National Park Service (NPS)

Mariana Islands Wartime Experience through Oral Histories Fellowship
(WAPA 4170)
Mellon Humanities Postdoctoral Fellowship Program

Alvin Josephy Jr.
July 22, 1994

Interview conducted by Daniel Martinez
Transcribed by Plowshares Media
Coordinated by Dr Jennifer Craig
Reviewed by Guampedia Foundation, Inc
508 compliant version by and Michael Faist

This digital transcript contains updated pagination, formatting, and editing for accessibility and compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act. Interview content has not been altered. The original digital transcript is preserved in the NPS WAPA Collections and NPGallery.

This digitization was made possible through the National Park Service by a grant from the National Park Foundation through generous support from the Mellon Foundation.

The release form for this interview is on file at the NPS WAPA Collections.

WAPA Collections
War in the Pacific NHP
135 Murray Boulevard, Suite 100
Hagåtña, GU 96910
wapa_interpretation@nps.gov

Interviewee: Alvin Josephy Jr.
Military Rank: Marine Corps combat correspondent
Interviewer: Daniel Martinez Hilton Hotel - Guam
Date: July 22nd, 1994

00:00:00 to 00:00:19
Audio Description: Alvin Josephy is a Caucasian American man with glasses, wearing a gray sports jacket with black stripes, and a plaid button-up shirt. Behind him is a pond fawn.

00:20:00
Q: The following oral history interview was conducted by the National Park Service at the Hilton Hotel in Guam on July 22nd at approximately 10:30 in the morning. The interviewer is Daniel Martinez, historian for the National Park Service at the USS Arizona Memorial. The subject of the interview is Mr. Alvin Josephy who served in the Marianas campaign with the United States Marine Corps as a combat correspondent. The interview is being made by the National Park Service, War in the Pacific National Park in conjunction with Guam Cable Television. Mr. Josephy I understand that the National Park Service has your permission to make this recording and to retain all literary and property rights deriving from it, is that your understanding?

---00:01:22

Alvin Josephy: That's right.

Q: Well, good morning, Alvin.

Alvin Josephy: Good morning.

Q: We would like to welcome you here to our oral history interview. For the record, could you spell for us – tell us your full and complete name?

Alvin Josephy: Alvin M. Josephy Jr.

---00:01:40

Q: And how do you spell your last name?

Alvin Josephy: JOSEPHY.

Q: And your parent's names?

Alvin Josephy: Alvin Sr. and my mother's name was Sophia Knopf.

Q: How many children in your family?

Alvin Josephy: We had four children, all grown and they have children, all but of one them.

---00:02:04

Q: So you are a grandfather?

Alvin Josephy: I'm a grandfather and we have eight grandchildren.

Q: Your parents – how many brothers and sisters did you have?

Alvin Josephy: One brother, he was in Normandy, he was with the first Army. Went through that war over there.

Q: Your brother survived?

Alvin Josephy: He's still around, yep.

Q: So two boys? And one in Normandy and one in the Pacific. Your parents must have had some anxious moments.

---00:02:33

Alvin Josephy: Well, they did. I think they suffered much more than we did.

Q: What was your place of birth and date of birth?

Alvin Josephy: I was born in Woodmere, New York, May 18th, 1915. So I'm 79 right now.

Q: Did you grow up in that town?

Alvin Josephy: No, we moved away when I was about two I think, moved to New Jersey and then eventually to upper Manhattan island, which was very beautiful then, in those days. I was really raised in New York City, although we had a place in Westchester County, spent a lot of time there. And then I went away to college and then came back to New York and had a career there before World War II.

---00:03:26

And after the war, well, when I was in the war, I figured if I get out of this thing, I don't want to go back to New York. So I went to California.

Q: What was high school like for you? Did you start developing these literary interests that you had? When did it all start?

Alvin Josephy: I always wanted to be a writer. I don't know why or how. It just was in my blood, I wanted to – I actually started government history and economics. And I was infatuated with the field of journalism and the excitement of being able to interview prominent people and talk to them as an equal almost, you know? So you have to learn a little bit about an awful lot of things and I did. And I got in with a newspaper in Boston first and then with The New York Herald Tribune and I -

Q: Pretty famous paper, although it doesn't exist anymore.

---00:04:27

Alvin Josephy: It was a great newspaper. After some general reporting, I went to Mexico for them, in 1937, the tail end of the Mexican revolution was still on and I interviewed Leo Trotsky down there and – he was still alive and a very exciting man.

Q: What kind of man was Trotsky?

Alvin Josephy: Trotsky was a very, very interesting man. I called the article, the article finally – it ran in The Herald Tribune, it cut you know, just the piss of it, but the whole interview ran in a magazine at the time and I called him "a bomb in a pail of water" because he was ready to go off in all directions, but he had to tell the Mexican government, in return for being given asylum there, that he would not interfere with their politics or the politics of the United States. And he had an awful lot to say though.

---00:05:27

Q: He was assassinated shortly after that?

Alvin Josephy: He was assassinated three years after I saw him, yeah. But it was inevitable, it was coming, you could tell. He had so many enemies on all sides.

Q: He was fairly outspoken about the role of government in the communist -

Alvin Josephy: Well, he was a total enemy of Stalin and he felt Stalin had become a dictator, which was true and in doing that, had betrayed Marxism. Without getting on to Trotsky too much, but he was an intellectual, he had no real mass following, even though he gets the credit for having built the Red Army. A very unlikely figure to have built a great army like that. Because he was a thinker and a writer and a school teacher type. But he had a great presence as a speaker and he used to sway mobs over in Russia.

---00:06:27

Q: You started your professional career after completing college, would that be accurate? Where did you go to school?

Alvin Josephy: I went to Harvard and I have to tell you, I only finished two years there because I did sell a story to a magazine and then they sold it to MGM and I was having an awful financial time, it was in the pits of depression and I had three jobs a day up there and just keeping my head above water and wondering how I was gonna do a third year. So when MGM offered me a – what they called a "junior writers" role to come out and turn my story into a picture, for the summer of '34, I went out there and they offered to keep me there for another year and a half. So I never went back to Harvard.

---00:07:20

Q: When you were at Harvard, you know there are so many famous people who went to school there, especially during that time; did you know any of those fellas?

Alvin Josephy: Well I don't know if the word famous is exactly right, although it is true. Bill Burroughs was a classmate of mine, the fellow that wrote *Naked Lunch*. And showed no inclination in that direction. We were in the same writing class I think, in our freshman year. And there were a couple of other writers in the class. A fellow who wrote *Pajama Game*. There were a lot of talent -

Q: Jack Kennedy went to school at that time.

Alvin Josephy: He was behind me somewhere. Franklin Roosevelt Jr. was a year or so behind me and -

Q: He ended up in World War II as well.

Alvin Josephy: His name was big then, because his father was President.

---00:08:15

Q: Let's take you up to the eve of World War II. 1939 the war has broken out in Europe and it's obviously a big story. More importantly the United States has become the so-called arsenal of democracy. Did you start covering the war as it raged in Europe in any way?

Alvin Josephy: Well, after I served with the Herald Tribune, I was hired by Mutual Broadcasting System; actually it was a radio station in New York, WOR, which at that time was very prominent as a station that covered the news. And we have the very fine engineers who were pioneers in the commercial radio business, who were developing the ability to do all kinds of broadcasts at that time.

---00:09:05

For example, I did a broadcast – I joined them, they asked me to join them in what we call a news and special events end of things, became a director of that department for them in their eastern – key eastern station in New York, WOR. WGN was the other key station in Chicago and that was owned by Colonel McCormick of the Chicago Tribune. We did have a couple of other big stations, but we had – I think more stations than any other network, although most of them seemed to be 50 watters or 100 watters. But we did have a tremendous sense of rivalry in looking for scoops. Again, CBS and the Red and the Blue Networks of NBC – one of them became WABC network, eventually.

Q: So these were the heavyweights for business.

Alvin Josephy: That's right, but we were right up there with them because of our ability. We had several advantages that they didn't have. First of all, we had a gung-ho spirit, they were muscle bound, they couldn't interrupt commercials for flashes, for bulletins, they had to wait until they break.

---00:10:18

They could not, they were not allowed to use recordings and I don't know what the rationale was at the time, I think it was more commercial, they could tell companies, it's got to be live, these commercials. But anyway, we could put a record – let's say we cover a speech by

some prominent statesman like Lithenoff [sp?] over in Geneva in the middle of the night, 3:00 am, during the Munich crisis or something like that when everybody was staying up listening the radio. And then we could use the record of it, all morning long, as people went to work or as they got up and missed it during the night, where the other networks could not do it.

Q: Sort of the prototype to what we now know as CNN and the approach.

---00:11:06

Alvin Josephy: Exactly, that is about as good a way of putting it, I think. We had some commentators also who gained almost instantaneous celebrity, as excellent men. For instance, Raymond Graham Swing. These people all become big names in covering the crisis in Europe. [unclear] of NBC was – became the big name during the Munich crisis, but Swing eclipsed him when it came to war. When the war period arrived. And we really had the audience for news.

Q: What kind of stories did you cover for them?

Alvin Josephy: Well, I – before the war broke out, I was doing all kinds of news – what we would call, making the engineer do something he had never been able to do before. For instance, do a broadcast from a submarine. Do a broadcast from an airplane. Just get up in the plane and do one of broadcast quality. And one of – I recall, Eddie Rickenbacker who owned Eastern Airlines, was quite a promoter and we worked very closely with Captain Eddie, on a lot of his schemes and he was introducing the DC-3. And he said, look now, we are going to make this plane a household name and make it popular and the way we are going to do it, we have got an idea here to cut off one engine while we are flying.

---00:12:37

And show that we can fly on one motor. And we would like you to come on up and take this ride with us and get on the air up there. And I did. We flew around over New Jersey and I would say, now we are about to feather one engine, w are not feathering the engine, we are

only flying on one.

Q: So it was very dramatic in it's approach. How did you capture all of this? You couldn't actually shoot a beam down, could you, or did you do a recording?

Alvin Josephy: Well, the technical end was beyond me. We had some wonderful engineers and I remember a fellow who used to come with me a lot, Mac Reed, who would just twiddle the dials of his equipment up there and – [crosstalk] he was sending it by radio, down to a receiver in [unclear] New Jersey, I think they were picking it up and then re-broadcasting it to the world.

---00:13:36

Q: That's breakthrough stuff for those days.

Alvin Josephy: Well, we were breaking through really in all directions. You see we did not have a lot of the facilities that NBC, for example, they were owned by RCA. And they could do anything they wanted. For instance, when Howard Hughes went around the world, that was a great news event and NBC thought they had it all locked up for exclusives because they had put all the radio equipment in, the RCA equipment and the radio man was an RCA man. So everything like NBC would get it all. Well, we could pick it up short wave and run it the minute, instant we got it. NBC might get this thing coming through and it would be at a time when they had a Lucky Strike program on or something, they couldn't break in and again and again, we were broadcasting -

Q: It must have drove them crazy.

---00:14:29

Alvin Josephy: It did, it did. There was a guy named Abe Shecter who was head of their public – of their special events news department, he was a little guy and he did everything but tear his hair out over these things. But it was kind of the mentality of the reign among our groups of scooping – trying to get scoops. I mean, Ted Eusing was a great sport

announcer for CBS and we went out and covered a golf match or something and I remember cutting his wires. He was in a high chair, way up in the air, watching the golfers through binoculars, and suddenly he wasn't on the air. It took him about a half hour to find out where the line was broken. Get him back on the air. But they did the same thing to us.

---00:15:18

Q: So there would be this corporate sabotage huh?

Alvin Josephy: Yeah, it was really exciting days for radio. But what was happening is that we were getting the engineers to make it possible for us to do such things as two-way communication, two way talk between New York and London. Three-way among New York, London and Berlin, where we could cover things and talk to our correspondents in various places and listeners can hear this and by the time Hitler was really on the rampage when [unclear] came in Austria, there were all kinds of things that we were able to do that a year before had never been tried.

Q: You know, we think about it, 1994 when we see this on television, for instance the Gulf War was an obvious media – high media event. But we could talk to people in [unclear] and New York, wherever. And you guys laid the ground work for that kind of stuff.

---00:16:15

Alvin Josephy: Well, I think that is true. They were pioneering days for the radio and of course, long before television.

Q: Well, the war approaches, where were you on Pearl Harbor day? When the United States entered?

Alvin Josephy: Well, I had left, as I say, I had gone over into radio and as Pearl Harbor period approached, I happened to be a little bit leery about what was going on when the Japanese, who were visiting in Washington, [unclear] felt that we had to stay on the alert that something was going to happen there, because there were stories coming out from the

southeast Asia about their fears. Japan was feeling desperate, their sources, tin and rubber, were being cut off and they were going to have to move somewhere. And it was a Sunday and I happened to be home around noon, shaving and taking the day off and I was married then, we lived in Greenwich Village and I was tuned to another station. WNYC, which was a city owned station, because they had classical music on.

---00:17:33

And suddenly I heard an announcer break into the music and just kind of fumble around, he had thrown something off the ticker tape and read that the United States had been attacked at Pearl Harbor. And it didn't sound like it was real because he was fumbling around. He was alone there, there was nobody over him. So I called our master control right away and said, do you have that there? And the fella said, no, we haven't got it. We were broadcasting a football game, a professional football game. And I said, well get in and look at the ticker there. And sure enough, it was on the ticker. I said, get that thing on the air right away. And within moments I had to try to mobilize all these possible if possible.

Q: Because that was a major news story.

Alvin Josephy: Figure out what the devil to do.

Q: I've heard the broadcast and some of them are quite controlled and other guys are excited, we interrupt this program, the Japanese have bombed Hawaii!

Alvin Josephy: I kept a diary that period for about four years, beginning a year or so before and ending when I finally went to the Marine Corps.

---00:18:45

Q: Have you ever considered public publishing that?

Alvin Josephy: I have thought about what to do with this diary.

Q: Especially with this 50th anniversary of World War II.

Alvin Josephy: I haven't used it at all for anything. In looking back over it, it does reflect extreme panic among our population because we did not know what was happening and the panic was being generated, not just on the West Coast, of course the West Coast, we were getting reports from our station and other people out there that Japanese army had landed in Baja, California and was marching north.

---00:19:22

All the electricity had gone off from Los Angeles South, the power stations would go on -

Q: Water was being poisoned.

Alvin Josephy: Oh, and the Japanese submarines were lobbing shells into Santa Barbara. All kinds of things and on the East -

Q: Some of which was true.

Alvin Josephy: That's right, the midget submarine did throw some iron at Santa Barbara or the outskirts of Santa Barbara.

Q: Worry about the little refinery.

---00:19:52

Alvin Josephy: But on the East Coast, the panic there is totally forgotten, but it was – LaGuardia went on the air immediately in a high shrieking voice about air raid signals were going off and we were getting mixed signals, the police department and air command and everybody else. German planes have been sighted coming in over Montauk and were approaching Manhattan island and we even had – we had a whole style of World War I helmets. They were hanging on the wall. I don't know why we had 'em but somebody figured, well maybe the day will come we will need 'em.

---00:20:32

Q: Alvin, isn't that an amazing transition where a country like ourselves goes from peace time to war time and when you look at that and it's amazing the – people change and the attitudes change.

Alvin Josephy: Well, you know, I have been interested in the way we are thinking back these days, because a lot of it doesn't match my memories of reality. Now, memories are very bad because I could be wrong, my memories could be wrong. But when I look at what I wrote, I realize that its very difficult to catch the flavor and the feel and so forth. But we were a very polarized nation in year 1941, until Pearl Harbor.

Q: Which galvanized it.

Alvin Josephy: That's right, and brought about unity, but until Pearl Harbor, it is just amazing how many Americans did not want to go to war with anybody. They wanted to stay out, they were isolationists, they felt that this was Europe's war and we had no belief that we were going to get in the war with Japan.

Q: Plus we had that horrible experience of World War I. Not so much what happened to us, but what happened to those other nations.

Alvin Josephy: Well, World War I was a very disillusioning war afterwards.

---00:21:44

After we went over there, guys came back and all through the '20s and '30s there was real pacifism in the United States about, we went over there and what did we get out of it? It was dirty war, it was fought by [unclear] and kings and the people that all got killed for what? What was that war all about?

Q: And we could see that after the Vietnam War.

Alvin Josephy: But my generation for instance, raised in the '20s and '30s was a pacifist generation. There was an Oxford movement of taking an oath; I will never fight in any war. And when Hitler rose, there were an awful lot of people who said, let Hitler fight the Europeans or let them fight him, [crosstalk] and then when he attacked Russia, we said, let those two knock each other out, we will stay out of it. And we forget the American First Committee and the German American Bund and the big rallies at Madison Square Garden.

---00:22:45

Q: American Communist Party.

Alvin Josephy: The communists were changing their tune every six months, or every two months and but there was a real polarization.

Q: Alvin there is a collection of historians, as you are aware of, that look back at World War II and they are saying, we are going through a whole period of the politics of memory here with World War II, that the recollections aren't so accurate. And they are altered to fit what is contemporary and so I think you bring up a very valid point and one that is discussed. The National Park Service of course has gone through this with a lot of the historic sites and maybe this is a good time to address it. How do you look upon the kind of social engineering that some – that the Parks Service has been accused of, of kind of changing what the facts are, rather than just simply putting the facts out there and letting the people decide. Do you see that as a problem?

---00:23:39

Alvin Josephy: I don't see that as a problem yet. It may become one. I think it would be best of the Park Service can achieve a cache of being an authority. In other words, shy away from too much editorializing, that undermines any credibility that you got. I think the Park Service – we need sources that are really credible today. We have lost a lot of our media that had credibility because they have gotten so darn interested in just being entertainment vehicles rather than trying to report what actually happened and the truth

about things. And I think we have been sucked in a long time. Now, by feeling well, we are reading the truth in one paragraph and you can't read the truth in one paragraph.

---00:24:34

But also the generation of the '60s, the had the attitude that all history before 1960 was irrelevant and World War II was an unnecessary war and it shouldn't have been fought, and all that, which I think, to their credit, they have grown up and matured enough to realize it was all rather childish thought and not based on anything more than emotion. And I'm glad to see that change, because they are recognizing now that that generation really, as President Clinton said, or whoever wrote it for him, let's save the world. And that eventually will be more and more recognized because -

Q: I suspect that may be the epitaph for that generation of Americans.

Alvin Josephy: Well, I don't know what will be the epitaph, but there is a lot of – it's almost the theme of that generation because they had to fight fascism, world fascism, which was evil and was going to win. It was on a roll. And the people were not standing up to it, they were scared to death of it and didn't want to get involved with it.

---00:25:48

Q: They had become victims of it.

Alvin Josephy: They were becoming victims, they went down one by one and finally, whether it was the stand in Russia that stood up to them first, or Britain's stand and when the United States got smacked by Japan, our first feeling was, it was an overwhelming feeling, let's go with Japan and get revenge right away forget this European business. And it's kind of odd today, the change that's come in that direction because when we went into the war, the perspective of most Americans was, that this is a major war, should be against Japan. And when we take care of Japan, we can see what we can do about helping get rid of Hitler. And of course the Europeans all wanted us to focus on Hitler, get rid of him first.

Q: Then there was this political struggle over that in Washington.

---00:26:44

Alvin Josephy: That's right, that tore our administration, but that was a reflection of the tearing process that had been at work in the United States itself among the isolationists who didn't want to get involved in Hitler and it was really only after D-Day on Normandy that we suddenly went at Hitler. We had the North African campaign, Sicilian campaign, but the interest of the average American I think was, what was happening in these islands out here and now, 50 years later, there is hardly an American, it seems to me, who ever knows how big the war was out there.

Q: You know, Alvin you are absolutely right, we have them come to Pearl Harbor and we have to do a geography and history lesson and it really strikes me and it's something that I have seen and the other part of this equation is that the media has not covered the Pacific War.

Alvin Josephy: The media has no interest in it, because they have lost that interest.

Q: How do you account for that?

Alvin Josephy: Beating Hitler finally came into focus as the great evil, the number one evil that got finally beaten by the whole world standing together against him.

---00:27:59

I think the Normandy invasion, the D-Day invasion of Normandy, turned the American nations eyes from the Pacific to European and from there on it was only an occasional battle that broke that sense like Iwo Jima. Iwo Jima, Okinawa, maybe.

Q: But contemporarily speaking, we get – you see very little coverage of these commemorative activities. I don't know what went out of here on Guam, but I know with Saipan, when we went to Midway, there wasn't all of that – the primary coverage on the

Pacific had been Pearl Harbor, its 50th anniversary. How do you account for that?

---00:28:42

Alvin Josephy: I think this is all a result of the last 50 years of our history. The turning away from the Japanese war. That Japan was so thoroughly beaten by one bomb, and that that was the story of this war and nothing else. People's eyes glaze over if you talk about Guadalcanal or – and look at the names that are totally forgotten where very fierce battles took place against a very dangerous and formidable enemy that would not surrender. [names] The Solomon Islands, Tarawa. I have had people say to me, what is Tarawa? They don't know that name.

Q: They would never forget if they were there.

Alvin Josephy: That's right. But the people who were there are dying out and it is not getting into our history books the way Europe is.

Q: So it is this thing that we have been talking about, this politics of memory that is being shaped by several forces.

---00:29:44

Alvin Josephy: Well, I think there is a tremendous job to be done, it's going to be a long range job and I think the Park Service has a big role to play in it. I think the associations of the Marine Corps units and other units that are out here, have a big role to play in it and I think Congress has a role to play in it and that is to restore what happened out here, to the memory of the American people, by whatever means are necessary, because this is far away. It's out of sight and out of mind for the average American who doesn't want to go west of Pearl Harbor. It's got everything there and that extra trip is too much for him or her.

---00:30:28

Q: Some people have suggested that Hawaii or Pearl Harbor, who has had so many visitors

come there, should be somewhat like a large visitor's center that would explore the Pacific War and show people how to get out to these sites, somewhat what they have in Seattle for the Klondike. How do you feel about that?

Alvin Josephy: I would – I would support that as one step. I think that is the kind of a thing that – that is the kind of thinking that's got to be done. How do you get people interested in coming out here? Now, I think it will happen eventually because Americans love to get out ahead of the mob, they like to see what is over the next ridge – always. And there are parts of the American West today which never had any tourism and never had people venture in there and they are beginning to do it, because population is growing and when summer comes, the Dad says, hey, we have never been in this area, why don't we go see what is up there? That kind of thing. And then they get there and they say, gee, where has this been all our lives? You know, we never heard of any of this. And I think the Western Pacific is maybe going to get more traffic, but you have had some problems, this has been the part of the world where the atom and hydrogen bombs have been tested and the government hasn't wanted tourists out here, for one thing.

---00:31:51

Continental Airlines has been flying out to these islands for years, since the end of World War II, with little tiny hotels, but the people they have been flying have been the technicians, the technical people, the branches of the military and as long as a place like Guam is treated the way it's treated now, where so much of it's land is owned and administered by military installations, the Navy, the Coast Guard, the Army, the Air Force, the Marine Corps and so forth. There is an almost under swell here of, we don't want people to come out here, we don't want them to see. If these people of Guam become a commonwealth, for example, and have the right to run their own affairs, they will do things that they can't do today and Congress will be put in a position of helping them and having to help them and that is just one thing that has got to be done, I think. And it's going to be very hard, because the military will always have a feeling now that this is our first line of defense, we are not out in the Philippines anymore and we've got to hang on to all this land, it's really barred to the people here as well as the tourists,

---00:33:11

Q: And it's lead to a major controversy of course, which you read about the papers and such – it does kind of lead me to another subject that I would like to have your views on and one that – it polarizes people and historians are split over this and that is this whole idea of political corruptness and especially the Park Service. Let me give you an example and maybe you want to comment. The change of the name of Custer Battlefield has polarized people because we are politically correcting the past. How do you feel about that kind of -

Alvin Josephy: That kind of political correctness? Well, as it applies to history and to Indian history or history of an island like this, I'm generally against it, I think it's an artificial way of going at things and it gets extremist and it's sometimes childish and stupid. I think there is selected examples where people have been insulted and felt that they were being insulted, but did not have the power or ability to be taken seriously in what they felt was the right way to call them or so forth. I have been working recently on a book, I finished a book, to accompany an eight hour series on American Indians that Kevin Costner has produced.

---00:34:34

And I wrote my book as history and I did not worry about political correctness. But they were meeting Indians all over the country and all types of Indians who were telling them, don't ever use the word Iroquois, it is a dirty word for us. Or don't call us [Indian word], so they were trying to be politically correct all the time. And they were really being trapped by some Indians who loved to kid the white man and make the white man do what they want them to do. I just think you have to know what the devil you are doing and not fall for all that baloney. But in some cases recognize that we are recognizing that we have been wrong in what we have been saying and doing and we have been insulting people or hurting them and gradually there is a middle ground there. I know in the field of Indian history, many years ago, I wrote a book called *The Patriot Chiefs*, I think I was the first one to point out that Benjamin Franklin had been influenced to a great degree by the league of the Iroquois and how it was organized and set up and how it brought all these Indian tribes together.

---00:35:57

And that is about all I said. When he presented his plan of union for the 13 colonies at Albany in 1754, he pointed out the league of the Iroquois as a worthy example of what unity would do and these colonies should form a union like the Indians had. Well, after time went on and more and more people read by book, I don't know whether I influenced them or not, but all kinds of things began to come out, that Benjamin Franklin wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution based on the League of the Iroquois and they carried it to ridiculous extremes. There is no truth to it.

Q: Let's come back a little, back to the Pacific and get you involved. How did you become a war correspondent?

Alvin Josephy: Well, when Pearl Harbor came, I tried to get in the Navy and I was turned down because I wore eyeglasses and some enlisted guy said, imagine if you fell on the deck and broke your eyeglasses, you would be no good to us. And then he said, you speak Morrow? And I said, no. So it came in the way of getting rid of me. I went in the Office of Facts and Figures, which began the Office of War Information in Washington. And for about a year I was there and then I enlisted – I got to know the Marine Corps and I enlisted and because of my background in journalism, they plucked me out after boot camp, after Parris Island and brought me up to the Navy yard in Washington.

---00:37:34

And I became a combat correspondent. Originally just print. I had a typewriter with portable – Hermes portable and a carbon paper and paper and then just before I was to go overseas, Dr. Harold Spevak [sp] who was ahead of the music division of the Library of Congress, I approached the Marine Corps public information office and said, we would like some of your combat correspondence to take recording machines out and get us the songs the guys were singing in this war, we would like to have them in our collection.

---00:38:11

Well, he had done the same thing already with the Army and the Navy and both of them had turned him down and said, get lost we are running a war here, we can't do this. But General [name] in the PR office of the Marine Corps said, sure we would be glad to take these machines.

Q: That surprises me that the Marine Corps would be sensitive to that, that's great.

Alvin Josephy: Well, they had a combat correspondent unit going and his idea was, I will give a couple of these machines to two or three of these combat correspondents and they can make the recordings out in the field.

Q: What were these machines?

Alvin Josephy: The one that I got – the first guys who went out, took out these great big, Presto Platters, these big, great big platters that broadcast studios used. They broke. Those things were too delicate. And then wire recorders were too breakable, the wires would snap. But Spevak – I was sent over to the Library of Congress for a few days of orientation on the use of a brand new machine, experimental, made by Armor Research Company in Chicago, I think, that had an endless spool of tape that was 35 millimeters wide and it looked like a moving picture tape and it just went round and round.

---00:39:31

And the needle in a fixed head just scratched parallel grooves as this thing went round and round. So you could get an hour and ten minutes out of these parallel grooves. And to power the thing I had a – they gave me a 12 volt storage battery, a big truck battery.

Q: Those weigh a few pounds.

Alvin Josephy: And how. And a converter and a bag full of microphones, all covered with condoms to keep the salt water out and extra spools of tape and so forth. So I had to lug that stuff out.

---00:40:10

I was assigned then to join the 3rd Marine Division, which was just coming out of Bougainville and going back to it's camp on Guadalcanal and I had to manhandle most of this stuff myself, across the Pacific. I took a train to Oakland and was at Treasure Island and then went aboard a Liberty ship, an ammunition ship, in charge of eight Marines, being a sergeant, I had eight casuals and we stood watch in the gun tubs going across. We went across on our own, they didn't want any ship near us. And we got there and we were out of sight of land for 24 days, had the usual scare, a shark chewed our sonar equipment, we thought we were being followed by a Jap submarine for two or three days of general [unclear], two hours on, two off and all that. And we stood in the gun tubs and looked out at the water and figured where to stand in case a torpedo hit us and the whole ship blew up.

Q: Kind of fatalistic thinking.

---00:41:15

Alvin Josephy: Well, we wanted to know where to fly, which direction to fly out. But we got to New Mia, New Caledonia and from there I got a lot of help from – everybody was helpful in helping me swing stuff down on ropes and the little landing craft and pull it back up again. And I went on the canal. And when I got to the canal to join the 3rd, combat correspondents then would be assigned by the division.

Q: Now this is Guadalcanal, right?

Alvin Josephy: Yeah. They had come back; the 3rd had come back from Bougainville. And we would be assigned to different regiments or different units within the division, where they felt that there would be stories or enough to write about to make it worthwhile to be there rather than over here. And I was sent to an artillery regiment, the 12th – the 12th Marines and was with them in the mud and heat of Guadalcanal.

---00:42:20

Soon after I landed, soon after I joined them, we started to load ships for Rabel [sp?] and Kavieng. We were supposedly going to attack those two places and be expendable for Macarthur's troops that were going to come in over our bodies or something. And fortunately, at the last minute, the strategy was changed and we were – and those two places were called off, we could end run around them. And we were transferred overnight to Nimitz's command, Admiral Nimitz's command in central Pacific and we had some blowout on the canal that night. Everybody got anything they could possibly drink – hair tonic or whatever and singing, "Give my regards to Macarthur" and "Remember me to Dugout Doug". Then we came to Guam.

Q: Did you make recordings while you were on Guadalcanal at all?

Alvin Josephy: I made quite a few, they were the typical kind of a recordings that a civilian correspondent might make. For instance, for Memorial Day program back in the States, I went to the cemetery on Guadalcanal, of the 1st Marine Division, did a program for them.

---00:43:36

But a lot of interviews with people that come out of action.

Q: How was this equipment working in the tropical environment?

Alvin Josephy: It worked fine. They assigned me a Jeep and a Seabee to run the equipment, so all of a sudden I was way on top of the world. I had all the equipment in a Jeep and the Jeep stood wherever I was, at whatever camp I was in.

Q: Now, how did they get that information back so that it could be broadcast?

---00:44:02

Alvin Josephy: It went – I got it to Division Headquarters, D2, the intelligence section and

they had a public information officer, a public relations officer. And somehow or other he took it from there, he got it back either by plane or command ship or something. So our stories and everything we did got back awful fast and stuff was sometimes the first real action material. When we went aboard ship to come to the Marianas and we were aboard that ship for 54 days, I recall.

Q: I understand you were held in reserve for the Saipan -

Alvin Josephy: For Saipan, but then we had to turn around and really run for the protection of the Enewetak lagoon because the Japanese fleet was coming out and I guess it was [unclear] who stopped them at the first battle of the Philippine Sea, really destroyed that whole Japanese fleet. [crosstalk] It was a big sea battle.

Q: Tremendous sea battle, which of course led to the Marianas turkey shoot and the bringing back the Naval arm of [unclear] of the Japanese navy.

---00:45:20

Alvin Josephy: Well, we didn't really know what was going on, we just knew that we were not going to Saipan.

Q: Now was your first combat experience at Guam, or had you had a previous one?

Alvin Josephy: No, my first combat experience was Guam.

Q: Let's take us to that. Tell me what that day was like.

---00:45:43

Alvin Josephy: When I was still aboard ship, Division transferred me, Division PR guy, I got orders transferring me to the 3rd Marine regiment, which was an infantry regiment. In other words, out of the artillery and put my equipment in a halftrack. The 3rd Weapons Company, which was going to be the first wave to wade ashore. There were three waves

that were carried in on amtraks, amphibious tractors ahead of us and then we were supposed to go to the lip of the reef and the ramp would go down and we all get out and wade in with this halftrack. The halftrack had a 75 millimeter cannon on it and machine guns and everybody is packed for inside and we were pulling a trailer with flame throwers and things. And also we had a rubber boat for the wounded. And this was my first combat.

Q: What were your apprehensions?

Alvin Josephy: Well, I was so interested in what I was doing, that as I look back on it and this has always been true, as I look back on it, I wonder what kind of a damn fool was I? I really don't remember being scared. My voice goes up high, it's kind of a nervous tension you know, how am I going to keep from falling in this water here? Things like that. Times when bullets almost like a scream, were plopping up the water around me.

---00:47:17

You know, that I'm scared, but I don't remember that. It's like starting a footrace, you know, you get very tense when you are down on the blocks, but once that sprint starts, you are in it. That's the only way I can liken it. Now we had to wade, I thought it was a half a mile. My memory was, we were told it was about 800 yards.

Q: This was at Asan Beach, right?

Alvin Josephy: On the left bank, beach Red One, right near Adelup Point.

Q: What was it like going back there the other day and seeing all of that?

---00:47:50

Alvin Josephy: Well, I don't know. I don't know how the hell I did it, to tell you the truth, because -

Q: How old were you when you came ashore?

Alvin Josephy: I was – that was '44, I was 29. 29. And they called me grandpa, a lot of the guys.

Q: Because they were like 17 and 18, right?

Alvin Josephy: But I had been recording aboard ship, first of all, I had made recordings of the guys singing [unclear] our own lyrics, you know, "We are Marines and we are fighting like hell, heading for Tokyo, got every weapon to shoot up the town, we are scattering Japs all around." Well, anyway, and they were singing down in the holds and I heard them say, tomorrow morning we are going over the side and we are going to take Guam and so forth. 6:00 in the morning, I began to record. Now, I had 40 feet of wire, which meant I had to stay fairly near the halftrack. Everybody else could get as far away as possible, because from the hills, from the top of Fonte plateau there, that halftrack looked pretty big to draw fire, you know, coming in.

---00:49:08

There were no tanks yet, as I recall, the tanks came in after.

Q: So did you draw fire?

Alvin Josephy: We sure did. And it took a long time for us to get to that lip of the reef, we went around and around and then we got orders to go up to the next line and go around and around and up to the next line.

Q: What was dropping you off on the reef, an LST?

Alvin Josephy: It was an LCVP. I don't know what it stands for, but it was big enough to hold the halftrack and that is why we were not in amphibious tractors. They finally hit that – and I was really just, almost back at WOR describing an event. Giving people an idea of what it looked like and who was doing what and what were the functions of this.

---00:49:58

That's why the recording for the average person might seem very boring, where is the action? Where are the guys getting killed? But there is a long period in where it's a real technical description of a ship to shore landing. And picture these guys coming down the cargo nets slung with all kinds of things, a guitar on one guy's back, a cigar boxes hanging off of them.

Q: To your knowledge, had this ever been done before?

Alvin Josephy: It's never been done. It hadn't been done before, it has never been done since. You saw all the movies of the guys wading ashore at Normandy, it's as if one of those guys had a hand microphone and was telling exactly what he was going through. And what the buddies around him were going through. There goes a guy down in the water, grab him before he drowns.

---00:50:47

Things like that, are on this tape, but as I say, there is a long period at first where a line of departure and here comes the salvage boat, and I describe the salvage boat, what it's going to do and then you hear a guy's motor boat come up to us and say, -

Q: Now is gunfire clearly audible?

Alvin Josephy: As we get in, the gunfire from the destroyers and the battleship or cruisers or whatever they were, off-shore, you can hear that. You can hear an occasional plane and I describe that. Dive bomber going down. And then as we come closer to the reef you begin to Japanese fire, mortar shells dropping in the water.

---00:51:28

And our own machine gun going off and things of that sort. Because Adelup Point was right nearby on our left and they had – I remember the orange flames, you know and you

see the smoke, everything was full of smoke, but you could see these orange dots coming through the smoke.

Q: As you were recording this deadly contest, didn't it seem a bit surreal?

Alvin Josephy: Well, it was almost as if I wasn't in it. As if I wasn't a part it. But finally the ramp went down and I described getting out and I'm in two feet of water, I think my pistol got wet and here we go now. Slogging through the water and very tough walking through water. Sometimes it was only a couple inches, sometimes it was up to my waist and then guys began to get hit. And we were putting them in the rubber boats and it was a long walk. I tell you that. But when we finally got up to the beach, we were only half on the beach and half off and we were trying to get cover behind coconut lodge and we finally all got orders to get the hell away from that halftrack.

---00:52:44

Which was really drawing fire – mortar shells.

Q: Had it been hit?

Alvin Josephy: No, I don't think it had. I don't remember that it got any hits, but what happened to it was after we left it, it started to get up the top and it hit a navy – Japanese naval shell I think, that had been put on the ground like a mine and it blew up. And the guys who stayed with it were all killed.

Q: Your equipment had been pulled out then?

---00:53:14

Alvin Josephy: Yes, I had taken all the equipment out and put it in the sand there, tried to cover as much of it up and I wasn't able to record for a while because we were trying to get inland, I was fighting, I was with the guys around me. But a little later – we were pinned down on that beach practically all day long, so a little later I was able to slither my way

back to it and begin to record again this battle going on right around us on the beach and on the hill right ahead of us, at Chanito Cliffs, that just goes right up in front of it.

Q: What other war correspondents were with you, of note?

Alvin Josephy: I don't think there were any. There was an Australian guy, uh Bob Sherrod wasn't with us. They came in late; I mean they came days later. But the only guys who were there were combat correspondents, each – one of the landing regiments had several. Sy O'Brien and I were with the 3rd. There were two guys, Jerry O'Leary, who was with the Washington Post, I think for years. Jeremiah O'Leary, after the war. And another guy.

---00:54:36

And on the right flank, there was a fellow named Saul Blackman and a fellow named Jim Moser. Well, the second day, when Division Headquarters were set up on the beach, our PR officer was a man named Henry – Captain Ray Henry, and he got a hold of me and he said, you gotta get over to the 9th, the other side, the other end of the beach; they have no correspondent over there. Blackman had been killed right away. We put a wreath out yesterday for him. And the other guy had been taken off, he lost his foot. So I made my way along the beach, really just zig-zagging and you know, because that beach was under fire at that time, still. I went through the rear elements of the 21st and got up on the 9th and so for about a day – two days maybe, I was with the 9th. I had to report in. But they let me do, they couldn't' have cared less that I was there.

Q: Did you do more recording?

Alvin Josephy: I can't remember if I took any recording equipment over. See, I also had to write stories. I remember writing some stories with them. I got [unclear] and then some damn fool way, I went off by myself and I ended up on the other beach head, Agat. I made contact. I think the 9th had already made some contact, and they had a public information officer with them and a couple of combat correspondents.

---00:56:20

So I reported into them, I said, I come from the 9th. The said, what the hell are you doing here? So anyway, I got back then and when I got back, I found orders had been sent to me to leave the 9th and go with the 21st, which was up the hill, up on the ridge. They had had some casualties of the correspondents. So I joined the 21st then and I was with the 21st from then on, all through the battle. I got up there just before the – I think it was the day, the late afternoon that ended that evening in the banzai charge and that Seabee joined me, some way or another we made a connection.

Q: And he brought the recording equipment?

Alvin Josephy: And he had the recording stuff and he and I shared a foxhole on the side of the hill that night and it was a hell of a night.

---00:57:11

Q: Did you record the banzai attack?

Alvin Josephy: Yeah, the guys going – I didn't know what the hell was going on. It was knife fighting.

Q: I understand that star shells were lighting up the -

Alvin Josephy: Oh, it was the fourth of July.

Q: Better than the firework show we saw last night?

Alvin Josephy: Just about. And these Japs were hollering, Marine, you die! Marine, you die! And you get these [unclear] chants of theirs, like Indian sing songs.

---00:57:45

Q: Like the Zulus make these chants before the big attack? Is that?

Alvin Josephy: Well, these were guys that had been hit, not killed. They would lay around and you would hear them, yeah, but there were 3,000 of them in back of us. By morning, they were all being slaughtered down back at the beach by cooks and bakers and engineers. Everybody had to fall out and fight. They over ran the – our main aid hospital down there. The patients had to get up and fight.

Q: We are going to stop the tape for just a minute.

Alvin Josephy: Well, look I'm talking too much.

Q: We're gonna do a wrap. We're pretty much close to time. You're not talking too much, this could go all afternoon. It ties in so beautifully what we've been talking- we have talked with so many of the 21st, we could write almost a definitive work.

00:58:59
[END OF SESSION 1]

01:00:20

Q: Taking us back to the bonzai attack and you recording that. When the dawn breaks, what was there? What was the visual that was in front of you?

---1:00:32

Alvin Josephy: Where we were, was part way up the hill, we weren't up in the very front. It was obvious that there was a lot of commotion going on behind us with all these Japanese that were down.

Q: So gun fire, all kinds of racket going on?

Alvin Josephy: And lots of live Japanese down there. Not on the hill and not up above us that I could see. So – and they looked like there was some very exotic types of fighting going on down there.

Q: What do you mean, exotic?

Alvin Josephy: Well, the Japanese were sitting in front of tanks, in front of our tanks, just sitting there. As if they wanted to be run over and commit suicide for the Emperor that way. In fact, I think I wrote a story about that, about that particular thing. That the Japanese were doing some very odd things about getting themselves killed. And killing themselves with their swords or hand grenades, right in front of us. And that all looked like it was more important for me to cover, so we went back down to try to tell a story of how many Japanese had gotten through our lines that night.

---01:01:48

And what they were doing, how they were being killed and whether they were a threat or not. And there was a lot to write about there. And so I was – I really withdrew for that day, in the sense of just going back down the hill to see what kind of mayhem was happening behind us. But once there was – once I wrote that, and wrote stories about that, then it was on and we went upward, back to the top of the ridge where there was a – there were other stories to write about because we had suffered some great casualties. And one of the stories I wrote about, and I forgot see, I have forgotten through the years, a lot of these things, but it was a man named Mulcahy, Ed Mulcahy, I don't know if you have come on him, he is here.

---01:02:43

And he was a lieutenant I think, at the time, and he was right in the front of our lines in the 21st and he had a whole – his whole group of men around him and it was like a nightmare for them because his men were being blinded and hanging onto his leg, you know, and all kinds of – he could have written a horror movie or a horror novel about that one night there. Well, I wrote it up as a story, just an article for a newspaper. I think all of them or most of them were taken out as wounded, a lot of them were killed, I don't know that any were deranged, but they just lived through a hell that night.

Q: What kind of censorship did you encounter with your stories? Do you know what the story looks like after the censors get done with it?

Alvin Josephy: Well, to a large extent, we had been briefed on what not to say. For instance I never said, this is a sergeant from Minnesota, I would never tell exactly where on a combat story.

Q: So you spoke in generalities, so that perhaps family at home –

---01:03:59

Alvin Josephy: Later on, if he got a Purple Heart, then I could write a real Joe Blow story, tell all about him, name him and so forth and get in his hometown newspaper. But these stories were being handed out or made available to AP and UPI and INS, all the wire services as well as *The New York Times* and whoever – *Time* magazine and *Life*, anybody could really use our stuff if they wanted to. Now, most of them were very decent guys. If they used any of this stuff, they credited us. Sergeant Alvin Josephy, Marine Corps Combat Correspondent wrote this – and then the whole story might go out under our byline. Right from there, it would cabled back to the States and a lot of these correspondents, like Bob Sherrod was awful good about not taking any of our stuff, but just sending our whole story with our byline on it, because we were really living through this stuff.

---01:05:06

And the – I don't know, it's hard to tell, because we saw so darn much that they didn't see, and we were trying to convey it. Joe Rosenthal, you know, the photographer, was usually with us.

Q: Pulitzer Prize winning photographer.

Alvin Josephy: Yeah, the guy who took the flag raising.

Q: Over Suribachi.

Alvin Josephy: Suribachi.

Q: They are doing some work on this, I don't know if you have heard about this but this is the so-called American icon of World War II, it is the image. Did you witness that, by the way?

---01:05:40

Alvin Josephy: No, I saw the flag but it was already up when I saw it. We saw it go up, but it was the other end of the island from where we were and it was another division. It wasn't our division.

Q: When you look back at this Guam campaign and I am talking about your own personal feelings, I mean, you saw so much, you wrote about it, was there one point when the weight of all of this just comes down and [unclear].

Alvin Josephy: I think the answer is no, because what happened is that as the fighting kind of got less and less, we moved north, through the jungle. We – you know, the tension kind of disappeared, although in a way it didn't because we were in the jungle ambushing them and they were ambushing us.

---01:06:39

But the fighting was less intense. There were small unit actions and finally when the island was secure, I found myself in love with this island. Oddly enough.

Q: What about it?

Alvin Josephy: It was such a beautiful place and the people were so nice. I was with the group that I think was the first group to liberate that big camp. I went into that concentration camp when they were all there and I wrote, I did, I wrote about that and I met some of these young guys, right away, they joined us.

Q: Did you reunite with any of these people while you were here?

Alvin Josephy: I did about six years ago when I first came back here. I haven't had a chance this trip really. But last time I came back, I brought a lot of glossy pictures with me and I gave them all to Rose to use if she wanted to, but some of them were of these Chamorro people coming out of the camp on caribous and walking and then we had a big pile of shoes for them and all that.

---01:07:57

And then there was a big group shot of all of the scouts together and then also a shot of my favorite friend, the guy I really got friendly with, his sister was dying of TB, she had been raped by the Japanese and she was a beautiful, beautiful woman but nothing but skin and bones. And -

Q: She had contracted tuberculosis.

Alvin Josephy: Yes and she was dying in a little house here in Hagatna, that had been half destroyed –

---01:08:29

Q: You said this was a sister of a good friend of yours? That you had become friends with? What was his name?

Alvin Josephy: All I remember is his first name, Felix, but I showed this picture six years ago to these other Chamorros and they all recognized him, oh, there he is! He had died a few years before. And I recognized some of these other guys because they were with us on various occasions. After the sweep, we tried to get a lot of Japs to surrender you know, and went out on an LCI and circle the island and had a Jap prisoner with us.

Q: With loud speakers?

Alvin Josephy: Yeah, with bellowing through a bull horn. And there was a combat photographer along and he took pictures of that and I think I gave Rose some of those pictures too.

Q: Now there was some Navajo code talkers here, did you ever interview all of those guys?

---01:09:23

Alvin Josephy: No, I didn't. I knew some of them just as "Chief", everybody called them "Chief" and they kind of stayed by themselves a lot, you know.

Q: How about war dogs? Did you ever do a war dog interview?

Alvin Josephy: Yes, I did on Iwo Jima, I did a recording of the war dogs on Iwo Jima. There is a recording of them and their use.

Q: Let's talk about your recordings. Just for those historians or researchers that will be looking at this, where is a primary collection of your recordings?

Alvin Josephy: As far as I know, the biggest collection is in the Library of Congress in a division called something like, the broadcast music or recorded music and broadcast sounds of – there is a fellow named Sam Berlowski who has been the head of the division for years.

---01:10:11

I don't know if he's still there, but I discovered this some years ago because somebody was putting all of WOR's recordings in there, as a gift. And they came on records that I had made at WOR and Sam Berlowski said, oh, we have war records that this guy made. So they told me about them and I went down and he had quite a collection. Not just of mine, but of all the combat correspondents who had recording machines of any type and had made records at other places. New Georgia -

Q: Seems to me it's like an untapped resource that I haven't seen used very much.

Alvin Josephy: It's absolutely – the Marine Corps has ignored it for 50 years.

Q: It's great primary source stuff.

---01:10:57

Alvin Josephy: For some reason, the historical section of the Marine Corps has shown no interest in these records and they have been doing their own oral history, but what they seem to do is to – they want the – I don't mean to sound this way, but of officers, you know? They want a general officer and [crosstalk]

Q: Falling into the Civil War historical trap which is you interview the officers, but the real people that did the fighting, those are those prized documents.

Alvin Josephy: They are leaving them out, I think. And then there is another catch of these things that has just come to light. It's the National Archives and I can't tell you much about them, but they have been discovered by sound people who are working on documentaries on the history of World War II.

---01:11:48

Q: So some of your things are there too. Do you think it's a duplication of that or - ?

Alvin Josephy: There may be some duplicates, but there are also some that they sent me that I had never heard before. For instance, the fighting for the cliffs on the second day, down on the beach.

Q: At Chonito Cliffs? There is also a historical flip on that, I don't know if you -

Alvin Josephy: How do they get this word "Chorito"?

Q: It's actually on the maps as that and it was somehow transcribed on your planning maps as Chonito Ridge and it was an error.

Alvin Josephy: It's really Chorito. Well our memory of it all is Chonito.

---01:12:26

Q: And that is the way it was because it apparently was on your maps that way, so you are recalling it as accurately as the information given to you. The other thing I want to talk about is for researchers watching this, is there any collection of your writings or your correspondence, these articles, are they all over the place or - ?

Alvin Josephy: I had carbons of every story I wrote and I had them in a packet. I came here from Iwo Jima from an air evacuation plane.

Q: Because you were wounded?

Alvin Josephy: No, I wasn't, but I was called back to Washington and I received orders to come back as fast as possible. There were five of us correspondents from the three divisions to speak at the National Press Club and elsewhere, go on bond tours and write magazine articles and a book, which would tell the American people why Iwo Jima was necessary.

---00:13:24

There was a big controversy -

Q: Because the casualties were so high?

Alvin Josephy: Why was this battle fought? Why was there all these casualties? Right. And of course all you had to tell them was what – we took it for the Air Force. And to help bomb Japan. To help get planes lower down and give them fighter escort and all the rest and save the big B-29s on their way back, if they had been shot up. And that was what we were communicating to the American people. And so I was – I got back to Guam where we

had left my sea bag, somebody had gone into my sea bag and a lot was missing, but at that point, I didn't give a damn, I just wanted to get back to the States fast. So – but I think I managed to get the carbons – my entire carbons back and then I just – it's a blank. See, I lived in Washington DC and I was in the – still in the Marine Corps, based in the Navy Yard and I was going to go back overseas.

---01:14:32

And they sent me to the Infantry Journal to do some articles for the Infantry Journal. I did one I know, on the Japs' surrender, it was called Some Japs Surrender and it was about going around the island with a bull horn and these Japs – and then I moved to California, right? As soon as I got out of the Marine Corps, and in the process, these things just evaporated and I don't know where they are or what happened to them. I have never followed through with the Marine Corps as to whether they have them stashed somewhere. They would have the originals if they had them at all, but they could have thrown them away through the years.

---01:15:15

There have been books published, like *This Uncommon Valor* and *Sempre Fidelis* that have used a lot of the stories and I don't know where they got the originals.

Q: You wrote a book as well.

Alvin Josephy: I wrote *The Long and The Short and The Tall*, and I did use stuff out of a lot of my stories, so I have a feeling that I still possessed that whole set when I wrote that book. But I wrote that book on that first return. As soon as I finished some bond tours, I got a 30 day furlough, went down to Nag-Sag (sp?) to take it easy on the beach and wrote the whole book down there. With the exception of the very last chapter, which I wrote back in the - I came back to New York City to a friend's apartment and spent a weekend there.

---01:16:06

And I stayed up all night, wrote the last chapter, went downstairs to get some breakfast and the guys were hawking the paper that we dropped the Atom bomb. So that was August and then I knew I probably wouldn't go back overseas.

Q: If a researcher was looking for these articles, where would you suggest they start looking?

Alvin Josephy: Well, the Marine Corps Public Relations Department, see what they can tell about where these might be. Certainly a guy like Ben Frank at the Marine Corps Historical Foundation. I think they are all going to say, we don't know. We have no idea where it all went.

Q: So they might go to like *The New York Times* and start looking at their coverage – major newspapers?

Alvin Josephy: It wouldn't be, all you would get was an occasional story here and there. But what I'm looking for is, where is the whole sheaf of these things?

---01:17:04

Q: Where are all your papers kept? All these many books you have done?

Alvin Josephy: Well, those are at the University of Oregon library, but I only started sending things to them in 1962 I think and I haven't sent them very much Marine material. If I could, I would tell you where to start looking here, because I ought to do it myself.

Q: Sounds like a good job for a historian to do, is to track down the Josephy papers.

Alvin Josephy: It would be great. My papers are all at the University of Oregon library and they are wonderful because they want everything. It started, they wanted manuscripts and research notes and so forth, but then they said, look, we want everything about your life.

Q: So not only your American Western Indian things, they want it all.

---01:17:54

Alvin Josephy: That's right and there is a lot of Marine Corps stuff there and other stuff with that.

Q: Oh, there is some Marine Corps?

Alvin Josephy: Well, things like Caltrap the publication of our division association. Not anything that I can think of that is of the war years, but I do have a number of things in file cabinets at home from the war years. I have all my field notebooks where I interviewed people and wrote down the stories in note form before writing them. And there is quite a few things – mimeograph stuff that came out to us from Division of Public Information in Washington. Various passes that we had to give to the Japanese prisoners. And little notes for combat correspondence.

---01:18:46

Q: These recording machines – does one exist still?

Alvin Josephy: If so, I don't know.

Q: It would be wonderful to find one of those.

Alvin Josephy: You might ask the Music Division. You might try working with them. I don't know what they call it today, the Division of Broadcast Music -

Q: The Library of Congress.

Alvin Josephy: It's in the Madison Building there. It was, anyway. And if Sam Berlowski is still there, he's very helpful and really interested in all this. And there is a lot of inventories that have been through the years. There are some errors in their inventories

because they didn't know and I tried to – when I was there, I tried to correct them.

---01:19:31

But they were in too much of a rush and said they would do it some other time. Where they have question marks, they don't know who made the recording or where it was made or when.

Q: Sounds like another trip back to the Library of Congress. Before we close the interview, it's been very interesting and helpful, you talked about this process of veterans returning to for instance Guam or any of these other sites. Could you share some of those thoughts about what happens? You are a veteran and you are experienced.

Alvin Josephy: When I was a kid there were still Civil War veterans left, a lot of them. And they were all telling their own stories of Gettysburg and everything, to anybody who would listen. And the kids would all say, oh, the old guy. We didn't have much sympathy for them. And I remembered all of that and I wondered, what is going to happen to us?

---01:20:27

But when I came home, there was a big division, kind of an emotional division between most of the guys who came home and everybody else – the rest of the people didn't know that there was this division. But I think most veterans did not come home and want to talk to even their family about anything unhappy that had happened over there. Oh, they might say, we had some beautiful nights there on the island and a funny thing happened to Joe, I wrote you letters about Joe So-and-so, he was a clown. But they wouldn't tell – they just didn't want to talk about battles or what they went through. Any connected way. Now this was not true of everybody. For instance, I sat down and wrote this big, *The Long and The Short and The Tall*, but I was writing that, really, for the guys in the outfit. It was really – I thought they would want to have this. I wasn't thinking of family or anybody else. There were others who did that. John Monks in the Star about Bougainville. And of course Mailer wrote a book, Manchester later wrote a book.

---01:21:41

Q: *Good-bye Darkness.*

Alvin Josephy: Yeah, and so forth, so it's not all together true that nobody wanted to say anything about it, but the average guy, who is here now, is typical and this would be typical of every theatre of war, that men have not wanted to talk about this. They have shied away from it. Nobody has pressed them to talk and if they had, they would probably turn it off pretty fast.

Q: Our experience with this oral history program is that people are talking about things they have never talked about before.

Alvin Josephy: That's right. Now, I think what's happened finally and I think maybe this coverage of Normandy might have opened it up, started, is men finally are getting over this wound or the coping with it.

---01:22:31

I think it's some kind of a mental wound and what the wound is, I believe, is a feeling of guilt or a feeling that, why did I live through this? Look, I have trouble right now. [cries] So – because you think of the other guys who didn't come back. And these memories of a fire fight are full of memories of so and so going down. And you don't want to talk about that.

Q: It's been very, very tough on a lot of people to recall the loss of friends and buddies, this whole system out here and I guess the military experience in general is you make these friendships and you share these foxholes and that guy doesn't make it.

Alvin Josephy: That's right and we left here, see, they weren't with us. We went home and they weren't – I had to go home after Iwo Jima and confront a lot of families and tell them about their kid or their husband that wasn't coming back and I was the first one to tell them that they weren't coming back.

Q: They were all so young.

---01:23:48

Alvin Josephy: We were all young. We were all very young. Well, thanks a lot.

Q: Alvin, I would like to thank you for this interview and it's – it's a pleasure to meet you finally and to talk with you about these very personal recollections. But you know and I know that these recollections are the fabric of history of our country.

Alvin Josephy: Oh yeah, sure. Well, I would like to see a Pacific War veteran remembered.

Q: Maybe we will talk a little bit more about that sometime. Thank you very much.

Alvin Josephy: Thanks a lot.

END OF VIDEO