

National Park Service (NPS)

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



Harry Noble
July 18, 1994

Interview conducted by Steven Hower
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508 compliant version by Michael Faist

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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.

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Interviewee: Harry Noble

Military Rank: K Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Marines, USMC

Interviewer: Steven Hower

Hilton Hotel, Guam

Date: July 18, 1994

--00:00:00 AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Narrator: Harry Noble is a Caucasian-American man with bushy eyebrows and a silver-chain necklace. Wearing a button-up navy blue shirt with printed patterns. And behind him, is a white lamp, and a beige wall.

[Unrecognizable Conversation being held]

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Q: My name is Steven Hower and I'm here at the Hilton Hotel in Guam on the 18th of July, at 5:00 pm, that's 1994, to record an oral history interview with Mr. Harry Noble, who served in the regimental intelligence section of the 21st Marines during World War II on Guam. This interview is being made by the National Park Service, War in the Pacific National Historical Park, in conjunction with KGFT Television. Mr. Noble, I understand that the National Park Service has your permission to make this recording?

Noble: Yes sir.

Q: And to retain all literary and property rights deriving from it, is that correct?

Noble: Yes, that's correct.

Q: I can call you Harry, I hope?

Noble: By all means, Steve.

Q: I want to thank you very much for taking the time to chat with us today. I've already

enjoyed speaking with you.

Noble: My pleasure.

--00:01:24 AUDIO DESCRIPTION

Q: Just for the record- could you state and spell your full name?

Noble: Yes. My name is Harry Noble. That is spelled N-O-B-L-E. And-do you want my address?

Q: Why don't you just say, when were you born and where?

Noble: I was born New Years Eve, December 31st, 1923.

Q: Where?

Noble: ... and I was born in Astoria, Queens, which is on Long Island, New York and I resided at- in Elmhurst, New York, when I enlisted in the Marine Corps, and that was in the early part of 1942.

Q: So you grew up in Queens?

Noble: I grew up in Queens, yes.

Q: Ok... When did you join the service?

Noble: I actually was sworn into the Marine Corps after a delay in my enlistment, only because I had to have some teeth fixed, before they would accept me, which was quite unusual. I thought – I figured maybe I will get in and get my teeth fixed there. Anyway, I had to get them fixed, went down for another examination and then they accepted me. I was sworn in actually on August, 12th 1942.

Q: What motivated you to join the service?

Noble: Uh-number one, Pearl Harbor was sort of the day that I remember, because I was playing football at the time and they stopped the game and announced that Pearl Harbor was attacked. And of course I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was, even, but when I got home, my father was sitting in front of the radio and he was and he looked at me and said, well son, he said, it looks like we are going to go to war.

And my father had served in World War I and I was very aware of that. And I said, well, Dad, I'm going to sign up. He said, "where are you going, to the Army?" I said, "I don't think so." I said, "we have been talking about Marines; some of the guys on the football team were talking about going down together." And I went down and I signed up in the Marines anyway, because mainly I knew that the Marines had excellent training and I wanted to be sure that I could do what I had to do properly and I would be safe, knowing that the guy next to me would also be trained well. And that is really my motivation. That, plus patriotism of course.

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Q: So how was the training that you experienced?

Noble: Well, that was [laughs] – where they say, Marines want you! The first thing that they let out when we were on our way to boot camp, on the bus or the train or whatever, I went down to Parris Island, the other boots that were still there, they were old timers, they being there a week ahead of me. Yelling out, "you'll be sorry!" I think in a few days we were sorry. It started off – we never expected the guys yelling out at you, calling you all kinds of nice names and treating you like that. I said, what the heck have I got myself into? And I even remember guys in boot camp crying in their sack the first night. And it was kind of scary. But as time went on, they treated you a little – not a little better, but you get more treated like men rather than a bunch of egg heads that we made you feel like you were, and shaved your hair off and they make you all one. And then they build you up from scratch and after it was all done, boot camp, you knew why. They made men out of you.

They made Marines out of you and then you were proud enough and then you would do most anything for the Marine Corps and what you were told.

Basically what they would do, they take you out of being a... snot-nosed kid or a mama's boy or anything like that and teach you how to take orders. And you will take orders and you will do it.

Q: Were there any memorable characters that you met there in basic training?

Noble: Yeah, there is a couple. One in particular I remember, and I didn't know this until many years later – Leatherneck Magazine is a Marine magazine, um- at the time I did get a subscription to it and I would generally get it every month. And one issue, it has all about Lee Marvin who was famous for the Dirty Dozen, movie actor. And the first paragraph it was discussing how he went into the Marine Corps August 12th 1942. That is my day. He lived in New Jersey, came out of New Jersey, I came out of New York. Came out of the recruiting depot in New York. Then I noticed his serial number was two above mine. Mine was 439665 and his was 439667. I said, this guy's got to be in my same platoon.

It had on there, Platoon 626, I said, ah-but I don't remember Lee Marvin, because now Lee Marvin is a big star and I knew what he looked like. But then I turned the page and they had a picture of him in boot camp. And he was the guy that was standing right behind me. And it ended up that Lee Marvin was in the Marines, he ended up in the 4th Division, I ended up in the 3rd Division.

Q: So right out of boot camp, that is how you got assigned to the 3rd Division?

Noble: Yes, they were forming; they were forming the 3rd Division. Specifically they were forming the 21st Marine regiment and I was assigned to that. After boot camp we went to uh-our assignments. Mine was K Company, 3rd Battalion, 21st Marines. And we started training. And it uh-was the early days and of course they were still filling up to get enough personnel to fill a regiment. And they were doing it at that time of the war, why they needed men in a hurry, so we went to a lot of rough training in the beginning from boot training, which was now real good training.

And we were up at um-North Carolina, Camp Elliot and then we went out to Pendleton before we shipped out overseas.

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Q: When did you ship out overseas?

Noble: It was uh--actually we spent Christmas – I remember that, in San Diego and then that is up to 1942 and then we shipped out early of '43, actually. And I was sent out overseas on the SS Lurline. USS Lurline – not USS, it was a steamship, SS Lurline. Which was converted to a troop transport and we went directly to New Zealand.

Q: To New Zealand?

Noble: We had advanced infantry training there. Actually we were two-fold, advanced infantry training and to be a-deterrent to the Japanese, which were coming down through Port Moresby at that time.

Q: Yeah... What was your assignment at that time, still a rifleman?

Noble: Well, I had qualified expert on B-A-R and so they really assigned me B-A-R man.

Q: I see.

Noble: And I don't know why they picked the shortest guy, almost the shortest guy anyway, in the platoon to be a B-AR- man, which was a heavy weapon. But I shoot – when you shoot expert with something, I guess they figure, well, you are qualifying. But anyway, I started as a BAR man and I also went to Scout School, which later on, when we got to Guadalcanal after New Zealand, and trained ourselves some more jungle warfare, to go up and invade Bougainville. So when we invaded Bougainville, they made me a scout.

Q: So Scout School was something that took uh-place in New Zealand?

Noble: New Zealand and Guadalcanal, right. And map making, stuff like that. Being a scout, you have to [unintelligible] not necessarily combat patrol. You go on patrol to try to gather intelligence information to bring back. Bring it up to headquarters. They disseminate it and they compile it into information that they could divulge to the rest of the regiment, down to the companies. Positions where the Japanese are. Strength, condition of the units. Terrain, everything. Try to avoid the enemy, basically when you go scouting for patrol.

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Q: It's evident why you got to be a B-A-R man, but why would you have been picked or did you volunteer for Scout School and why?

Noble: Well, I guess – it might have been my background, I had some artistic background, which made it easy for me to lay things out in an organized manner as far as map making is concerned. And uh-we had gone on this particular patrol on Bougainville, and I was like doubling from B-A-R to scouting, we went on a patrol – a platoon patrol. We went across the Torokina River, which was our line of departure, actually, then we are going into Japanese territory.

We went on this patrol with a platoon of men and a typical – like a movie, I always remember it's like a movie, rifles over your head to keep your rifle dry and swimming with the current or against the current of the river and going under darkness. Which incidentally, there was one little incident before we went through, I had a run-in with a war dog on one of the patrols where the trainer – we had war dogs along the front, if there was any movement from the Japanese, and sometimes the war dogs could smell them and they alerted everybody, but maybe I smelt like a Jap, I don't know, but this one dog leaped at me, he must have stopped about three feet from my throat, the trainer grabbed the leash. And this was a Doberman Pinscher and believe me, to this day, I cannot be about Dobermans, I get a little bit frightened of them. But back to the story of my patrol that I went on... we had gone – the patrol had gone out a distance and we ran across a trail, which was later known as the East-West trail and it turned out to be, later on, the Japanese main supply line in that area in Bougainville.

And we pulled back from there and the lieutenant in charge of our patrol, he said, we have – he said, Harry, “you are scout trained, we need a volunteer to go on this patrol.” He said, “but it has to be done as a non-combatant patrol and you have to do it avoiding the enemy at all costs, but to map it out. We have to find out where that line comes in to the Torokina River, because we were some ways in.” And it was me and this good friend of mine who volunteered and the two of us left the patrol in an area and for two days we went patrolling the East-West trail.

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Q: Excuse me, clarify for me this follow the patrol – this is after you were out with this platoon.

Noble: Well, we started with the platoon, we were on a reconnaissance patrol, but when we came across something as individual as this. We pulled away from that area...

Q: I see, I see.

Noble: ... and rendezvous to a point that we knew we could discuss this thing and it was then that the lieutenant wisely decided it should be a two-man patrol, not a guise that we were a little over a squad. We had maybe about twelve guys on it. And it couldn't be noisy; it had to be done in daylight hours too, because we had to see where we were going.

We had to pace it off so we know the distances, what the terrain was like. Now the odd thing happened, when we were heading toward our lines to contact to see where it met the Torokina River, we had done the other part of it. We were there for two days, by the way. Um- I had [clears throat] come down to the Torokina River and there was an artillery barrage going on, on the other side, which was Hellzapoppin Ridge. We didn't realize at the time where it was, but we shot at en masse with a compass to locate it. But at any event, our artillery was preparing it for an attack, for the Marines to go up there, because the Japs were in number up there in Hellzapoppin Ridge. We ended up, they were overshooting it, our artillery, they didn't know where we were, but we ended up in our own artillery barrage and we took cover in Japanese foxholes. They were driven out apparently because of the

over shelling that was going on, which went to our advantage and I always give the 12th Marines, which is our artillery battery, that was uh-supporting our company, our battalion, which was 3rd Battalion, the credit for saving our lives, because they got them out, so we went in the foxholes until the artillery let up and then we got out of there and we slept one night in the Jap foxhole.

It was kind of weird, but it was safe. [Laughs] It helped. But it was rather interesting. But what happened after that, then they decided that they were going to take me out of K Company when Bougainville was finished. Um... and I was brought up to regimental intelligence. Regimental headquarters. Apparently the map that I had made was quite accurate and it enabled them to destroy their supply line coming down into our lines, and it worked out well. So they shipped me up to regimental intelligence and then I stayed there for the next campaign, map making, reading aerial photos and preparing our invasion for Guam. Because Guadalcanal, after Bougainville, was not a secured island. We set up a territory of an area that – that is all the Marines were ordered to do, is to have a ten mile parameter on Bougainville and we left that island in that condition, turned it over to the Army. But back to Guadalcanal, then we started working on the next invasion, which was Guam. And that's how I entered into that section of the regimental intelligence; I was a scout for Guam campaign.

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Q: So during preparation for Guam, you were sort of privy to some of the more...

Noble: Terrain.

Q: ...I guess secret intelligence.

Noble: Yes, I worked on aerial photos and uh-we made some of the battle maps for the entire division, but mainly it was working our own 21st regiment section. So I knew where we were coming in, it was all classified naturally in material. So I worked on the invasion map for our section for the regimental – for the 21st regiment.

Q: So um-tell us a little bit about the Guam campaign.

Noble: The Guam campaign was, as you probably know from history, that the 3rd Division was held in reserve for the Saipan invasion and when the 4th Division didn't need us in there, then we came in to hit Guam. But it was 53-53 days in a troop transport, which was – not being sailors, I think most of the Marines in the 3rd Division had more sea duty than half of the Navy. [Laughs] We wrung out of our socks probably more salt water than they ever saw, some of them.

But what happened was, when we finally came around to invade Guam, I was in the first wave going in, and being a scout, I was pulling out in front in order to do my thing, as well as the guys that were invading, you know, the ready rifleman. And we came in, jumping off the – I think we called them alligators, coming in over the reef, we had to transfer into that from the Higgins boats, that we come down the cargo net.

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Q: Excuse me, do you remember the name of the transport that you were on?

Noble: You know something; I have at home, that information. But it's not up here anymore. [Laughs]

Q: That's ok. Do you remember reveille in the morning of W-Day? Getting ready?

Noble: Oh yes, I remember very well. They blew general quarters. I remember a message coming over the PA system, which was our lieutenant general Geiger, he was the Corps Commander and he was telling us in so many words that we have an honor bestowed upon us, the 3rd Division and all the people that are invading Guam, because it was the only United States territory that was captured by the Japanese and he emphasized the fact that it is an honor and he said, good luck, in so many words. I know exactly the words, but I don't recall the exact words that he used, but the essence of it was, that we have the nation, our United States, has the eyes upon us, invading an American territory and knows that we will well under fire and that we will capture it. And we did. And we were proud to do it

and it was an honor to do it.

Q: So you took that very much at face value.

Noble: At face value and right to this day, we are proud that we did it again and we felt it an honor then and we felt it an honor to be here today.

Q: Did you or were you honored with a special meal that morning or did you get the usual chow?

Noble: [Laughs] The only greeting we got then was bullets and bombs and artillery and everything else that they could throw at us.

Q: It must have been pretty heavy coming in the first wave.

Noble: Well, the first wave -

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Q: Excuse me, excuse me, did you... sorry probably should't interrupt but as a scout, going over the side, were you perhaps-carrying a lighter load than usual?

Noble: No, I had to carry my ammunition, I had to carry my field pack, which had enough canned rations to last me maybe one or two days and whatever little clothing that we could take with us. The same pack that a rifleman would carry, I carried. I carried an M-1 weapon in with me, obviously. It was rather a long or high jump down from those caterpillars and lucky you don't break a leg, and some guys did. But luckily we got on shore because of the tracks that were on them, to bring us right up onto the beach. When it's on a rise up like that, it makes it even higher. I imagine it's like about a – running off the front of it, because there wasn't a drop gate or anything like that, like the Higgins Boat would have. Um... it's a high jump, at least nine feet I would say.

Q: So in other words you jumped over the side of this.

Noble: The side of it into the sand and then take off at high port, and let me tell you, it was wonderful to be on terra firma after 53 days. So it felt good, we were anxious to get ashore. As much as to do battle, we were anxious to get ashore to get off that ship. And-in front of us, I remember there was a rice paddy, we ran across the rice paddy and up the cliffs on the side of the hills. And we got through pretty much without getting any resistance in the first wave. And after we were ashore, the Japanese probably worked it this way, they were going to try to pin us down and try to knock out the second wave and then they could come in and annihilate us, which would have been a wonderful thing. But [clears throat], as we went up the side of the cliff, going up, you know exactly where we landed, between Asan and Adalup Point and the 21st Regiment was in the middle. And I was in the middle of the middle, if you want to call it that.

But we got ashore fine. Practically no counter fire, because they were pinned down from the [unintelligible] fire from the ships and the big guns off the ships.

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Q: So what were your instructions- [off topic conversation]

Harry, you were a scout and you were attached to the regimental headquarters of the 21st Marines, you have just come ashore in the first wave, what kind of instructions were you under and how far inland were you expected to go, given your particular duties?

Noble: Well, individually as scout, my scouting duties probably wouldn't take over until we get fully inland. Basically I was running with the troops, our two sections came in with – I don't even remember what company we were mixed in with, because uh-they came in waves anyway. Just to get ashore, set up a parameter, make contact with your flanks, stay in an assigned area until a-a particular opportunity is needed for a scout and then they would assign us to a company or a platoon who needed a scout in order to do some intelligence reconnoitering . But when we went across the rice paddies, as I say, naturally there was water in it and everything and right across that and started up the hill. This-we wanted to make room for the second wave to come in.

All the people that were on the first wave, they caught hell. And it was like sitting on the side of a hill, not being able to do a damn thing about it, and watching them catch hell. We caught some fire, only because we were in the reverse slope of the hill, so therefore the mortar fire would be coming over our heads and they were pounding the – they meaning the Japanese artillery and mortar fire and it was pretty heavy. And those guys caught hell coming in.

Q: Could you see some of the uh-amtraks getting hit as they -

Noble: Yes, it was like watching a movie. We could see them hitting amtracks, a couple I saw go up and bodies flying and I saw a lot of guys in the rice paddies getting hit. I felt sorry for them, but we couldn't do a darn thing about it, except hold our line. They were rolling some charges down onto us, down the hill, and we did get some small arms fire, but they wouldn't hit us with the mortar, because the mortars would be – the trajectory of it would throw them out further, because we were on the reverse slope.

We couldn't even get up high enough because we were starting to get pinned down.

Q: Could you see the enemy at this point?

Noble: No, I don't remember ever seeing them at that particular point, except getting all the fire. Uh...

Q: Could you locate where the fire was coming from?

Noble: Over the top of the ridge. And of course they had some machine gun fire coming down through some of the - it was heavy brush up there, at the top and that was to pin us down so that we wouldn't try to get up to the top. And of course-the infantry companies, it was their duty to do a charge up there, but we were pinned down there for five days until the banzai charge, really.

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Q: So am I correct in assuming then that the regimental command post got itself set up and – [cross talk] rice paddies and you report and got some instruction.

Noble: I would report to them and get instructions. We tried to get out in front, tried to find out what the strength was, where they were at. We didn't get too far on it until that banzai charge on D plus 5, I believe it was. The 26th, in the night. In fact, I was on an outpost that night and – which means I was in front of the frontlines and I could hear a lot, I was radioing back, that there is some activity going on. The Japanese started to put up some flares, there was a lot of activity all over the whole front, not only in our sector, but also in the 3rd Marine Division, 3rd Regiment on the left and the 9th Marines on the right and um, there was a lot of activity and we were putting up flares and we were giving them artillery– I know we were pounding artillery back to them.

But see, the theory of combat in the jungle and it was like a jungle, the jungle is really like what it was on Bougainville, but this was heavy brush and heavy jungle, in my mind. Anything that moves at night is the enemy. So we sort of hold up and wait and you could hear a lot of activity all over the place and then that fifth night is when they broke through and they were coming all around us. By the time dawn came, then it was like a shooting gallery. They were all over the place and you were popping 'em off.

Q: So what personally happened to you?

Noble: Well, I was in the position to point out – I saw a lot of machine gun fire coming out of one of the small caves and eh-I ran over to the company that I was assigned to, in that sector, and I told them where the fire was coming and I had to fire into it, so that they could see exactly the trajectory, where the bullets were going. And then they laid in some fire on that. I picked off a few for myself. Then there was one incident I remember very readily.

There was like a knoll with a small ridge to it and there was one group of Japanese coming out of one side of it, and some of our guys were on the other side of it and I was yelling over to them, "throw a grenade!" This was like maybe about 50 yards away or something like

that. I tried to tell them, that they are coming around to meet you on this side. They didn't understand what I was saying. I told them to lob a grenade over. So rather than trying to pick off the Japanese there, the guys were holding up the fire, because they were too close to it. They lobbed a couple grenades over and they got a hold of them and then they came around and wiped out that pocket. But it was a thing that was going on all around you. You would turn around, they were over that way. You turn around, they were over that way. Because they had broken through that night, in fact they broke all the way down to the beach. I know that, later on, I didn't know it then.

But you had eyes in the back of your head all over the place. [Clears throat] And that sort of broke their back right there, when that particular day was over with and then we went into regular attacks, regular patrols. Then I had scouting missions, more then. And right up the coast, right up to the Northern part of the island.

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Q: Do you recall any of those particular scouting missions, so you can tell us what they were like?

Noble: Well, we tried to avoid, as I said before, uh, contact because my scouting missions would be only me and maybe two or three other guys. They would send me out to different sectors that had to be put on the map as to what is out there, what the terrain was like, in comparison to what we had thought it would be like. If we could run into any patrols of Jap or where there were concentrations of Japs – the one instance I was told to scout out was a rather thickly dense area, they said there is some activity over there, if you want to check it out and see what is going on. This was the worst thing that I found, in the whole Guam campaign, happened there. I came to a clearing and it was pretty sad what I saw. There was a row of Guamanians that were kneeling down, hands tied behind their back, tied at the feet and I would say there were about 40-50 people. They were elderly gentleman, there were, women and little children and at their feet were their heads, they had been lobbed off.

And uh-it was pretty sad. And it was an atrocity that I couldn't believe I saw and it was pretty horrible. And the activity, I would say took place only a couple of hours before we got

there. For no reason at all other than the fact that they were doing such a terrible thing to these people. That stayed with me a long time. [Brief pause] It was one of the reasons why I was glad that I was there, to do harm to them – meaning the Japanese, as much as I could. It made me feel good that I was there helping these people. It uh-made me feel that I'm back here to see them again.

I hope that those people – I'm sure that it happened a lot during the years that the Japanese occupied this territory.

Q: ... Not sure is this best time to ask this question. Aside from the, what's the word, emotional considerations of what you saw and what you saw the Japanese soldiers do in this case, aside from that, what is your professional assessment of a the Japanese soldier as a fighting man?

Noble: Oh, I thought they were excellent soldiers, I thought they were excellent fighters. I found on Bougainville that they were tenacious and they were – I guess they were well trained. They were the kind of people that I would suspect – they had-they were doing what they were told to do and I was doing what I was told to do. They were good soldiers. I remember when I enlisted, how they were saying, oh, they can't even see straight, they all need glasses.

They were experts; they were experts at camouflage – much better than we were. I remember back in Bougainville, without going back to that campaign, that you could be ten feet away and you couldn't see them in the jungle. And it was displayed here too, there were areas where you could hardly see them at all and they were right there. Because it ended up it was your or me routine. I also wondered too that during the banzai charge, that we ran across Japanese foxholes that were emptied with Sake bottles, they must have been high and they were high, half of them were out of their minds I guess, when they did pull that banzai charge. But as um-equal, as far as I would say, any foe would have to be, to do a good job. They were not an easy foe to beat. In fact, General Geiger did mention that, you are about to meet a foe that is tenacious and that is good-well trained and it's not going to be an easy battle. And he was right, absolutely right,

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Q: Anything more about the fighting or the campaign at Guam that you could share with us?

Noble: Uhh... the forward movement north was sort of, in my sector anyway, what I had to do was sort of routine patrols. Some combat. The only hand to hand combat I saw was during the banzai charge. Anything else, I would say that it was pretty much distant from uh-meeting onto the Japanese, close hand, I could pick off quite a few at a distance. I was also a sharpshooter with the rifle. But my job was to avoid that more or less. The only thing that happened to me, was near the end of the campaign and we were at – enduring a bit of a battle on the northern end, I ended up with Tenge Fever. So they couldn't evacuate, it was at night and they couldn't evacuate me at night. I was sent back the next day, so during that night, if they had pulled a banzai on me, I would have said, I'm dead, go right ahead. I had no strength, no will to fight or anything. I had a very high fever and it took a while to get rid of it.

But that is how I ended up the end of the campaign here on Guam. Going through a real echelon area to being in a tent, which was the tent hospital and I was there for about a week, week and a half before I rejoined my outfit. And then all I went on was some outer patrols. With one patrol I went on, in the water, in a boat.

Q: That's right, we were talking about that. Could you explain that?

Noble: Well, it was because it was a whole different approach to it, it was sort of coming around the end of the island on the boats and then we would hone in on an area where they were and sort of machine gun fire, rifle fire and picking out an area that I remembered from the terrain, exactly where we were and so we knew about where we could reach them and then we were firing up on them from the boat in the end.

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Q: How would you know the Japanese were in this particular area?

Noble: Well, our intelligence reports. I wasn't the only scout; we had a whole platoon of them. And uh-each regiment had their own, so each area would have their own intelligence information.

Q: What kind of boats were these?

Noble: They were like gun boats, smaller gun boats actually, because they had to have 50-caliber machine guns on it and we had some Navy personnel, of course, but it was small groups of us that went out on that. And it also enabled me to identify the terrain, to bring back the information of what it was like, what they were going to run into if we pull-push them into the water, so we could be ready for it. How they could defend it. There were caves that had to be blown up.

Q: So your outfit stayed on Guam for a while...

Noble: Yes, this was our training base and after a rest for a while, we didn't have any R&R or anything like that, but uh-they put us right back into training and I was busy map making and looking at aerial photos for our next campaign, which was Iwo. Iwo Jima.

Q: How did your camp in Guam compare with let's say, Guadalcanal?

Noble: Much more pleasant. Much more pleasant and it was nice because we visited with some of the people on Guam, got to know them. Became friendly with everybody that you run into. They felt- they made us feel good. This was the first opportunity that we had our own people, and to know that we helped liberate the only American territory during the Pacific War and as I said, it was an honor. And now they honored us again back totoday.

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Q: So your next campaign, as you mentioned is Iwo Jima.

Noble: Iwo Jima, yeah, and that was a campaign that was pretty bad. For me. I got hit the first day, but it was a superficial wound, so I ended up being there for the whole campaign.

And felt I was very, very lucky that I came back pretty - much intact. Maybe I was a little asiatic at times, but got over there.

Q: Were you doing pretty much the same kind of duties on Iwo as you were doing on Guam?

Noble: Yes, same duties, I was still a scout. Map making. I was in close coordination with the um-company commander that I was assigned to and bringing intelligence back into my own intelligence officer. And working the maps too to see exactly where we were, what is in front of us. Keeping an updated map-for the intelligence officer.

Q: Were there any particularly hairy moments when you were doing your scouting on Iwo?

Noble: Hmmm. But that sort of – my mind blocked a lot of Iwo out, I don't even particularly care to talk too much about Iwo, it was a terrible, terrible – too much price most any man can - I will give you an example. At least here it was, you could almost change your socks maybe once every week. Iwo Jima, I was on there, I think it was for about 31 days and I didn't not even have the opportunity to change my socks one day. And when the campaign was over, before we boarded ship, I took my shoes off and my feet were in bad shape and I had to scrap my socks off with my knife. That is how it was on Iwo, it was disgusting.

[Laughing] Bad campaign.

But I came back to Guam and within two days there was a list of who can go back to the States for R&R, the war was still running. And I was here two days and I went back, my name was on the list. My captain tried to talk me out of it, he wanted me to stay and help – um-just help the troops because we were getting a lot of replacements, we lost a lot of people. All over. And I said, Captain, my name is up there and I'm going back. And I did. And luckily the war ended when I was in the States and I never came back out again. So it was a good thing that what happened, happened when it did. I refer to the bomb. It ended the war for me and it ended the war for a lot of guys, because our division was going to be an assault division on Kyushu. I saw the aerial photos, I knew what we were going in for, and I would have had to come back and rejoin my outfit and my outfit was going – that is the scouts in my regimental intelligence group, was going in ten days before the troops. And I don't think that I would have come out of that one anyway.

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Q: Could you describe what that mission was supposed to be?

Noble: Well, we had to go into reconnoiter, and see exactly the terrain, report back when the troops came in, that we had all this information. We were going in as a reconnaissance, not for anything other than that.

Q: How would you have been landed?

Noble: By rubber boat.

Q: And taken in by?

Noble: Submarine, probably.

Q: Well, I can imagine your feelings of relief.

Noble: They were preparing for that and I – I found out a lot in detail exactly how we were going in. All the information mainly about it, when I met up with guys that were in my outfit that stayed, because they were working on it feverishly when I was back in the States. My orders were already cut to go back. And that is when the war ended.

Q: Were you with your family at that time?

Noble: No, they gave me uh-30 day furlough and 60 days duty and I was at a – it was actually a Navy brig, which was on Heart's Island in New York and we were prison chasing, is what we were doing.

And then like I said, they called and said, here is your orders, you are going back at such and such a date, and in the meantime the war ended and everything was fine.

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Q: So you had a chance to sort of have a family reunion a little bit. Uhh, before that...

Noble: Oh yes, yeah. After 27 months over here.

Q: I'm sure they were glad to see you and you were glad to see them.

Noble: It was very strange, very strange indeed to come back and see everything was so nice and calm and the, world over there – and I always said that the people will never know, what was the world like. And people here knew. They went through it more than anybody else. So I would say the people in Guam are unique in the fact that they are the only Americans that knew what it was like to have the enemy take their territory.

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Q: What do you want to tell people who, 50 years later, might be listening to this tape. What do you want to tell them about what the war was like?

Noble: It's something you never want to go through. You would never take a million dollars to go through what we went through, to do again. But I wouldn't do it in reverse, they couldn't pay me to do it either. I did it, it was I guess the emotion of the time. It was – the country was at war. I come from a very patriotic family, my father, as I told you, was in World War I.

And in fact most of my family fought in every war that the United States was in, even to the present time. My son became a Marine. My son in law was a Marine. My cousins got into the Marine Corps, because of me. One was in Korea, he was in the Chosin Reservoir and he got wounded there. I guess my family happens to be a patriotic one. And I love my country. And the one thing that destroys me about people, is when they don't love their country. And we see that a lot today. And that gets me very upset. So really, for the future, I would say, keep your country strong, have pride in your country and be ready to support and defend your country in case of any problems. World problems. It's got to be a nation and a world that can get along with each other. Because with the type of weapons that they have today, as we know, we could destroy ourselves. That's what men will do if

they don't watch what they are doing. They have to learn to get along.

[Brief pause]

Q: Is there anything else you would like to tell us while we have a chance to talk to you?

Noble: Sure, I can tell you that my grandson recently got married. [Laughs] And I'm very proud of him. My family too.

Q: Well Harry, it sounds like they have something to be proud of also. We appreciate you taking the time to talk with us today.

Noble: It's my pleasure, thank you.

Q: It's been a pleasure meeting you.

Noble: Thank you, thanks Steve.

[END OF SESSION]

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