

# National Park Service (NPS)

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Mariana Islands Wartime Experience through Oral Histories Fellowship  
(WAPA 4170)

Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship Program



Frank V. Brewer  
February 17, 1989

Self-Interviewed

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Interviewee: Frank V. Brewer

Military Rank: Unknown

Interviewer: None – Reading a Statement

Guam

Date: February 17, 1989

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Brewer: National park service ward of Pacific Ghana Guam. Attention Michael Tahila, Park Ranger. Dear sir, My name is Frank V. Brewer I have a lovely wife Betty we have four sons and a daughter, we all reside in the Phoenix, Arizona area. On July 16<sup>th</sup>, 1994 my wife and I will start our tour to Honolulu and Guam. We will stay five days on Guam to participate in the fiestas of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation from Japan—that was on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1944. On July 20<sup>th</sup> at Guam we will celebrate my wife's birthday.

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After our stay on Guam we will return to Honolulu to celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. On July 25<sup>th</sup> we will leave Honolulu for Phoenix. As for my military history, it all started in Chicago, Illinois on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1943. I enlisted in the United States Coast Guard, which sent me to Manhattan Beach training station in Brooklyn, New York. After boot camp I was sent to Camp Lajune7 New River North Carolina for training on an LCVP.

November, 8<sup>th</sup>, 1944 at the age of 18 I went aboard at Norfolk, Virginia, the AKA-17 USS Centuris that was an amphibious assault transport ship that carries small boats called LCMs and LCVPs. Aboard ship I was assigned to LCVP-7 as a motor machinist mate with a cocksman and a seaman to make a three man crew. The ship departed Norfolk, Virginia on November, 11<sup>th</sup> and arriving up the Panama Canal on December, 17<sup>th</sup>. Departing the Canal December 19<sup>th</sup> for Pearl Harbor. Departing Pearl Harbor January 22<sup>nd</sup>.

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January 30<sup>th</sup> 1944 we arrived at Kwajalein Island in the Marshall's group for our first invasion landing. After Kwajalein we went on to make six other island invasions in 13 months, never losing a man or a boat. Next we went on down to New Guinea making landings at A-tape on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and on April the 29<sup>th</sup> at Saidor New Guinea. The month of May was slow, but June 4<sup>th</sup> we started to load troops and equipment and leaving Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands on June 12. Our ship joined the floating task force of ships bound for Saipan Island. This task force off the coast of Saipan as the floating reserve unit. Returning June 30<sup>th</sup> to Witok Islands leaving there July 17<sup>th</sup> bound for the invasion of Guam, arriving at Agat Bay Friday morning July 21<sup>st</sup> 1944.

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After our ship lowered all the ships in the water that morning, we never went back on board until the 27<sup>th</sup> of July when we left Guam. All of our boats have been assigned to other transport ships to transport troops and equipment to Agat beach. After leaving Guam we had a short stay in Guadalcanal departing September 8<sup>th</sup>, for the invasion of Peleliu, which took place on September 15<sup>th</sup>. We departed Peleliu October 3<sup>rd</sup> with captured Japanese prisoners of war, stopping at Guadalcanal for fuel on October 13<sup>th</sup>.

We continued to San Francisco, California arriving October 28<sup>th</sup>. After debarking the prisoners all of the ship's crew went home for thirty days. At that time December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1944 in Chicago, my wife and I were married going back to the ship without her—the ship departed San Francisco December 22<sup>nd</sup> arrived at Pearl Harbor December 30<sup>th</sup>. And departing January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1945 stopping off at Guam, Eulithy and departing Eulithy March 27<sup>th</sup> arrive April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1945, April Fool's Day at Okinawa Japan for the invasion of Okinawa.

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Departing Okinawa April 9 for Pearl Harbor. On May 5<sup>th</sup> at Pearl Harbor other crewmembers and myself were transferred to the USS Henrico APA-45 for transportation to the United States. After arriving in San Francisco I was transferred to a sub-chaser SC-

1340 at Charleston, South Carolina. I stayed on the SC-1340 until I was discharged at the age of 19 on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

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As for most of the islands, they all looked the same. Coming into the beach the palm trees had no tops. Then came the coral reefs and the sandy beaches. It was very interesting to see what lay ahead. As for hitting the beach with a boatload of troops or equipment—first you go to the transport area. There the boat master will assign your boat to a large circle. As the circle of boats goes around he will wave each boat to a transport ship where we would go load 30-40 men leaving the transport ship you start for the beach, stopping a thousand or so yards off the beach to form a horizontal line of 50-60 boats called a wave of boats. Then you head for the beach dropping off your load and go back to the ships for the next load to the beach.

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At first the troops from the ships will kid and joke around. As we get close to the beach it is dead silent on the boat. You hit the beach and do what you have been trained to do. One of my jobs was to drop the ramp for the troops and the equipment to get off. The raising of the ramp and the returning to the ships for more. Sometimes our boat may hit the beach as many as 10-15 times during any invasion. Our boat crews never went beyond the beach, so we did not get a chance to know the people on the islands. The time I spent aboard ship with other members of the boat crew I grew up at the very age with a lot of pride and values to raise a family with. As for war time friends, our ship's crew never had a reunion in 49 years. But on October 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1992 I put together our first reunion which brought back a lot of old and new friendships.

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I'm looking forward to see what Guam is today. I will go see the town of Agat and Agat Beach. To sum up the youth of today I suggest they start with the tour of duty in the

military with an objective of learning what the position of our military is in the world. Then stop to think about what is the most important thing you would like to accomplish for freedom for your family and yourself. Along with this tape I have pictures of our ships and boats and other articles that may have been some interest to the war museum in the pacific. Thank You, Frank Brewer.

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You hit the beach and do what you have been trained to, do one of my jobs was to drop the ramp, for the troops to get off the boat, after the troops get off the boat, we back off the beach raise the ramps and head back to the beach for another load. So at any invasion our boat crew will hit the beach 10 to 15 times. We only went ashore on the beaches so we never had a chance to get to know the people of the island. Being in the service aboard ship.....

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In our crew....

....we never had a chance to get to know the people of the island. Being in the service aboard ship, our [unclear] may grow up at an early age. With a lot... With a lot of pride and values, my wife and I have a great family. As for friends in the war, our ship never had a reunion in 49 years until October 1992.

I put together the first reunion of the crew. It brought back old and new friendships together. I am very excited to see what Guam looks like today as I return I want to see the town of Agat, Agat beach, and the rest of island. To sum up the youth of today I should start with a our of duty in the military. With the objective of learning what the position of the military is in the world. And think on what is most important. The thing you want to accomplish...is to maintain freedom for yourself, your family, and your friends. Thank you.

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