

Carleton-Willard Village World War II Memories Project

DVDs presented to Bedford Television

June, 2013

Ward Chamberlin

When Ward Chamberlin tried to enlist early in WWII he was classified 4-F as a result of a childhood injury, but he was able to join the British Army Field Services program and was assigned as an ambulance driver. He served in N. Africa and Italy during the height of the battles there.

Ward describes the battlefield conditions from the perspective of an ambulance driver. He observed first-hand the 1942 battles against German Field Marshall Erwin Rommel in North Africa. After the victory in North Africa, he was transferred to Italy, where he received a battlefield commission when his commander was killed.

In this interview, Ward elaborates on the interviews he provided for Ken Burns in his PBS documentary, THE WAR.

Judith Emmons

During World War II Judith Emmons was a First Lieutenant in the Red Cross Recreational Division attached to the United States Army in North Africa and southern Italy.

After a training period in Washington, DC, she joined a group of men and women who were shipped overseas. Among them were psychologists and other medical professionals, as well as directors of recreational activities. Judy and her group were charged with entertaining the servicemen. The activities included acting in plays, playing music, participating in games and contests and parties. After a year Judy and a few of her compatriots asked to be sent to southern Italy where they traveled around in jeeps or club-mobiles serving coffee and doughnuts behind the lines. They were known as "The Doughnut Girls". They were there when Gen. Mark Clark reviewed the troops after the fall of Rome.

Luis Fernandez-Herlihy

When the Germans attacked the Netherlands in 1940, Mexican-born Luis Fernandez-Herlihy and his family were living in Rotterdam where his father was serving as the Mexican consul. They suffered during the bombing and occupation and were forced to leave the country and move to Berlin. With great difficulty, they managed to leave Germany and travel to Finland where they were able to board a ship bound for the United States.

Stuart Grover

Stuart Grover volunteered in the US Navy with the Minesweepers of Harbors in the Mediterranean. This required detailed knowledge of the four basic types of mines in order to locate and destroy them ahead of the arrival of other ships. In order to remain afloat themselves, each minesweeper had to detect mines a certain distance ahead or on the sides and detonate them to make the harbors and shipping lanes safe.

Sheppard Holt

Sheppard Holt was a Radar Officer on the submarine Sea Lion II in World War II. He had received a Master's Degree in Mathematics at MIT and was working there at the Radiation Laboratory at the time of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He enlisted in the Submarine Service in the Navy in 1942 and was sent to MIT to study RADAR,

followed by Submarine School in Key West. He was then sent to join the Sea Lion near Midway Island. The submarine was highly successful in the South China Sea. It sank several ships at a time over many months and the crew received a citation from the Secretary of the Navy for their prowess. Sheppard Holt describes the importance of RADAR for their success. Included is raw footage of Allied Servicemen Prisoners of War being rescued at sea by the Sea Lion.

Daisy Ilich

Daisy Ilich grew up in Vienna. She was a school girl when Hitler annexed Austria, and her father was arrested and sent to a concentration camp. Her mother managed to obtain British immigration permits for Daisy and her younger brother, and soon the two of them traveled by train through Germany and Holland on their way to England. Daisy spent the war years as a student in that country.

Anne Larkin

Anne was born the youngest of 6 children in 1938. Her mother and father were immigrants from Italy. Anne describes the language and cultural issues her family faced during WWII.

Her oldest brother, Anthony joined the US Army Air Force in 1942. He was killed on his last flight in 1945. Another brother Frank joined the Army in 1943, fought in the Battle of the Bulge and was captured in 1944.

Anne tells the story of her two brother's experiences in WWII and the effect on her family, especially her mother, from the perspective of a young girl.

As an adult, Anne describes how the memories of WWII continued to affect her family. Her brother Frank is now 88 years and has only recently described his POW experiences in detail.

John Mannarino

John Mannarino, already a practicing lawyer, joined the army in World War II as an interpreter, and was assigned to a colonel in Italy. He was the colonel's receptionist and found his duties were sometimes more personal than military. John has been a life-long opera lover. You will find this video has a bit of humor in it along with the inevitable arias.

Suzanne Newton

Suzanne Newton joined the Waves soon after she graduated from Smith College. She and several college friends, all of whom felt the need to participate in the War effort, decided to sign up together. They were sent to Washington, D.C. and found a place to live together. Suzanne was assigned to a decoding unit located in a building belonging to the U.S.Navy. There was a battery of machines, each run by an enlisted woman. Suzanne, as their officer, was in charge of the young women. The machines were receiving and decoding secret **Suzanne Newton, Cont.**

messages, but that was not at all apparent to anyone there. Although she knew this was top secret, Suzanne found out the details only after the War had ended!

Ralph Ragan

Ralph Ragan sums up his military career: "I went to school". Born in Ridgeway in the northwest corner of Missouri, Ralph matriculated in Electrical Engineering at the University of Missouri where he had two years of

ROTC in Cavalry (horse drawn caissons). After his sophomore year he went into the Navy V12 program and got his degree in engineering with honors in late 1944. Then to Midshipman school at the US Naval Academy, radar school at MIT, Electronic Mtce. School, finally joining the Seventh Fleet in the Pacific.

After leaving the service Ralph taught at the Naval Post Graduate School in Newport, RI, returning to MIT for a Masters Degree in Instrumentation. He then spent three years at Raytheon before returning to MIT where he became Deputy Director of the Instrumentation Lab. Ralph spent a career doing military work including Apollo, Polaris, guidance and classified fields.

Robert Sawyer

Robert B. Sawyer (Bob) was interested in airplanes from the time of Lindbergh's trans-Atlantic flight in 1927. He built model airplanes, including those that were gasoline powered, up through high school. He wanted to fly but his eyesight wouldn't permit it.

Bob went to Aero Tech Institute in Los Angeles, which trained people for the airplane industry. Fortunately he was hired by a division of United Aircraft Corp. in Stratford, Conn. as a Wing Inspector. Chance Vought built the Corsair Navy Fighter Plane and **Robert Sawyer, Cont.**

Bob was soon on the final assembly line as Inspector. His deferment ended in May, 1944 when he joined the Navy.

Ultimately Bob was sent to Norfolk Naval Air Station reassembling aircraft engines that had been damaged. On V.E. Day the operation was shut down and after leaving the service Bob returned to his old job at Chance Vought.

Richard Smith

Richard (Dick) Smith worked as an embalmer's apprentice for nine months after high school. When war was declared Dick enlisted in the Navy and asked for medical duty. The Navy was critically short of enlisted medical personnel called pharmacist mates and when it was learned of his embalming experience he was immediately assigned, on the first day, to a ward in the Chelsea Naval Hospital starting at 5 P. M.

He was subsequently assigned to an LST and joined a convoy in Halifax for England. Maneuvers were carried out in English waters, one of which was attacked by German E boats resulting in the loss of 479 men. Dick was on the initial and subsequent landings in Normandy carrying troops, tanks and trucks to the beach and bringing wounded back to England.

Bill Stern

Bill Stern served in the US Army as artillery and radar specialist assigned to the Alaska Defense Command. He was first stationed in Sitka and later on Adak Island in the Aleutians. His job was radar detection, harbor entrance and aircraft control. Alaska was the base for the North Pacific combat fleet surveillance aircraft.

Daniele Stewart

Daniele Stewart was born in Alsace and spent most of the war in occupied Paris, becoming skilled in the difficulties of obtaining food under rationing and avoiding German soldiers in the crowded Metro.

Eventually she obtained her nursing degree, came to Boston on an exchange program and married an American

doctor.

Ned Thomas

Ned Thomas served in the US Navy from 1940 until after WWII. He was commissioned in March, 1941 and was married in June, 1941.

After Pearl Harbor Ned was assigned to a Destroyer. In 1942 he was sent to Mine Sweeping School, promoted to Lt. and transferred to Newfoundland. In 1943 he was assigned to the Mediterranean where he served as the Executive Officer and Assistant to the Squadron Commander mine sweeping the harbors in preparation for the invasions of Anzio and S. France. In August, 1945 Ned was promoted to Lt. Commander.

His second son was born in September 1945 and he decided return to civilian life to raise his family after the war. At the time of this interview, Ned was 93 years old and married 71 years.

Eleanor Voorhies

Eleanor Voorhies was a nurse in the Yale University Hospital team which cared for the wounded from the islands in the Pacific from 1943 to the end of the Second World War. The first hospital was in a thousand-bed building in New Zealand. Wounded servicemen were brought there from the Mariana Islands. As a Public Health nurse, Ms Voorhies' responsibility was the care of those with communicable diseases, such as malaria, or suffering skin wounds and insect bites from the swamps.

When the islands were freed, the entire hospital staff moved to a Quonset hut hospital on the island of Saipan where they were able to continue their mission closer to the areas of the fighting.

Caleb Warner

When the European war started, Caleb, joined the Marine Engineering Program at U of Michigan, and the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps, a way to combine love of the sea with military service. On graduation as an Ensign, he was assigned to the USS Melville, a repair ship stationed in Scotland where his engineering training proved important.

Caleb Warner, Cont.

After repairing ships damaged on the north Atlantic convoys, the Melville relocated to Portland on the English Channel in preparation for the allied invasion. After D-day, his ship was extremely busy repairing damaged vessels returning from the invasion beaches. When no longer needed, the ship returned to Brooklyn for refitting for the Pacific, but the war was over before she was ready.

Caleb was discharged in late 1945, and maintained his interest and participation in maritime affairs throughout his career.

Mary Welch

Mary Welch was in Europe traveling with her family when the Germans invaded Poland. She provides first hand descriptions from the perspective of a young American woman as the family traveled one step ahead of the Germans in the late 1930s. Their return trip to the United States was on a Polish ship which was later sunk by German submarines.

Mary describes her life as a young married woman with one child during World War II and the role her husband and other family members played during the War.

Harry Wildasin

Harry Wildasin was a Captain in the U.S. Marine Corps who served with valor and distinction while leading a platoon in the battle of Iwo Jima, one of the most important engagements of the war in the Pacific. He was one of the youngest officers in the Marines and was involved in fierce fighting with the Japanese that liberated the island after taking heavy casualties. He fought until he was wounded and evacuated. and was much decorated for his heroic efforts.

Harry could have had a career in the Marines, but chose to return to civilian life and became an outstanding agricultural scientist