

Antony Pizzi

WWII



When did you enter the military?

“I enlisted in nineteen forty-eight.”

How old were you when you entered?

“Twenty.”

What boot camp did you go to?

“Great lakes, Great lakes yeah, it’s up in Chicago. Cold.”

“Well I was there for...boot camp generally runs for three months.”

Did you go to a second Boot camp?

“No, I didn’t. When I was going there it was during the Christmas holidays, we broke for the holidays and went home a leave for thirty days. Then went back to, uh, Chicago to finish our tour.”

Did you join the military voluntarily?

“Yep”

What made you choose that particular branch of military?

“Well, yeah, I just felt like gettin’ into the navy.”

What branch of military where you in?

“Navy, U.S. Navy”

What equipment did you use on a daily basis?

“What with the boot camp there was anything but, uh, we wore jackets because it was freezing up there. For boot camp they sent me up to Alaska.”

What rank you did you achieve?

“Engine man first class. That’s (from) working on engines and the small boat engines.”

I just want to ask a question, were those steam engines?

“No mine were diesel, all diesels.”

Oh yeah, I do that in my work, I’m a stationary engineer.

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah we were mechanics, I work for the Times, before I retired and we had a lot of you guys working for us.”

Oh alright, very good.

“In fact there’s another guy called Fisher and he was a boating engineer too.”

Is that right? Wow.

Were you wounded while you were in the military? If you were in what way were you wounded?

“No.”

Were you in any famous campaigns or battles?

“We operated the whole ship; the whole ship goes in so we’re all part of. Each one they make a different design but the main design they hold. This’s a, I think, a Bergen county medal. Everybody has a, that’s a, uh, good combat medal. That mean you were good. Oh and, uh, distinguished service. There was a, uh, patch, that we had. This’s a...I was out with the amphib. This’s water and land. We went in and picked them up, I was on a ship that had two big oars in the front, they’d bring us all to the beach, they’d open the doors, not screen doors, regular doors. And they’d load out tanks, trucks, foot-soldiers all for the campaign. This one’s a Korean battle again, and that’s the victory battle there. They didn’t have a medal; they just gave you a brooch. And this one’s a Korean amphibious patch. And this one’s a dog tag, the dog tag’s changed, they have it on the bottom now to put in your mouth, you see the dog tag has a little notch on the bottom of it and that’s from when, the guys who’re on detail, they’d put your dog tag in your mouth and they’d tell you to bite so they know who it is.”

Like a dental record?

“No, you were dead, hehe, no record. There were so many people and they’d move you back and forth so much that sometimes you’d lose people. And then that’s about it now.”

Did you receive any awards or medals for your service?

“Damn right I did...was mostly Korean medals. Korean medal, this is the one the Korean government gave us. That’s, uh, what they call a victory medal. This one’s my Father’s, he was wounded in action in World War one.”

Which medal means the most to you?

“Uh, oh God, they’re all equal I think.”

What was a “normal or average Day” while you were in the military?

“Well, you see you; my machines had to work because the ship had to go. You had to get diesel to the galley, because the cooks needed to cook. They cooked on diesel.”

Did the pumps run on steam?

“The pumps? I wonder.”

Okay.

“See we had lots of pumps on the rear port, on an L.S.T.”

What’s an L.S.T.?

“Landing ship tank”

Oh okay.

“But, uh, what we had to do was take polls on the operation, on what everyone needs. We had bulldozers and all sorts of stuff.”

Oh alright.

“Heavy equipment, you know, because I reckon when they got, uh, shipped out, the way the loaded stuff into the hole they, you know, for storage.”

So with the bulldozer was that for big hauls or, what was the equipment for?

“We didn’t use it, we carried it.”

Oh you transported it.

“Transport, yeah.”

Alright, very good.

“So we didn’t use it to work, we wanted to throw it off the side.”

What was your normal or most common routine while you were at war or battle?

“Well you got a regular job you did what you had to, the Navy had, uh, had a fire watch. There was a room down below the galley were you had a fire watch, and then you would go up one ladder, down the other ladder. If you were on an emergency call, you had to make sure you were on the right ladder. If there was a

fire on the ship you'd want to be on the right ladder with a fire extinguisher, maybe a hose, and everybody's got their job. And you gotta be there when that thing (the siren) started ripping, because a fire's the worst thing that could happen on a ship."

I'm actually a volunteer fireman, and what you say is exactly right. You get on the fire truck and you know exactly what your duty is, whether you're hitting the hydrant or you're the first guy on the nozzle fighting the fire, or the axe man.

"So when you call the police, uh, fire department you're the guy there. You go to school for that, maybe not a regular high school like this, but a school nonetheless. And you go there for your training and you get your grades and they teach you what you should do: How to prepare for it, what to bring, why are you bringing it, and they time you."

What type of firearm(s) did you use?

"We didn't use...well everyone had to check out with the M-1, that's what we had, that was a Springfield rifle. because you never know."

Did you use any heavy weapon Artillery?

"Fixed them"

While at war, what helped you pass the time?

"Well, I was in before they had the, uh, t.v.'s on the ships. It was fun."

While at war, what helped you get through hard times?

"Knowing that you, uh, would be home soon"

After you came home from war, did your perspective on anything change?

"Oh yeah, I changed after four years, how couldn't you?"

Did you carry anything from the military with you after the war?

“No.”

Is there anything you would like to add or say that I missed or is there anything that you would like to talk about?

“Each day was a different deal; really, you’re busy all day long. For the most part you started early, like I told you. When they sent me up to Alaska, they sent me to, uh, a big island called Kodiak. Which by the way was captured by the Japs during the war, then *they* found out how cold it was, and then they sent me to a big island called Adak. That was the pearl of the oceanic chain for those air force pilots. Me and the guys, we made some sleds out of sticks and we had a big hill. We would pull each other up and then come sliding down swift. See, you gotta make the best of it, or it can be a real lousy situation you’re up against. Hope’s have gotta go on, and you’ve gotta keep them up. All in all it was fun.”

