

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Don Pickard

Date of Interview: September 17, 2020

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 17th of September, 2020. I am in Llano, Texas at the home of Mr. Don Pickard, and I am interviewing him here at his home. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So, Don, thank you for letting me come to your home and sit and talk with you about your World War II experience. I'd like to start by having you introduce yourself. Let's hear full name, date and place of birth, please sir.

Mr. Pickard: My name is Don Pickard or Don Robertson Pickard, Jr. I was born in San Mateo, California just south of San Francisco. I was born October the 18th, 1926.

Ed Metzler: Okay. And were you born at home, in a hospital?

Mr. Pickard: I was born in Redwood City Hospital.

Ed Metzler: And what did ... what did your parents do for a living and do you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Pickard: I had one sister and a half sister. My dad ran a tug boat in San Francisco Bay for Shell Oil ... for a shell company and my mother originally was just a housewife.

Ed Metzler: Okay. So, you have no full brothers or sisters; you're the only child of that union?

Mr. Pickard: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: 'Cause ...

Mr. Pickard: I had one sister. I had a sister and a half sister.

Ed Metzler: Okay, a sister and a half sister. Now was your sis ...

Mr. Pickard: My dad's first marriage had a girl.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: And then they had ... he remarried and my ... my sister was first and then I was second.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so ...

Mr. Pickard: We're two years apart.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Okay, so you're the younger of the two. So, did you grow up as a child in that area, same area?

Mr. Pickard: Uh no, I kind of grew up going from one set of friends or relatives to another for quite a while until actually ... actually 1939 is when I finally settled down with my mom and stayed with her instead of relatives.

Ed Metzler: And was that all in the California area?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, yes. I was living in Oregon with my aunt. In '39 my sister was ... always stayed with my mom. They were ... she was living in this Bay area, San Francisco Bay area. We went up to see my dad in ... which was the first time I saw him in ... in '39, and she stayed and I came back and from then on I was with my mom.

Ed Metzler: So, your schooling ...

Mr. Pickard: In the Bay area.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So, your schooling, elementary and high school, you were kind of bouncing around some.

Mr. Pickard: Kansas, Detroit, Michigan ...

Ed Metzler: My word!

Mr. Pickard: ... uh, wherever she could get a job and ... and had somebody we could stay with, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah. What kind of work was she doing?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, she was a ... well, actually she ... she became a buyer for Sathagate (sp?) Bookstore in ... in Berkeley, just a couple of blocks from the University of California.

Ed Metzler: Huh!

Mr. Pickard: And my dad, later on, bought a sixty-five-foot boater, a freighter, a motor freighter, and used to run from Seattle to Attu, Kiska. He was the only one that would take supplies out to them and ...

Ed Metzler: In a sixty-five-footer?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I'll show you a picture of it later.

Ed Metzler: That's rough, rough territory for a ... a ship that small.

Mr. Pickard: Well, during the war, uh, the Navy mounted ... I believe it was a fifty-caliber machine gun on each front deck. And while he was out running around between Dutch Harbor and Seattle, if he saw anything, he'd get a hold of those, so that's all I can tell you about that.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! And he was on the front lines in a way.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, he was. He had ... he was at Dutch Harbor when the Japanese bombed ... bombed Dutch Harbor; blew the cabin door off, but ... didn't sink the boat (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: It was a motor ... motor scutter (unintelligible), so it was ...

Ed Metzler: My gosh! So, when the war started for the U.S. in 1941, where were you living at the time?

Mr. Pickard: I was living in the Bay, San Francisco Bay area in Albany, and we heard that they were attacked, and we went over on this hill next to the San Francisco Bay, and the railroad tracks ran through there. I vividly remember civilians with rifles on either end of the ... there was a big overpass there, uh, by the train tracks, and then these men with rifles were at either end guarding that overpass. I guess they thought maybe it would get bombed and that would shut down the trains.

Ed Metzler: And that was right after Pearl Harbor then.

Mr. Pickard: That was probably, yeah, right then, the day it happened.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: Because when we went to school Monday, the next day ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: ... we all gathered in the gym of the ... of the high school, junior high/high and heard President Roosevelt give the peach declaring with ...

Ed Metzler: The Infamy Speech?!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, yeah. We ... I could always remember that – sitting in the bleachers listening; they had a radio in the ... in there and listen to the speech of him giving the declaration of war to ...

Ed Metzler: So, you were about fifteen years old at the time; I've just done the math here. You had just turned fifteen.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, it was a junior high/high, so yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And then ... 'cause that was in '41, yeah.

Ed Metzler: One, you and you were born in '26.

Mr. Pickard: Okay, in '44 when I turned seventeen and a half, I finally talked my mother into ...

Ed Metzler: We're going there, so don't ... don't leap ahead now.

Mr. Pickard: Oh, I'm sorry!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), I ... I want to ask you some more. Now so, you're sitting in the bleachers in your junior high/high school hearing, The Day That Will Live in Infamy speech over the radio, what was the mood then? What was your mood and what was everybody else's mood and reaction?

Mr. Pickard: Well, I think I ... I think it was just ... couldn't believe it; I think most people felt that way. You ... you heard it, you could understand what they were saying and the ... the importance of it, but, you know, of course nobody clapped that I can remember. We just all kind of sat quietly in our own thoughts basically.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. It's kind of somber then, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. I guess once we left and went to class, we probably talked about it, but being in ... right in the San Francisco Bay area, we immediately went to (pause) blackouts where ... for some reason they think something or submarines off of the coast, they'd black the whole coast out. I ... I joined the Civil Defense as a messenger. We didn't have the radios like ... like they do now.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: Or phones and so ...

Ed Metzler: So, tell me about that being a messenger for the Civil Defense. What ... what did you actually do?

Mr. Pickard: Well, I'd carry a message on a bicycle 'cause there's no road, I mean, when they went to blackout, there wasn't any traffic. Of course, by that time gas was ... was ...

Ed Metzler: Rationed.

Mr. Pickard: ... rationed, right. And so, what they'd do is they'd give me a message and I'd ride my bicycle from there to wherever I was that they wanted me to go with the message. And ...

Ed Metzler: And you did that because you're feeling very patriotic or what?

Mr. Pickard: Oh, I felt very patriotic, yeah, always did. That's why I joined the Navy as soon as I could, you know, and ...

Ed Metzler: Now, you were living with your mother at that point?

Mr. Pickard: Yes.

Ed Metzler: What did she think about you out riding your bicycle out there?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, didn't bother her at all (chuckle). In those days, you could.

Ed Metzler: That's true.

Mr. Pickard: Those are a lot different than ...

Ed Metzler: Yes, I understand.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, did the rationing impact your personal and family life much, or was it pretty much business as usual and you just couldn't turn your lights on at night?

Mr. Pickard: Uhm ...

Ed Metzler: What was it like?

Mr. Pickard: Well, of course, gas was rationed, and my step-dad then ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: ... uh, Richmond, California is part of the San Francisco Bay area, and he was a pipefitter, and he worked at Kaiser Shipyards in ... in ... in Berkeley. I don't mean Berkeley ... in Richmond. And so, he got, you know, enough gas to get to work and get back.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, he was a critical skill em, you know, worker, yeah!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. And they ... they also ... there was busses in those days (chuckles) that you could ... like if you wanted to go to Berkeley, you could ... you could get on a bus and go into Berkeley and ...

Ed Metzler: You could actually get on a bus and go somewhere.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, you could!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, really. And ... and they used to let us ... this is kind of a side thing. They use to let us out of school to go watch ships launched.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: In the ... in Richmond, yeah, where they were ... they had built ... they built a [USS] Victory Hall [s/b USS Victory?] and a [USS] Liberty Hall [s/b USS Liberty?], and I think the ship I was on is the Liberty Hall.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: And the ...

Ed Metzler: And they cranked those things out, too!

Mr. Pickard: Oh, yes they did. But they used to let us get out of school to go down and watch them launch which was quite a thrill to watch one of those big ones either launch stern first or slide off sideways which was something in itself (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Just hope it floats!

Mr. Pickard: Yes.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: (Unintelligible) 'cause when it hit it tips ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Pickard: ... way up ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Pickard: ... and then it pops up, you know? So ...

Ed Metzler: Right, right. Uhm! So, you went ahead and graduated from high school?

Mr. Pickard: No.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Pickard: I was in the tenth grade.

Ed Metzler: Okay, tell me what happened then.

Mr. Pickard: (Pause), well, as soon as I turned seventeen and a half, I talk ... I got my mother to sign for me.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: And I went over to San Francisco on June the 26th of 1944 to San Francisco who I and a bunch of other guys took the oath.

Ed Metzler: Were these all seventeen- and eighteen-year-olds or your buddies?

Mr. Pickard: They were diff ... different ages.

Ed Metzler: So, these are people from ... kind of all around there.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. And since I had enlisted, they gave me ten days to go home and get my affairs in order. So, I actually went into ... well, I guess it'd be active duty on July the 6th of '44 where we met in San Francisco and took the train eventually down to San Diego Naval Training Station.

Ed Metzler: Now, tell me again why you picked the Navy.

Mr. Pickard: Uh, I don't know, but my dad being in it, I just liked the sea and the water and ocean and I'm Libra and I've always ... I used to go down when I was younger in San Francisco and walk down to the Pacific along where the zoo is and the park down there, along the ... and just watch the waves come in, and ...

Ed Metzler: So, you and the sea were connected.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. Besides ... besides that, you can dig a fox hole faster in the water than you can in the land (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), I've heard that before. That's usually the peop ... the excuse people use for why they didn't join the Army is they didn't want to live in a fox hole.

Mr. Pickard: Well, I didn't ... I don't like a tie (?).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: And the Navy, I mean, the, yeah, the Navy neckerchief is a lot bigger.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, a lot easier, yeah (laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Oh boy! Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), so you went off to basic training down in San Diego area. So, tell me about that experience.

Mr. Pickard: Well, we were, I believe, four months. They were putting guys through in three months, as long as they, you know, if they can shoot a rifle and ... and salute, they ... they were on their way in ... in the early days of ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum!

Mr. Pickard: But I think we had four months of basic training in San Diego which was ... was good. I was young, of course, and learned a lot. They asked us what we wanted to go in, and I put in for armed guard.

Ed Metzler: Why?

Mr. Pickard: It was gunnery on merchant ships. And you won't believe this, but anyhow, when I came home on leave before we ... when we finished our basic training, they gave us five days off. And when I was home I was working the Ouiji board.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: And I asked the Ouija board, "Am I going into armed guard," and it said, "no." And I said, "What am I going into?" And it said, "The amphibs." And sure enough, when I got back and the roster came out of where we go, I went into amphibs. So ...

Ed Metzler: So, you are a believer in the Ouija board?

Mr. Pickard: Yes, I am.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: My mother was a little psychic anyhow, so ...

Ed Metzler: Oh really?

Mr. Pickard: But anyhow, we went on to Coronado for ... and I can't remember how long we were there, probably a couple of months – amphibious training.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And we did our ... our landings off the beach there. And then, well, I get ahead of me on stuff on that ... on the next one. Anyhow, when we finished from there, they loaded us up, a bunch of us together, and we went up to, I think it's Astoria, Oregon where we picked up our ship. It was made in Portland, Oregon, the last ship Kaiser made. And I think they used every piece of rusty metal they had (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), they went to the ... to the scrap pile that ...

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... (unintelligible) off, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. And they brought her down there.

Ed Metzler: Now, that's the last one made at the Portland yard.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Because they were still making them elsewhere, right?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, now that I don't know. But yeah, the last one at the Portland yard.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay.

Mr. Pickard: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, what ... so what time of ... 1944 was this?

Mr. Pickard: Right at Christmas.

Ed Metzler: Right at Christmas time.

Mr. Pickard: Right in the Christmas time.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And we ... we got there the day before they, uh, (pause) oh, I'm trying to think of the word, uhm, commissioned it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And so, I was ... I was there the day they commissioned the ship.

Ed Metzler: So, you're really a plank owner as they say.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. And ...

Ed Metzler: Part of the original crew.

Mr. Pickard: And I was on it the whole time until just a few days before they decommissioned it. And that's ... way ahead of time.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah, that's coming, yeah. What's your reaction the first time you saw it ... saw your ... your ship?

Mr. Pickard: I loved it (laughter). Yeah, it was ...

Ed Metzler: Wouldn't you really rather be on a battleship or ...

Mr. Pickard: No.

Ed Metzler: ... or an aircraft carrier?

Mr. Pickard: No. No, I ... I was in the boat group. I mean, we had trained as the boat group.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: 'Cause on the board there's ... there's ships company, there's a landing section that goes on the beach and sets up flags and stuff so that when you're bringing not men but material in, you know where to go and then the boat group. And I was part of the boat group.

Ed Metzler: So, what does the boat group's primary responsibility then?

Mr. Pickard: Primary responsibility is get men and supplies from the ship to the shore. And I was expected to home ... back the wounded. Uhm ...

Ed Metzler: So, just ... which of the boats were you using? I mean, there's a lot of different ...

Mr. Pickard: Oh well ...

Ed Metzler: ... LCVs, LCI.

Mr. Pickard: ... LCVP, landing craft vehicle personnel. It would hold ... I think there was thirty-six men or a jeep and probably a few men with it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: But we always just carried men.

Ed Metzler: Now, is that the famous Higgins boat that we've heard so much about, or what ... were they ... was it made out of steel, wood, what?

Mr. Pickard: No, no, it was made out of wood.

Ed Metzler: Okay, that's probably ...

Mr. Pickard: And a steel ramp.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: No, yeah, that's the Higgins ... in fact, on PBS they showed a thing of them building those things and all about them. And diesel engine. You'd about wide open about eight knots. Had two thirty-caliber machine guns and a crew of four. There was a coxswain, signalman, uhm, (pause) I don't know if you'd call him an engineer, and a deckhand, so ...

Ed Metzler: And what were you?

Mr. Pickard: I was signalman, you know.

Ed Metzler: So, you're a part of the crew of four, so what are you using to signal with?

Mr. Pickard: Well, you used ... you use uhm, flags, a semaphore. Or if somebody was trying to contact you ... like you'd line up ... the boats would line up over ... over an area, and they'd get the signal and you'd tell the coxswain, you know, go ... it was go for the beach and then you'd just go.

Ed Metzler: And so, there's six, twelve, eighteen of these boats in the water all at once headed in, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Oh yeah. Well, we had ... we had LCVPs which has the big ... has the big wrap in front, and then there's the ... there's an R boat which is built like it except it's got small in front with a small ramp where the guys could come out quick and go right out, straight out the ... behind the guns there in front.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And then there was the LCMs which were ... they'd carry a tank.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And they was all steel, they were.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: But the other ones were ... you still see some around in the ... in yacht harbors, some of the World War II boats.

Ed Metzler: Right. So, they dropped these boats down the side and you climbed down a ladder, rope ladders to get in or did you ... how ... how did you actually hit the water from the ... from the ...

Mr. Pickard: Well, I believe the boats ... the boats were lifted out of their cradles.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: The ones that ... that weren't hanging over the sides and bring it down to this ... to the side, and I believe at that point in time, the crew got in because they'd lower it from there down where ... 'cause we had to be there to ... to let the block ... there's ... if you look at the pictures, there's two booms and they ... they bring a boom around and pick the boat up like ours ... ours was on that front deck. And we had four boats – two here and two up above.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And they'd lift it up and swing it over and let it down. See the booms in front (showing picture)?

Ed Metzler: Yes.

Mr. Pickard: Here.

Ed Metzler: Yes, yes, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: My boat was right up here.

Ed Metzler: Right by the ...

Mr. Pickard: By ... there's four of us.

Ed Metzler: ... on the starboard side.

Mr. Pickard: Either side.

Ed Metzler: Either side, okay.

Mr. Pickard: Uh, but in fact, that one, if you look way back at the stern ...

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Pickard: ... they've got a boat ... that one is underway.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah, I see it now.

Mr. Pickard: You see the ...

Ed Metzler: So ... so, we're looking at a photo of the APA-150 that Don's pointing to. Go ahead.

Mr. Pickard: Okay, this boat is either being picked up or lowered.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: But it's underway. It's ... if you turn ... turn it to the other one (flipping photos). You see this pennant?

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Pickard: That means the anchor's down or they've got a line over the dock. And then there's a black ball back on the bridge that tells ... that tells other ships that we're either anchored or as soon as the line goes over the side to dock, those go up. And the other one isn't, so that tells me that that one is still ...

Ed Metzler: She's not anchored; she's ...

Mr. Pickard: She's still moving.

Ed Metzler: ... right, right.

Mr. Pickard: Slow, but she's moving.

Ed Metzler: What was the toughest thing for you in basic training?

Mr. Pickard: (Pause), uh, (pause) I don't know; I did basic training pretty easy.

Ed Metzler: So, it wasn't all ...

Mr. Pickard: I had all ... in all ... I had to learn the ... the drill with a rifle drill.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And of course, I'd been a city boy. And so, you had to learn to shoot a rifle which I hadn't done before. But probably (laughter) swimming, I wasn't a very good swimmer, but you had to swim the length of the pool in order to graduate ... like for out of the amphibious training.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And also, you had to jump off of a high tower with a life jacket on and which simulates if you have to go overboard. And ...

Ed Metzler: That was exciting!

Mr. Pickard: ... the first step was exciting, yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: But other than that, I ... I just ...

Ed Metzler: But they didn't run you to death or make you do pushups till you couldn't do another one or ...

Mr. Pickard: No. Uh, we got into ... our company, into a guy that ran it that always would find something else to do when they did calisthenics. I guess he didn't like ... I don't know if he didn't like it not, but ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: ... anyhow, because we had to be different places at different times, and we walked, we walked twenty-five miles in the sand.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: With packs and rifles and stuff. And we actually set a record for the ... the fastest ever done, our company. He was that kind of guy that ... that people would do what he wanted them to do, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Oh, he was good!

Ed Metzler: Hum. So, you ... you saw your ship for the first time, and you were assigned a role aboard other than being a signalman on the boat on one of the LCVPs, so, what was your combat assignment or ... or station or did you have one?

Mr. Pickard: At sea ...

Ed Metzler: Yes.

Mr. Pickard: ... I was a ... a lookout in the (unintelligible as door is closed) I was back here way up there (looking at photo). Isn't ... isn't that way up there?

Ed Metzler: Towards the stern and up high.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, it's (unintelligible), yeah. That ... that's the highest one. These ... this mast, I believe, is either fifteen or twenty-five feet higher than this mast.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: So, when somebody else sees you, they could tell you which way you're going.

Ed Metzler: And you were ...

Mr. Pickard: And I was up there.

Ed Metzler: So ...

Mr. Pickard: Up there in the daytime and on the wing of the bridge at night.

Ed Metzler: ... so, heights didn't bother you then, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Still doesn't, yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: That's good, that's a good thing, yeah (laughter)!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. No, I had no problem with it. I noticed ... I remember in some of the rough seas we were in, we'd roll over and I'd look down at the water (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: Especially one typhoon we were in.

Ed Metzler: So, you sailed. What was ... where did she sail first? What was your first destination?

Mr. Pickard: I believe our first destination (pause) ... on the computer under the naval history, it gives us a thing of where we were.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: I believe that ... I can't remember if we went to San Francisco first, or we went to Seattle.

Ed Metzler: But then from there you went ...

Mr. Pickard: I think ... well, my ship was painted, I don't know why they did it, was painted for the Atlantic Ocean which was white and black and gray.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: Okay, they were checkerboarded kind of a thing.

Ed Metzler: North ... North Atlantic conditions, yeah (laughter).

Mr. Pickard: The ship for the Pacific was this gray (showing the color gray), kind of a blue gray.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: So, I believe we went from there down to San Francisco where they put us in dry dock and painted us with a new color.

Ed Metzler: My goodness!

Mr. Pickard: From there, I believe, we went up to Seattle into the Puget Sound area where we picked up our ammunition. And we anchored out ... we didn't go into a dock, we were anchored out and they'd bring barges' loads of ... of forty-millimeter, twenty-millimeter, five-inch, thirty-eights – those were the armament that we had. And that was a long hard thing, uh, process of getting it down in the hole which they'd lower it down on pallets, and then moving it from there to wherever they were going to stack it. Anyhow ...

Ed Metzler: Did you ... did you get seasick first time you were out in the open sea aboard ship?

Mr. Pickard: No, the only time I ever got kind of seasick was ... we were painting the ammunition locker at the forward part of the ship way down in here (showing photo), right down in here, and there's no ventilation, and I got ... I got to feeling real bad and went up topside and ... and ... on the leese (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), alright.

Mr. Pickard: And ... no.

Ed Metzler: So, that was just fumes that got you there.

Mr. Pickard: It was fumes that got me, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Pickard: But other than that, that was the only time I ever got sick. We had guys that ... the second they threw the line off the dock, they were sick, you know.

Ed Metzler: Some of it's psychological.

Mr. Pickard: Yes! But we got this one kid that was a part of our boat group that ... we got him eating bread, something that ... that wasn't greasy but had some volume to it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And that finally ... finally cure him of what his problems were.

Ed Metzler: Settled him down, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So, when you left the States on the ship, where was she headed?

Mr. Pickard: Well, wait a minute. Before we did that, after we got the ammunition ...

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Pickard: ... we went back down off of San Diego.

Ed Metzler: Oh, my goodness!

Mr. Pickard: And we did maneuvers for (pause) either weeks or a month off the coast of California. We did one big landing, is it Camp Pendleton, uh, down there which is ... which is the roughest beach I've ever ... we ever hit. It ... the second we hit the beach, we turned sideways. Regardless of how hard we hit it straight ahead, that current would just turn us sideways. And we had to get ... they had machines that ... that would come out ... come over the boat, pick it up and straighten it out. And then we ... we had a good coxswain. The ... the guy that was our coxswain had been on one of the carriers that got hit; he was a gunner, and ... but he was real good. He ... he was ... he was a ... you could put your trust in him, you know? Anyhow, from there then, we went (pause) I believe we went to Oakland, California which is in the Bay area.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: And that was a part of debarkation at the time, and we went from there to Hawaii.

Ed Metzler: Under the Golden Gate Bridge.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, and I thought we were going to hit it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Oh, really?!

Mr. Pickard: I *really* did.

Ed Metzler: Why?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, because when I first looked at it at an angle, I thought well this ship is taller than that bridge is ... is ...

Ed Metzler: Right (chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: ... when we went underneath it, we had a ... a lot of room, and which was quite a thrill. But then it takes three days from there to Hawaii, three or five.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, but here you are, you're eighteen, you'd just turned eighteen.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I would have turned eighteen by then.

Ed Metzler: And here you are on a ship of war, headed out on the high seas. What's going through your mind? Are you hot and heavy and ready to go, or are you get a little bit worried?

Mr. Pickard: No, I would say, uh, it was kind of exciting that we were finally through with training and starting to do something because we went to Hawaii where we picked up a load of pineapple, aviation oxygen and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer (chuckles) which was hardest to keep the deck, uh, the hatch on.

Ed Metzler: I bet!

Mr. Pickard: Not for me, I was young and I didn't drink so, uh, anyhow, we took off in a convoy which we didn't run in much. Our ... our ... our ole man was ... his name was Van Zandt and he was a submarine skipper.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: A four-striper. He was at Subic Bay in the Philippines when the war broke out.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: And he sunk one sub and brought one sub out. And anyhow, you didn't usually find a four-striper on an APA.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: But he was the kind of a guy who would go down on the deck and walk around and talk with you. And, you know, the guys would go anywhere; he wanted to go, they'd go, you know? You know, it was that kind. Anyhow ...

Ed Metzler: So, it a lot of respect for him.

Mr. Pickard: A *lot* of respect for him, yeah. He was an older guy. Uh, let me let her out (letting animal out of the house).

Ed Metzler: Okay (recording momentarily stopped).

Mr. Pickard: I'm surprised she came out of hiding. Usually when there's ... it's alright (letting animal in or out), at a girl (door slamming).

Ed Metzler: 'Cause I don't like strangers in the house.

Mr. Pickard: Well, when a strange car pulls in that driveway or a truck, they're gone; there's two of them.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: They're ... they're ... anyhow ...

Ed Metzler: So, his name is Van Zandt.

Mr. Pickard: Van Zandt.

Ed Metzler: Where was he from, do you know? I mean ...

Mr. Pickard: No. It ... it may say in that Navy thing.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, right.

Mr. Pickard: You can bring on, uh, you can bring up on ... online.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Pickard: All you got to do is put APA-150.

Ed Metzler: All kinds of stuff comes up.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I know.

Mr. Pickard: And it gives you a lot of the dates when things happened.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: Uhm ...

Ed Metzler: Now, was she in a convoy going over to Pearl from the west coast?

Mr. Pickard: No.

Ed Metzler: So, you soloed it; so, did you zigzag? Do you remember?

Mr. Pickard: No, I ... I believe a convoy went, but for some reason, we couldn't go when they went.

Ed Metzler: Okay, something came up.

Mr. Pickard: He did not like convoys.

Ed Metzler: Oh, he didn't?

Mr. Pickard: He did *not* like convoys. If he could figure a way to get out of it, he'd get out of it. And I always thought that the idea is that if a submarine is out there, they're

not going to waste a torpedo on a one single, little ship when they might be able to hit a big convoy and take several of them out, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: That was always my thought. But anyhow ...

Ed Metzler: Well, how long were you in Pearl before you loaded up and ... was that quick?

Mr. Pickard: It would be quick, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Because you didn't actually take on any cargo anything there. You'd loaded up stateside, is that right?

Mr. Pickard: No, I think, I don't know.

Ed Metzler: Well, the reason I ask the question is did you have any time to look around in Oahu before you board ... and joined the convoy there?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, not that trip 'cause we went in and we ... we anchored there at Pearl, uh, we were ... we were at Pearl and docked when we saw the [USS] Saratoga come in.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And all shot full of holes.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: And they brought her in and passed us and that was quite a (pause) something to remember or I guess you'd call it kind of a thrill to see. Actually, something you remember the rest of your life, you know?

Ed Metzler: That was the real deal you were looking at.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, that was really a real deal. Anyhow, we left there, or are we at that point?

Ed Metzler: So, anyhow, yeah, you departed Pearl in a convoy.

Mr. Pickard: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Loaded up with pineapple and Pabst Blue Ribbon beer.

Mr. Pickard: And aviation oxygen.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), and aviation oxygen, okay.

Mr. Pickard: We were going to Ulithi atoll.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: Well, I had the twelve to four shift; I worked ... I worked twelve to four a day up at ... up at the lookout, and at night twelve to four on the ... wing of the bridge. Uhm, and I got up ... on the twelve to four shift at night, they'd feed

you. So, I got up and went to the galley and I thought man it's quiet, why is it so quiet? Well, I got there and found out that we'd burned out a thrust bearing and we were sitting dead in the water.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), that's why it's quiet!

Mr. Pickard: That's quite a thrill (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Oh, no.

Mr. Pickard: It wasn't bad when we found out that they had left one destroyer with us or a D.E. [destroyer escort] with us to protect us until we could get underway. Well, we got underway eventually and got into Ulithi. And then from Ulithi, I don't remember a convoy. I think we went by ourself to Saipan 'cause that's where the 29s were taken off of ... off of Tinian, I think it was Tinian.

Ed Metzler: Tinian, and ... yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And they're not too far apart.

Ed Metzler: No, they're close, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: I remember going between them, and I was looking out, I was at the lookout. So, I could see the tails ... they had an abutment around, but I could see the tails of these 29s sticking above it. I remember that.

Ed Metzler: Did you see the tails of the 29s?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I ... I couldn't see the ... the planes themselves, but you could see the tails sticking up there. Anyhow, we went around to Saipan and unloaded, and we were at Saipan when Roosevelt died.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so that's April ...

Mr. Pickard: And ...

Ed Metzler: ... of '45.

Mr. Pickard: ... yeah, whenever.

Ed Metzler: April 12th of something like that.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Well, we ...

Ed Metzler: What was the reaction when everybody heard that?

Mr. Pickard: That was quite a (pause), well, when the President dies, it ... it ... I don't know if you think of remorse or ... or just uh, I don't know how to put it. I don't think you feel down, you just feel lost, you know.

Ed Metzler: He'd been around a long time.

Mr. Pickard: Yes, he had. I remember when I was in high school some kids fighting over ... this was during the election, over who was going to run for President (laughter). And at that time, I would have voted for ... for Roosevelt if I'd of been of ... of ...

Ed Metzler: Voting age, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: ... voting age, yeah. But anyhow, we then went by ourselves back from there to Hawaii where we put in for a month while they put another engine in it, or fixed that one. I think they ... I think they just pulled the shaft out of it, and put all ...

Ed Metzler: Redid the bearings, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. And while we were there, I think is when they put us in dry dock and uh, scraped the bottom and repainted the ...

Ed Metzler: So, you had some time there on that stop at Pearl?

Mr. Pickard: Had about, yeah, I spent a lot of time ... well, we ... we, my crew that I was on, went around the island to the ... to the west side of the island where we went through Smoke School. And it's uhm, our boat was assigned, in case of an air raid, to lay down smoke screens. So, we had on the back of our ... our landing boat, we had a smoke generator to where we could lay down smoke screens if we needed to. So, anyhow, we spent a month there and ... and I liked to ... I used to go to the USO, USO?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: USO and watch the old movies.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: The old black and white silent movies.

Ed Metzler: yeah, right, right.

Mr. Pickard: I just loved it 'cause I ... I was so young, and I didn't drink, so I was not chasing women, so that's just what I did. I'd go to the USO or ...

Ed Metzler: Did you go alone or did you have some buddies you hung out with?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, both. Yeah. Uh, the ... well, some of the guys from the crew, we, you know, the boat crew, there was four of us.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: So, three of us would go; the older guy wouldn't but ... older guy (laughter).

Ed Metzler: What was he? Twenty-two (laughter)?

Mr. Pickard: Ah, he was probably a little older than that, but uhm, anyhow, and then there ... this is where (pause) the history that they show really missed the boat. We picked up guys that they had flown off of Okinawa. Now, these are guys that had been, from the very beginning of the war in action over there, picked them up. I believe it was Guam they flew them to, from Okinawa to Guam, from Guam to Hawaii. At that point, we picked them up, plus we had nurses; we had some women who stay up in the officers' quarters, and we took these guys back to San Francisco

Ed Metzler: This is while the war was still going on?

Mr. Pickard: This is while the war was still going on. They were the first ones back from the Pacific Theater.

Ed Metzler: From Okinawa?

Mr. Pickard: And the history, the thing doesn't show a thing about it.

Ed Metzler: What did you see?

Mr. Pickard: Well, as we came into the United States, and these guys hadn't seen it since the war started in '41, the ... the, in fact, that ship picture I originally thought 'cause there's a ... there was guys hanging all over the place, Army. And ...

Ed Metzler: Army and Marines, I guess or ...

Mr. Pickard: I ... I don't know.

Ed Metzler: Doesn't matter (unintelligible).

Mr. Pickard: Uhm ...

Ed Metzler: So, you were packed to the gills?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, we could carry fifteen hundred. So anyhow, uhm, when we ... if I get a little teary, it's ... it's ...

Ed Metzler: It's okay (chuckle).

Mr. Pickard: ... it just always ... it hit me so much. I looked ... I was at lookout up main top, and the whole coast was fogged in. You couldn't see land. And (tears) as we got closer, the (tears) the fog opened up in one spot, and there was the Golden Gate Bridge (tears).

Ed Metzler: Quite a sight.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I really ... and you can tell it really hit me (tears) that these guys hadn't seen ... seen land for, you know, America, (tears), there's the bridge! Anyhow, we went through the ... the fire boats met us with the ... with the things and uhm, we got all the water spraying. And as we went into dock, we docked there at San Francisco, and there ... there was a ... apparently some people know it, because there was a lot of people down at the dock, and I think probably some of the wives (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah?!

Mr. Pickard: That ... that met us there, and it ... it was a big deal, and it was all over the San Francisco Chronicle, Oakland Tribune, and I had a copy of it and I can't find it. I mean, I didn't have a copy, I had a ... a regular ...

Ed Metzler: An original!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, paper of it ... of ... of that.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And the ... I've always wanted to try to get a hold of somebody in the history part of the ... the Navy thing and let them know that there are pictures of the ship and the guys and all of that that was in the newspaper that they ought to get and to be able to put into this history part. 'Cause all they show is this ship.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And that's probably anchored off of L.A., well, not L.A., uh, San Pedro ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, these ...

Mr. Pickard: ... where it'd be.

Ed Metzler: ... these ... these photos, this photo here, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, see, that's anchored. You can't see the anchor but this ... this other anchor would be down on the other side.

Ed Metzler: Right, because of, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Because of that and the black bar.

Ed Metzler: And the black ... yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And then we probably had to wait there to get into dock to unload, but ...

Ed Metzler: So, the wounded that you brought back from Guam to ...

Mr. Pickard: No, they ... I didn't say they wounded.

Ed Metzler: Okay, I'm sorry. I misunderstood that.

Mr. Pickard: No, these were just ...

Ed Metzler: These are just guys who had just ...

Mr. Pickard: ... who had been there since the beginning of the war.

Ed Metzler: And ... and survived.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Right, okay.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, and ... and some nurses or women; I'm not quite sure. We had some VIPS onboard, too. But in the history, they don't say anything about that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: But to me, it was a big deal.

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Pickard: You know? And I was ... I was still at main top when we docked and I was looking down on them.

Ed Metzler: You ...

Mr. Pickard: And all the people and ...

Ed Metzler: You literally had the bird's eye view of the whole thing!

Mr. Pickard: I did! I really had the bird's idea, but seeing that opening in there and the Golden Gate Bridge and the rest of it, you couldn't see any land at all. Uh, emotionally just, as much as I try not to (pause) get emotional about it, I still have to. So ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, it's worth getting emotional over. It's worth it.

Mr. Pickard: It was ... not necessarily for me, but for the other guys.

Ed Metzler: And for the country!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And the love of the country.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh, so, when you were going between Tinian and Saipan, and you saw the tails of the B-29s, you were headed for Ulithi?

Mr. Pickard: No, we went to Ulithi first.

Ed Metzler: Okay. And then you were headed to Guam?

Mr. Pickard: Ulithi is, hang on a second. Ulithi, no, we didn't go to Guam (looked up records).

Ed Metzler: Alright.

Mr. Pickard: Well, what I said was that they had flown these guys from Okinawa to Guam to ... to Hawaii.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: The people that we took back to the States.

Ed Metzler: Okay, okay, you're right.

Mr. Pickard: Okay, just a second. I'll be just ... just a second (recording stopped momentarily).

Ed Metzler: Okay, we're going again. Okay, so we're looking at a map of the western Pacific, and ...

Mr. Pickard: See, San Francisco and L.A. is up here.

Ed Metzler: Okay. And there's Hawaii.

Mr. Pickard: That's Hawaii. And this is Ulithi (looking at a map).

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: Right here somewhere. Or is it over here?

Ed Metzler: That's Eniwetok right there.

Mr. Pickard: Eniwetok; yeah, that's where we went, Eniwetok.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: And then to Saipan.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: We went on the west side of the island where we unloaded.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: Then we came back to Hawaii.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Pickard: Where they did repairs, and then we went to San Francisco. Now, the best ...

Ed Metzler: With the veterans that had come from ...

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay. So, now we're back in the States, and the fog has lifted and you've taken the veterans let them off. What happened next? Where did you go?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, yeah, (unintelligible), uh (looking at documents), somewhere I've got the ... anyhow, I believe it was ... in June, I got it written down. Before it's over with, I'll get it. When we left Hawaii when we got to San Francisco, uhm, the date that that should have happened, if anybody wants to look it up.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I don't have to have the exact dates.

Mr. Pickard: Okay. I think it was the 5th of June or July of '45 that we ...

Ed Metzler: So, Okinawa was pretty much over with by late June, early July. I think mid-June is when Okinawa was pretty well secured.

Mr. Pickard: Uh, secured, yeah. Well, I know that the (pause) oh, here it is. Is that alright or has it got to (unintelligible)?

Ed Metzler: That's perfect, that's perfect.

Mr. Pickard: Uh, I know that they landed at Okinawa. The Marines (unintelligible) ... ooh! That's too (unintelligible). The Marines went, I believe, south and the Army went north; that didn't work. So, they brought ... they switched them.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: Because the Mar ... uh, the Army couldn't cut, I mean, couldn't ...

Ed Metzler: Couldn't ... couldn't finish them off.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, that's right. So, they sent the Marines ...

Ed Metzler: The Shuri Castle and the Shuri Line and ... and that whole thing, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, so they ...

Ed Metzler: They went in on April the 1st, and I think they secured, finally, the whole island by like middle of June, something like that.

Mr. Pickard: By the time I got there, it was basically uhm, secured. Well, the war was still on because we had the, well, we'll get to that later. Anyhow, uhm, then we went to Seattle. We went ... we may have gone somewhere besides that.

Ed Metzler: Sure.

Mr. Pickard: I don't think so. We went to Seattle and we picked up ... we picked up a shipload of black troops.

Ed Metzler: Interesting.

Mr. Pickard: Uhm, at Seattle we went to Hawaii, we picked up a convoy at Hawaii, and we went to ... now, that must be when we went to Ulithi; that's a farther one on that. I believe it's an island (looking through documents) ...

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Pickard: Let's see, that would be, uh ...

Ed Metzler: So, we're looking at this map that you've got, the path of your ship.

Mr. Pickard: (Looking at map), what's that right there?

Ed Metzler: That right there ...

Mr. Pickard: Here's a magnifying glass that ...

Ed Metzler: Oh, I got it; that's Ulithi.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. We went to Ulithi, okay?

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: Still with the same troops on where we picked up a convoy.

Ed Metzler: Yep. And then it says here that in August you went to Okinawa.

Mr. Pickard: That's right. We took them in. They were actually turned out to be the replacement troops as far as I know or getting ready for the invasion of ... and we were at Okinawa when the ole man came on and said that the Japanese had surrendered. And then ...

Ed Metzler: Were you ...

Mr. Pickard: ... later ...

Ed Metzler: ... go ahead.

Mr. Pickard: ... later on he told us that our next assignment would have been the invasion of Japan.

Ed Metzler: So, were you enroute to Okinawa when they dropped the atomic bombs? Do you remember what that sequence ...

Mr. Pickard: No, I really think they dropped the atomic bomb before we ever went to Saipan the first time, didn't they?

Ed Metzler: No, it was August the 6th, I think, was when they dropped ...

Mr. Pickard: What's that say about the date, well, okay, we know that ... that Roosevelt died.

Ed Metzler: April.

Mr. Pickard: Was it?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: We didn't hear too much about that. You know we'd ... you'd ... the communications were little to none.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), uh yeah.

Mr. Pickard: I mean, if you wrote a letter, some officer went through it and looked and ... 'cause we had one guy, not us, but in the ship's company that ... I'll put it over until we need it, if we need it (moving documents).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Pickard: Uhm, that wrote Saipan under a stamp and put it on there and they got him. He got a, I think, it was a summary court-martial out of that one.

Ed Metzler: Oh really?! (laughter)

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, you didn't say anything!

Ed Metzler: Well ...

Mr. Pickard: If they would, you'd ... I don't know if you'd know it or not, but when they would censor your mail.

Ed Metzler: Oh yeah!

Mr. Pickard: And they'd cut out what they didn't want you to ...

Ed Metzler: Looked ... looked like paper dolls ...

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, and ...

Ed Metzler: ... by the time they got through with it.

Mr. Pickard: Uhm ...

Ed Metzler: So, the ole man came on and said the Japanese had surrendered?

Mr. Pickard: Yes.

Ed Metzler: And you were enroute to Okinawa at that point?

Mr. Pickard: We were there.

Ed Metzler: You were there. So, you're in Buckner Bay right ... right there (chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: We were ... we were in (pause) we were on the west side of Okinawa. I believe it was Subic Bay, but I wouldn't ...

Ed Metzler: Well, Subic Bay is down in the Philippines, isn't it?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I guess it is. We were on the west side of the islands where we unloaded all of the supplies and the men. Now, there, I think we took them in the ... we put cargo nets over the side and they ... we took them in by ship; there wasn't any docks.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: I mean, by landing boats.

Ed Metzler: Right, now this is the black soldiers that you were speaking of?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, yeah. The black soldiers. And we took them in, and of course, we have ... we also carried supplies. I mean, besides the guys, uh, they had, you know, bunks that ... that were aluminum racks with canvas stretched across them, and they'd fold up this way in the daytime, and so they'd ... but anyhow, uhm ... and then the (pause) uh, they still had like blackouts because of the kamikaze. And ... but we came in and we weren't there more than a day, maybe two, and we had to pull out because of a typhoon. So, we went out for a couple of days, and I think we went out as a convoy but staying far apart (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Far apart, you didn't get knocked into each other!

Mr. Pickard: Oh listen, those suckers are rough!

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Tell me about that typhoon experience.

Mr. Pickard: Well, I went through two of them.

Ed Metzler: Two of them!

Mr. Pickard: I'll tell you about the second one after I get ... it was just that we went out there, had to tie the boats down, double-tie, you know, every ... well, with cables, with steel cables, tied them down to the deck. And we rode that out, and then when we ... we got back to Saipan, they got hit pretty hard. I don't mean Saipan, I mean Okinawa.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Pickard: Got pretty ... got hit pretty hard. And so, we went from there (pause) well, when we were there, one night we went to general quarters, and my general quarters was in the ammunition locker under the five inch, thirty-eight (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: And they said, the guys on deck say that three kamikazes started out after us. But on the other side of the island, on the east side of the island is where the fleet hung out. So, they figured ... the guys ... the kamikazes pulled off, pulled out and took off for the other side of the island thinking that they're going to hit something bigger.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: Well, the fleet had left. And there was a ship just like ours anchored over there, and they ... the crew was in the galley part of it, uh, mess hall watching a movie; they weren't at general quarters, and the planes took them.

Ed Metzler: (Phew sounds).

Mr. Pickard: They put one bomb right down through the ward room and down below and it blew up and ... and two of the planes hit and one missed, I think it ... there was one of the kamikazes. But that always made you stop and think it was a ship exactly like ours, but we were at general quarters, they weren't. And ... but also right after the war ended, they ... when we were still on the west side, they issued us gas masks because they thought that it was a chance that the Japanese ... the ... the die-hards that didn't want to quit would ... would use gas.

Ed Metzler: Do something crazy.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: But anyhow ...

Ed Metzler: But this was right at the tail-end of the war; that must have been some of the last of the kamikaze.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. It was right after they had surrendered.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: I mean, not written it but said they weren't going to fight anymore.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: The kamikaze still came.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: And then ... anyhow, we went around uh, to the “A” side of the island, and as I understand it, it was the 7th Army we picked up. And we ran in convoy from there to uhm, North Korea, uhm, or to Korea on the inside.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the Sea of Japan over there, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Uhm, we went ... where in the hell is that? If I get this thing right (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Other side, other side (turning document); no, just flip it over.

Mr. Pickard: On this side?

Ed Metzler: There’s Japan.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Looking at map), there’s Korea.

Mr. Pickard: Oh yeah, okay.

Ed Metzler: You’re right on ... you’re right on the crease (laughter).

Mr. Pickard: I believe ... I believe that it was called Gin-Sin (sp?), Korea at that time.

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Pickard: Right up here. That ... we took the 7th Army in there.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you’re on the west coast of Korea.

Mr. Pickard: On the west coast of Korea. Well, that would be ... that would probably be ... well, it was all Korea then. There wasn’t (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I understand, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: We went in there.

Ed Metzler: And so, what did you take ... why were they going there? Do you know?

Mr. Pickard: Occupation troops.

Ed Metzler: Okay. ‘Cause that was all Jap ... under Japanese rule.

Mr. Pickard: That was all under Japanese rule.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: So was this area up in here. Well, but not necessarily, but in here. So anyhow, and they’ve got tides there that are like twenty-something feet.

Ed Metzler: (Whistling sound).

Mr. Pickard: You can have a boat drop, the water drop out from underneath the boat and have to sit in the mud all night before you could go on.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: But that's ... that ... that is where another thing that really hit me. We went in and we were doing supplies, and we went in to dock. We had to go in at high tide, and we unloaded and uh, at first, we were going to have to stay overnight, maybe. If ... unless we could get out quick enough. And we had sea rations which were fancier than K-rations. And so, we saw these guys working the docks. They had local people working the ... helping unload.

Ed Metzler: Koreans, I guess, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: So, we thought, okay, we've got this extra food, we're not going to eat it. Let's swing by and throw it up there which we did. And it's the first time that I saw people fighting over food, and that really hit me. To this day, when I see people waste food (chuckles) it ... it just really ... I figure, you know, you just don't know how fortunate you are to be where you are and ... and the type of government we have compared to ... to these poor people who are starving. And ... and we never thought about them fighting over the food, but I never forgot that.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Pickard: But anyhow ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: ... we went back to uh, to Sai ... to Okinawa in convoy.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: ... uhm, (pause) where (pause) I got to get my time right, uhm, where we ... where we picked up the First Marine Division.

Ed Metzler: From Okinawa?

Mr. Pickard: From Okinawa.

Ed Metzler: Man, they were in the center ...

Mr. Pickard: And ...

Ed Metzler: ... of a fight.

Mr. Pickard: ... and we took them to China to Tin-Sin (sp?); that's what this other ...

Ed Metzler: So, they were part ... kind of part of the China marines?

Mr. Pickard: See, we took them ... we took them from Okinawa into China. And the reason the Marine Corps was in there because they didn't know whether the Chinese were going to uh, accept them with open arms or shoot at them, so ...

Ed Metzler: Depends on which Chinese you were (laughter), yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. So, they ... we took the First Marine Division in there. And from there, we went back in convoy heading for the Philippines and got in the middle of a typhoon. We came within two degrees of turning over. It was so rough. And then by that time, I had switched from being in the boat group to gunnery. Now, in gunnery, uh, four hours I was on the help, and four hours I was in aft uhm, in the back where the engine ... the ... the motors are, the engines are to steer the ship.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: In case ... there's a place back there where ... in case they lose hydraulic, could lose steering from the bridge, they call you real quick, you flip a couple of levers and you take over. They give you the heading and you can do it from there.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: But man, that sucker would go down like this and then come up, throw water clear over the top of the ship, you know? And it would roll, and when it would roll, it would want to go this way. Well, you're fighting that wheel ... 'cause it's going this way, you're pulling back to try to get it back on course, keep it on course. That was ... I had four hours of that on ... on ... but anyhow, we went from there to the Philippines. So, we were in the Philippines at Manila uhm, I guess it would be the uhm, New Year's Eve of '46, between '45 and '46.

Ed Metzler: Okay, yeah. New Year's Eve '45, New Year's Day '46.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Got it.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, 'cause I remember going up on the four deck and finding bullets on the ... on the deck where people had shot up in the air (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). New Year celebrations.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, because you could hear gunfire everywhere, but it ... it was, you know, in ... in fireworks and ... and ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: And we got liberty there. We were there for a while. And we uhm ...

Ed Metzler: So, you were in Manila on liberty?

Mr. Pickard: We got, yeah, we got, you know, liberty in Manila. And I remember seeing the buildings all ... all blown out. And then there's a ... isn't there two parts to Manila? There's the old wall with the old city in the ...

Ed Metzler: Probably, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: ... yeah. It was at that time. But there wasn't, you know, there wasn't hardly any place to go except maybe the USO or by that time. And I think we went from there out, and I remember looking at Corregidor 'cause I was at maintop with, you know, the seven ... the seven-fifty binoculars, and you could see the hospital up on top or where it was the offices? It was just a gutted uhm, building. And we went right between the mainland, of course, and the ... and Corregidor. We went up to Subic Bay, and I was trying to think of what we did at Subic Bay. I think we picked up some troops there, and that's when we joined the Magic Carpet. And we started running then between the Philippines and the States – San Francisco, L.A., back and forth. I re ... I remember when we went by ... it was Iwo Jima that they put the flag up?

Ed Metzler: Yes.

Mr. Pickard: Okay. We were going by Iwo Jima, and ... and we were down scrubbing the deck, and all of a sudden, here comes a flight of ... of (pause), it wasn't the P-38; I think it was the sixty-one, their night fighters. They're built like a P-38, but they're ...

Ed Metzler: They're called the Black Widow, I think.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, right.

Mr. Pickard: They ... down below our deck line flying right over the water, and as they went by us, they popped up.

Ed Metzler: Well, at least they popped up (laughter)!

Mr. Pickard: They ... we didn't even know they were coming, and that was quite a surprise, you know? There was about three or four of them. And ... but then we to where ... when we would come back, we'd go up by the Aleutian Islands out of Okinawa and pick up the Japanese current. Now we were making good time using the current, and we'd go up and then drop down into either San Francisco or down into the ... to the San Pedro area.

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Pickard: There's a big fort down there, well, Pendleton. Is Pendleton Army or ...

Ed Metzler: That's Marine.

Mr. Pickard: Marines.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Anyhow, we made quite a few trips back and forth.

Ed Metzler: How many would you guess? Three or four?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. I would say ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: ... three or four trips 'cause we made the one from Hawaii, that was our first one.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: And then we made uh, one from Subic Bay or Manila, and I think we ... I think we made four trips, but in that ... in that, you know, on the Navy in the Navy history, it'll tell you how many trips we made.

Ed Metzler: So, these were all in early '46 then, most of them, most of these?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. Okay, I got out (pause) in May or June of '40 ... of ... of '40 ...

Ed Metzler: Six.

Mr. Pickard: ... of '46. But we went back to San Francisco. The Navy used T.I, Tresure Island, where the World's Fair was, and that's where they were storing their landing boats. So, we went back and got rid of our landing boats. We got ... loaded our uhm ... loaded our ... our ... la-la-la-la, the holds full of pig iron for weight 'cause other ...

Ed Metzler: Ballast.

Mr. Pickard: Well, what happens is when you hit a wave and the ship goes this way, the screw would come out of the water and it would shake like hell (laugh) and they'd go down, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: So, then we went down through the Panama Canal at night, and we come out on the other side, and we were there for three or four days. We got ... we got leave there, that was nice. And because there was a hurricane in the gulf (laughter). So, we had to wait to the hurricane to go up in the Atlantic to get over with. Well, then we started out. Well, the water was still rough, and like I said, even though we had ballast up in the hold to hold us down, when the bow would go up it wasn't bad, but when the bow went down, the stern went up and just shake and shake like the devil (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: And we went up to Norfolk Virginia where we put in there and then they started stripping guns and ... and I remember, I can't remember the name of it, I believe there was two carriers, the big ones. One was [USS] FDR.

Ed Metzler: I don't remember whether there was a carrier that was actually named after Roosevelt.

Mr. Pickard: There was two carriers there.

Ed Metzler: Actually, during the war? Was it the [USS] Midway? 'Cause the Midway had been launched and was active in the war.

Mr. Pickard: It could have been. Well, these ... I don't know if they ever got over there into the ... into the Pacific or ... or not during the war.

Ed Metzler: I don't know.

Mr. Pickard: All I know, there was two carriers and the crews, one was a foot or so longer than the other, and they kept getting it thrown up in their face. But anyhow, I was there till just a couple of days before they decommissioned the ship.

Ed Metzler: Your ship?

Mr. Pickard: My ship.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: So, I was on it the full time it was in service except for a couple of days at the end. They sent us home on thirty-day leave which I go back to the Bay area. Well, my folks, by then, had bought a ranch or a ten-acre in Placerville, California. I don't know if you know where it's at.

Ed Metzler: Uh, roughly.

Mr. Pickard: It's up in ... it's fifty miles uhm, east of Sacramento, up about a thousand foot level of the Sierra Nevada's.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, up on the way to Tahoe, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: On the way to Tahoe, on ... on Highway 50. Anyhow, I went up there and came back to Shoemaker. You know where Walnut Creek is?

Ed Metzler: Yes.

Mr. Pickard: Okay, it's between there and where the Highway 5 is.

Ed Metzler: I can't ...

Mr. Pickard: Well, there was a Navy base there.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And we went there, uh well, yeah, I did, but there was a lot of other guys there all in there for discharge. I got discharged on points. Uhm ...

Ed Metzler: So, this is mid-'46? June-ish, July-ish?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. Yeah well, and (unintelligible) paperwork over there (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's okay.

Mr. Pickard: Anyhow, yeah, I was discharged from there, and then I went from there up to Sacramento up to Placerville ... where when my folks left Placerville, I didn't.

Ed Metzler: They left, but you stayed (chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: You better believe it! They're going back down to the Bay area. They said, "You coming?" I said, "No." (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: No, I like ... I loved the mountains, I loved the ... well, we're only fifty miles from Tahoe. It wasn't far, so ...

Ed Metzler: But this is '46, so you were only twenty years old even then!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Getting to be an old man.

Mr. Pickard: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Well, compared to now, oh, a little bit, yeah (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, I got a couple of questions I want ask you.

Mr. Pickard: Okay.

Ed Metzler: This is ...

Mr. Pickard: I don't know if we covered everything, but I tried to.

Ed Metzler: Oh no! Yeah, I doubt we have, but that's okay. While I'm still thinking about it, earlier you mentioned going to the USO ...

Mr. Pickard: Uh huh.

Ed Metzler: ... and watching old movies. Did you ever have the opportunity to go to any of the USO shows where, you know, the Hollywood celebrities came and entertained you or of that?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, they had one at ... at boot camp.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Pickard: But I was young and naïve, and I guess I went, but because of the language and stuff, I didn't stay (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Because when I went in the Navy, *gosh* was it just ... that was bad!

Ed Metzler: That was a four-letter ... that's a four-letter word, gosh! (laughter)

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, gosh, you know!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Just ... well, during the war, I was raised with my mother and sister, my aunt and her daughter, and a friend of my sister's, and her mother, and I was the only male.

Ed Metzler: And you kept it clean!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, (laughter), you kept it clean.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah, (laughter). So, when you were over there in the Pacific, did you write home many letters?

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I wrote my mother, yeah.

Ed Metzler: And she wrote back?

Mr. Pickard: Oh yeah!

Ed Metzler: She send you any care packages? Cookies and all that jazz?

Mr. Pickard: Uh, yeah. I remember getting a cake that was ... I don't know if it was mildewed or just so hard you could drive nails with it.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), it wasn't edible, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Well, one of the guys in our boat group ... mother canned some chicken, fried chicken, canned it. So, when we were out on the boat on maneuver's we'd lay the cans on the manifold on the diesel engine to heat it up (laughter), and we'd have a good meal!

Ed Metzler: A good hot chicken dinner!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, that was good, so ...

Ed Metzler: Speaking of that, what was the food like aboard the ship?

Mr. Pickard: Well, outside of chicory for coffee, that was good, especially after we left Ulithi because we picked up a load of ... of Australian beef; man, that was good!

Ed Metzler: Really?! They didn't ...

Mr. Pickard: Oh!

Ed Metzler: ... they didn't feed you mutton like a lot of the Australian ...

Mr. Pickard: No, this was ... this was steaks and stuff.

Ed Metzler: That was nice, huh?

Mr. Pickard: Oh, let me go back to something.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: I think. When we picked up the Marines, we picked up a group of Marines first; that may be what we picked up at Subic Bay, uhm, as a work group to help load whatever had to be loaded and ... and ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: ... and the ole man, now these guys are right of ... right out of battle area; no, I guess it wasn't when ... in ... in ... it was uh, when we took them into China.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Pickard: Okay? That's when that happened. We picked up this group to ... to work before we picked up all the rest of the guys. And the ole man fed them steak and ice cream, fresh breads, stuff, well, you got to remember, he was a submarine skipper, and the crew would follow that man anywhere he would want to go, you know, even though we usually ran by ourselves, not with convoy. And we were between Ulithi and Okinawa, uh, we were the ... I thought of it the other day, we were uhm, well, I say the ... the command ship isn't the word of it, but we were in charge of the convoy, and ... flagship! That's the word, we were the flagship ... for that.

Ed Metzler: Flagship, yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. And anyhow, he fed these guys just ... every meal he gave them ... really fed them good, you know? They hadn't had a decent meal in a ...

Ed Metzler: In a *long* time.

Mr. Pickard: ... in a long time.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And I ... I always ... always felt so good that we did that for these guys. And I tell you, talk about one bunch of guys that I never forgot, their BARs, instead of sticking up to their shoulders like you normally did, were made over like a submachine gun where they could hold it down here and fire it, rather than put it up here and fire it, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And ... but oh! You wanted something done, just say something, and boy, there was a couple of guys right there to help you; they were so good. And I always, you know, I had a lot of respect for the Marine Corps.

Ed Metzler: Now, your crew of four back earlier in the war, did you stay in touch with any of those guys after the war was over?

Mr. Pickard: No.

Ed Metzler: You all just went your separate ways?

Mr. Pickard: We all went our own separate ways, yeah. Well, we all went ... some of them were from Louisiana 'cause I was living in California then.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: I was in California, some of them were from Mississippi, some of them were for New York or up that way.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: In fact, this is kind of ... goes back, but when we would pull into San Francisco, the guys from the east coast would work my watch so I could go home. So, when we got to Norfolk, Virginia, we were there quite a little while. I'd watch ... I'd work their watch while they went home, so that worked out real good, and you know, and I always appreciated that, too, so ...

Ed Metzler: After the war, were there ever any reunions of the ship's crew or anything like that?

Mr. Pickard: Not that I know of.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: Not that I know of. There is a group, and I've got to get on it when I get my computers working. Uhm, there's a ... a thing that you can join that basically puts you in contact with other people from the ship that also got in contact with them.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum!

Mr. Pickard: And I've got to get in ... try to do that. The trouble with getting old, and you may not be there yet, but you have so many friends that die off.

Ed Metzler: I'm getting there.

Mr. Pickard: And my mother used to get so depressed because all her really good friends were dying, and she wasn't. She lived to about ninety-six, ninety-eight.

Ed Metzler: Well, that's good DNA to have (laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, well, I'm going.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you're working on it.

Mr. Pickard: I'm (unintelligible) be next ... ninety-four, or, yeah, ninety-four next month. And the ... but anyhow, so how many of these ... of course, there was a lot of young ones on. I mean, let's face it, war is a young man's thing.

Ed Metzler: Yep.

Mr. Pickard: How many of these are still living or alive, I don't know. I've ... I've tried to look up one guy, uh, Posey (sp?) from Texas, but I never wrote down what his address was or ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: ... 'cause when we ... when we were ... went off, we didn't necessarily all go at the same time.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: Because I enlisted and I went off ... I, you know, so, I ... they let me out on points. I was a new reserve then. But if any of the guys were full-time, they had to go out and finish their enlistment before they got out. So ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: ... no, I never did get in touch with them.

Ed Metzler: You never got sucked into the Korean War, did you, because you were in the reserve?

Mr. Pickard: No, I almost ... I almost re-enlisted (cough), but I really wasn't uh, (pause) well, all these inspections and you have to do this and you have to do that and you have to wear your clothes a certain way, I really didn't like that part of the Navy (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: I understand.

Mr. Pickard: And I almost re-enlisted and I was uh, actually, at that time, I was working for Arthur Murray in Sacramento ... when I was younger. And I thought about it, and then I thought no.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: No, I don't want to get into that 'cause I knew ... I knew there'd be an invasion and they would hit up north.

Ed Metzler: Which takes us to the subject of the Invasion of Japan that didn't happen. Let's talk about that for a ... a minute because you probably would have been a part of the big invasion of Japan if we'd had to do it.

Mr. Pickard: Oh yeah! Very definitely! And the thing is I heard not too long ago on PBS they figured, I think, it was a million and a half men would have been killed in the invasion. Once they saw all the underwater obstacles and stuff, 'cause you

take those ... those uh, those boats, if you're running full speed and you hit one of those triangle metal objects underneath there, it'd take the whole bottom out of it, yeah. And down you'd go! And ... plus, I guess, I think ... I think that they were going to have even the women and the children get pitchforks or anything else they could get to ... to ... to try to kill guys coming in.

Ed Metzler: Well, it would have been like Okinawa only a hundred times worse.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. The ... 'cause, you know, even in Guam, years after the war, there was some Japanese soldiers that gave up that didn't even know the war was over. You'd ... remember that?

Ed Metzler: I do!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. It was back in the '70s.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: They went all the way into the '70s, a few of ... hold-outs. Well, when you were overseas, what did you miss the most from a normal life that, you know?

Mr. Pickard: Well, I loved the sea, and I used to, at night I'd go up on the ... up on the rails along the side, and we'd sit upon the rails, believe it or not.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah.

Mr. Pickard: And watch the phosphorus of the water or in the daytime, the flying fish. Uhm, I loved it, but uhm, well, I ... I was always anxious to get mail from my mother, you know, or my sister. But since I'd been moved around so much when I was younger, uh, being away from the family didn't hit me that hard.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, I can see that.

Mr. Pickard: You know? And I uh, you know, it was ... it was during the Depression, and you ...

Ed Metzler: Tough times.

Mr. Pickard: ... before the war, you know, uhm, I mean, that part of my life today has been a God-sent because in those days, my mom worked, my step-dad worked, my daughter, uh, my daughter ... my sister cooked, I'd set the table, I'd stack the dishes, she'd wash, I'd dry, I'd wash clothes, I'd dry clothes, I'd iron clothes, but you helped where kids today (chuckles) don't.

Ed Metzler: Not, not like back then.

Mr. Pickard: Not like back then! You kids, you just ... you didn't think anything about it; you just did it. But I basically worked most of my life. I ran ... I had newspapers and ... and I liked to work, so, you know?

Ed Metzler: So, what do you think about the Japanese?

Mr. Pickard: Oh, they ... they ... well, let me get back. Before the war, I went to school with some Japanese.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: When the war started, I didn't think anything; they lived not too far from me. Their folks owned a nursery, and I didn't think too much about it that they just weren't there anymore. And ... and it wasn't till years later watching PBS I found out about all the ...

Ed Metzler: Found out what went on (chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: Well yeah, about them being all the Japanese on the west coast were pulled off the west coast.

Ed Metzler: Yes, they were.

Mr. Pickard: And sent inland to ... kind of ... well, were they classified as concentration camps?

Ed Metzler: No, no. I think they ... they had a word for it like "relocation camps" or something like ...

Mr. Pickard: Because they were American citizens ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Pickard: ... they just, you know, were Japanese. And ... and then ... so, that really hit me when I saw that. I thought well, that's ... I ... that's what happened to those people. But no, I worked with George Shikawa (sp?).

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: The one I was telling you about ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: That worked undercover for the ... because he knew all of the ... he worked with the intelligence and stuff because he knew all the procedures of the military of how they acted, what they did, how they responded to let the ... the officers

know, you know, what they could expect out of these people. And, oh (unintelligible), you know, that ... that was over with, the war was over and just the Germans today they ... they were just as bad. And ... but I remember the newsreels before the war when China was in ... at war where they'd go into a town and throw babies up in the air and catch them on bayonets and stuff, and you know, that was *horrible!*

Ed Metzler: Yeah. They were ... they had some horrible stories, and ... and they did some terrible things.

Mr. Pickard: And I remember the Flying Tigers.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So, how often do you think about the old war years, very often?

Mr. Pickard: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Other than when you're sitting here getting shot of a bunch of questions.

Mr. Pickard: No, I think about it. Uhm, well, they were going to make me an expert lookout right at the end of the war, and the war ended and that was the end of that.

Ed Metzler: What's an expert lookout? What do you mean?

Mr. Pickard: Well, I could outsee the radar. I was far-sighted. And like I spotted this one ship on the ... on the horizon, and I reported it. And they called back and they said, "Are you sure there's something out there?" I said, "Yeah, just a second, I'll look again," and I looked again and I explained it to them. And the radar couldn't see it, of course, this was early radar, but I could. And I also spotted an airplane. I also spotted a mine going down between the convoys or we were getting into it.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: Going up to Ulithi and reported it. And ... but I'm very conscientious, and I spent a lot of time with those binoculars looking, you know? There was me, and then there was lookouts down below, but I never, of course, I couldn't hear if they ever reported anything. But ...

Ed Metzler: Hum.

Mr. Pickard: And I also became ... when we were in Okinawa, I ... I became the messenger for the captain.

Ed Metzler: Oh?!

Mr. Pickard: When I got into gunnery, they ... they had me do that, especially that one time we went to general quarters, you know? I'd go up on the deck and ... up on the bridge and tell the officer what ... he wanted done. And ... but anyhow, it's like going out of San Francisco the first time, the blocks on the booms were banging, and we got a ... now, we're all rookies (chuckle), we got called down there to secure those blocks; they were making too much noise, you know? And I got to thinking later, you know, if a submarine hear those things going (slapping sounds) this way ... and so, I look around and we all look around and there's not a boatswain in sight, and I'm thinking well, what you'd have to do is rig a boatswain's chair up and lower yourself down because a block was halfway up this ... that boom.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Pickard: And I ... and everybody was standing around looing at each other. I said, "Cut me two pieces of rope about that long," and they did. And I put those around my neck and I went hand over hand right straight up the ... the line till I got to the top, and I hooked my foot through the block and tied it tight to the ... to the boom. And then I went up, across the ... across that ... this top part right here (showing a document).

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Came down, secured the other one, and then came on down, you know, and ...

Ed Metzler: Looking back on it, can you believe it?

Mr. Pickard: Well, nobody was doing anything, and something had to be done, so I did it (laughter), yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: But there wasn't anybody to tell us what to do. And, of course, the Navy way would have been to hook up a boatswain's chair and lower somebody down, and that would take too long.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, but what happens if you fell?

Mr. Pickard: Well, I wasn't dizzy. You're young, you're invincible.

Ed Metzler: You don't know any better, yeah (laughter).

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, that's the trouble when you're young; you don't think anything's ever going to happen to you.

Ed Metzler: It's a wonder we survive youth, you ... you know it?

Mr. Pickard: Well, you know, I told you I got a guardian angel. Uhm, we were in there, and our ... my boat was up in the air, and we were swinging it in to lower it onto the cradles. They had two boats here, then they put this cradle in there, then they put a boat here and a boat here. Well, there was myself and two guys holding a line back from the stern to keep it from swinging, and somebody forgot to put a stopper on one of the ... the ... one of the (unintelligible) coming off the wench, and they dropped it. And they ... coming right straight at us, and I heard a voice just as plain, a man's voice, just as plain as they ... as you could be to get back in the corner with ... the ... the rail came this way, and there was a bulkhead here, and I threw my arms back and I ... to get these guys and we got right back in that corner, and that boat slid right into that corner and stopped. And that's on once. And the other one was I was logging. I drove logging trucks after I got out of the service for a while, and up in the Sierra Nevada's. And it was a ... old ... it wasn't old, it was a ... a military vehicle, six-wheel drive, the hood was ... you could lay across the hood and sleep.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: And I had a load of logs, and I come down this one-way road, around along the (unintelligible) river, I guess it was, or American, and it was a hundred feet or so down, made a ninety-degree turn, went across this bridge, made another turn and started up the hill, and the steering wheel broke off right at the gear.

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Pickard: And the Good Lord was watching after me, you know?

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Pickard: So, I've had things happen to me that ... where I shouldn't ... shouldn't be here, but uh, so, I'm a firm believer in guardian angels, I really am.

Ed Metzler: Well, what other stories are you holding back from me?

Mr. Pickard: Well, that was after the war (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I know, but it's all part of the ... the war experience.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: What else can we talk about in the war?

Mr. Pickard: In the war. Uh, there was a good crew. I say the ... the ole man was the kind that'd get down on the deck and walk around and talk to you; I don't care whether you're a seaman first or a seaman third, it wouldn't make any difference. He'd come ... he'd come around and talk to you. Those guys would go anywhere, and we usually ran without convoy. Well, if we had to, we would, but if we didn't have to, we wouldn't. And ... it's like going into San Francisco Bay one time, we were heading for Oakland. I think we were going to pick up some troops over there or something 'cause it was port ... it was the port of embarkation at one time. And we were in the Bay, and San Francisco Bay is rough, rough and there's a lot of currents. And there was another ship coming at us, and it swung over towards us. And the ole man took the ship away from the pilot which we had onboard. You know once you're off Golden Gate, you get a pilot, and the pilot brings it in. He took the ship away from the pilot and got out of there where we wouldn't get hit, you know? So. Yeah, he was ... he was a good, good guy. He ...

Ed Metzler: And the same captain the whole time you were aboard the ship?

Mr. Pickard: No. After the war, there was another ... we had another officer come in, but I don't think he was a four-striper. I think he was a commander, three-striper. And ... but VanZandt ... he probably retired after that. He was, you know, he was getting pretty old.

Ed Metzler: So, how old would you guess he was during the war?

Mr. Pickard: Your age (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Watch that (laughter)! So, he was in his sixties or seventies?

Mr. Pickard: No, he was probably in his (pause) forties, fifties.

Ed Metzler: Okay. But that was really old back during the war. I mean ...

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. Well, like I say, he was a submarine skipper and a four-striper, so he had to have been in ...

Ed Metzler: He'd been around a while.

Mr. Pickard: He's been in probably close twenty years if not longer than twenty years.
Career military.

Ed Metzler: Well, I'm giving you one last shot to make ...

Mr. Pickard: Oh ...

Ed Metzler: ... to make a statement here.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, one other thing we did. We came into L.A. (pause) I think we dropped troops off and then we went into where you anchor, where the ships anchor, and when we dropped the anchor, it was fine. And right after that the fog set in. And we were going on leave, I mean not leave, but we had ...

Ed Metzler: Liberty, huh?

Mr. Pickard: ... liberty, but you couldn't see your hand in front of your face.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: So, our captain or, not our captain, but our coxswains got the heading for where the beach was. And ... you ever been down there to the fun land of ... along ... along in there?

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Pickard: Oh, okay. Well, it was like a boardwalk, and there was Ferris wheels and there was rollercoasters and all of this stuff and this big beach. Well, that's where we landed (laughter). It was dark ... it was dark. Of course, the ... it was all lit up 'cause after the war, anyhow, or was it? Yeah, it was after the war, and we went in, fog and all, we went in.

Ed Metzler: Made a landing.

Mr. Pickard: Took our shoes off and socks off and waded in. I mean, we got up on the beach as far as we could and ... we were in the P-boats and dropped those ... dropped the ramps, and that's the way all the guys got (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: I remembered that and I thought I wonder what those people onshore looking at ... looking at all of these guys coming out on the beach.

Ed Metzler: They thought it was an invasion (laughter).

Mr. Pickard: (Laughter). Oh goodness me!

Ed Metzler: Oh dear!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, I miss those, and I ... I really missed the Navy. I miss the ocean ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Pickard: ... since I moved to Texas. I guess I worked for NASA for thirty-one years and only lived twenty-six miles from Galveston.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: We'd go down to Boliver or Galveston and camp. I've got a motor home.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And we'd rough camp, or we'd go to Padre Island which I really loved.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Pickard: And we'd go down there and spend maybe four or five days just roughing it. But we'd camp on the beach, above the high tide line, of course.

Ed Metzler: Uhm.

Mr. Pickard: And I really ... I really miss that. I haven't been able to go since this.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: But I can drive! It's just that my eyes are getting bad and that's not good, so ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: Anyhow, I don't know if I could ... we've (unintelligible) a lot of things that went on, but ... but were just routine, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you don't tend to remember those after seventy-five years. But the non-routine stuff sticks in your mind.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah. Yeah, the ... the ... those hurricanes did. Well, they weren't hurricanes, they were typhoons.

Ed Metzler: Typhoons, oh man. Yeah, I've heard a lot of typhoon stories from the guys that were over there. I mean, they are scary!

Mr. Pickard: Oh yeah. Well, they're the ones that ... that happened when we were at Sai, uh, at Okinawa at the airfield there at Okinawa. Man, it tore a bunch of buildings up and ... and ... you know, you didn't hear too much about it, but we would get a ... a letter, not a letter, it was kind of a printout. (Looking for documents). You know, they ... they couldn't ... they couldn't tell you what was going on most of the time. I don't know if I've got any of them or not (still looking through documents) of (long pause) ... (unintelligible) that's about my dad

during World War II (unintelligible). Somewhere in some of my stuff, I've still got, oh, this is me when I was younger.

Ed Metzler: We can't pick you up on the microphone when you're talking over there.

Mr. Pickard: Oh, oh, oh ...

Ed Metzler: Need to bring it back over.

Mr. Pickard: Well, I'm just ...

Ed Metzler: Hey! This is a handsome young fellow! I'll bet he's not more than eighteen years old!

Mr. Pickard: I'll bet you're right!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Pickard: But more like seventeen.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, look at that! Jaunty looking fellow!

Mr. Pickard: You notice the way that hat is ... is cocked over to the side?

Ed Metzler: I do!

Mr. Pickard: And probably the neckerchief is up here tight, (unintelligible) down here.

Ed Metzler: Yeah! It looks pretty snappy, yeah!

Mr. Pickard: Oh yeah, we had ... the ole man, if the crew didn't like somebody, like an officer, he'd get rid of them. We had an ole guy in charge of our boat group; we called him Mama Sykes (sp?). He's a ... he's a guy that brought his way in as an officer, he had money. But, you know, he was so bad that ... and I guess the commander, VanZandt got so many ... many uhm, complaints that he got rid of him.

Ed Metzler: So, he would get rid of an officer if ... a whole bunch of the crew didn't like him?

Mr. Pickard: If the crew didn't like him, he got rid of him!

Ed Metzler: That's pretty unusual.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: But it's all about morale and that's ...

Mr. Pickard: Well, I imagine that goes back to ... to the submarine.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Pickard: When you got spend months in a submarine underneath the water or close to it ... this is before atomic, you know, submarines ...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Pickard: ... uhm, you (pause) by god, you've got to live together in close harmony, you better ... you better ...

Ed Metzler: You better get along!

Mr. Pickard: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Pickard: But he would, he'd ... (looking through documents). This might be interesting to you, I don't know. That's my dad.

Ed Metzler: Okay. Yeah, so this is your dad, he passed away in 1960.

Mr. Pickard: Uh maybe, I think that's what I wanted to (looking through documents).

Ed Metzler: Born in 1903. So, he was only fifty-seven years old when he passed.

Mr. Pickard: He smoked all the ... yeah, but read ... I think it talks about what he did during World War II.

Ed Metzler: It doesn't.

Mr. Pickard: It doesn't say down there about him going out to Attu and Kiska and ...

Ed Metzler: Uhm, no.

Mr. Pickard: ... his friends that ... that apparently got killed or ... by the Japanese when they invaded Attu at Kiska? I don't know if they took both islands or just the one.

Ed Metzler: I can't remember.

Mr. Pickard: I've got an article some place that ...

Ed Metzler: I think they ... I think they ...

Mr. Pickard: ... explains all that.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that was probably a long obit that you had. Well, I tell you what, Don, I'm going to end the recording here.

Mr. Pickard: Alright.

Ed Metzler: I've given you all your last shots, and I appreciate the time that you spent with me.

Mr. Pickard: Oh, anytime!

Ed Metzler: And ...

Mr. Pickard: If you're ever this way ...

Ed Metzler: It's never too late to thank you guys for what you did for our country, so I'm going on record one more time, thank you, sir, for your service.

Mr. Pickard: You're welcome; it was my pleasure.

Ed Metzler: You guys made a difference for our country.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah, and that's the part that hurts. When I look at what's going on today compared to what the guys have ... the guys that gave their life to save this country from Japan and from Germany and ... and what's going on today with the young people which are trying to destroy it just really ... really gets to me. You know, there's so many guys that gave their life during World War II, and then I see all these ... like Washington, Oregon where they're having ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the west coast has changed.

Mr. Pickard: San Francisco, I was born ... I used to, as a kid, I used to go across the ferry and walk up the main drag up to my aunt's place and stay a couple of days with my aunt and uncle and walk back or would just go over there during the, uh, during the World's Fair, I used to go over by myself. You never had any problem. San Francisco was so nice, and now, you know, they ... they give out maps from what I understand to tell tourists that this is where they're crapping on the lawn, I mean, on the street, and this is ... to stay away from ...

Ed Metzler: Do the other areas ...

Mr. Pickard: ... just stay away from ...

Ed Metzler: ... stay away from ...

Mr. Pickard: ... stay away from this area. Used to go up to Chinatown and ... and oh, I don't know.

Ed Metzler: Well, I'm going to kill it here.

Mr. Pickard: Yeah.

FINAL copy
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