. I mean, I know it doesn't sound good, but that's the way it was. A lot of it was really fueled, not by practical reasons. It wasn't just fools either. Or savagery or anything like this. There's a reason for that. Now there was one thing that was on people's minds. When they took a prisoner, if one of our guys was taken prisoner, he wasn't going to live. They might kill him. And they would debase his body, they would do some horrible things. The extent of which I don't want to go into detail here. But they would desecrate his body any way. So these things, I would not forget. But we would try to, I think if at all possible, to take them, and take them alive and get what information we could from them. Now there's combat intelligence. You know, where their units might be and who they were and what we might expect, so on and so forth. We would have an interpreter available in the regiment who would talk to these people. But I only remember from personal experience, taking maybe one or two. Very rare. You know after we leave here, I'll probably be saying to myself, I should have told you this, I should have told you that. But as they say, it's very difficult probably to talk about war. The more time that you have, I probably could come up with some other stuff. I'm sorry I can't now.

JL: I appreciate what you've done. And I certainly appreciate your service.

LS: Thanks a lot, Jim.

JL: Yes sir.