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Robert Sheeks
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Interview conducted by Daniel Martinez
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Interviewee: Robert Sheeks
Military Rank:
Interviewer: Daniel Martinez Saipan
Date: June 14th, 1994

--00:00:00 - 00:00:15
[Audio Description] Robert Sheeks is a Caucasian American man with black framed glasses wearing a white button-up shirt. Behind him is a palm frond and a black background.

--00:00:23 - 00:00:51
Q: The following oral history interview was conducted on June 14, 1994, at approximately 9 a.m. by the National Park Service, American Memorial Park, in cooperation with the Marianas Cablevision. The subject is Robert Sheeks, USMC retired major, veteran of the Marianas campaign. The interviewer is Daniel Martinez, historian, USS Arizona Memorial.

--00:00:51 - 00:01:02
Q: Well, good morning, Robert. How are you?

Sheeks: Good morning, Daniel.

Q: And I understand I'll call you Bob from now on, right?

Sheeks: Do people call you Daniel or Dan?

Q: Daniel's fine, or whatever you feel comfortable with.

Sheeks: Okay, Daniel.

--00:01:02 - 00:01:45
Q: For the record, would you just please state your full name and could you spell that last name for us?

Sheeks: Yes, my full name is Robert, middle name is Bruce, I just used B, the initial, Sheeks, unusual name, it's S-H-E-E-K-S.

Q: And what's the cultural background, ethnic background there?

Sheeks: Well, my father's family came from Holland, and I think when they emigrated to the US, probably the immigration officials spelled it any old way, and I think it was originally something like Van Skecht.

Q: I see.

Sheeks: So it came out that way.

--00:01:45 - 00:04:17

Q: And where were you born?

Sheeks: I happened to be born in Shanghai, China. My father had gone out as a businessman originally with the Ford Motor Company, and I grew up and went to the American school in Shanghai, left there at age 13, and went to high schools and college in the US.

Q: And what date were you born on? What was the full date?

Sheeks: It was a long time ago. It was April 8, 1922. So I'm 72 years old, and it was 50 years ago at age 22 that I first visited Saipan.

Q: What were your parents' names?

Sheeks: My father's name was George Lamar Sheeks, and my mother's name was Molly Harris Gordon Sheeks.

Q: And did you have any brothers and sisters?

Sheeks: Yes, I have one brother still living. He's two years older. His name is George Harris Sheeks, and he lives in San Diego, California.

Q: So there was just two in your family? You had two boys?

Sheeks: Yes, just two kids, two boys.

Q: And so your mother and father passed away?

Sheeks: Yes, my mother passed away in Shanghai, was buried there. And my father died some years later in Spokane, Washington, where I'd gone to high school.

Q: How long did they live?

Sheeks: They were elderly as parents when my brother and I were born, and my father lived to be in his late 80s. Mother died, I think, when she was in her late 40s. I went to visit her at the cemetery in Shanghai a few years ago, and it's been turned into a very nice park. The cemetery's gone.

Q: Is that right?

Sheeks: Yeah.

Q: So where's your mother's grave site? Somewhere in that park?

Sheeks: Well, yes, it was in that park, but when the Communists took over, they removed many Chinese graves from all over the whole countryside because land is short. And this was a foreign cemetery, so they certainly weren't going to keep it. But the trees are there, except they've become huge and giant, and it's a very nice park. So I felt somewhat relieved that even though the cemetery's gone.

Q: Your mom's resting in a beautiful place.

Sheeks: Yeah, in a beautiful park.

--00:04:18 - 00:05:18

Q: You say you grew up in Shanghai. Would you call that your hometown?

Sheeks: Yes, and I like to think of it as a hometown. It's a very fascinating, dynamic city, and I think it's going to become the leading city in China again one of these days. And I stayed interested in Chinese, kept up the language, and later studied Chinese in college, and I kept it up. So I still sort of think of my second home as being Shanghai, but really I'm a Californian. Marin County.

Q: Oh, so when you left Shanghai, you settled up near San Francisco?

Sheeks: Well, it was not that direct. I went to school on the east coast of the U.S., and then I was away during the war, spent a lot of time living in the Pacific. But when I did establish a home base, it was in California.

--00:05:20 - 00:08:18

Q: You went to grammar school then at the American School in Shanghai?

Sheeks: That's right.

Q: And then from there you left, and where did you go to school?

Sheeks: Well, we first went to Southern California where my father had a farm property. We later moved to Washington State where he had another farm property, and I went to high school in Washington State, graduated from high school in Spokane, Washington. And I had joined the Marine Corps Reserve because I'd been very impressed with the 4th Marines in Shanghai, which was a famous battalion.

Q: Chinese, China Marines?

Sheeks: China Marines, yeah. They were so handsome, you know, on the parades. And so I had it in mind to- maybe I would like to be a Marine. And as fate would have it, I joined the Marine Reserve in Spokane and served one summer in Bremerton, Washington. In fact, I had joined the active reserve when I graduated from high school, but- and I thought I was going to go into military service, but much to my amazement, I got scholarship to Harvard. I'd taken Harvard scholarship exams and I was convinced that I'd failed. I knew I had failed. There were two days of hellish exams. So I just gave up. I put it out of my mind. And some teachers

had urged me to take these exams. And I was on duty at Bremerton Navy Yards when I got this announcement from Harvard saying that if I was interested still, they would like me to come. And they were providing the scholarship. So I went off to Harvard instead of a conditional release from the Marines.

Q: The reserve unit?

Sheeks: From the reserve unit.

Q: Must have been a bright young fellow to make it to Harvard.

Sheeks: I never thought so, but I guess I must have got something right.

Q: Were you there at the time Jack Kennedy was there?

Sheeks: No. I think that he was- No, I don't-

Q: You don't recall meeting him? He was there in the late 30s at, as they say, Harvard.

Sheeks: That's right. You've got it exactly right. I went there in 1940.

Q: Okay.

Sheeks: The fall of 1940.

Q: He was- I think he was out by then. I think.

Sheeks: I think you're right. I lived in the same room that Franklin D. Roosevelt had occupied.

Q: Is that right? You boarded in the same room?

Sheeks: Yeah. They put the names of the people who lived in these rooms, you see, and so-

Q: It's quite a tradition.

Sheeks: Yeah. It's kind of a funny tradition.

--00:08:18 - 00:11:03

Q: So the war- the clouds of war are gathering while you're at school.

Sheeks: Absolutely. In fact, they had been declared a limited emergency and reserves were being called up. That's what would have happened to me if I weren't in college. And the second summer, when I was a sophomore, I had gone back to Spokane and had taken an Army Air Corps, we didn't have an Air Force at the time, a reserve program and got a private pilot's license and was in the Army Air Corps Reserve. And when Pearl Harbor occurred, I was interviewed suddenly by a Colonel Hindmarsh, I mean Commander Hindmarsh, Navy, from Washington, D.C. because he knew that I had a Chinese and some Japanese language background and they were scraping the bottom of the barrel for anybody who could go into language services.

Q: Now, when you were at Harvard, did you carry on that education in language? Japanese language?

Sheeks: Yes, I did.

Q: Would it be fair to say that you perfected it?

Sheeks: No, no, no, no, far from it. When I was recruited right after Pearl Harbor, they sent us to Berkeley, California. There was a school at Pearl Harbor which was transfe- the people transferred over, the Navy Language School, to California. And when the Japanese were evacuated from California to the inland, it was moved to Boulder, Colorado. And I finished the Navy language training there, intelligence and Japanese language, but I had said that I wanted to be commissioned in the Marine Corps rather than the Navy. So that's how I got to become a Marine officer.

Q: So they commissioned you as a lieutenant?

Sheeks: A second lieutenant, so I'd been a private in the reserve, and then after some college and Japanese Navy language training, then I was commissioned, went to San Diego and was shipped out to the Pacific.

Q: Now, did you have to redo basic training?

Sheeks: Some, yes. There was some basic training at Camp Pendleton at a place called Greens Farm near San Diego, and this was one of these rush training programs.

Q: Now, the Marines, that's a pretty tough outfit. That training is pretty rigorous.

Sheeks: Yeah, it was very tough, and they made a point of it. You ended up hating a lot of people, not only the enemy.

--00:11:07 - 00:13:31

Q: With Pearl Harbor broken out and prior to that, you must have kept kind of a perspective on what was happening in China. Did you have kind of an interpretation of how you felt the world scene was going to unfold prior to Pearl Harbor? Did Pearl Harbor come as kind of a surprise to you or?

Sheeks: It did come as a surprise, but I was in Shanghai in 1932. I left there in ‘35 at the age of 13, but the Japanese invaded Manchuria, and they also invaded Shanghai at that time, and I personally saw the evidence of war and their atrocities. They were a very, very cruel, militaristic nation at the time.

Q: What kind- You saw some atrocities?

Sheeks: Well, I didn't go and watch any atrocities being committed, but there were photographs at the time that were published by the newspapers and journals, and the Japanese did all kinds of things to terrify the Chinese to keep them from resisting, and all kinds of needless things. They would tie up a whole bunch of people and douse them with fuel, you know, gasoline, and just ignite them, or they would shoot a whole lot of people needlessly, and so I had a tremendous hatred for the Japanese. And curiously, when I started studying

Japanese language and learning, our teachers were Nisei, and I learned more about Japan. My terrible youthful hatred sort of subsided, and I got a much better perspective.

Q: Some of these Japanese officers and soldiers that did this were an aberration of some of the Japanese culture?

Sheeks: I think so, but they did have for many years a militaristic country, just like Germany had turned militaristic, or Italy.

Q: Yeah, during the 20s, this rise of militarism in Japan-

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: -and this so-called, maybe overused, Code of Bushido.

Sheeks: That's right, that's right. It was an aberration, but they had a lot of cultural roots on which to base it, you know, with the samurai traditions.

Q: Sure. Going back to the Edo period.

Sheeks: Oh yes, that's right.

--00:13:32 - 00:16:05

Q: It must fascinate you to see the Japanese today, i .e. the government, certain officials in their government, not all Japanese officials, but certain officials, refuting that history and saying that didn't occur, that it's almost as if the Holocaust, those people that say the Holocaust didn't occur, and these people fall from power. How do you feel about the Japanese, some of the Japanese refusal to come to grips with their own history?

Sheeks: Well, that is all quite recent. It's just happened really in recent months, and it's come as a shock because I've met a younger generation Japanese, and they seem to be, you know, an entirely different type of mentality. They’re-

Q: How's that? How are they different?

Sheeks: Well, they don't seem to be militaristic, they seem to be far less arrogant, far less convinced that they're superior chosen people. They do look down on, still on Southeast Asians, and to some extent-

Q: There's a word for that, isn't there?

Sheeks: You mean the superiority complex? I suppose so. I'm not sure exactly what it would be, but they have a lot of not very polite words for the people in Southeast Asia, which, you know, like *namakemon*, lazy people, and they feel that a lot of them sit around, wait for papayas to fall, and that type of thing, whereas they regard themselves as extremely diligent and-

Q: Industrious.

Sheeky: Industrious, which they are. But this recent event of the, was it the foreign minister who-

Q: Japanese minister.

Sheeks: Japanese minister who tried to say that the rape of Nanking practically didn't occur, was greatly exaggerated, and so on. That is disturbing, because it sounds as if there's some resurgence of this old attitude.

Q: A lot of historians like myself are very concerned about this revisionism that crops up.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: And to me, it obviously creates barriers in which understanding between new nations are stymied by people's refusal to understand their own history.

Sheeks: Definitely. I'm concerned now that if things don't go well in Russia, things aren't going well, there'll be a revival of militaristic-

Q: When people become desperate.

Sheeks: That’s right.

--00:16:06 - 00:17:45

Q: Well, let's talk about when people become desperate. The Pacific War was a tragic war for everyone involved, and the cream of American youth came out here to retake these islands, and you were part of that.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: And you had a very unique role in all of that, and reading your papers and such, that I'd like to just, let's kind of capture what the uniqueness of your role was because there isn't many individuals that I've run across that were sent into the field specifically to do what you were told to do.

Sheeks: I thought it was fascinating. I mean, war is war, but the work that I was sent to do was extremely interesting, and it got me into very interesting situations.

Q: How did that all start, and what was the genesis of how you came to be part of the, what was his title, the Japanese translator?

Sheeks: Japanese Language and Intelligence Officer. And I was with the 2nd Marine Division at the division headquarters, rather than at the regimental or battalion level. And I was first sent out to New Zealand, and immediately transferred to New Caledonia, which was where Admiral Halsey's headquarters were. My first job was to interrogate prisoners from Guadalcanal, and that was very interesting. And we also had some prisoners who were from sunken ships, which our Navy had sunk.

--00:17:45 - 00:20:49

Q: Do you remember the very first Japanese prisoner you interviewed? Do you remember that? Can you tell me a little bit about that?

Sheeks: Well, I'd rather- he was a fairly routine Army prisoner from Guadalcanal, but I'd rather mention something that I think is extremely interesting. It was not the first one, but a little later, the ship which had taken me from Wellington, New Zealand to Noumea, New Caledonia, was sunk several days later by a combination of two of our US patrol planes and a New Zealand Corvette. Twelve Japanese survived from this Japanese submarine which sank our ship that I had been on. Of these twelve, six, half of them, died overnight coming into Noumea. The other six I helped interrogate. It turned out that they were on a submarine which was the largest submarine that had ever existed up until that time. We didn't know anything about it. It had a 180-man crew. It had a airplane, waterproof airplane, seaplane hanger on the deck.

Q: Big I-class submarine.

Sheeks: Big I-class, absolute, and I- We didn't know about the E-go, the I-class submarines until then. After I got a little information about them, a submarine senior officer, I think he was an admiral from Pearl Harbor, flew out to direct the interrogation. And it turned out this was the submarine that had shelled the Santa Barbara oil storage area in California, the first time the US was directly under attack.

Q: Right.

Sheeks: And he was a brilliant submarine officer, the American, and by finding out what was their route and their fueling stops, he was able to find out about where its sister ship, another I-class, would be going, and a killer squadron was sent out by the US Navy, intercepted it and sank it somewhere out in the Pacific. Yeah, it was fascinating.

Q: So that also not only gives us information regarding a new weapon, but it also aids us in defeating the enemy at sea?

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: So the intelligence part of this is extremely important?

Sheeks: Yeah, intelligence of various sorts played a really important role, and lack of it played an important role. We were a little short of it at Tarawa on tides and so forth.

Q: Were you at Tarawa?

Sheeks: Yes. That was my-

Q: It was a terrible battle.

Sheeks: It was a terrible battle. It was only 76 hours compared with what happened here in Saipan.

--00:20:49 - 00:22:25

Q: That's right. Can you give me a view of your role at Tarawa?

Sheeks: Yes, I was a, you know, a Japanese language officer with 2nd Marine Division Headquarters, and that first day, things were not going well. And about midday, General Hermley, who was the- I think the Assistant Division Commander, was sent in with a few people, including myself, and my job was to catch some Japanese and find out what's going on. Which was-

Q: Catch some Japanese?

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: On that small atoll, right?

Sheeks: Yeah, and, I mean, they didn’t-

Q: For the audience that perhaps doesn't understand the humor of this, why don't you explain what the humor in all of this is?

Sheeks: Well, you know, all hell is breaking loose, and a lot of our people were being killed, and it was quite a job just to survive. But when you're given the instruction, very briefly, you

know, go in and find some Japanese prisoners and find out what they know. So we went in, our boat was hit, we had to get out of it, get into an amphibian tractor which picked us up. We went on to a pier, and I started crawling in under the pier. A lot of our kids were wounded and dying under the pier.

--00:22:26 - 00:23:54

Q: Now was this the first time you were actually under fire?

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: What was that experience like?

Sheeks: Well, it was terrifying, but there's only one thing more terrifying, is to let anybody else know that you're terrified, so-

Q: Is that part of the Marine Corps training?

Sheeks: I think it's human. That- I suppose in China they'd call it losing face, you see, but you have to show that you're brave. And so humor and all kinds of things help, but once people are wounded, you know, it's a little different. And here I was a lieutenant, I was brand new, green.

Q: Twenty-two years old?

Sheeks: Twenty-one at the time, and green as a leaf, you know, and so when I was crawling under this pier, you'd say, Lieutenant, Lieutenant, you know, can you help me? And I didn't have medicine, I didn't have enough morphine, cigarettes.

Q: All these young guys, and even younger, are dying around you.

Sheeks: Yeah, there were seventeen, eight- some of them lied to get in, you know, but they were all incredibly brave. And everybody was scared as hell, but you just don't want to show. You don't want to show it to anybody.

Q: I remember seeing that pier in photographs. I know what you're talking about.

Sheeks: Yeah.

Q: Long, narrow pier.

Sheeks: That's right, that's right.

--00:23:54 - 00:25:04

Q: You crawled under there, and did you accomplish your mission?

Sheeks: Not until the next day.

Q: So you spent the night on the beach?

Sheeks: Yes, and it turned out that there was a great big metal float of some sort at the end of the pier, and we'd gone right by it, but it turned out later that a Japanese had got into it, and it was a sniper, and he was firing at us from behind. Nobody knew where it was coming from, and finally when he was located, of course, he was killed. But it was utter confusion, and we got very few prisoners, and some of them were actually not fully military. They were sort of labor battalion, and there were some Korean labor battalion, but we got a few, and I went back to Pearl Harbor with all of them on board a ship and had interrogated them on the way back to Pearl Harbor. We got some useful information, mostly about how they constructed the defenses and so forth.

--00:25:04 - 00:28:14

Q: These defenses, which is, I think, essential in understanding Pacific War history, in many cases, this was the first example of the Japanese using these type of defenses, and also, correct me if I'm wrong, but I remember that the American forces were somewhat interested in the way that they triangulated, cross-fired, and covered beaches.

Sheeks: You're very well informed. You're the first person I've run into in all these years who knows about this. One of the things that happened to me, I was sent to CINCPAC, Admiral Nimitz's headquarters at Pearl Harbor, to work on the defenses of these atolls and islands, and

we had aerial photographs, but we took a lot of still photos of all the defenses at Tarawa, and they used many, many methods, and the triangulation, cross-fire, plus using bunkers, concrete, and lots of coconut log placements stapled together with huge steel staples and so forth. And I helped produce two volumes that were published there at CINCPAC on defense installations of the Japanese in the Pacific Islands, all illustrated, and lots of technical drawings as well, and aerial photographs. I don't know, I'd love to get hold of a copy.

Q: I've run across some of these monographs now, but they do exist, and they're very interesting because it was kinda- they were classified, of course, but they've now been declassified. These things exist, and they do exist in the archives.

Sheeks: Oh, I'll have to look them up. I was working right next to a unit called FRUPAC, Fleet Radio Unit Pacific, and that's where they broke the Japanese naval code, and so that's how we had some advantage at the Battle of Midway, and so-

Q: Right. I've interviewed some of those people.

Sheeks: Oh, really?

Q: And you worked down in the basement of the old administration building, and Joe Roachford, Matt Rupp, were all down there.

Sheeks: That's right. They were all- that’s right.

Q: And when I was a young man, about 13, I went to a dinner for Joe Roachford-

Sheeks: Really?

Q: -and I had no idea who he was, but Walter Lord had just come out with his book, which was called Incredible Victory, and he featured him there, and of course Joe's story is a tragic naval story because what happened to him, but he was later, after he passed away, honored the way he should have been. That whole beehive of activity, I've often wondered, you know, if that administration building could tell stories, it would tell your story as well, about

working on these books and volumes that were going to be so valuable to the oncoming campaign.

Sheeks: Yes.

--00:28:14 - 00:30:48

Q: So after Tarawa, your next action would be where?

Sheeks: Well, it was Saipan. From Tarawa, went back to Hawaii, and the division was based at Kamuela, but I was sent to work at Pearl, and we prepared leaflets to drop at Saipan.

Q: Why don't you show us some of those leaflets? Can you just bring some of those?

Sheeks: Yeah, yeah. They seem very amateurish now, but the best we could do at the time. We did all kinds of things, thinking that maybe we could soften up the population, military or semi-military at least.

Q: Why don't you go through those, and just put one in front of you so the camera can see it.

Sheeks: Oh yeah, alright.

Q: And then why don't you talk about it for just a moment.

Sheeks: Alright. Well, this one has these two big red characters superimposed. Joshiki in Japanese, or Changshi in Chinese. It means common sense. And what it's trying to do is to tell the Japanese, you know, use your common sense, and understand what really is going on in the Pacific, and what's the situation in Japan, and don't think that there's any value in resisting, and so forth.

Q: And these leaflets were meant to be dropped over the enemy, right?

Sheeks: Yes, and they were. They were dropped at Saipan. How many were picked up, and they might have used some for toilet paper, they were probably short of it. But anyway, these were dropped by spotter plane. This one tried to attract people by saying, military secret.

Q: So the red characters right there say military secret, right?

Sheeks: That's right. Just like the advertisers-

Q: They say free automobile, you know, you're going to look at that ad, right?

Sheeks: That's right. And so this is top secret military, you see. So they would pick it up and read it, and it would tell them what's really happening in Japan, and what they are not being told, and that the war really is being lost, and so forth.

--00:30:48 - 00:33:03

Q: That's interesting. What's that one say?

Sheeks: Well, this one here is actually in Korean, and it's trying to disaffect the Koreans, many of whom were here.

Q: As laborers.

Sheeks: As laborers, and some were semi-military and so on. Yeah, been integrated into the military, and it refers to the Japanese occupation of Korea, and the Cairo Declaration, which said that Korea is going to be made an independent country, and appeal to Korean patriotism, and so forth.

Q: How interesting that you, too, as a historian yourself, we look back and we see that the issue with Korea is unresolved after 200 years. And it's on a lot of people's minds, even today.

Sheeks: Absolutely. But anyhow, they're not under the Japanese anymore, and this was appealing to independence. And I met a Korean doctor here yesterday through Guy Gabaldon, and showed him this Korean one. And he said, oh, the Korean government will be very interested to see this because it refers to independence, and so forth. So anyway, I'm going to give him a copy.

Q: Okay.

Sheeks: This is another one, which is a letter from- this is not real. It's not a real letter. It's a letter purportedly by a Japanese prisoner of the U.S., who had been in the Aleutians, and the Marshals, and so on, and had been captured. He was now in an American camp being well treated, and so forth. And he's appealing to his comrades.

Q: To give up?

Sheeks: To give up. And it's pointless to resist, and they really are being treated- a lot of other prisoners from different Japanese areas, and they're all being treated very well. You know, that kind of thing.

Q: Great.

Sheeks: I don't know how effective they were, but we had several other kinds I don't have. One of them was a surrender pass, saying that if you turn this in, you'll get water and medicine, be well treated.

--00:33:03 - 0:33:56
Q: So you were preparing these leaflets in Hawaii, in preparation for the invasion. What else were you preparing?

Sheeks: Incidentally, these were printed by the Hawaii Advertiser.

Q: Oh, the Honolulu Advertiser?

Sheeks: Honolulu Advertiser newspaper. And they were wonderful people. They never charged anything for it. They produced thousands and thousands of them, provided the paper and the printing services. Then we took them back to Kamuela and got them ready for dropping by.

Q: So the Honolulu Advertiser has a lot to do- has a connection to Saipan.

Sheeks: Oh, absolutely. And I wish I could remember the names of the people, but they were generous and thoughtful.

Q: Well, I can get those for you, because I have the old newspapers that have all of the people and what they worked for.

Sheeks: My goodness.

Q: So we'll work on that a little.

Sheeks: Yeah. Well, they contributed to the Saipan effort.

Q: Well, that's great.

Sheeks: Yeah.

--00:33:56 - 00:35:59

Q: So what else do you have there to show us?

Sheeks: Well, the preparatory stuff. We tried to help in every way we could. We produced a little thing about Saipan. Nobody knew much about Saipan and-

Q: So this was like a fedora's guide to Saipan?

Sheeks: That's right. And this was distributed to all of the troops in the 2nd Marine Division after we had embarked and were on our way here because it was still a top secret where we were going.

Q: So the fellows would be laying on the decks of the invasion craft and be reading those. I've seen newsreels. Are they talking about that?

Sheeks: Yeah, that's right. And, you know, it tells about that. And then this was produced by the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area. Everything was abbreviated in those days.

Q: It had acronyms, right?

Sheeks: JIKHOA, which is a funny name. And this one has some Japanese language phrases and CHAMORRO. This is a whole list of CHAMORRO vocabulary, CHAMORRO terms and so on. And maps of-

Q: Map of the island?

Sheeks: Saipan and Tinian and so forth.

Q: Can you just hold that up right in front of us so we can get a picture of that? Hold it right in front of you.

Sheeks: Right in front of me? Okay.

Q: There we go.

Sheeks: This one is called Memo on the Marianas. And this one was just simply called Saipan.

Q: Wonderful.

Sheeks: Yeah. Then we had all kinds of other stuff by way of preparation. This was called a patrol card.

Q: Who would get one of those?

Sheeks: Everybody would get one. I don't know whether they kept them. And that's just in case they ran into somebody because we had not enough interpreters. Very few.

--00:35:59 - 00:37:17

Q: How many interpreters were here on the island at the time of the invasion?

Sheeks: Really trained people, I'd say not more than a dozen. But then we had some kind of supplementary people who would know a little bit. And we prepared quite a bit of literature for them. But this was to- for anybody. They could point to a phrase saying location of others, you know, and then use sign language.

Q: The scenario is I'm a marine out there and I have my patrol card. And coming through my lines is somebody who wants to surrender, obviously. I can pull that out and point that to the language.

Sheeks: You can let them read the Japanese or the Korean. And then when they get through reading that, you can see it says here, it directs them to show you on a map or by some other way where there are others hiding or in a position.

Q: I see.

Sheeks: And then it gives some instructions, what not to do, you know. And then it emphasized every prisoner turned in means a saving of American lives, time and materiel. It was a hard job to convince our own people.

--00:37:17 - 00:39:46

Q: And I want to talk a little bit about that. It's obvious that a lot of the marines that came here were trained to be very, very careful. There had been experiences prior to this in which Japanese appear to be surrendering and they have a hand grenade or perhaps a pistol or something. And the obvious thing is they're going to take their lives and take you with them. There were examples of that. And so how- what was the reality of using the patrol card versus convincing marines that nothing was going to happen to them?

Sheeks: Well, these patrol cards could also be used with civilians, anybody. I mean, men, women and children, they could know something. But the instances in which there was treachery were actually very few in number. You don't need many because it makes such an impression. There were lots of stories. How true they are, I don't know. At Guadalcanal, I heard that there would be three soldiers coming to give up. And one of them would have a light machine gun strapped on his back. So when they got closer, that guy in the middle dropped down on his knees and the other two operated the gun. Well, I've never found

anybody who could tell me that they saw it or it happened. But it's a very vital kind of an image.

Q: A vivid image, a terrifying one.

Sheeks: A terrifying image. And then you hear about people who are carrying grenades. And as soon as you are helping them, they pull the pin on the grenade. Well, I think it was very rare, but you don't need many to make a, you know, vivid impression.

Q: Right. And those type of stories would circulate quite rapidly.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: So it would cause fear. I know if I heard a story like that, I'd be fairly apprehensive.

Sheeks: And they were reinforced by the fact that a lot of people, I mean compared to what we think might have happened, did commit suicide in one way or another. So if they were willing to blow themselves up, commit suicide, it's easy to think they might try to take you with them.

--00:39:46 - 00:40:53

Q: Well, let's take us back to the invasion of Saipan.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: Prior to Saipan, obviously you were being briefed about what was going to happen. Did you have a chance to brief members of the 2nd Marine Division on capturing prisoners and how important that was?

Sheeks: Oh, yes. That was really one of my main jobs. And I had to go around and lecture. And we had some slide shows, and we'd try to work them in before the movie, you know.

Q: And there might not be much interest after Betty Grable thought this was great, right?

Sheeks: That's right. And that at least kept them in their seats. And then we had to be brief and then be gone. And often we're greeted with- I was greeted with some skepticism.

Q: How did the Marines show skepticism?

Sheeks: Okay, you take them. You want to talk with them? You take them.

Q: Okay. So you had banter going back and forth.

Sheeks: Oh, yeah. Yeah. There was a give and take. They'd say, oh, to hell with it, you know.

Q: Yeah.

Sheeks: And Marines have even more colorful language.

Q: I understand they do.

Sheeks: Yeah.

--00:40:53 - 00:42:35

Q: When the invasion of Saipan takes place, where are you? Are you on the first or second wave coming in? And what type of landing craft?

Sheeks: Oh, yes. No, I wasn't on the first or second wave. In fact, the first wave wasn't as bad as some later ones because, I don't know why. I think the Japanese were letting the-

Q: Kind of drawing them in?

Sheeks: Drawing them in. Yeah, letting them come in. And then hoping there'll be a big concentration of boats coming in. And then they would let loose. They had already triangulated and spotted out here off these beaches.

Q: Sure.

Sheeks: So I came in, I would say, maybe like about fourth wave on Red Beach 1, which was the northernmost beach. Unfortunately, the lead misled the sixth Marines too far north by, I don't know, 400 or 500 yards, and later they had to fall back. And that's when, incidentally, the big Banzai charge occurred. So it took the full brunt of that on Red Beach 1. But I came in about Red Beach 1 near Red Beach 2 in the early afternoon, or about midday, I think it was. And then they were firing over us and knocking out amphibian tractors and boats. And then there was quite a lot of beach mortar fire that we were taking.

--00:42:35 - 00:45:20

Q: In the National Park Service film we watched last night, they showed some actual footage of the landing craft just getting- just fire laying down on them, and it was just water geysers and things exploding. Was that the image you recall?

Sheeks: Yeah. Well, quite a bit of that happened before I arrived, and there were enough boats and amtracks already in and more coming so that there wasn't such a large percentage being hit. And I was very lucky, got onto the beach without difficulty, but was just coming up on the sand when some Marines who had made it earlier and were in a kind of enlarged hole, not a foxhole, bigger than a foxhole, took a direct hit with the mortar and disappeared. It was just smoke, you couldn't see anything. I mean, it's a total evaporation.

Q: You know, during any time during this Tarawa or Saipan actions, did you think, this is it, I'm not going to make it? Did you have time to think about that kind of stuff?

Sheeks: Yeah, there's a great deal of fear and, you know, a tight knot in your stomach, but you never feel that you're going to get it.

Q: It's always going to be the other guy.

Sheeks: Well, don't even think about that. You really think about what needs to be done, and that probably saves one's sanity because there's a lot to do and you keep pretty busy, and it's at night when it's worse.

Q: Why is that?

Sheeks: Well, first place, you're dead tired, you can't sleep properly, and you're staying awake for safety's sake, and it's harder to be brave at 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning than it is at 10 o'clock in the morning. And we were being fired on, and people were being hurt, and there was screaming and there was yelling for corpsman, and then we were asked- everybody was asked to help drag people to safety and so on. And I think that under those circumstances, you think, you know, you may well not survive until morning, but once the sun comes out, you feel better.

--00:45:20 - 00:47:45

Q: Now, you had a small cadre of people you worked with, correct?

Sheeks: Yes. I worked in the context of the 2nd Marine Division Intelligence Section.

Q: Did you set up a CP in the area?

Sheeks: Well, I didn't personally, but the D-2 Section was set up very near the division general's headquarters CP, and that was just in from Red Beach 1 and 2, and General Watson came in that evening, and he was right. I mean, the Marine tradition, especially 2nd Marine Division, is follow me. Forward men, I'll be there soon.

Q: I'm right behind you.

Sheeks: Right. Right behind you. I mean, the generals took terrible chances. They were right in there with everybody else.

Q: When did your job actually start? When did you actually start going out in the field and talking to the Japanese, and when did you arrange for these leaflets to be dropped? What was the whole schedule?

Sheeks: Well, the leaflet drops were not really done until about 2 days, 3 days later because we used the artillery spotting planes to do the leaflet drops, but we started to get some prisoners almost immediately, wounded soldiers and some civilians, and so I started talking to them the second day, well, the first full day.

Q: What were you finding out from them?

Sheeks: Kind of miscellaneous stuff. We tried to find out whether they knew anything about bunkers, where they were located, and what their fields of fire were. That was what we were most interested in.

Q: Were they able to give you some of that information?

Sheeks: Yes. Some of them said, yes, you have to go here, here, and then there's a big place and a bunch of soldiers there and so forth.

--00:47:47 - 00:49:42

Q: For those of us outside this realm of World War II history, we know that when our prisoners were captured, they were supposed to give name, rank and serial number and not divulge any military intelligence, according to the Geneva Convention.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: How was the Japanese soldier different?

Sheeks: Oh, that's a wonderful question. They were so different because they had been told that no Japanese has been captured. And if you were ever to give up, you would not be Japanese anymore. And so they couldn't at the same time say, now just in case you are captured, only give your name, rank and serial number. They couldn't do the two. And that's why when we got the Guadalcanal prisoners and the Navy picked up people from sea and so on and I was interrogating them in New Caledonia, it was quite easy to get information. But in the case of those Navy people, we separated them so they couldn't agree on a story, sort of like detective work. And I had the help of a Nisei there, which was very good. And I would pretend that I'm a proper military officer and the Nisei would be like a sergeant and the person would come in and he would shout in Japanese, attention, you know. And then I would start with name, rank and serial number, but then go on from there. And then your unit, you know, and where were you trained and what was your function and, you know, it all came tumbling out.

Q: That's not a structure they could identify with?

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: It was pretty much a charade that you're talking about. You created this-

Sheeks: Yes, that was, of course, a more formal thing in a prisoner of war camp.

--00:49:42 - 00:54:04
Q: Right. What was it like in the field?

Sheeks: In the field, it was a little different. Sometimes you were hiding with them from the firing from both sides.

Q: I see.

Sheeks: And if you had rescued the people, you know, and you'd give them a cigarette or a chocolate bar and say, look, we're going to get you safely over the camp. First thing they wanted was water. Our biggest ally, in some sense, was that it was very hot and dry in the middle of June that year. And it's pretty dry right now. I mean, but now there's a water supply. But then there wasn't any. And some of the prized possessions were just a beer bottle where they could, you know, get some water and carry it.

Q: Right.

Sheeks: And when we would find refuge areas of theirs, one of the things we did, it's cruel, is destroy all the water containers and the corrugated iron for catching water inside. And people were dying of thirst in many cases. And so the first thing they wanted was water. And so we would-

Q: That was a bargaining chip.

Sheeks: Well, not exactly, but it was a way of establishing that we had some concern for them. Here, look, drink some water. You need some bandages. And, you know, how about a little food?

Q: So this compassion that you would show, that would loosen, make them comfortable to speak to you.

Sheeks: Yeah. Not all of them. Some were tough nuts, you know, and we captured them because they were wounded and they wanted to be killed. And one fellow especially said he wanted us to shoot him. And we said- what I said is, no, you can die. I have no objection to your dying, but first you've got to dig your grave. So he gave him one of these little trenching tools. And he dug- he started, you know, and then he said, when he was getting a little tired, he gave him a cigarette. I'd say, it's not deep enough. And it was very tough because it's mostly coral rock there. And then he'd sweat and then he'd wait for a while, you know, and then go back to work again.

Q: Amazing.

Sheeks: Yeah, and so.

Q: So you distracted him.

Sheeks: Yeah, and just, you know, wore him out digging his grave. We're going to help you do what you want, but look, you've got to do your part. Finally, he got the idea, you know, and there were some others who had been captured in the camp and they spoke with him. But he was very, very proud, you know. So he was then-

Q: Was he an officer or enlisted man?

Sheeks: I think he was maybe a-

Q: Sergeant?

Sheeks: Yeah, kind of warrant officer and so forth. And right to the end, he was arrogant as hell, but he went to the camp and he survived.

Q: Incredible.

Sheeks: I wasn't going to-

Q:What would be a, and speak to me in Japanese, what would be a typical greeting or something that you might say to them in Japanese if you knew there was someone out there and you wanted to make contact with them?

Sheeks: Well, the simplest thing which we told everybody to say is a kind of a command to come out. *Detekoi*. It's not very polite. You know, you would normally say, *detekoi kudasaimasu*, you know, please come out. We didn't do that. We just gave the imperative, you know, come on out. And well, just all the normal things you would have to say.

Q: Besides that, was there something about come out unarmed or-

Sheeks: Yes, *te wo agete*. That means raise your hands, you know, come out raising your hands.

Q: Was there also a phrase that you won't be harmed or did you give a chance to say any of that to them?

Sheeks: Oh, sure. We had all those phrases. You will be safe and so on. But mostly it was, you know, show yourself, raise your hands. We will not shoot you.

--00:54:05 - 00:55:04

Q: How many prisoners did you get in those first few days?

Sheeks: Well, you know, I don't really like to call everybody a prisoner. A lot of people really were refugees. And there are people who think that, you know, they were capturing prisoners. They were just bringing in people who were giving up.

Q: Well, you know, Bob-

Sheeks: Real prisoners who were resisting and so on. I suppose maybe I brought in 20, 30, but of the other type who were on the verge of giving up and maybe were talked out of resisting any further, perhaps a couple of hundred, something like that. But refugees, there were thousands.

--00:55:04 - 00:57:34

Q: One of the things I think is most misleading, and if we're not able to speak to individuals like you, is you see photographs of so-called prisoners.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: And you made it abundantly clear that these people were dressed in uniforms because that was their clothing. And for a variety of reasons there was also- the Japanese had the idea that the populace here was supposed to be like a people's army.

Sheeks: That's right.

Q: Can you elaborate a little bit more about that?

Sheeks: Yes. Well, once the war was going badly for the Japanese, Saipan was not well supplied with consumer goods, you know. They didn't have very much clothing and so on. So the labor troops were issued khaki clothing and the bushes, very rough, pandanus, screw pines, you know, and that kind of thing, lots of coral around. So a lot of them used these patis, you know, those wrapping around the legs.

Q: Like leggings.

Sheeks: Leggings, yeah. And then there were discarded military jackets or caps, you know, kids and men wore them. Even women wore discarded military clothing because better than the stuff they had. So it was to their disadvantage. When we- after we realized that here in, for Tinian, I had leaflets dropped telling all the people to wear white and I have some photos

of people. And when we finally got there and things were calmed down, we had whole columns of people along the road, all wearing white clothes.

Q: So that information was getting through?

Sheeks: Yeah, it got through at Tinian, but we didn't realize that they might be wearing military colored clothing. And then some people probably took, during the campaign, even took clothing off of dead soldiers just to have some kind of garments.

Q: White?

Sheeks: No, no, no.

Q: Oh, just garments to wear?

Sheeks: To wear. And when it's khaki colored, you know, all of our boys thought, these are troops.

--00:57:34 - 00:60:12

Q: How was Saipan different than Tarawa in your view?

Sheeks: Well, in most ways it's totally different. Tarawa, physically a little low atoll. I think the highest point was about six feet above sea level. It was a coconut studded little place and it was- the whole thing was a fort. The Japanese thought a million men couldn't take it. And I can see why they thought that. And it was just hot firefighting from beginning to end. And then it was over. Here we have a high island. It went on for weeks. And then after it was declared taken around July 9th, something like that, I told Colonel Tom Colley, the D2 of our division, I said, you know, I think there are a lot of Japanese still up in the hills. And he told the D3, the operations chief, Colonel David Shoup, who later became commandant of the Marine Corps, what I said. So I was called in and he was skeptical. He said, well, how many have you seen? I said, well, I've seen several here and several there. He said, well, maybe there are several because it seemed as if our three divisions had marched shoulder to shoulder from one end of the island to the other end of the island. How could there be anybody left?

Q: Was that in fact a reality that we had done that?

Sheeks: No, it was a totally unreal thing. And how so many people escaped detection, I don't know. I was asked to put in an estimate. I said, three to five hundred left. And I think we got out something like 7,000.

Q: Is that right?

Sheeks: Something like that. I mean, there were thousands of people who hadn't been found in caves or at night they had infiltrated back, hidden behind our lines, and we weren't all that eager to go into every nook and cranny.

Q: That terrain over there, which I've seen, is very advantageous to people that want to hide, because of the caves and the very structure of the island on that part there.

Sheeks: Yes.

--00:60:12 - 01:07:21

Q: Can you shed some light? There was one thing that we mentioned before we got in here, and you wanted to set the record straight on. And that has to do with the people that surrendered.

Sheeks: Do you mean- We mentioned a couple of things when we were chatting. One was about the number of suicides.

Q: Yes, yes. That's what I'm getting at.

Sheeks: Oh, I see. Well, if you see a hundred people jumping off cliffs, and a dozen families with little kids, you know, jumping off cliffs, you really think the world's coming to an end. I mean, it's so dramatic and so moving, but it can easily give you a misimpression.

Q: Especially when it's captured on film.

Sheeks: That's right. And then we had a lot of photography going on, and we had an outstanding combat correspondent who worked for Time magazine, Bob Sherrod, who wrote a major article for Time, which was questioning whether all of the Japanese in Japan would be committing suicide if we were to invade.

Q: Do you think that that article by Mr. Sherrod had an influence on the decision to drop the bomb?

Sheeks: I do. I happen to think so. But by the time the bomb was dropped, we had already taken Okinawa. And it was clear that not everybody in Okinawa was committing suicide. And the number of suicides here, I think, was in a few hundreds. I mean, the ones jumping off the cliffs. It certainly wasn't thousands. And we had thousands who didn't jump off. So I think it was a bit sensationalized. And-

Q: And exaggerated.

Sheeks: Exaggerated. But it did, I think, have a big impact on the American public, including policymakers, thinking that probably we would run into tremendous resistance in Japan, which I think would have been the case. I mean, they'd have fought the way they did here. And it would, I think, have meant maybe a million American lives. Who knows? So the decision to drop the bomb, I think, certainly was based partly on this conviction that the Japanese would fight to the death to- at least the military. But how the decision was made to drop it on Hiroshima and Nagasaki is, of course, another complicated issue. I understand that Kyoto was one of the first targets that was considered, but Langdon Warner, the Harvard Asian historian and art curator, I think, played an important role in Washington saying, don't destroy the cultural capital of Japan just to show them, show the emperor something, that it's a cultural resource of the world and it should not be hit- a military target or something. But there are people who think we should have had a demonstration place. But anyhow, the decision was made.

Q: And that debate is going to be a very interesting and hot issue next year when we observe the 50th anniversary of the ending of the war.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: This myth, rather not so much this myth, but this over-exaggeration of the suicides that took place, although they did take place in the hundreds, is that perpetuated in any of the monuments out there?

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: It says that thousands literally-

Sheeks: No, no, no, I misspoke. It doesn't say that, but the fact that there are monuments there and that this scene is repeated over and over again, I think gives the impression that Saipan was a place of mass suicide, which it never was. There were a lot of people who did kill themselves, but when we say a lot, a few hundred is a lot.

Q: Right.

Sheeks: But it wasn't thousands.

Q: Wasn't this kind of the first example of this, though, in the Pacific War that we saw, was here at Saipan, of the populace doing that?

Sheeks: Yes, I think so.

Q: It was shocking, I think, to the Americans.

Sheeks: Because this is the first place that we came that there was a resident civilian population. Now, in Guadalcanal and even at Tarawa, soldiers killed themselves.

Q: Right.

Sheeks: And there were one of the favorite methods, often photographed, was to put a rifle here and then pull the trigger with your toe.

Q: Right.

Sheeks: And so you'd see these pictures.

Q: And they're rather dramatic.

Sheeks: Dramatic.

Q: But here's an example, non-combatants doing that. And I think it still is shocking to a lot of people as it was. But it's interesting that you point out that this did not take place in the overall populace because there was, what, over 7,000 that you would-

Sheeks: Well, yeah, there were thousands already in the stockade at the time that these suicides were occurring. And I think the suicides occurred for several reasons. One is they were so fearful of the Americans. They had been told many, many stories. And I got these stories. They'd say, the favorite American method is to make you lie down on the ground and roll over you with these tanks. That was a story widely circulated by the Japanese to keep their people from-

Q: It's a terrible, terrible, terrible prospect.

Sheeks: Yeah, yes. And then women thought they were going to be raped and brutalized and so on. And then there were some who probably were patriotic and thought that this was a duty to do this. But mostly it was fear. And then they'd gone through so much misery already that living didn't seem to have that much attraction anymore.

Q: They were constantly under fire and starving and such.

Sheeks: Starving and sick. And they could see that the U.S. forces were devastating the island and lots of killing was going on.

Q: The ring was becoming tighter.

Sheeks: Tighter. And there was death all around the place. And I think they were getting used to it.

--01:07:21 - 01:11:19

Q: Could you shed a little light on the Guy Galbadon story? Did you see that or know anything about that?

Sheeks: Yes. Guy was very, very active. He was a scout or a scout and sniper. I don't think they did much sniping, but we had scout and sniper platoons. He was a scout. He had a very unusual background, which included Japanese language. He had foster family, so to speak, in Los Angeles. Nisei friends and so on. So he knew some Japanese and knew some good slang Japanese, which was just about right for some of the soldiers here. And Guy, a very brave, tough guy, little packet of dynamite, and still hyperactive person. And he took a lot of initiative and went out. He wasn't that fearful of the Japanese. He knew something, as I did. We didn't think that they were monsters from another planet that couldn't be overcome. And he went out and got people out of emplacements, and he interrogated people as well as he could. He was tough.

Q: Do you remember the first time you came in contact with him here on the island?

Sheeks: Not too clearly, but we would get together. We'd see each other while we were moving prisoners or refugees around. And he would be marching in a bunch of people from time to time. And he was in, I believe he was in the 2nd Regiment. And he acted as an auxiliary language person as well as a scout. And he did a remarkable job, deserved his decorations fully. And he's an amazing guy. He came out of a tough, he says, slum background, and pulled himself up by his bootstraps and did a terrific job here.

Q: Do you remember the day he brought in all the prisoners? Were you witness to that?

Sheeks: No, I wasn't. And I myself think that, again, the public tends to feel that when they see the word prisoners, they see all these well-trained military people marching in. But I believe that, you know, it was always a mixture. There were some military, paramilitary, lots of civilians and so on.

Q: So you had a combination of all of these people?

Sheeks: Yeah, and so it would probably be a mistake to think that they were all marching at the head of a column of troops, yeah.

Q: But quite a thing anyway.

Sheeks: Oh yes, quite a thing. All of us who were involved in this kind of work brought some people in and helped fill up the military camp. And then afterward, he took up more Japanese training, but he used what he knew and he supplemented it. He's got a tremendous initiative mentally, and he's an amazing guy. He's very modest about himself, and he always thinks of himself as this little minority guy. I mean, he could do anything. Actually, he's a brilliant guy.

--01:11:20 - 01:15:23

Q: Moving on to another subject, and as we draw this interview, and it's been wonderful to listen to these stories, is why did you want to come back to Saipan?

Sheeks: At this time? Well, I suppose Saipan was one of the great experiences in my life. I was here for some 14 months. It wasn't as if, not like the 76 hours in Tarawa, although I wouldn't mind revisiting Tarawa. After all this wartime stuff, I helped the civil affairs people here. I helped reconstitute the fishing fleet. They used to have a fleet here that caught bonito, *katsuo*, and they had a factory that made dried bonito sticks, *katsuobushi*. And all those ships were sunk, and maybe civil affairs did a terrific job taking engines out of our damaged landing boats, putting them into the Japanese ships that we pulled off the bottom. We got carpenters and so on among the prisoners, and we got these boats going again, went out, caught anchovies for live chumming, and then went out following the seagulls, and we caught lots and lots of bonito. And we provided fresh fish to the ships and to the camps and to the military forces here. Later, Hawaii sent some reefers here, and we even were shipping this bag. You know, there's like a small tuna bag from Hawaii. And I often think I was a fool not to have stayed and taken over the fleet and become a tuna fisherman. But anyway, that was a great experience, and I worked with the civil affairs, had a farming operation here. And then, of course, Tinian was part of this operation. And so, that over a year here was one of the big experiences in my life, and it made a tremendous impression. Of course, islands are beautiful.

Q: You're from an island.

Sheeks: Right. I'm from Hawaii, and so it had that appeal too. In fact, a lot of my life has been connected with islands one way or another. I lived in Singapore and Malaysia and the island of Borneo and spent a year in Indonesia and the Philippines. And so, I heard about this reunion through my son, my second son, who heard about it by receiving some brochure from an outfit called Valor Tours.

Q: Right.

Sheeks: Which does these wartime memorial tours. And he sent me a copy of the thing, and there was a copy of the invitation from Governor Tenorio, you know. And so, I thought, this is one marvelous opportunity. And so, my son sort of urged me to come here, so I decided that.

Q: You haven't been back since then?

Sheeks: I came through briefly, not even overnight, 1967 approximately, with a professor from the University of Hawaii who was one of the world's leading algologists, seaweed expert. His name was Dr. Maxwell Doty, brilliant algologist. And we stopped, because we were on our way to a meeting in Manila. I was with the National Academy of Sciences at the time. We had a science cooperation program. So, we stopped, and we swam out toward this Managaha Island, looking around at the seaweeds, which he could readily identify, and to see whether it might be practical to produce two species of them here commercially.

Q: I see.

Sheeks: Which I later got into in Malaysia.

--01:15:23 - 00:16:40

Q: Well, tomorrow is the big day.

Sheeks: Yes.

Q: And what is going to be the most important thing for you to be witness to or be part of?

Sheeks: Well, what I really want to do is to see where we landed. I've been here two days, and I still don't know where it is, because we've been doing other things. The Second Marine Division observance is at 6.30 tomorrow morning, I understand. I want to see the other old antiques like me from the Second Marine Division, see if I recognize any of them, and maybe shed a few tears together, if I can see where we landed, and then just recall what happened.

Q: Well, I'm sure Guy will be able to take you maybe to that place.

Sheeks: Oh, he will. He knows Saipan like the back of his hand, and he's lived here for years now and has done a lot. I hope you're going to join us in the flight over to Tinian and his plane.

Q: I hope so, too.

Sheeks: Yeah, and then maybe, if you can get away, he's thinking about flying up to Pagan Island, where he has a cattle ranch or something.

Q: Guy's got quite a lot of things going for him.

Sheeks: Amazing!

--01:16:40 - 00:17:20

Q: Yeah. Well, Bob, I really want to thank you for this interview. It's hard to believe, but we've almost gone an hour and a half.

Sheeks: Oh, my goodness.

Q: And you've got so much more to share, and hopefully maybe we'll be able to do this again, but I'd like to thank you very much.

Sheeks: Well, it's been a great pleasure, and I want to congratulate you and the Park Service for what you're doing. I'm looking forward to the museum opening, which is to take place this afternoon. I understand that it's under the wing of the Park Service.

Q: Park Service is making some inroads here, and hopefully, with a lot of support, they'll be able to do more. Thank you very much.

Sheeks: Thanks to you.

Q: Okay.

[END OF SESSION]