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Cristino Sablan Dela Cruz
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*Cultural Reviewer Note: After some initial online research, the interviewee's correct name and spelling is "**Cristino Sablan Dela Cruz.**" This was confirmed having found his first death anniversary announcement and image of his grave marker. Mr. Dela Cruz died March 26, 2000 and he is identified as a Corporal US Marine Corps, World War II and a Purple Heart recipient.*

Interviewee: Cristino **Dela Cruz**

Military Rank: 4th USMC, **Corporal, Purple Heart**

Interviewer: Daniel Martinez

Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands

Date: June 17th, 1994

Q: The following oral history interview was done on June 17th, 1994 at approximately 11:45 in the morning, by the National Park Service at American Memorial Park in cooperation with Marianas Cablevision. The subject is Cristino **Dela Cruz**, resident of Saipan, prior to and during the campaign of the Marianas. The interviewer is Daniel Martinez, historian for the National Park Service at the USS Arizona **Memorial**. Good morning Mr. **Dela Cruz**.

---01:0:42

Dela Cruz: Good morning sir.

Q: I have a few questions to ask you and the first one is, could you, for the record, state your full and complete name?

Dela Cruz: My name is Cristino **Sablan Dela Cruz**.

Q: Could you spell **for us** your last name?

Dela Cruz: My last name is **Dela Cruz**.

Q: When were you born?

Dela Cruz: I was born on December 15th, 1926.

Q: And what were your parent's names?

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Dela Cruz: My parents name is Jose **Cepeda Dela Cruz** and my **mother's** name is **Consolacion Tudela Sablan**.

Q: And sitting with you is Mister - ?

Dela Cruz: Mr. Jose M. **Palacios**

Q: And he will act as our interpreter today. Welcome Mr. **Palacios**.

Interpreter: Thank you sir.

Q: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

Dela Cruz: I have only one brother besides me.

---01:02:08

Q: And his name?

Dela Cruz: My brother's name is Gabriel **Sablan Dela Cruz**.

Q: Are you the older brother or the younger brother?

Dela Cruz: I am the younger brother.

Q: Is he still alive?

Dela Cruz: He was killed **during the US invasion** by the Japanese.

---01:02:29

Q: We will talk a little bit about that later. What town did you grow up here in Saipan?

Dela Cruz: I was living in Garapan.

Q: Which was the main town here?

Dela Cruz: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Did you go to school in Garapan?

Dela Cruz: Yes, I did. I went to elementary school for three years and then after I **graduated**, I become graduated on the higher school for two years, makes together, five years. Then I **joined** the Japanese uh, **cooperation forces** by the Japanese.

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Q: What was the **cooperation forces**? What was that?

Dela Cruz: We **are assigned** to the Japanese, to any place to help the government to function like a **coral road** or any **road** that they build, we have to be assigned to **work** there and anything like an air strip, I was assigned also to do the work for **a one year period**.

Q: That was hard work.

Dela Cruz: Yes.

Q: How old were you when the work was being done?

Dela Cruz: 14 years old.

Q: How long was your work day?

---01:04:04

Dela Cruz: All day, Monday **to** Saturday. I worked **there** for the year.

Q: How many hours a day?

Dela Cruz: Sometimes ten hours. From six o'clock in the morning to six in the afternoon, in the evening.

Q: How did the Japanese treat you?

---01:04:28

Dela Cruz: Sometimes, before the war, the Japanese treat us very nice, but when the war broke out, the Japanese becoming very strict, especially to the native - **to the** Chamorro or to the Carolinian.

Q: What kind of discipline would they inflict on people that they felt did not behave or perform properly?

Dela Cruz: We are instructed by the Japanese **government** not to beat any Japanese **ah** children. Once we caught – we fighting against Japanese children, we are to be forced to like, beating **or to give some** work, **hard work** together with discipline.

Q: So you could be beaten **yourself** or forced to hard labor.

---01:05:32

Dela Cruz: Yeah, sometimes they did something like that.

Q: What was Saipan like before the war came?

Dela Cruz: Saipan is like during – I mean, before the war come to Saipan, like we are living in paradise. Very good living **to me**.

Q: What kind of things were here that are not here anymore, in way of agriculture and things?

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Dela Cruz: Oh, before the war, we have – we told to do the agriculture work and then by the time we do it **you know**, the Japanese, they **are** strict to the Chamorro or **Carolinian** people the same way and to give us some good treatment, but only thing that when the war comes, we are becoming to face a very horrible -

Q: The main crops here were sugar - ?

Dela Cruz: Sugar and tapioca. We harvested the tapioca and put it into the firing station and we dry and send to Japan. And also the sugar.

Q: Sugar is hard work.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, that is right.

Q: I went up to the park and I saw the statue of what they call the Sugar King, did you meet him? Did you know him?

---01:07:20

Dela Cruz: During my school time, we the one who build that statue. It is a **statue imported** from Japan, made of bronze.

Q: Very heavy.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, very heavy and we are told to do the work and sometimes we guide the Japanese labor **on** how to build this.

Q: So that statue was up before the war started.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, about 15 years before the wars come to Saipan, that statue was built in same place.

Q: **I noticed there** is a train there; do you remember the **steam** train?

---01:08:17

Dela Cruz: Yes, all three of the train that been operate during the sugar cane harvest time, is more than seven train. Some train that been used to melting the asphalt for the **[unclear] after the war.**

Q: How did you find out that Japan was now at war with the United States? **How did the Chamorro people and the Carolinian people know -**

Dela Cruz: How did we know that Japanese is start to war against the Japanese – I mean, the Americans? Because we have been called by the Japanese school teachers to be assembled during my time. I was only 5th grade during that time. And we make an attention to **hear** the order from the Japanese **principal** who are announcing this document that came from Japan Imperial. This is why the Japanese is to commit to be at war against the American and you know, beginning because we **were surprised** by the Japanese to be heard of some order by the Japanese Imperial that the Japanese starting to war, you know?

---01:10:17

Q: What changes occurred after the war started here? **Although the war doesn't come**

here till years later, were there changes already happening? You said **that** they treated you differently – what kind of changes were happening in Saipan.

Dela Cruz: Well the changes – one that we can see Japanese **ah** reaction, the movement and some order delivered to Chamorro people and **Carolinian**, not to look around where the Japanese **had** crewman that, you **know** begin to move from the seaside, because they are start to transfer, start to moving these **like a big cannon**.

Q: So they started to build their defenses and move guns and you were told not to look at that or watch that. Was there any resistance? I mean, you were basically Japanese citizens because of the mandate. You spoke Japanese yourself? Did Chamorro people **have to** speak Japanese or learn Japanese?

---01:11:36

Dela Cruz: Yes, especially my class during that time. I forced myself to understand more Japanese. Not only to understand by **speaking**, I learned how to write **four different** letter like **Katakana, Hiragana, Kanji and Romaji**. I got to learn, my secret, so I can hide. I got to hide something what I know. When they ask me whether I understand Japanese, sometimes I **refuse** to say yes, because I got to hide some secret. Because when the Japanese know **that anything** like what I said, this **four language** that I can write, I become in trouble **by** the Japanese.

Q: Suspect.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, to have [unclear].

Q: Did you witness executions or bad treatment of your people?

---01:12:52

Dela Cruz: No, I didn't.

Q: What about your brother?

Dela Cruz: Yes, I can that yes, but that is during the war **here**. During the fighting, when the Japanese order, I mean, when the American **Marine** start to invade Saipan, **three days later** my brother killed by the Japanese.

Q: Why was he killed?

Dela Cruz: You know, it is something what I can say that, accident or not accident, but I can say that **you know**, while we **were coming out** - while the American Marine calling us to come up from the foxhole, we are coming out, surrendering to the Marines, **then by sudden**, my brother fell down and **then** I look at him and he's a little painful, so I look, but something that I cannot say anything in that moment. So we coming out from the foxhole, surrendering to the American Marine and then they told us to get up to the **personnel carrier**. When we get up, my brother who was **after** me, he cannot get up, so the Marines help **him** to carry to unload **him** to the **personnel** carrier and when I look, the driver said, let's go. So he drove the personnel carrier to the safety zone. While we are going to the safety zone, and then we reach, we are told to come down and we come down. **We** got my brother in my hand and my mother and we **unloaded then** my brother cannot move. **The corpsman came** down and he put the thermometer inside the mouth and my brother still unconscious and the thermometer that he has in his mouth, crushed by my brother.

Q: He crushed it with his teeth.

---01:15:41

Dela Cruz: And then the corpsman shake his head and ask what – you know, I cannot speak any English at that time. But I said -

Q: Can you repeat what words you said in Chamorro, can you say those words?

Dela Cruz: In Chamorro? **Okay**. I got to say - **What that mean?** [Translates and says in Chamorro] **Håfa enao?** Then the corpsman shake the head and I realize that maybe

it's no good. My brother is about to pass away. So he told us to come up to the **personnel** carrier and by the time we come to the **personnel** carrier, everybody loaded, then he proceed down to Chalan Kanoa and he turn to the south, where the 4th Marine Division **cemetery** and when **we reach** there, we are told to come down.

---01:17:01

When we come down, we look around and the chaplain, who was giving service to the **dead** person, is calling us and he told us, in English, this is your brother? But I cannot understand during that time, any English. So the chaplain spoke in Spanish, then my mother understand Spanish and he said, he is calling us, whoever **understand** the language is coming. So my mother and he asked me to come and to give him a service. So I look at him and then chaplain came over and the one Marine, one **sent** some Japanese, he told **to two POW** to come help us for the burial.

Q: Did you see your brother shot? Was he shot?

---01:18:33

Dela Cruz: I never see anything at that moment, but when my brother was – my brother's body move to the side, I can see some bullet hole from the back.

Q: He was shot in the back. So he wasn't shot by the Marines.

Dela Cruz: No, no. Those are Japanese snipers, who were hiding behind us, before we coming, they are the ones who shot my brother.

Q: Because they didn't want you to surrender.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, that's right.

Q: And then they buried your brother at the cemetery.

Dela Cruz: Yes. And before the burial, I look around, then the Japanese **POW** came down, **the two POW**, and he tip it over the stretcher, which **ah** have my brother on the stretcher. So he tip it over and he dump it in the pit and my brother's body fell down to the ground, I mean, to the – what do you call that?

Q: Burial pit?

---01:20:00

Dela Cruz: Yes, and then maybe my brother's neck almost broken. So I told myself, you Japanese no good. Especially you are POW, I am now with American. I am with American hand. I got to do something. So after the burial I look around where I can see burning stick, like this maybe and I mean to kill him, this Japanese POW and I beat him and not only one time enough so I look around again and I told the Japanese, even you Japanese Imperial - **Emperor Hirohito**, I'm going to do something! So I beat him again.

Q: Were you talking to them in Japanese?

---01:21:03

Dela Cruz: Yes, I talking in Japanese.

Q: Can you say those words in Japanese that you were saying.

Dela Cruz: I was talking to the Japanese in Japanese.

Q: Can you repeat those words for me in Japanese?

Dela Cruz: Okay, the first what I told them, you did it, you **dumped** my brother. I got to kill you. So I told him in Japanese. You Japanese, you **dumped** my brother like an animal. I am not the enemy. I got to kill you. So I got **the** stick and I beat him. Then I look around again and I tell him in Japanese. Now, you Japanese, I got to kill you, even Japanese Imperial, I got to kill you. And I beat him again.

Q: [to interpreter] Can you ask him to say those words in Japanese?

---01:22:30

Dela Cruz: I tell him in Japanese. **[speaks in Japanese]** at first and then I tell him in Japanese again, and I tell him in Japanese. **[speaks in Japanese]** This is the language I spoke to them.

Q: 50 years after this, you still feel this in your heart.

Dela Cruz: But 50 years, maybe nothing in my heart, because **everybody is peace now**, so what I can – I elaborate what I told him, for 50 years, this is what I did.

Q: You **had** vowed then to join the American forces to avenge your brother's death. How did you do that? Who did you see that would allow you to **be scout**?

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Dela Cruz: When I was put in to the **stockade or** internment camp, I was so sad, maybe like **revenge** what I tried to do. But when I sat down from five o'clock in the afternoon, during that particular day, I sat down, face down, very sad. And I try to remember **why** I did to the Japanese. The first thing, what they did to my brother is already done. **So why I did to the Japanese? Why I did it?** This is **what** I tried to **realize**. So I sat down, very emotional and the **hour** passed – two hours **then** three hours, the dark came, nine o'clock at night time. From five o'clock in the afternoon until nine o'clock, my tears come down. Not just because my brother. The war come and we are **victimized by the** Japanese. **We try to**, but I can't forget anything. **Until** nine thirty, I look around, nothing I can see because full dark. Only the **fighting forces who landed** that you can see any light.

---01:26:22

I face down and then suddenly somebody touching my shoulder. I look around; I can see only his shadow, of a man. And I look, there is the light of a cigarette or a cigarette lighter, **trying to light it** and **I try** to look **at** the men who are looking, but I don't know whether they are looking **at** me. **Then** suddenly a man said, you come. So I can see only some light and I step out from the gate. There are 13 Marines who I follow, one by one. And I was going with them. By their command. I never know what kind of language, but I followed, what they waving me, like this. So I follow until I reach a tent. A service Marine, to the cemetery and some higher ranking officer that I don't know their name, I don't know their rank, which one is higher or which one is low.

---01:28:12

So I look at them and then we came into the tent, where somebody **went in to interrogate** by the higher people inside and I was told to wait. I don't know the language but I have to wait. But after they wave me, the guy that **had** been **interrogated**, he **moved** to the other side. When I come in, they ask me to sit down **where the coconut [unclear] on the bottom**. So I sit down and maybe that commanding **marshall maybe**, colonel or somebody, he told me, are you the one who beat the Japanese? But I cannot answer, in that moment I cannot understand any word, English words. So they ask one **Mexican** Marine to come to me and he asked me in Spanish. He asked me, are you speaking Spanish? Si. [speaks Spanish] Then he asked me, how old I **am** ?

---01:30:03

In Spanish [speaks in Spanish]

Q: How was your mother? Was your mother very, very sad as well? How did she take your brother's death?

Dela Cruz: Same thing as what I felt. So the Mexican people go with the English and I go with the Spanish and then **the**, Mexican people, tell me, [speaks in Spanish]

Q: So he was telling you, you were brothers?

Dela Cruz: No, he is telling, I can speak also some Spanish. And German. We can go with Japanese, we can go with **English**

Q: Because the Germans were here and Spaniards were here and the Japanese were here.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, so I can communicate **both ways very quick with the language**. Then the colonel who was interrogating me, he become happy and he shake hand with me. Then I be happy too. I very happy. So -

Q: And you were 17 years old?

Dela Cruz: 17 and a half.

---01:32:08

I was also questioned, **why** you beat the Japanese soldier because you don't like? I said, yes. Maybe I don't like because why he **dumped** my brother, it is not good. So I tell him, I communicate in that way. And he asked **me, you** familiar with some Japanese, where they are hiding? I said, yes. I will show you where **their** hiding place **is**. I took **out** the Japanese **map that I hiding** into my back trouser pocket and I **showed it**, this is the map. I can show you where we hiding Japanese **gasoline, Japanese ammunition** or Japanese gun shells, everything. And some **food for ration**. I can show you where the Japanese Company that hiding and to which way **they** fighting against Americans.

Q: That must have made the officer very happy.

---01:33:37

Dela Cruz: Yeah, he become so happy. And he told me, you are the one I was looking, please can you show these **target men** where the Japanese hiding place and also **their ammunition** and I tell them, okay, **if you** take me to this place and I will show you. Then he told me, I'm going to let you go over to your mother and get your mother's blessing. So if

you want to go with our people, do you want to go? I said, yes. Okay. So he told this American-Mexican people to go with me to the internment camp where my mother is, so I get my mother's blessing.

Q: Wasn't your mother afraid that you may die too?

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Dela Cruz: She told me, oh my dear son, you are already **safe**. **Are** you going to die maybe because you go with the fighting men. **So if** you still want to go, I will give you my blessing. So she hugged me and crying for five minutes. And her tears come to my chest and wet me all over. Then she told, please, may God be with you. Then I told my mother, if I'm not die, **good fortune will** come to us and also to the American soldiers. But if I die, **maybe** give us a **prayer**. **[unclear]** so I **depart** with my mother's blessing. When I come over, there is a **[unclear]** the uniform that we have inside the duffel bag.

Q: The Marines gave him a uniform?

---01:36:21

Dela Cruz: Then I was given a helmet, **shoes and a helmet and fatigue** uniform. **They painted my front shirt** with red and **black here**.

Q: Oh, they painted it with red, so that you could -

DelaCruz: To identify

Q: As a guide. So you became a Marine.

Dela Cruz: Yeah.

Interpreter: Provisional Marine.

Q: Provisional Marine.

Dela Cruz: Yeah.

Q: Now, was there any other Saipanese or Chamorro people or Carolinian people that became like you?

---01:37:00

Dela Cruz: I never know, but later.

Q: Later. And there were two more.

Dela Cruz: Two more, yes. But the only **one** which I went to is 4th Marine Division, on the east side of the island.

Q: What town would that be? Would that be **up** at Garapan?

Dela Cruz: **No, Finasisu.** On the, like the road going up and going to almost the – the road leading to the airport area.

Interpreter: The southeast area.

Q: The southeast area. Because you had worked out there, so you knew what was out there.

---01:37:46

Dela Cruz: So I was told during that night, if a tank came over, **that's the time that you're going to ride so you got to wear and stand by. You know,** before I wore the American Marine uniform, I was **in the Japanese fatigue** uniform too and they slash with the cleaver, they tear off everything, even my panty. I have nothing. So they gave me all -

Q: You had no clothes.

Dela Cruz: No, but I **get all my** uniform at that moment, so even the shoes **and pants too in** my size.

Q: How did you feel?

---01:38:46

Dela Cruz: Very good. I like it very much and not only that, I become a Marine. You know, I'm very, very proud to show the people **that** I am with the fighting men. So I start from the road which I **said**, over there. And then I ride with the tank to where they have to. And the radio communicating with them that we are here and depending on the signal, to which way I have to **go** and almost go like this, zig zag, to make sure that the Japanese cannot destroy my tank. But only two days later, I come near to the Death Valley -

Q: The famous Death Valley area.

---01:39:58

Dela Cruz: And at that time, Japanese projectile penetrated, blow up on the left **half** of the tank. Then side – side down **my tank**. Then **I crawled** out from the turret, you know -

Q: Oh, you were in the tank?

Dela Cruz: Oh yeah.

Q: That must have been something. Did it shake you?

Dela Cruz: Yeah.

Q: Were you scared?

Dela Cruz: Yes, **a little bit** because I was told not to carry any firearm. I am scared because I **got** to only go by my body, not to go with any weapon.

Q: So you crawled out of the tank, was it burning?

Dela Cruz: No. **Lucky I'm not** because this is something that we have **you know, lucky that** we went out, went out. Two minutes later, the explosion from the inside, everything -

Q: Blew up. How did you get out of the tank? Did you go out the bottom or out the top?

---01:41:17

Dela Cruz: The top is like, the turret, but side down and I got to crawl from the side.

Q: With the other Americans, right?

Dela Cruz: Yeah.

Q: A near thing.

Dela Cruz: And then I was told that I have to **not be with the tank** this time. I have to **be with a half-track**.

Q: A **half-track**.

Dela Cruz: During that time, very dangerous from **the side and the top or maybe** you can be hit.

---01:41:56

Q: Its open, so a hand grenade can come in.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, that's right. And then I was told by MP to **halt** – you know. So we **halted** and then we came out from the **half-track** and we sat down and we **ate** our lunch during that time. But only **switch out**, one by one to eat.

Interpreter: 50-50 when you eat in the military. Half eat, the other half security.

Q: So half eats and half protects.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, that is right. So while I eat I sat down **nearby** the **GMC, or maybe not GMC - the Big Diamond T truck** and I sat down and the four wheel on the back between the **front wheel** -

Q: Axel and rear axel.

---01:43:05

Dela Cruz: I hide between the two wheel and *lanya* [Chamorro expletive] then I was **surprised** when I could see **anybody not** – I could not see anybody because **they facing on the ground** they are protecting themselves. So I hide between the two wheels and **I'm eating my - but suddenly Japanese counter-attack.**

Q: Counter-attack.

Dela Cruz: More than 500 Japanese all in our sight, **very near** six feet from where I'm hiding. So I'm pretending that I'm die already. So the Japanese coming but *lanya* [Chamorro expletive] **what** I can see many American Marines **very brave** fighting with the bayonet -

Q: Hand to hand fighting.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, and the Japanese **who** tried to kill the **American** Marines with the bayonet and the American slice the bayonet too and the Japanese rifle fell down and fell down to **my – right here.**

---01:44:31

Q: Is that a scar from the bayonet?

Dela Cruz: This is something like two inches and a half long and this is from the Japanese fragmentation grenade.

Q: Fragmentation grenade. And your hand? What is - ?

Dela Cruz: Oh no, this (**scar**) **suffered** from the accident.

---01:44:56

Q: Accident. But you were feigning death, you were pretending to be dead when all of this happened, so what happened next?

Dela Cruz: Next, right after that, two second, I mean five second, there is a Japanese counter attack **again** coming but lucky there is some back up from the Marines **side**.

Q: Reserves.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, they kill and kill each other, sometimes I can see one Marine **bayoneted** one Japanese.

Q: They bayoneted each other at the same time?

---01:45:42

Dela Cruz: Yeah, but lucky, the American **never die** – but what I can see, one American Marine bayoneted one Japanese and the five Japanese one time, bayoneted to one American Marine. Intestines came out, everything. I can see more than 500 Japanese at one time, die. And the American, more than 150. Hand to hand combat.

Q: You had never seen anything like that before.

Dela Cruz: No, I never see.

Q: It must have been horrible.

Dela Cruz: Yeah. But right after this incident, right after **my wound**, everything calm down. That took two days to finish in that Death Valley. Then I was transferred to a field hospital where I was treated and then while I was being treated, the colonel came up – Company commander I believe, he come over to **inspect** his men and then he saw me and he said, you wounded? **Lucky that the** Mexican Marine was with him **in my Company**, and he told me **again**, he said, you wounded? I said yes, so he told him. So now, we are going to grant you permission to get any **weapons** you want to get and to use as what you can.

---01:47:55

My brain suddenly decided that I have got **to get the bazooka** to blast them up, the Japanese. So I decided, when I see my Mexican buddy, he said, what are going to do with this? I said, I'm going to use it. He said, you cannot. You have to have seven **to** eight person on your team. You can't **use the** bazooka. Somebody has to transfer the shells, somebody has to -

Q: Load 'em. You wanted the biggest weapon.

Dela Cruz: So I asked him, **what will be better**, he said, **all these guns like the Tommy Gun (Thompson)**, carbine M-2, carbine M-1, M-1 rifle **or anything** – if those things that you want, go ahead and take. So I **tried the** Tommy gun, oh baby, good one. So I carry and I get the carbine also. And I load it with a clip together. Very good.

---01:49:25

Q: So you had a Tommy gun and a carbine?

Dela Cruz: Carbine M-2.

Q: So you had two weapons.

Dela Cruz: Yeah, but sometimes in the shooting place good, because you have to wait, but to go forward, you cannot go with two weapons, too heavy. So I decided maybe not the carbine, I got to get Tommy gun.

Q: Did you ever fire a weapon before this? Had you fired Japanese weapons, or did you know how to shoot. Were you a good shot?

Dela Cruz: Yeah. **Nothing to be a good shot- of course when you carry a** Tommy gun. Good! If you go about ten feet away, nearby the Japanese, you got – like this – Japanese is no more. Very good, this kind of weapon. Very accurate.

---01:50:27

Q: It is humorous now, but it certainly wasn't humorous then.

Dela Cruz: But you know, while I'm with the American Marines in the fighting, not to shoot anybody, but I **use** to shoot when he have an occasion to shoot. Nothing to risk, because in other words, no time to see **an enemy** that is coming. And if they are coming and you are about to be shorthanded ammunition, **nothing** to shoot anymore and you have **to kill it** so -

Q: It is very difficult in the jungle to fight, but you knew this jungle. You knew the ground and terrain. Were you able to tell the Marines where the Japanese may be hiding? Did you take them to those places too?

Dela Cruz: Yeah. Especially when I'm going with a Marine, I never know whether someone is near you, already hiding and the only ammunition that they need to be **killed**,

when you have ammunition, but when you have not enough ammunition to shoot anybody, especially the Tommy gun, Tommy gun is very accurate for only five feet on the distance. But you have to have enough ammunition. Nothing to waste.

---01:52:08

Q: When you went out on your patrols with the Marines, did you start to find **Chamorro** people and Carolinian people and call them out too?

Dela Cruz: Yes, that is the most **practice** that I have to.

Q: Did you find many?

Dela Cruz: Oh, not in my place, not at the east side.

Q: More on this side **were found**.

Dela Cruz: Especially when you encounter Chamorro or Carolinian people, they are **not away** from the ranch house, family. They must be hiding inside where they belong. Not **too** far away to walk. Not like Japanese.

---01:52:59

Q: How long did this fighting go on with you? Did you fight the whole campaign?

Dela Cruz: Yeah. About one month, 17 days.

Q: And then did you go with the other scouts that were recruited, after the campaign, to find more Japanese?

Dela Cruz: Yeah, I went.

Q: When did it all end **for you** ? How did it end, working with the Marines?

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Dela Cruz: Okay, we heard from the announcement from my walkie-talkie that the war in Saipan has been declared secure, but not really. Not really. And when I was **detached** from the service I did, because the American Marine going to **move** to Tinian and to Guam and **Iwo Jima**. **That's the time** I asked them, **please forget anything**. What I give you, service, but I have to be with my mother. My mother is very old now. So I have to go with her.

Q: Take care of her. And they let you go.

---01:54:30

Dela Cruz: Yeah.

Q: Were you ever recognized by the United States or given any medal or anything ever done for the scouts that helped that day?

Dela Cruz: No. Only in this particular month when they are having a ceremony at the Susupe.

Q: At the Memorial Park. How do you feel about that?

Dela Cruz: I feel so happy. I feel so proud to receive this kind of medal because during my time to save the American Marine, nothing to give but they **are still busy**.

Q: I'm sorry?

Dela Cruz: [unclear] they still not – [video cuts and goes to interpreter]

---01:55:26

Interpreter: **One of the scouts from Guam mentioned** that we should look into this for **our** folks like Mr. **Dela Cruz** here and among the other – well, a total of 100 of them **back then** and after the war that were recruited to assist them. No documents or records have been actually – no, in black and white, that is. I went through the **Northern Marianas archives** and now we are working with the Washington rep **out of** Washington, **our CNMI** representative, to try to see if there is any records of the 2nd or 4th Marine or the 27th -

Q: Written reports.

Interpreter: Right, out of **their much bigger** archives office over there in Washington. So now we, just in the past couple of months we have been, again, working with these people and involving our **Northern Marianas** archives to ensure that these events have been documented. We want to make sure that it should be extended and hopefully the future generation will one day, they can always go back and review and –

--01:56:34

Q: What their ancestors had done.

Interpreter: Right, exactly.

Q: Did you talk to Lieutenant Sheiks at all? He is Major Sheiks now, he mentioned that he had one of the guides with him, he was a translator. Have you had an opportunity to talk with him?

Interpreter: No sir.

Q: Well, we will get you that name and address.

Interpreter: I appreciate that.

Q: Why is this commemoration so important to you?

---01:57:06

Dela Cruz: Because if I don't come to this celebration, people cannot see exactly what I – what kind of service and **I want** the other people to be knowing exactly what we did. This is why I am happy to be in this commemoration.

Q: These memories are very painful. And yet, you met the Marines and – did he meet anybody that knew him during that time?

Dela Cruz: I don't meet them. I asked somebody **whether** – somebody from the 4th Marine Division is visiting.

---01:58:21

Q: Some are at the PIC.

Dela Cruz: I asked them, but my Division which I work out of, not only Saipan. Also they fight in Tinian. Maybe not in Guam, but Iwo Jima and Okinawa. And that is why my – **same buddy** who was fighting with me during this campaign, maybe no more. They die.

Q: The Mexican man that you knew, do you remember his last name?

Dela Cruz: His name is Tomas Knotting.

Q: Knotting. But that isn't a Hispanic name. But he was Hispanic?

Dela Cruz: Yeah.

Q: He spoke Spanish.

---01:59:33

Dela Cruz: I asked for him by name but nobody knows.

Q: Have you talked to the Marine Corps history people at all?

Interpreter: I spoke with a couple of them.

Q: They are very good, have they been helpful to you. Well, Mr. **Dela Cruz**, I want to thank you for this interview. Is there anything that we have not covered that you would like to talk about? A story that you would like to tell? Something I missed.

Dela Cruz: That's it.

Q: I would like to thank you on behalf of the National Park Service for your interview and I want to thank Mr. **Palacios** for being our translator. I hope that when this show is on TV that a number of island people see this because your story is very special.

Dela Cruz: Thank you.

[END OF SESSION]