

Interviewer: And if you could just tell me your full name, date and place of birth

Balthrop: Okay my name is Charles D Balthrop I was born 84 years ago this past January the 8<sup>th</sup> at 25 Lawn Street in Clarksville Tennessee which is in Montgomery County. And that's where I spent all my childhood.

Interviewer: Great what branch of the service were you in and what unit?

Balthrop: I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine division 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine regiment C-Company and spent all that time with them except for a little stint I had with the 5<sup>th</sup> marine artillery. And when we went to Okinawa I was with the 10<sup>th</sup> marines and but when I came back they transferred me to the infantry. And I guess that was because I was an expert rifleman when I went through boot camp.

Interviewer: I would like to go back a second if I could to the late 30s you said you grew up in Clarksville. And just from a domestic standpoint ask you how the depression affected you and your family.

Balthrop: How what?

Interviewer: The great depression affected you and your family.

Balthrop: Oh my dad was working at the Clarksville Foundry when I was four years old and he applied for a position at the police department as a patrolman which he spent as a patrolman for about seven years. And the night lieutenant retired and he put up his application for that job and got it. He served as night lieutenant for three years and then the chief of police position came open when the chief Robertson retired and he took that he got that position which he held until he retired in 1955. And during the depression we didn't have a whole lot of niceties like any kind of luxury. Daddy would buy beans by the bag he'd get a half of white beans and a half a bag of pinto beans and we'd alternate with beans and potatoes. But we didn't starve and we faired pretty well because he I think he made \$100 a month as a patrolman and which back then was a real good salary. But my mother had tuberculosis and she had six healthy children and none of them ever contacted tuberculosis which she died of when she was 37. And he was strapped with a whole lot of medical bills because of her condition and that was one reason that he didn't advance money wise I would guess. Because I know at times he would have a drug bill as high as 80 or \$90 a month.

Interviewer: Wow and he was making 100.

Balthrop: Which was a great amount.

Interviewer: Now he ended up the Chief of Police in Clarksville?

Balthrop: Right he was Chief of Police from 1939 until 1955.

Interviewer: Now you would have been 19 years old when Pearl Harbor happened?

Balthrop: When he

Interviewer: When Pearl Harbor happened were you 19?

Balthrop: When Pearl Harbor happened I was yes 19 years old.

Interviewer: Did you see it coming at all? Were you aware of the potential problems there?

Balthrop: Not really I was like most Americans we were surprised by the whole thing. But my older brother the first thing him and a friend of his did was volunteer and they both volunteered for the marine core. They were watching football practice out at CHS and talking to one of the boys on the football team and he said they said they were going to join the marine core and he said this kid said Bobby Halliburton said if you'll wait until football seasons over I'll go with y'all. Which he did and they were in the 4<sup>th</sup> him, John D Balthrop and Marshall Hodges and Bobby Halliburton were all in the 4<sup>th</sup> division 4<sup>th</sup> marine regiment I think it was and he was a 30 caliber machine gunner. And he carried that 30 caliber machine gun through the Marshall Campaign, Saipan Campaign, Tinian Campaign and he got wounded on Ewagema that fifth day he.

Interviewer: Wow and that was not a light piece of equipment.

Balthrop: Yes it was but he carried that thing all through those campaigns. And me when they pulled out of Saipan our replacement pulled in and we replaced in the 2<sup>nd</sup> division 10<sup>th</sup> marines because they lost so many men on a banzai attack. See they have machine guns set up along with 105 millimeter howitzer they were firing those howitzers point blank. They were exploding like 150 yards in front of the guns and they were getting the back blast from it. And they burnt up all these machine gunners burnt up barrels on the machine guns mowing down these Japanese.

Interviewer: Still coming

Balthrop: Yeah they come in waves just like hollering banzai. That's the reason I replaced in that 10<sup>th</sup> marines because they had lost so many men in that attack. And on Saipan now we went through all of our training and we fired 105s off of a point into the ocean for pattern you know. And we were there until they started Okinawa Campaign which we boarded APAs and went to Okinawa. Well that whole ocean was just covered up with ships of all descriptions and the Japanese there was Komokozzie planes they had free picking. Because they didn't have to pick and choose they just took one and dived into it one came right over the mast of our APA and dove right into the side of this APA oh about 150, 200 yards to our starboard side and went right on in the engine room. And we stayed there for a couple of days and then they ordered all our division out into open waters to get away from those suicide planes. And we stayed in open waters for several days and then they decided they didn't need our division anymore. We pulled a whole bunch of fake assaults on the southern tip of the island you know that was where all the troops of the Japanese was concentrated right in that southern tip. Well we'd pull in in waves and draw a fire then we'd circle back and regroup again and we'd go in again and draw fire. And while we was doing that they were landing two marine division and two army divisions was landing on the west coast. And the marines swung north and took over three fourths of the island and didn't hardly fire a shot.

Interviewer: Do you know who designed that plan? That landing and the decoy your decoy?

Balthrop: It was similar to Okinawa or Saipan they said it was. I didn't get ashore but they said all the terrain was similar to Saipan a lot of caves and a lot of caverns and whatnot. And the 8<sup>th</sup> marine division the 8<sup>th</sup> marine regiment rather took this little island Lejima that that writer is it Pyle?

Interviewer: Ernie Pyle

Balthrop: He got killed on Lejima anyway that was the only regiment that participated in that. We went back to Saipan on standby we stayed on standby then when they hit Ewagema that whole ocean out that was covered up with cruisers, destroyers, APAs, landing craft and this was the night before the day before they hit Ewagema. Well my brother was aboard ship of course and he asked his captain could he come ashore because he knew I was on Saipan.

Interviewer: He knew you were on Saipan?

Balthrop: Uh huh so he said no you can't ashore said those Japanese will know we're coming. He said captain those Japanese know we're coming anyway. He said well you can't go. So he saw this line lined up to go ashore for sickbay so he just stuck his hand in his shirt got in that line and came ashore. Well he found my tent camp and it was vacant we was out firing 105s. But this jeep come rolling in and he flagged him down. He said where is everybody? Said they're out on a point firing 105s he said can I are you going out there? And he said yeah as soon as I load up some chow said you help me load the chow and I'll take you back out there. And he walked up I had a 105 howitzer shell projectile in my hands because I was feeding a 105 and almost dropped that thing because he come up and tapped me on the shoulder and I looked around and I saw him. And I handed that thing to another member of our outfit and my commanding officer when I told him who he was he said why you can have the day off just go do whatever you want to do.

Interviewer: How long had it been since you'd seen him?

Balthrop: About two and half three years because he went in in 1942 and I was working for BF Goodrich Company the government took some personnel from Goodrich to run a shell loading plant in Texarkana Texas.

Interviewer: Now are you doing this right after Pearl Harbor?

Balthrop: Yeah because I was working at the Goodrich plant here in Clarksville. And they picked 16 men to go to Texarkana to work as supervisors for loading shells of all different descriptions and I was picked as one.

Interviewer: And this would be in 1942?

Balthrop: Right

Interviewer: Okay

Balthrop: In the spring of 42. I spent spring of 42 until 1943 at that shell loading plant then they opened up a synthetic rubber plant which is something new in the defense corporation. And they sent me out there to work in that rubber plant.

Interviewer: Where was that?

Balthrop: It was at Border Texan right about 50 miles from Amarillo.

Interviewer: Okay

Balthrop: And so I was there until Uncle Sam said I need you in June of 44.

Interviewer: Forty-four now your work was strategically valuable before that though supervising a rubber plant.

Balthrop: Yeah I was in Defense Corporation.

Interviewer: So what do you think made Uncle Sam decide in the summer of 44 he needed you for?

Balthrop: That was just one of those things. My brother said the draft board must have had something against daddy because they took all of his boys. Because my younger brother Ray he was in the army and John was in the Marine Core and they took me. I went to they sent us to Nashville for a physical me and another boy from Clarksville Milton Hargus. And him and another boy they was going to volunteer for the marine core. I said heck I ain't I'm going to volunteer for the navy. So I went in to get my physical I came out and this ole Marine Sergeant was standing there he was taking the folders and threading through them looking to see who was who and what was what. And he took my folder and he stuck it under his arm and I said you're not going to take me in that blame marine core are you? He said yeah said you'll make a good marine. I said you might take me but I don't believe I'll make a good marine. Anyway when Melton come out from he had already decided he'd go to the navy too see so they took his folder. I said if you're going to take me take that big ugly devil there.

Interviewer: You got him volunteered for the marines.

Balthrop: Yeah and the bad part about it was he got wounded he got shrapmetal in his foot on Ewagama and when we came home we had a baseball team and he was playing on it and he was bobbling around and said yeah if it hadn't been for you I wouldn't have this.

Interviewer: Where did they send you then in the summer of 44 after you're in the marines now?

Balthrop: I went to the recruit depot in San Diego California.

Interviewer: San Diego?

Balthrop: Yeah they sent us all the way to San Diego instead of I don't know why they did because Camp Lejeune was a lot closer. But they put us on a Pullman train a train with a Pullman on it with a private room three of us rode in this private room all the way to Dallas, Texas. In Dallas they put us on this cattle train I think it was and it just had bunks in this boxcar like and that's what we rode all the way to San Diego. We got a rude awakening and then we went to Los Angeles they took down to San Diego recruit training depot. Which we spent from June 44 26<sup>th</sup> of June until August and that's when we finished our basic training.

Interviewer: Pretty tough basic training?

Balthrop: Oh yeah oh yeah I was we was standing at attention one day and we were doing order of arms I snapped my rifle from my shoulder and slapped it over to my left wrist and it tiled my, we wore these ole pith helmets like they carry in Africa. And it kicked that thing right down on my nose and I was

standing there like this you know. And I couldn't stand it no longer I took my thumb and pushed that thing up and when I did that GI wacked me across the helmet with his swagger stick. And oh yeah they made us go out to the boondocks sometimes and get sand and bring it in and scrub the floors with sand and bricks just routine stuff you know.

Interviewer: When did you know what you were specifically going to be doing or specifically being trained for?

Balthrop: I didn't know until I got to Saipan and then I found out. Well you know we had brand new M1 rifles all through boot camp. And they took those rifles away from us when we boarded ship.

Interviewer: What did they give you instead?

Balthrop: And didn't give them back to us when we got to Saipan they issued us some rifles that had been through two or three looked like. The sight wouldn't even shoot straight or nothing you know.

Interviewer: Wow

Balthrop: And so I don't know why they opted to take a brand new rifle away from you and I guess they figured they had plenty overseas.

Interviewer: Gee-whiz did you go from San Diego then to Saipan?

Balthrop: Yeah we went from San Diego to Pearl Harbor and we anchored in at Pearl Harbor.

Interviewer: Had you been on the ocean before?

Balthrop: Never

Interviewer: Did you get seasick?

Balthrop: I was sick from the time I got aboard that ship and hit the ocean until I got off. It was like even when we was in Higgins boats making landings I would get off that thing and say shoot me I don't care whether I get killed or not. I was so dog gone sick. But I did I managed to kind of regulate myself where I wouldn't get deathly sick I just watched what I ate stuff like that. But I still was uneasy queasy in my stomach I was the whole time I was aboard ship anytime.

Interviewer: Now how long were you in Pearl?

Balthrop: Let's see about two days I think we were. Then we pulled out and went to Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands and we anchored there. And of course we had destroyer escorts and they was doing the zig zag course to keep submarines from hitting any of our ships.

Interviewer: How many ships were in the convoy?

Balthrop: I don't remember it was a lot of them though. Anyway we stayed at Eniwetok maybe a day or two and then we went on to Saipan. Well first time we was anchored in Saipan the Japanese pulled an air raid on us. Because they see they still had Ewagema and they was hitting us just about every night.

And sometimes it would run through our tent camp and it killed some kids. But most times when we'd get an air raid we'd file out to this hillside and just stay on hillside. And we watched Japanese bombers bomb the airfield and you could see the search lights. You could see the fighter planes going up and knocking them down. And I know this P47 took off after a Japanese plane and this P38 passed him and shot down that plane before that P47 could get to it. But we could see all of that.

Interviewer: How much advance did you have when an air raid would go on?

Balthrop: It was pretty good.

Interviewer: Was it?

Balthrop: Yeah we had plenty of time to get to our bunkers in the hillside. And then when they of course the stationed the B29s on Saipan and Tinian and they also had B29s on Guam. And I knew one of the pilots on a B29 O'Brien Price and he I went to see him one day and he said if you get down here by eight o'clock on Sunday morning said I'll let you fly with me down to Guam to visit my brother his name was Vincent Price. They both wound up as lawyers in Springfield.

Interviewer: I'll be darn.

Balthrop: And one of the parks up there is named after Vincent I think. And anyway there was a boy from Clarksville in the army signal core James Dean. There was three boys that I know of was in the CBs Joe Anderson, Charlie Stainbrook, and Charles Binkley were all in the CBs and they are the ones me and John visited because they had cold beer and cold ice-cream. They had refrigeration and none of the rest of us had it. And that day he was visiting me it got close to darn and he says I've got to get back to my ship they'll have me AWOL. We went down to the docking area and there was a landing craft sitting at the end of this walkway dock with the number of his ship on it. And he went out there and said hey you going back to the ship he said yeah as soon as I load up a bunch of chow and deliver it around to different places. And so I like to got killed when the cargo net dropped loose and dropped a load of supplies down on top of us. But finally we delivered all that stuff and we went back and he took me back by my ship and there was boatman's ladder hanging down the side of that ship. So I jumped on that thing went up it like a cat and nobody ever even mentioned that I was gone. That was amazing.

Interviewer: That is amazing.

Balthrop: But undoubtedly either that or they set it up or something.

Interviewer: Now how far into the fall of 44 are we here when you're on Saipan?

Balthrop: Well let's see we go to Saipan in December and then they when they were hitting Ewagema we were at a tank battalion and getting the two way radio action going on. They was knocking out tanks before they ever got ashore and we was on standby for that but we didn't have to go for that. Then when we and one time over there on Saipan these Japanese that were holed up in them cave. They had a gun a big gun set up on a hillside pointed at the harbor area and when we discovered them and of course we all of them or captured them the ones that we could. We tried to capture them but we'd have an interpreter go to these caves we'd comb that whole island and an interpreter would go to these caves and try and talk them out and they wouldn't come out. They'd throw a satchel charge in there and set it off with a flame thrower.

Interviewer: No choice.

Balthrop: They wouldn't surrender they wouldn't surrender.

Interviewer: So those islands were secure enough to use the landing strip? But it's not like there were no Japanese left.

Balthrop: No they were still as a matter of fact I think we had some of them that watched movies with us we didn't know about. We'd sit up on this hillside and they'd show movies down in the little ole part of this hillside. And you could almost feel that some of them was around there somewhere and they probably were.

Interviewer: And were they shooting at you?

Balthrop: No

Interviewer: They were not?

Balthrop: Not when we was in the movies there. And undoubtedly they was just trying to stay healthy I reckon. But we killed and captured over 10,000 Japanese after we got to Saipan.

Interviewer: Good Lord. Wow now how did you deal with what did you think about where you might be going what might happen and how did you deal with that thought?

Balthrop: It didn't it was like one of those suicide planes flying around I didn't think about one of them flying into our ship I was just watching the action more or less. When I wasn't in the landing craft going making these fake assaults but it was like I said they were flying around like a bunch of bumble bees. They was all over the place but I didn't think much about it. You don't dwell on it like when I went to Okinawa they put me on the F18 which F14 which is forward observer and the captain says are you scared? And I said well I don't want to die but no I'll just take whatever comes I don't know what's going to happen I said. You just leave stuff in the master's hands he I guess if it's your time to go you go. But I never dwelled on it I missed my wife and kids. I had two children when I went into service and I missed them quite a bit.

Interviewer: Did you have communication back did you get correspondence frequently?

Balthrop: I got letters from them just about every day. We had good correspondence everything went airmail anyway and I got regular letters from home.

Interviewer: Great were your wife and children in Clarksville?

Balthrop: Yes were they in Clarksville the whole time you were in Texas?

Interviewer: No

Balthrop: They had gone to Texas with you and then came back?

Interviewer: They transferred when they transferred me to Texas my family went with me. Well as a matter of fact my first child was born in Texarkana and the second child was born in Border Texas so they are both Texans.

Balthrop: When I when they told me they was going to take me in the service I went to my plant manager there in Border and I asked them are you going to move my family back home? And he said no this is considered your home here. I said no its not I said my home is Clarksville, Tennessee. And I was I don't know why but this the plant vice-president was a plant manager at Clarksville for a while before he advanced and he also visited us in Texarkana and Border. And I don't know why he took a liking to me because I liked to have run over him with a lift truck one day with a load of skids. And he I wrote him a letter airmail special delivery I said they are taking me in the service and I said I don't consider this my home and I said I was under the assumption that I would be sent back to Clarksville eventually. And I said it's not because they had a strike out here and I said I didn't participate as a matter of fact I tried to go in over the line that they had set up to keep you from going in.

Interviewer: A picket line?

Balthrop: As a matter of fact I walked up to this guy and he said you ain't going in there. I said I'll either go in there over you, through you or whichever way I can but I said I've got a brother over there in the South Pacific that would give his right arm to be where you're standing. I said you better get out of my way and he did. But Mr. Kelly he I wrote him this letter and asked him was there anything he could do about sending my family and furniture back home and the next dag gum day I sent it air mail special delivery, the next day or the day after that the plant manager called me in and said you shouldn't have jumped to conclusions. I said you already told me there wasn't nothing you could do. I said I took it in my hands to do something for myself. He said well how much money do you need to go back to Clarksville? Says we'll pick your furniture up tomorrow and whatever money you need to get back to Clarksville said you can have it. I said I don't know you can give me four or \$500 dollars if you want to I said what I don't use I'll send it back to you, which I did. But that was I was coaching little league ball after I got out of the service, I was working at the post office. I don't know how I found time to coach little league ball because I was working like 12 or 14 hours a day. And Allen O'Neal was the plant manager at Goodrich and Mr. Kelly come to visit him. And well he come to visit the plant and he was staying and it happened that Allen O'Neal's son was playing on my team and he brought Mr. Kelly down to Merrcourt Park and called me over and it surprised me because I hadn't seen him in quite a while. He was just like a father to me I really liked that guy.

Interviewer: That's great, after Saipan where did you go?

Balthrop: From Saipan we went to we came back to Saipan and then they dropped that bomb on \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_ Hiroshima. They dropped it then they dropped one on Nagasaki well right after that the Japanese surrendered and so they had us scheduled to hit the Kyushu Island which is a southern island and that's where they had all the Japanese troops stationed. And I saw one of the maps where they had arrows pointing and what division was hitting where we was right set to go in that pump. But anyway we went to that's where we went to was Nagasaki in Japan. And we unloaded well we come down cargo nets into landing craft just like we was going to go invade one of the islands. And that's the way we went in. We went in ready to kill big bears if we had to. But we didn't have no opposition they pulled our landing craft up to the docks which was devastated. I mean all that was standing was steal structures no siding or nothing on them.



Interviewer: Now is this at the south end of that harbor at Nagasaki?

Balthrop: Yeah it was.

Interviewer: So your many be at that point you're maybe three miles or four miles from where ground zero was?

Balthrop: Yeah as a matter of fact we was about they put us in barracks about two miles from ground zero.

Interviewer: From ground zero.

Balthrop: It was just nothing but dust left where that thing exploded because they exploded it above ground by remote control I guess.

Interviewer: Just to go back a second so you were in Saipan the whole first half of 1945?

Balthrop: Uh huh

Interviewer: You were still there and you went from Saipan to be ready to invade that southern island.

Balthrop: Right

Interviewer: Then when the bombs fell you went to Nagasaki.

Balthrop: Yeah we went in as occupation troops and then they unloaded us on the dock and they marched us oh about two miles to these barracks Japanese barracks and that's where we stayed until about we was there about two months I guess.

Interviewer: What were you doing there what was your day to day routine like?

Balthrop: Just routine stuff like you do because the Japanese had already piled up all their weapons in piles and of course you had your pick of souvenirs if you wanted some. And all their fighting equipment they piled it up in piles and of course we confiscated it. But we had no opposition what so ever.

Interviewer: But there were Japanese there?

Balthrop: Oh yeah

Interviewer: Under your guard?

Balthrop: No we just milled among all the civilians and everything just like we was part of the community. And we encountered no opposition of any kind but we stayed there maybe two months and they put us on landing craft tank and took us around to the east coast and we disembarked from those landing craft tanks and went up this hillside and got on a train. And they took us inland to this place called Miyakonojo which is right in the center of Kusu Island. Well we passed airfields that didn't have they had aircraft all over the place but they was torn all to pieces. And we went into the town Miyakonojo and it was kind of weird you'd see square mile place maybe just devastated where the

bombs had fell. And right on the maybe right across the street from where all of this devastation was it was just still standing around that parameter. That's how they pinpointed their bombing runs. And we stayed there until let's see about November of 45 and then they took us to this west coast harbor called Sasebo and that's where we were when they started mustering us out. It just happened that I had enough points even though I hadn't been in the marine core but a year and a half I had enough points to get out in the first group of people.

Interviewer: Did you understand how that point system worked?

Balthrop: Not really.

Interviewer: I've heard different variations of it.

Balthrop: Well it well it was because of how much time you spent in combat, how much time you was in the branch of service, and your family if you had any family. Which I had a wife and two kids which helped me even though I had been in combat areas several time. But anyway they boarded us we boarded ship on December the 8, 1945 and we came back to San Diego where they mustard us out. And we split a seam on our ship from bad weather we had tremendous bad weather. The dog gone ship would come up on one of those swells and it would fall out from under you and that thing would hit the water and just quiver all over and of course the propeller would come out of the water and it would vibrate the ship.

Interviewer: Wow

Balthrop: But they claimed it split a seam.

Interviewer: Where were you when that happened?

Balthrop: I was they had us stationed right in the front bawl of the ship. So they put me on galley duty to go to the supply room and bring the supplies up to the kitchen. And I got friendly with some of the cooks and stuff that was in the galley and they had extra bunks right inside the galley. And I got I stayed in one of those bunks the whole trip back to San Diego and they never did they didn't even miss me I don't guess I left all of my equipment and stuff in the bawl of the ship in my bunk I never did use it.

Interviewer: Now did you go from San Diego then back to Clarksville?

Balthrop: Well I had the option to come back to Border Texas and I said no I'm not going back to Border Texas because they had dust storms every week and I just decided I wouldn't come back and eat that dust. So me and I caught this ride from this group that was going all the way to Memphis and I rode with them by automobile all the way to Memphis and I boarded a train in Memphis and came back to Clarksville. Now I tried to get back on at Goodrich and they said they didn't have any openings so I went to the post office and knocked on the post master's door and asked him if he needed any help. And he said well I'm thinking about hiring a couple of substitutes said you check back with me and I was back up there every day knocking on his door. And he said come to work Monday and he hired me and another boy and that's where I stayed for 37 years.

Interviewer: Awesome I have a couple of overall questions for you just to put some things in prospective. Now as a person who was not even having heading into that landing in Japan proper how did you feel when you found out about the atomic bomb going off?

Balthrop: Well I didn't think much about it. We was I would say we was exposed to quite a bit of radiation. Because it was they dropped that bomb on the 9<sup>th</sup> of August and by the first of September we was in Nagasaki.

Interviewer: You were in Nagasaki. Have you had any health ramifications from that that you know of?

Balthrop: None that I know of. Of course I developed skin cancer which I have to have removed several time. But I don't know whether it was from that or just carrying mail in the sunshine all the time. So as far as any other health problems from it I don't know of any. Of course the VA comes out if you was exposed to radiation I was subject to treatment but I never did need any.

Interviewer: What was your feeling overall of the Japanese as an opponent as the soldiers and as a people?

Balthrop: It was just like an enemy that was going to annihilate you if you didn't annihilate him. And that's basically the way you felt either kill or be killed. And of course they school you on stuff like that when you're in the recruit they even show you movies of different things. They kind of doctor you up on what's coming and what you might face and stuff like that. But you don't really I don't know you would feel a little hatred I guess if one of them showed up like I said you either kill them or be killed. My brother said he was sitting his gun up machine gun up and he looked around and saw this big Japanese back there and he hollered to one of his buddies said kill that Japanese and said one of them swung his rifle butt around and knocked him out. But they was throwing like hot water tank rockets that's what he heard that thing coming and said I just stuck my hand in that volcanic sand and I left my butt sticking up in the air that's where I got hit. Which he carried until he died he died last February.

Interviewer: I'm sorry. Did you say you were a marksman?

Balthrop: Yeah I was an expert rifleman. They had in boot camp well this was advanced training really where you took a rifle training. And on the rifle range you had a score of 240 that was prefect 240 way and my score was 206 so it was listed as expert rifle.

Interviewer: Had you hunted as a kid? Had you had experience?

Balthrop: Not really I did maybe a little bit of course I lived on the Cumberland River there two blocks form it rather. And most summertime we'd either play ball or go swimming in the river. But hunting I bought me a 22 rifle when I was carrying paper when I was about 16 or 17 years old. And we'd go on camping trip and go out and do a little bit of shooting but no hunting to amount to anything.

Interviewer: How do you feel that your training your basic training sociologically and your physical training helped you when you got there? Was it good?

Balthrop: When I went into the marine core I weighed 150 pounds soaking wet. I came out I weighed about 170 and the training built me up quite a bit. At one time I think I was eating those sea rations over on Saipan I think I gained about 20 pounds I weighted somewhere around 190 pounds. And of course I

lost all of that I know the cook had a set of wheels off one of those cane field carts they'd haul canes to the sugar field down there on the shore line. And the axel was attached to those wheels I mean it was all welded together. I saw this big ole burley cook come out there and he was trying to muscle that wheel up. I said I wonder if I could do that he didn't look like he was straining to get that thing up. And I picked that thing up muscled it up I said shoot I didn't know I was that strong. But undoubtedly I was it wasn't just much problem for me to get that up.

Interviewer: How would you say that whole experience changed you? And was the change permanent?

Balthrop: It changed me a lot of in fact I think it affected my married life really. I was still a responsible person I wanted to do everything I could for my family but I had a different attitude. My superintendent of mail he told me one day he said you're always going around with a chip on your shoulder. And I said well Mr. Bailey I said I've taken so much in my life I decided I wasn't taking nothing no more and I won't. And I said that's the reason you think I've got a chip on my shoulder. A kid one of the boys there in the post office one day called me a SOB and I grabbed him and threw him down on the floor and was fixing to hit him in his face and a boy grabbed my arm and said y'all quit you're in the post office said get up from there and quit that. So I got off of him and told him I said you don't ever call me no SOB I said that's my mother I said you better not ever do that again.

Interviewer: How long was that after you were back?

Balthrop: Oh it was probably six months maybe.

Interviewer: Six months.

Balthrop: Yeah I went to work at the post office in January of 46. I got out I mustered out the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 45 and.

Interviewer: New Year's Eve?

Balthrop: Yeah December the 31<sup>st</sup> and went and got a job at the post office I got a job as a temporary definite in other words they was appointing me every 60 days. And that's the way I worked at the post office until from 46 until 53 and they finally made a regular employee out of me. I'd work as much as 12, 14 hours a day five days or six days a week and on Sunday I'd pull either a morning shift or afternoon shift dispatching mail. But I learned how to do everything in the post office. I learned how to put box mail up how to work all the mail routes and I learned each route how to run each route. And I was available anytime I wanted something to do I just went up there and stood by the clock time clock and these old carries would come in and say Mr. \_\_\_ how about letting me off, oh I can't let you off. Yeah you've got Charlie Balthrop back there put him on so that's the way I got to work so much.

Interviewer: Now were you grateful for that job and grateful for that situation compared to what you had just been through? Was that part of your work ethic or was that just the way you're made?

Balthrop: I'm kind of a workaholic.

Interviewer: That's just the way you're made.

Balthrop: I've got to have something to do all the time. Right now I'm not able to do a lot of things because it gets me down in my back. I'm not able to do a lot of things but I still want to get out there and do it. And I'm unstable on my feet your equilibrium is off something like that. But that goes along with old age I'm 84 years old so.

Interviewer: Congratulations and thanks for doing this. This is very valuable to have and I really enjoyed this.

Balthrop: My pleasure.