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Joseph Friedman
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Interviewee: Joseph Friedman
Military Rank: 21st Regiment, 3rd Marine Division
Interviewer: Chuck McManus Hilton Hotel in Guam
Date: July 22nd, 1994

--- 00:00:00 to 00:00:14- Audio Description
Joseph Friedman is a Caucasian American man wearing a pastel plaid button-up shirt. Behind him is a pond frond.

Q: My name is Chuck McManus and I'm here at the Hilton Hotel in Guam on the 22nd of July, 1994 at 9:30 in the morning. To record an oral history interview with Mr. Joseph Friedman, who served with the 3rd Marine Division during World War II. This interview is being made by the National Park Service – the War in the Pacific National Historical Park in conjunction with Guam Cable Television. Mr. Friedman, I understand that the National Park Service has your permission to make this recording and to retain all literary and property rights derived from it. Is that correct?

Joseph Friedman: That is correct, sir.

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Q: For the record, would you please tell us your full name?

Joseph Friedman: Full name is Joseph Friedman.

Q: Spell your last name?

Joseph Friedman: FRIEDMAN.

Q: What unit were you in during the Guam campaign?

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Joseph Friedman: The 21st Regiment, 3rd Marine Division.

Q: What is your date and place of birth?

Joseph Friedman: I was born on June 28th 1923.

Q: In?

Joseph Friedman: Brooklyn, New York.

Q: Did you grow up there?

Joseph Friedman: Only until the age of five and then we left that particular area.

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Q: And where did you go?

Joseph Friedman: To the Bronx, New York.

Q: Did you go to school in the Bronx?

Joseph Friedman: For a short while, and then we moved to New Jersey in my early teens.

Q: How long were you in that place in New Jersey?

Joseph Friedman: Until I retired and moved to Florida.

Q: Where in New Jersey?

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Joseph Friedman: Two places, Flemington, New Jersey and Somerville, New Jersey.

Q: When did you join the service?

Joseph Friedman: On September 3rd, 1942.

Q: What motivated you to join?

Joseph Friedman: Well, the war was in full swing, it seemed like the proper thing to do in that time. Many men were joining and anxious to get into the action and not being known as, so to speak, a slacker.

Q: Where did you join?

Joseph Friedman: I was living in New Jersey at that time, but went to New York to join the Marine Corps, downtown New York on Church Street.

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Q: Number One Church.

Joseph Friedman: I forgot the address, but I knew it was Church Street.

Q: Why did you pick the Corps?

Joseph Friedman: I picked the Marine Corps basically because of the esprit de Corps that I knew the unit had seen and heard and in movies and in literature that I had read. And it seemed the type of unit that I would want to belong to. For myself. I felt the need for that type of strong discipline that would be beneficial to myself for the future.

Q: You graduated from high school?

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Joseph Friedman: Yes.

Q: Have you had any previous experience with – accept for the movies and the books you read, with the Corps or with any other military organization?

Joseph Friedman: None that I can recall.

Q: Uncles or cousins or anything like that?

Joseph Friedman: None that I can recall. My father was in the Army, World War I.

Q: Where did you take your basic training?

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Joseph Friedman: In Parris Island, South Carolina.

Q: How long from the time that you went to enlist until you left for Parris Island?

Joseph Friedman: Practically immediately. We were called down and sworn in and left by train in New Jersey for basic training at Parris Island.

Q: How long were at Parris Island?

Joseph Friedman: The basic training lasted approximately eight weeks, as I recall.

Q: Any particular thing happen during your basic training that might be interest of the tape?

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Joseph Friedman: There are many, many things that happened, personally, some of them not very pleasant. The training was difficult and they were very tough on you. The drill

instructors were very, very tough and I wouldn't call it a pleasant experience, but one that is very valuable. And primarily the heat down there and the sand flies and the close order drill under those circumstances are very – it was very difficult for new young recruits to be able to endure and live up to.

Q: Do you remember your DI well?

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Joseph Friedman: Yes, I don't recall his name, but I do remember him well, he was a Georgia boy. A sergeant from Georgia.

Q: How did you feel about him?

Joseph Friedman: We weren't very happy with the rigid strict discipline that we had to adhere to at that time, and it was something new. As a civilian you had all those freedoms that we were so accustomed to and to be subjected to that type of discipline took a little while to – for us to adjust to.

Q: Did you appreciate what he taught you, after you left?

Joseph Friedman: Yes, and we only seemed to realize that more later on in the Marine Corps, how valuable it was for the discipline to survive in the later stages of the war.

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Q: How old was your DI?

Joseph Friedman: I don't know precisely his age, but I would assume he was about 25.

Q: Very young.

Joseph Friedman: Yes.

Q: Were you assigned to any other unit prior to the 3rd Marine Division?

Joseph Friedman: No, I was not. Out of basic training, I did come down with a fever that they called at that time, they called it "cat fever" and I was in the hospital for about five days until the fever subsided and then went into a casualty company, so I could be reassigned. That casualty company was nothing more than a company where we did odd jobs until reassignment and from there I was reassigned to my present unit, the 3rd Marine Division.

Q: Did you go back with the men that you had gone through training with when you were in this casualty company?

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Joseph Friedman: Most of the men were – seemed to me, were put in different organizations, different units and because I spent the five days in the hospital, I wasn't assigned like they were, right away, until I came out of the hospital. Those who didn't get sick, such as I, were immediately assigned to different units and what units they were assigned to, I don't recall.

Q: But you went into the casualty unit and then into the 3rd Marine Division.

Joseph Friedman: Correct. Into the 21st Regiment.

Q: Where were they?

Joseph Friedman: That was in Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

Q: Not a very long haul.

Joseph Friedman: No.

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Q: Did you leave from Camp Lejeune to come to the Pacific?

Joseph Friedman: We left Camp Lejeune around middle of November and went directly to Camp Elliot, California, that was our first stop. And then from there, into Camp Pendleton and from Camp Pendleton, we left for the Pacific.

Q: And how did you leave the west coast?

Joseph Friedman: We left on the Matsonia liner, Luraline. A very magnificent ship that used to run trips to Hawaii and they packed the entire regiment – was aboard except for some attached units, and we went directly from San Diego directly to New Zealand.

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Q: Were you in a convoy?

Joseph Friedman: No, the ship went by itself. It was fast and they felt that because of it's speed, it could outrun any possibility of a Japanese submarine attack.

Q: Where were you in New Zealand, where did they put you?

Joseph Friedman: We were 60 miles from the city of Auckland, which I think – no, it's not the capital, but it's a large city anyway, and we were 60 miles out from that large city and a very small town, about five miles out, a town called Walkworth, and we stayed in that area right there. Very beautiful, beautiful area.

Q: Were you one of the first units in the area, or were there already 3rd Marine Division people there?

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Joseph Friedman: I do not recall if we were the first, but there is certainly plenty of other units from other outfits such as the Army and that type. And other areas, but we are not the first…

(cross conversation)

Q: Do you have any inkling as to why they sent you there?

Joseph Friedman: To further – to continue and further our training. We held a lot of exercises there while in New Zealand, for the few months we were there, four or five months, and we did an awful lot of training there for our future campaigns on the islands. The training was very extensive.

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Q: Any amphibious work?

Joseph Friedman: Some.

Q: And you stayed there for a couple of months you said?

Joseph Friedman: We stayed there from March and left in July.

Q: Wow, you were there for half a year.

Joseph Friedman: Pretty close, about five months.

Q: Where did you go from there?

Joseph Friedman: Directly to Guadalcanal, although we had one day stopover in New Mia, in the harbor of New Caledonia. And from that we left for Guadalcanal and arrived in the last week of July of 1943.

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Q: This was well after Guadalcanal had been -

Joseph Friedman: Yes, the Guadalcanal campaign ended in February as I recall and we arrived in July, although there was still plenty of air raids.

Q: How long were you in Guadalcanal?

Joseph Friedman: We used the island, the 3rd Marine Division, as a base of operations. And it was sort of known as our home base. And we arrived there in July and didn't leave until we left for Guam, although – intervening, we did go to Bougainville and from Bougainville back to Guadalcanal. So approximately a total of ten months.

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Q: Did you have any real combat training in Guadalcanal in terms of getting out stragglers?

Joseph Friedman: Definitely. We did a lot of jungle training on Guadalcanal. A lot of day and night prowls in the jungles of Guadalcanal. Quite a bit, so we did get a lot of training in jungle warfare on Guadalcanal itself.

Q: Also amphibious training?

Joseph Friedman: Uh, yes.

Q: Bougainville, you took part in the operation at Bougainville?

Joseph Friedman: Yes I did.

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Q: How long were you there?

Joseph Friedman: I arrived with my battalion over a week after the campaign started, we were known as the 3rd Battalion of my Regiment, came in late, but we also left let, when the other units left Bougainville, in December, we left in January, so those arrived later, left – stayed later.

Q: Great deal of jungle experience there, I'm sure.

Joseph Friedman: Well, practically all – 99% jungle fighting there.

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Q: So you were in combat, not necessarily an occupation force?

Joseph Friedman: No, we were definitely in combat.

Q: Then back to Guadalcanal?

Joseph Friedman: Then back to Guadalcanal.

Q: And you stayed there until?

Joseph Friedman: Uh, we arrived back in Guadalcanal about January 8th or 9th of 1944, took in more replacements and went to do training again after a short period of relaxation, so to speak and received more replacements and went into training for the Guam campaign.

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Q: When did you leave Guadalcanal for Guam?

Joseph Friedman: We left approximately May 15th of 1944. Our LST convoy sailed from Guadalcanal -

Q: You were on an LST?

Joseph Friedman: Yes, the particular LST convoy we were in, was the assault wave troops for the campaign at Guam.

Q: And you left there on May 15th?

Joseph Friedman: Roughly May 15th.

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Q: That put you at sea for a long time.

Joseph Friedman: Very long time, approximately 61 days aboard the LSTs, from Guadalcanal to Guam, in which the stopovers were at Quadraline and Enewetak harbors where we waited for the pre-bombardment to take place on Guam, although our division, as you are well aware, I'm sure, was floating reserve for the Saipan campaign and waited till they laid off the entire flotilla with the 3rd Marine Division aboard, laid off Saipan for that invasion, in case the invasion wasn't too successful, we would reinforce them. But being that it was successful, that Saipan landing was successful, the convoy went back to Enewetok Harbor.

Q: So you left Guad and were a floating reserve for the invasion of Saipan and then went back to Enewetak.

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Joseph Friedman: Correct.

Q: For R and R? Did you get off the ship?

Joseph Friedman: No, we did not. Some units did, but our particular LST and myself and

the men aboard did not leave the ship, except in the evening to go to other ships for the movies. Some of the units did get ashore, for some type of training, but my LST was not one of those.

Q: Living conditions on the LST while you were there?

Joseph Friedman: Horrible. We slept topside all the way, taking our little pup tents and making lean-tos from the trucks down to the deck, tying them down, so that we could get underneath some kind of cover in those heavy rain squalls we kept on running in and of. The living conditions were bad, we were very happy to get off, as a matter of fact. And get off that LST after 61 days, we couldn't wait to get off.

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So the landing itself, we thought would be a change, not knowing how bad the landing would be.

Q: That might have been an incentive they created so that you would charge up to the plan.

Joseph Friedman: I wouldn't be a bit surprised.

Q: How about the food and mail and so forth, for morale purposes while you were aboard the LST?

Joseph Friedman: Very adequate and the morale was very high. Fellas were always playing cards and kibitzing and having lots of fun, as much as we can, until the five Japanese torpedo bombers made a run at us one lovely afternoon and I was fortunate to have been asked if I could operate a 50 caliber machine gun. And I told the ordinance officer, Navy officer, that I was very experienced in 50 caliber.

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So he had me go down into the hull of ship and bring up 50 caliber and clean off the

cosmoline and set it up on the mounts. Which I did and was able to put it in action and fortunately I knew how to use it pretty well because when we were attacked, I got off approximately 90 rounds at the five Japanese torpedo bombers that were approaching us and we knocked down the ship, including my fire, which I saw was fairly accurate, knocked down three of the five torpedo bombers in that initial attack.

Q: Did they ever get close enough to drop torpedoes?

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Joseph Friedman: They did, the second plane, as I recall, dropped a torpedo and hit the LCI, which was alongside us, approximately 150 yards to our left, just in front of us. The hit took off approximately 40 feet of the bow of that LCI and the rest of the ship stayed afloat, and was sunk by destroyers. 17 men were lost on that LCI and our little LST picked up the survivors. We pulled them aboard.

Q: How many?

Joseph Friedman: I don't know precisely how many, but there were several, I would say 25-30 men.

Q: Did other ships also pick up survivors?

Joseph Friedman: I'm sure they did.

Q: Refresh my memory, were you ever involved with picking money out of water?

Joseph Friedman: Oh yes.

Q: Can you tell us that episode?

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Joseph Friedman: Well, the episode involved the LST convoy that was anchored in Tulagi Harbor, on the way to Bougainville. The anchorage was quite extensive there and all the LSTs were there and when they finally fawned for the invasion, to leave for Bougainville, there were a lot of card games ensued and I was in one of those poker games, there were many of them around. As I recall, while playing, a large gust of wind came along and blew all the paper money that we had on the deck, into the channel, the Tulagi Channel. With all that money gone, I saw a great opportunity to get a quick retrieval. I kicked off my shoes, boon dockers as we called them, and my shirt and pants and dove over the side and started to collect the dollar bills and five dollar bills out there floating on the water, until my sergeant bellowed to get aboard ship or else. So I wasn't able to retrieve all the money, but I did get a sizable amount.

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Q: Did you keep it all?

Joseph Friedman: I went back and got into the poker game with the money that I retrieved. I certainly didn't give it back to those that lost it, because we didn't know who lost what and how much, so I kept it all. It was a little wet, but it was worth the experience.

Q: Were you the only one that did a thing like this?

Joseph Friedman: I don't recall even thinking about it, I just instinctively saw that money and jumped over the side.

Q: Didn't the possibility of sharks cross your mind?

Joseph Friedman: Not at that time. Only afterwards, when I thought about it, I was a little frightened because there were a lot of sharks in those waters and I saw many of them.

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Q: What you wanted to do for motivation. Five dollar bills, okay. That's the kind of story

we are looking for, those kind of personal things that history books wouldn't record, but that we are recording here.

Joseph Friedman: I'm sure that every man in the division has a similar story – maybe not diving into the water for money, but some – fairly comical as they look back on it now.

Q: Now you looked up on the deck on your LST, what was in the hold?

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Joseph Friedman: In the holds of course of the LST were the landing craft for the assault wave. The amtraks and they called also – I forget now what they called them, they had wheels – the DUKW (pronounced "duck"), that's it – they were called DUKW.

Q: DUKW?

Joseph Friedman: Yes. And they were in the hold of the ship, fully loaded with our equipment, so all we had to do is get aboard and just ride out the ramp when we laid off about a mile off shore and we drove out right into the ocean and circle around a while for the pre-bombardment to finish.

Q: How long from the time you left where you were until you debarked on Guam?

Joseph Friedman: Well, the trip was quite long, I don't know the exact mileage.

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Q: In terms of time.

Joseph Friedman: In terms of time from the time we left Enewetak till we reached Guam? I would say about ten days. Eight or nine, ten days. In that range.

Q: On the day of the invasion, where were you relative to Guam?

Joseph Friedman: We were already sitting down in the hold of the LST, aboard our landing vehicles, waiting for them to give us the order to drive out.

Q: What time did you get up?

Joseph Friedman: Oh, I was up all night on the deck, look off into the distance and could see the muzzle flashes on the battleships and cruisers and destroyers that were bombarding Guam at that time. You could hear the report from 40-50 miles away, it was a low sound, but I stayed up all night on the deck, watching that.

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Q: The rest of your unit?

Joseph Friedman: Some did and some I think tried to get some sleep and others did watch also.

Q: When did you have your breakfast?

Joseph Friedman: Early that morning.

Q: Was it traditional steak and eggs?

Joseph Friedman: No traditional steak and eggs. I don't really recall what I ate. I don't even recall if I even ate, our nerves were really on edge and we weren't really able to concentrate on what we were eating, I don't think.

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Q: Looking forward to getting off the LST?

Joseph Friedman: Yes, that I will admit to, we were looking forward to getting off after 61

days.

Q: Where were you as the dawn broke? In the hold or still on deck?

Joseph Friedman: Not quite, the landing was at approximately 8:30 in the morning, we didn't get into the hold that early, because when those vehicles started up and the smoke and fumes from all those vehicles, just – it was just like looking through fog and it was a choking kind of experience with all the fumes of the exhaust, it was bad. You couldn't wait to get off for that reason alone. The fumes were so bad.

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Q: How long after the engines started did they open the doors and drop the ramps?

Joseph Friedman: Not too long, I would say about 15-20 minutes.

Q: When they did open the doors and the drop the ramps, could you see Guam? Were you pointed in the right direction?

Joseph Friedman: Well, it so happened, my particular vehicle was way to the rear and there were a lot of vehicles in front of me, so I couldn't see out too far, but we could look out, but not see too much.

Q: When you did get to the ramp, how far were you from the shore?

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Joseph Friedman: I would say from my memory – I would say about a mile.

Q: What kind of vehicle were you in?

Joseph Friedman: I was in one of the DUKWs.

Q: How many people were with you?

Joseph Friedman: About 12, I would say, 12 or 15 men were in the DUKW on the way in for the invasion.

Q: When you went down the ramp and into the water, did you go directly to shore?

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Joseph Friedman: No, we did not, we circled around for I would say approximately a half hour and watching from the DUKWs, the naval bombardment and the dive bombing of the beach area, which was extremely heavy – battleships were firing away, we could see that very easily, not too far from us. And the dive bombers were coming down, straight down, the Curtis Helldivers, and that pre-bombardment lasted for a while and then I remember a flare, an amber flare, exploding several hundred feet above, over the beach, and that was the signal for us to go in. When we saw that flare, that was the signal.

Q: Were you in the first wave?

Joseph Friedman: Not precisely the first wave, within the second or third.

Q: Where did you hit Guam? Where did you land?

---00:21:59

Joseph Friedman: At Asan Beach.

Q: Where on Asan, more specifically. To the left, to the right, to the center?

Joseph Friedman: Mostly to the right. There were units to the left of us at Asan.

Q: So you were down around the point.

Joseph Friedman: Correct. That is correct, right there where that park is, is where we pulled in. As I was there the other day, it was very easy to recognize for me.

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Q: When you hit the beach, what was your first action?

Joseph Friedman: Well, what happened, on the way in, on our DUKW, I looked back where the men were crouching, I could see the back of our DUKW was loaded with 105 millimeter artillery shells, which I hadn't noticed before. When I saw those shells, I hollered out to the men, I said, look what we have, we have these artillery shells, if we take a mortar hit, the mortars were landing all around us, the mortar shells and artillery shells were exploding all around our DUKW and other DUKWs beside. I said, when we hit out of the deep water and got on to the coral shelf, I decided to jump over the side, being that the water is about four feet deep. I wasn't too happy, looking at those artillery shells there, so I jumped out when we got to the coral and started to wade ashore and the other men saw me do that and they followed. When we waded in toward the beach, the fire was extremely heavy – artillery and mortar fire was exploding all around us in the water, and the men followed me in, took my lead, so to speak and when I got ashore, I turned around to see who was following me, and that particular DUKW took a direct hit and blew up, right 100 yards behind us. So that move obviously save all of our lives, by me jumping over the side.

Q: What was your rank at that time?

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Joseph Friedman: I was a private first class.

Q: Were your NCOs aboard that same one?

Joseph Friedman: I don't recall if our NCOs were aboard that particularly landing craft.

Q: You made the beach.

Joseph Friedman: We made the beach and the fire was very intense. Mortar and artillery fire was coming down very heavy and as we moved in land about 100 yards, I ran into an enormous tank trap that the Japanese had set up, a large ditch about 20 feet across and about 50-75 feet long and a lot of Marines were in there. When I saw all those Marines in there, I felt that the Japanese knew that that tank boat was there and that probably men would be in there and so I avoided jumping in.

---00:24:30

I took my refuge behind a coconut tree which had been severed by a Naval gun fire and I lay there under the mortar barrage, not being able to move out, it was so intense. And the mortar barrage, some of the shells landed right in that particular tank trap killing and wounding a lot of men, which I helped pull out of there. It was a lot of men killed there.

Q: What was your specialty?

Joseph Friedman: I was a weapons man, I knew 50 calibers, I was assistant gunner on a 37 millimeter anti-tank gun.

Q: Where was your gun?

---00:25:07

Joseph Friedman: It wasn't with us, as we moved in, it was probably still aboard and would probably come in in the later waves.

Q: How were you armed?

Joseph Friedman: With an E-rifle.

Q: Garrand carbine?

Joseph Friedman: Yes, yes.

Q: Any sidearm?

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Joseph Friedman: No sidearms.

Q: How long were you in that area of that tank trap before you -

Joseph Friedman: For several hours until the rest of our unit got ashore and we were able to organize ourselves and from there, wait for orders to move inland.

Q: Did you move inland that day?

Joseph Friedman: Not that day, no.

Q: So you were on the beach for the full day.

Joseph Friedman: For the full day, watching the artillery set-up by us and they started firing before noon, at targets up on Fonte Hill.

---00:25:56

Q: How far inland did you move the next day?

Joseph Friedman: The next day, we moved in, I did, moved in and went to the top of the ridge on my own to make sort of like a recon order, which was a little foolish, just to see what was going on, on my own. I made my way up Fonte Hill and saw the action up there and helped retrieve the wounded that were laying there and bringing them down from the cliffs. And – which I saw at that time and didn't know the man, there was taking a lot of pictures of the action and it happened to be Joe Rosenthal, later finding out, since the famous picture taken on Suribachi by him, found out that it was he that was taking

pictures of me.

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Q: Did you ever see any of those pictures?

Joseph Friedman: Yes, they are in the – one of the Marine Corps books that we received after the war. Helping men down that ridge on that cable who were on stretchers.

Q: Cable?

Joseph Friedman: The cable is what we held onto, the baskets that the wounded were in, were on that cable, in order to stabilize them as we let them down the very steep hill, it was very steep.

Q: Were there many cables?

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Joseph Friedman: Only that one that I can recall there may have been others.

Q: That is interesting. Men would anchor the cable at the top?

Joseph Friedman: Yes, and it would run all the way to the bottom of the hill. I had met Joe Rosenthal on our LST, what I failed to mention before, when the Japanese torpedo bombers attacked us, he was snapping pictures of the torpedo bombers as they approached our LST. And while I was firing away with my 50 caliber machine gun, he was taking pictures of all of that. When the attack was over, I turned around, not knowing his name or anything about him, after all, I understood he was just an AP combat cameraman and worked for the Associated Press. And I said to him, sir, what are you doing with those pictures after you take them? And I didn't even know his name. and he said, these pictures go directly to intelligence for evaluation.

---00:28:09

He said, because they want to know what type of planes are being used. So that was about it and the next time I saw him was on top of Fonte Hill, the day he took the picture of me helping those wounded down. I didn't know his name even at that time.

Q: It wasn't until after the Suribachi -

Joseph Friedman: Right, it was after that that I recognized and saw pictures of him, that who I was speaking to.

Q: Okay, we are jumping way ahead. Did you take part in Iwo Jima?

Joseph Friedman: Yes I did.

Q: Okay, we will go back to that. I was curious to that some people didn't. Where were you during the banzai charge?

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Joseph Friedman: I was sent up as a reinforce platoon on the right flank of Fonte Hill, the evening, about 10:00 in the evening to reinforce the right flank on Fonte Hill and that was several hours before the attack. We dug in our foxholes there; they expected an attack that night. Intelligence obviously knew something. We dug in on Fonte Hill on the right flank and of course that night there was some sporadic fire from the Japanese, but the main attack started under a mortar barrage by the Japanese on us at approximately 4:30 and the attack came about 5:00 in the morning. The full scale attack came at 5:00 in the morning.

Q: You were an active participant?

Joseph Friedman: Absolutely. I lay in the prone position with my M-1, firing furiously, clip after clip into the masses of troops 70-80 yards ahead of us, coming over the top of the ridge.

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All along the entire front, I was on the extreme right flank and as the charge over that hill, I lay in the prone position, firing five or six clips of ammunition into the midsection of that. That is where I aimed, across their bodies to get the most effect. I didn't want to get any shoulder wounds where they could still keep on coming. So I aimed right at their gut and under the full light of the flares that lit up the front lines, were able to repulse that attack and took tremendous heavy – gave tremendous heavy casualties on their part.

Q: How about you?

Joseph Friedman: I wasn't touched, the Japanese that swept by us, just continued to run down the hill behind us to get back behind us and create havoc back there, but we took a tremendous toll of them at that point. And if it wasn't – as I mentioned before, the fact that the mortar men kept up a steady tattoo of flares above our heads, the parachute flares, lighting the front lines up, in the full daylight, it seemed, out there, we had all of these targets to zero in on. We took full advantage of it. The fire power that we brought to bear because of that light from those parachutes is what repulsed that attack.

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Q: Now you say some got through? Were you ever attacked from behind?

Joseph Friedman: No. The ones that – the Japanese that we saw behind us, were running around amuck, shooting and killing any Marines they could find down there. They were only about 100-150 yards behind us at that time, working their way down and there was several fire fights between the Marines and the Japanese who had broken through. We could see it from the top of the ridge, but we could not fire in their direction because the Marines down there, may have thought we were Japanese. It was approximately 200 yards between the front lines and those particular incidents. And to fire at the Japanese – we could have hit them, but the Marines that were down there, we could see, were there and we didn't want to take a chance and let them think that maybe it was Japanese firing. We would get return fire.

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Q: Did any Japanese try to get back through the lines?

Joseph Friedman: Not that I saw. The few hundred that broke through were eventually annihilated by the Marine units behind us.

Q: After the attack was repulsed or diminished some, what did you do?

Joseph Friedman: Well, the shock set in then, as I recall. After the attack, it was well into daylight, 8:00-8:30 in the morning and I remember the shock, sort of like had a temporary breakdown, so to speak. Nothing elaborate, but just – it was very, very sobering. And we were active out there, looking around behind us to see if any of the Japanese were hiding where we could take shots at them and we did, we found a few that were hiding in certain areas and we brought to bear our M-1s and got a few of them that were crouched in some cubbies and little depressions. And we did that. And after that, we took care of our own wounded and that sort.

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Q: Do you remember anything specific – thoughts or events that occurred during the banzai attack?

Joseph Friedman: Absolutely, absolutely. To our left, while the enemy was coming directly at us with the front lines being lit up so brightly by the flares, I observed to my left, approximately 100 yards to my left, there were two tanks that had been brought in from another area on the slope of a hill facing upwards and those two tanks were firing point blank into the mass of Japanese troops that were attacking in the particular center. That was approximately the center of the front lines. I was on the right flank and I could see the Japanese clambering and climbing over these tanks in full view of where my position was and watched them sort of beat their swords on the turrets and tried to get inside.

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Which, they weren't successful and I was firing away on my own and sort of like, for a split second thought, maybe I can take a few shots of them from 100 yards away. But I had my own problems with them coming directly at me, so that thought dissipated quickly.

Q: Anything else? Any particular evidence of heroism, even on the part of the Japanese or the Corps?

Joseph Friedman: Well, the heroism of the Japanese attacking in a frontal assault like that, is obvious. As for us, to just be able, in my opinion sir, to be able to just lay there and not want to get out and run down to the beach, was in your thoughts, believe me, when you saw hundreds and hundreds of troops coming at you, right in your sector alone. The thought of wanting to get out and run entered our minds, but as I say, but everybody stayed put and put that fire out to good use in stopping and repulsing that attack.

Q: After the attack finished – you said it was finished around noon?

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Joseph Friedman: No, that attack was broken up by late morning, by as much as 10:00, but the Japanese who had broke through were still carrying on, creating a lot of havoc behind, for quite a while.

Q: By mid afternoon?

Joseph Friedman: I would say about that time, yes, until they entirely got all the Japanese there, behind us.

Q: Did you then get pulled out of the line and have you replaced for a 24 hour period or something?

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Joseph Friedman: No, we just dug in where we were and waited for orders to move out again, which we did late afternoon. We moved up into positions further up on top of the hill where the Japanese had originally come over the ridge, we moved to the very top and had a full view in front of us. Up to that point, we only looked at the top of a hill about 100 yards ahead of us and couldn't see beyond that. That evening we dug in at the top of the ridge and could have a full field of fire ahead of us.

Q: Have you visited Asan on this trip?

Joseph Friedman: I have not visited the front lines itself, I could see it from the beach area and when we went for 3rd Division memorial services, I could see the area from the beach quite clearly and my particular position was in full view from about – it looked about a half a mile away. But the hill stood out in the sunlight very bright and sharp and it's easy to recognize.

Q: Bring back some memories?

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Joseph Friedman: The memories were always there. The memories of that particular incident, that attack, were for the past 50 years have been very, very sharp in my mind. So looking up there didn't bring back anything that I couldn't recall in the past 50 years.

Q: Reinforce?

Joseph Friedman: Yes.

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Q: The next day?

Joseph Friedman: The next day we moved out early in the morning about 8:00 in what we

called, what is known as "jumping off". When you are jumping off, and attacking to take up more land and territory. We attacked about 8:00 in the morning and made fairly good progress. Moved up about – I would say about 700-800, up to 1,000 yards of sporadic fighting and we dug in again on the second day about 1,000 yards ahead of where the front lines were the night before and dug in again in our foxholes that late afternoon. Getting a field of fire for ourselves and our weapons. By about 4:00, 5:00, we dug in and created another field of fire. In case of another enemy attack.

Q: The basic strategy of the invasions was on either side of Orote Point and then the idea was to pinch off Orote Point and then conduct clean up operations. You were on the right plank, were you involved in joining up with any of the units that came in from Agat?

Joseph Friedman: No, not so ever, we – as the initial attack continued, day after day, we just turned north. We went toward Agana, marched through this town which was leveled by naval gun fire and continued to work north through the island. That was our field of operations for the rest of the campaign with our units.

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Q: I understand you were very active in digging Japanese out from caves and so forth.

Joseph Friedman: Well, we started immediately after the organized resistance and in the middle of August, from that point on, when we worked our way up into the north area of Guam, we started to get our camps set up and from that point on, from our camps, we started to go on practically daily combat patrols, from the end of August, all the way through to November. We sort of went on two platoon strength and had one day of combat patrols, two other patrols would go out the next day, and on the third day, we would go out again and that is the way it was rotated. Every other day we went out on combat patrols.

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Q: Were you able to identify where your base camp was located?

Joseph Friedman: I only know it was near north field of the B-29 airstrips, in those areas there. Precisely, I don't recall the names of that, but it was in that area that we had our base camp set up.

Q: You told me earlier that you were directly involved in capturing two Japanese. One of which was about to commit hara-kiri.

Joseph Friedman: Yes, we were on a patrol, we were walking through a large coconut grove and I happened to be in that particular operation, walking with my platoon, spread out in a formation. I was the point. And as the point, being out about 75 yards ahead of the platoon, I spotted movement from one of the huts, the Chamorro huts. They built up – they had sort of like four, or five or six feet off the ground, a wooden floor and I saw some movement in there and I reported it back to my platoon leader. I went back and I told him, I saw some movement.

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I didn't know what it was, we were about 200 yards away at that time, but I could see movement there. And as we approached, this particular Japanese soldier who was in there, got up and put a rope around his neck and was hanging with the rope around his neck, he had hung himself. But as he was dangling, I reached in for my Marine Corps KBar knife and cut him down and he fell down to the ground, hollering, pleading in Japanese not to kill him. I didn't understand it, but it was obvious he was – the way he was crying and pleading, not to shoot him. Which we didn't.

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My platoon leader ordered me to shoot him and I told him, lieutenant, I said, let's bring him back for interrogation. He said, kill him, screaming the way he is, he's calling for reinforcements for troops. I said, no, it seems to me sir, he's just pleading for his life. When he continued to scream, I told him, in Japanese [speaks Japanese]. It means, I think, to shut up. Which he did and we did bring him back for interrogation. When we brought him back into our company area, our company commander was a little perturbed, he – the

combat patrols usually last about four hours and when we came back, we were out about an hour and a half. And the fact that we didn't complete our four hour stint, he was quite annoyed with the platoon leader. And the Japanese had a severe wound on his chest, which he kept covered with a big ball of cotton, which was quite clean, we were very surprised at how well it kept and – the commanding officer was quite annoyed with our lieutenant for coming back from this patrol a little too early. So finally he turned to me and said to me, take him down to headquarters. He turned to me, okay, Friedman, bring along your boy. And we put him in the Jeep and we drove down to regiment headquarters where he was interrogated. He was sitting on the dirt floor of the tent and a Marine lieutenant who was an interpreter, could speak Japanese fluently, was questioning him. And I was sitting there with my rifle on him, he presented no threat, but as a matter of protocol I guess. So I was watching the interrogation and they had asked him how he was captured, in Japanese.

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I didn't understand the Japanese and on two or three questions, each time he was asked by the interpreter what happened, he was pointing at me. So I sort of like, butt in, I says, lieutenant, why is he pointing at me, I was using very unpleasant words, I wasn't asking in a nice way. I was a little annoyed at the Jap pointing at me. He said, well, I'm just asking him how he was captured and he is relating how you captured him. And then they brought him over a container of coffee and a donut and he was very, very – he would take his – and bow to everybody like that in appreciation of what he was being given. When he was eating it, the interrogator asked him another question, he asked him when he had eaten last. He said, I haven't eaten in five days. He was probably living on coconuts though. And that is the last I saw of him, I went back to my company area and that is the last I saw of that particular incident.

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Q: How about the other prisoners you had took?

Joseph Friedman: The other prisoner I took came out of the jungle when we were in our bivouac area on patrol, came out of the jungle with his hands raised. And as he approached

me, I leveled my rifle at him, but he seemed innocuous enough, harmless enough, which may or may not have been the proper thing, because there have been many incidents where they came in like that and some Japanese behind them would open up fire. But I took him prisoner and brought him into the company area. I don't know what happened to him after that. When I take them over to a company headquarters, I don't follow up on it, so to speak.

Q: What would be a particular procedure for working the stragglers out of caves? Would you try to draw them out or would you seal up the cave?

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Joseph Friedman: In those particular cave incidents on Guam and other areas, in many cases, were left the units behind us who knew demolitions. These demolition men, of course if they were in the caves that we were attacking, we put the flame throwers into those caves that we knew they were in there and that would usually do the job. Of course the tremendous heat from the flame flowers would snuff out all of the oxygen and anybody inside those caves would suffocate. But for those that we bypassed, it didn't seem like there was anything in there, the units behind us would come in with satchel charges, sticks of TNT and those gas mask bags and they just spin them around like this and just whip them in there and they go in maybe 60-70 feet and the explosion from the dynamite – not dynamite, TNT, would probably close the mouth of those caves, which they wanted to do. They wanted those caves closed.

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So if anybody was in there, they wouldn't come out at night to attack us, which happened many times, if we were careless.

Q: You operated the north end of the island all this time.

Joseph Friedman: On the patrols, yes.

Q: After November, where were you?

Joseph Friedman: We had our base camp set up pretty comfortably at that time. And we went in and received more replacements. They sent home – at that time we had about 21 months overseas, 22 months overseas approximately and they had to make a decision to send home men back to the States after two campaigns, we are entitled to stateside duty. But thy had to make a decision of who to send home.

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They sent home the men who were married and married with children. There were a few thousand of those, and those are the men who went stateside. Those who were single, like myself, stayed and formed the cadre for the new replacements who were coming in, the green replacements coming in from the States and we formed the initial cadre for those new men, to break them in, which the Division need combat ready men such as ourselves.

Q: You were doing a lot of training here on the island.

Joseph Friedman: So we did go back into training. It's hard to believe that after all those patrols and after all that combat, between Bougainville and Guam, we still went to a training program. Out on the rifle range and things of that sort.

Q: You were involved in the invasion of Iwo Jima, where did you depart from Guam to get to Iwo Jima?

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Joseph Friedman: We left from Apra Harbor.

Q: On another LST?

Joseph Friedman: No, fortunately it was one of the better ships, the Simon Boulevard, as I recall and a very large transport APA. And our unit marched from our base camp in northern Guam, across the entire island, practically a battalion of men. And marched that

17 miles overland, over hills in Dale so to speak, to the beaches, just before Apra Harbor, where we dug in that evening, set up a temporary camp bivouac and by morning we had our breakfast in the bivouac area and marched from that point, right aboard the ship at Apra Harbor for the invasion of Iwo.

Q: Any incidents occur during your entire time on Guam, which stick in your memory particularly vividly?

Joseph Friedman: Well, the most vivid things are the incident happened on patrol. Every patrol had its incidents. We met them time and time again on these patrols.

Q: Would you relate some of them to us?

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Joseph Friedman: Well a couple stand out. On this one particular incident on the patrol, those who were in the front of the platoon had come upon eight Japanese men who were Navy men, they weren't soldiers. And we could hear them – what brought our attention, we could hear them cutting coconuts, we could hear the hacking from about 50-60 yards away in the jungle. And when we heard that noise, we sort of like, dropped down and one of the men or two of the men went up closer to take a look to see what that noise was and the word came back that six Japanese Navy personnel were sitting in a semi circle, cutting open coconuts. So the five or six of the men who were in front of the platoon, I was at the back at that particular time, of the squad that was patrolling, got up and opened up on all eight of them and cut them all down.

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But one of them was mortally wounded, but he had enough energy, obviously to run away and he went swishing right by my, right through the jungle. And as he went by me, he was running like the speed of a deer, but leaving a trail of heavy blood on the jungle leaves. So I pursued him and only pursued him because of the blood that he was leaving and I followed the blood and I could hear him up ahead, but he was running very fast. When I came upon

him, he laid exhausted in a little open area. It was thick, that jungle. And as I came upon him, the men came up behind me, he was laying there, we thought he was dead. We were talking, shooting the breeze about what had happened, I thought I saw an arm movement of his, move slightly. So I turned to my sergeant and I says, Sergeant Muncine, I think he's still alive. So he says to me, finish him off, Friedman. I said Sarge, I haven't fired my rifle yet, I was behind the platoon, I said, if I go shoot now, I will have to go back to the camp and clean my rifle. Being that you already fired your weapon, I said, why don't you? So he did, he finished him off. And when we turned him over, that arm that I saw move, was already in the pocket of his uniform where the grenade – the grenade was in there and he was reaching for that grenade, the movement that I saw, he had made a movement toward that grenade and had I not seen it, he may have been successful in detonating that grenade on us. Plus, we were just sitting around smoking and watching.

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That is just that particular incident.

Q: Any others?

Joseph Friedman: There were others similar to that.

Q: That you can recall and tell us about?

Joseph Friedman: Well, the area of Patty [name?] Point, was a real hotbed for us on the combat patrols, a lot of the bypassed Japanese had gone into that area, especially with the caves were very numerous and the cliffs were very steep and they would hid in these caves on the cliffs. And on one of the patrols there, I had a little temporary lapse of what took place now, I will try to get back to that.

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Q: You have given us some good insight on the kind of activity you are involved in. You are the first one that has been – that we have talked to, that has been regularly involved in the

searching out of the Japanese stragglers on the north end of the island. Iwo Jima. Were you in the first wave at Iwo?

Joseph Friedman: No, I was not, I went in on the 19th – I went in on the 21st.

Q: So you were well down the line. Any particular incidents up there?

Joseph Friedman: Definitely. When our units got ashore, we dug in on the first airfield, which was coming under intense mortar and artillery fire from the higher ground on the right flank and still getting an awful lot of small arms fire from Mt. Suribachi, it hadn't been taken yet.

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And we dug in there, waiting for our units to come ashore, to move up into forward positions and while we were dug in over there, on the morning of the 22nd or 23rd – it was the 23rd, I think, I took notice of the flag being raised on Suribachi. I looked up there that morning and watched from the first airfield, the raising of the flag and I called attention to the men around me of the raising of that flag. And when we saw that, we knew that Suribachi was secure and we wouldn't be getting that intense small arms fire. We were able to move around a lot easier.

Q: How long were you on Iwo before they took you back?

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Joseph Friedman: I left Iwo on March 27th, at the end of the third airfield where all organized resistance, the Japanese were in that particular corner and we had pushed them in that area and at that point we drove them up to the corner of the island and the campaign ended there.

Q: And you returned to Guam?

Joseph Friedman: We returned to Guam. We left on the 27th – not before though. On the second airfield where we were dug in, waiting for the ship to come into the harbor to take us back, before 150 Japanese had come out of the caves at the other end of the island on the early morning attack in our area and all living hell broke loose. They were fully armed, they came out of their caves and attacked the tents on the first airfield, which air corpsman were sleeping and they killed several right on their cots. And the firefight ensued on the right side of the island, on that area between us and all the Marine units, and the 150 Japanese who had come down on full combat gear as a do or die attempt.

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We annihilated the entire 150 men, it was a firefight that lasted two or three hours.

Q: When did you come back to the States?

Joseph Friedman: I left Guam on an aircraft carrier on April 13th, which was the 12th in the States, when they announced that President Roosevelt, on the radio, we could hear that, had passed away. We were already sitting on the trucks, waiting to go down to the beach for the operation to get us back to the States. And it was aboard a CVE, the name of the aircraft carrier was The Halanya [sp?], it was doing nothing but duty, going back to the States, picking up fighter planes and bringing them back to the Pacific area. That was it's job.

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Q: What did you do after the war?

Joseph Friedman: After the war, I took quite a rest for several months, relaxed. We were getting a stipend from the government of $20 a week.

Q: Call the 52-20.

Joseph Friedman: The 52-20, correct. And that $20, even at that time, was enough just to

have a good time with and I relaxed for quite a while. Then when I felt like going back to work, it was a few months later, I went back into business with my father, who owned a furrier establishment. He was a furrier. And before the war he had trained me in how to sew on the machine, the sewing machine and the furs being cut. I worked with him a while, but the business was very, very seasonal, for a business. And if I worked five, six months, fine. Then the rest of the time was quiet and I wasn't drawing any salary. So I decided to get out of that business, couldn't support a family on six months salary.

Q: And you did what?

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Joseph Friedman: I went to school on the GI Bill of Rights; I went to printing school, where for 16 weeks I learned the printing trade. Not completely, you are only still a novice; it takes time before you become an accomplished journeyman printer. When I got out of printing school, I went and got a position with several, over several months, with local New Jersey newspapers. Which I got my experience from paper to paper as the years went by, until after five or six years I had enough time to become a journeyman printer, which I got my union card. And by getting my union card, it gave me a lot of flexibility. Then I went into New York City and worked for the New York Times.

Q: New York Evening News? Newark Star Ledger?

Joseph Friedman: The New York Times. I have to work for those New Jersey newspapers also on a part time basis. But I did work mostly for The New York Times.

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Q: Ever thought of coming on to the military for full time duty? Where were you for Korea, did they recall you?

Joseph Friedman: No, I wasn't recalled for Korea. I made a very – what I consider smart move in staying out of the Korean War by just not reenlisting in Marine Corps reserve. At a

local – man who was active in the Marine Corps reserve worked for the bank in Farmington, New Jersey that was badgering me to join the Marine Corps reserves and I told him, I said, my experiences of the past four years are still embedded in my mind, I said, I still haven't gotten the Guam and Iwo campaigns out of my system, I want to hold off for a while. And I didn't join the Marine Corps reserves as he asked me to and because of that, I didn't have to go to Korea. Had I joined the Marine Corps reserves, I probably would have gone to Korea to fight.

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Q: Our time is about up, I certain appreciate the time that you have taken. You said you thought you would only go for a half hour, we have been almost a full hour.

Joseph Friedman: Hard to believe. Yeah, the experience of relating this verbally and trying to articulate it and my memory, is very, very interesting. I didn't think it would be this pleasant.

Q: I appreciate your interest and appreciate your time.

Joseph Friedman: Thank you very much Chuck, I appreciate the opportunity to give you this information. I'm quite, quite pleased. Thank you sir.

[END OF SESSION]