

Interviewer: Okay sir what is your full name, where and when were you born?

Carson: Carson L Castleman I was born in Crossville Tennessee in 1922.

Interviewer: And what branch of service did you serve in?

Carson: U.S. Navy

Interviewer: And which unit were you primarily in during your time?

Carson: Well I was on a destroyer there is not unit there it's just a destroyer.

Interviewer: Who were your parents and what did they do for a living?

Carson: My father died when I was 12 years old he was a jeweler sort of like I am in fact I copied him part of the way even though he died when I was 12. But we lived on a farm of course that was right in the middle of the depression but we managed. Sometimes we'd get a job that was 25 cents a day.

Interviewer: How long were you able to stay in school during the depression?

Carson: I worked my way through school at Pleasant Hill Academy. We milked one guy and me milked 18 cows twice a day to pay our way through the school college.

Interviewer: How specifically did your family cope with the great depression?

Carson: Well of course my father was dead and of course there was no such thing then as we have now as today Social Security. We survived alright we had plenty to eat but it was just farm food and there wasn't too much of that.

Interviewer: Did you know anybody who wasn't able to take advantage of agriculture or the farm that lived in the city they couldn't find jobs?

Carson: Oh there was a lot of them back then jobs was almost impossible in fact if you got 35 cents a day you were doing real well. I don't know of anybody making a dollar a day there probably was but mostly 35 to 50 cents a day. And that was usually a lot of times was from daylight to dark.

Interviewer: So you did know of a lot of people who were long term unemployed during that time?

Carson: No it was a farm area and most every body was you know some people would go into a home and just stay and work for their board because there was just absolutely no money back then. I know kerosene was 15 cents a gallon I don't know what gas would have been then. But my father had a T-Model Ford and it was a good ole car but it would do a good 15 to 20 miles an hour.

Interviewer: What were your thoughts on President Roosevelt during that time?

Carson: Well we thought a lot of him he was we looked at him as a father really. So and I still feel like he did a good job.

Interviewer: Did you know of anybody that took advantage of the New Deal Programs?

Carson: No I don't I'm sure they did but of course I was very young during that era and I probably didn't pay that much attention to it. But there was just was not any jobs at all there was no cars on the road no nothing it was just dead.

Interviewer: Did you ever have an opportunity to listen to FDR's Fireside Chats on the radio?

Carson: Yes occasionally we had a radio and of course back then it was nothing like the radio today. But my brother had the radio we would listen to it but I can't remember much of what was said. It was a great excitement anyways to be able to hear a voice coming into the house. But it was there wasn't really much going on eat and sleep and work.

Interviewer: Did you feel that the situation did improve a little bit as time went on before the war?

Carson: No in the area that I was in it didn't change it was just the same ole routine up until the war started. Although before the war started we did move to Wiley Tennessee which is not far from Crossville. The main town was I believe north and the other was south but it was not that much difference.

Interviewer: Well before the war erupted were you aware of Hitler and Nazi Germany?

Carson: No no we didn't we didn't know anything about that my older son or brother rather might have but he never discussed it with us. Because the town close by Crossville Tennessee was like 100,000 miles away. So overseas would not have caught our attention.

Interviewer: When or how rather did you hear about the bombing of Pearl Harbor?

Carson: My brother had the radio on that night and we heard it I didn't really understand what it was all about. But I knew we had our country had been damaged bad because the announcer was real serious. So we listened to the whole thing that we could listen to it was a scary situation I remember that quite well. But the next morning I went and signed up for the Navy. They didn't hesitate too much to take me.

Interviewer: Just out of curiosity why the Navy why not the Army or Marine Core?

Carson: Well I've often wondered about that not being that close to water and everything. But I don't know there was just something about the Navy that attracted me that the other forces didn't. So I just went Navy but that's about it. I don't know why I didn't even consider the other I don't understand why I did choose the Navy but I did. I guess I must have seen one of the guys in town.

Interviewer: While you were joining did you ever dream that you would be stationed on a ship out in the middle of the ocean?

Carson: No no I never did I never did. I didn't know what was going to happen I just knew I was gone. And I was one of the first ones that went right after the war. There is some of them I believe there was some of them drafted I wasn't drafted. It was we felt now we were quite loyal to our country. When I

heard that one of the first things I thought was I have to go. So I went and I had little things that was holding me back probably but I think they just erased all of those and took me in. But it was a different world. I liked the Navy thought but I always stayed on the same ship the whole time I stayed on the same ship.

Interviewer: Where did you go for basic training?

Carson: San Diego and I think our training was three or four weeks something like that. It was so little time that we trained and they sent us over to Hawaii Pearl Harbor and of course the ships was all still burning over there. And it didn't take any time at all for us to get organized as far as the trip was concerned. But I was surprised when we pulled in Pearl Harbor things were still smoking. But the Captain we headed out to sea on the first trip and I don't know it was almost no time at all before to get there and went in just three or four weeks of training was what we got. But we come down through the channel that the Japanese had left you know and headed back to Japan but we got the word that we were going to that our destroyer was going to go out and fight the group of Japanese ships. But I was hoping so bad we would miss them but when I seen Pearl Harbor it was a horrible mess and I knew we wouldn't stand a chance. But we done alright.

Interviewer: When you went into Pear Harbor were you aware of the severity there that we didn't have hardly any big battleships or cruisers left?

Carson: Yeah it was brought to our attention. A lot of those were still in the harbor burning. And a lot of them just had to stay until they were done and it was somewhat of a mess. But it was just one big mess at that time but it our little destroyer group that went out and I can't even remember where we went. I think we just finally went on a little cruise around because we were looking mostly for submarines but the little destroyers were gutted by the submarines. Our main jobs later was we assisted a battleship we stayed along side a battleship and if a submarine fired a torpedo towards that ship our job was to go in between that ship and the torpedo and catch the torpedo. Thankfully we never had to do that. And also when the little destroyers were out exploring an area especially around the islands all over the Pacific and so everything worked out fairly well considering.

Interviewer: I guess I got a little bit ahead of myself but when you were in basic training did you qualify for any advanced training?

Carson: No there was nothing said about advanced training at all it was just what ship you were going to go in. I think our training the best I can remember was three weeks in San Diego and we headed out.

Interviewer: Did you feel that that training properly prepared you for what you were about to face?

Carson: No it was more confusion than it was I didn't know what it was all about. I was in the kid in the country so I could run that far easy but it was a little strange but it wasn't so strange when you really thought about it. And of course there was older guys on the ship that helped us a lot too. So I stayed on the same ship from the time we entered Pearl Harbor until we decommissioned in New York at the end of the war. Everybody said it was going to be razor blades I didn't buy any razor blades after that.

Interviewer: What was your specific job on the ship?

Carson: I was in the firing most of the time. Back then we used fuel not even diesel it was below diesel and we had to have a man on the upstairs or the second level of the fire room to watch the boiler all the time to keep the water level and we had a boiler on each side. And that was a 24 hour job and a lot of times we'd get 10 hour shifts in and some times we'd have five hours off and then come back. So were short on help at that time.

Interviewer: Roughly how many did it take to man that vessel?

Carson: Now I believe it was about 300 I'm not positive about that but I believe it was in the area of 300. But it wasn't the destroyer we had a lot more of the normal even at 300 because the destroyer is small. And our destroyer besides that our destroyer was not equipped very well with guns we didn't even have a 20 millimeter on there. And it tickled me we was back one time during WWII before it was over back to the states but our ship was damaged and we went back to the U.S. and then we got we learned more about it and also we got guns put on there that we didn't have. And the funny thing about it is we put the 20 millimeter and the Captain insisted that I put on that I stand on one of the 20 millimeters. And the 20 millimeter was like 100 feet up there was where the Captain was and out here was a raise up panel and I was up there on the gun. I told him I said, well I only weighted 120 pounds, and I told him I says I'm afraid to use that. And he said no your going to use that so I got up there and we was firing at another ship and then I was holding that down and a guy on each side was feeding it and my feet started dancing I started going that way. The Captain said get that man off there I was glad to get off because I couldn't keep my feet on there I should have had lead stone or something in my shoes but didn't ever ask me to go back on the 20 millimeter any more. But the other guns were mostly five millimeters five inch shells. Because that's the only until then we didn't have anything on there except five inch guns.

Interviewer: Did you happen to have any depth charges?

Carson: Yeah we had let's see about three on each side I believe there might have been more than that. No I guess there was more there could have been six on each side. Of course that was one of our main duties back then if a submarine came in was to go out and track them and throw torpedo deals out. But we did it some but not an awful lot as far as I know we never really sunk all that many we might have scared them off but none ever come to the top that I remember. But the destroyers they pretty well control themselves and they watch the battleship very carefully and stay their distance and everything and everything worked out pretty well.

Interviewer: Do you remember when your ship was commissioned? Was it an older ship?

Carson: No no I can't remember now let's see 38 sounds right 1938. Now I'm not positive on that either because there was no reason in fact then we also couldn't keep diaries either. We were told if we were caught with a diary they would shoot us with the fan tail of the shell. I didn't I had one but I hid it but I didn't copy any of the battles down because we were in every battle in the Pacific except one. When we was here in the United States in damage time when the ship had been damaged so bad in the battle.

Interviewer: So you saw action in pretty much all of the major battles in the Pacific?

Carson: Yeah we were in everyone. I don't know one little battle came when we headed back to the U.S. we only came back to the United States one time in the years that I was in I only got one 30 day leave to go back home and that was only because the ship was damaged. But let's see seems like I'm leaving out something I can't remember what it was. But anyway it was a world by itself there. Of course we went back towards the U.S. very very slow and we worried about we were by our self and if a submarine would have come in it would have took us out in a hurry but they were more interested in the Japanese over there than we were in the U.S. And by the way I don't want to get ahead of myself I want to tell you this when we were in Okinawa raiding Japanese at night the main land and we did it for quite a while and they the night that the day that they were going to drop the bomb over there they told us that night not to attack the land that night because it was fairly close to we was coming from the main, my brain went dead. But we were pretty well stationed in that area where did I say that was?

Interviewer: You said Okinawa.

Carson: Yeah because when we what I really meant to also tell you was the most disgusting thing that I ever did. When we went in there it was pretty well close to the end of the war we didn't stay one place too long we took over all those islands around there. And when we went into Okinawa it smelled awful and then I looked over the side and there was Japanese floating in the water with their insides hanging out. And of course I couldn't eat for three or four days, I got pretty hungry before I ate. But they told us I believe I said this before not to raid the main land the next night and we didn't. Of course that's when they dropped the bomb that was the end of the deal then.

Interviewer: During these battles what was your ships role? Was it usually just anti-submarine or did you play a support role in bombarding the islands?

Carson: We did everything we were no telling what we would do. At one time they were sending us from Guadalcanal through that area there they would send us in there at night. We knew what was going on they didn't think we did but we'd go in there so they could locate the shell the beach shelling out in the ships. So they would fire at us so they would tell them where to fire then. We were just out there as a target we never got hit out there but we done some dodging too.

Interviewer: Did you usually stay close to a battleship or another ship in the line or were you with destroyers?

Carson: No when we were out in the islands no they would send us out there so they would fire at us at the destroyer so the battleship or cruiser or whatever it was could knock them out. So I don't know whether that was in Saipan or I can't remember where that was. But we took notice that we had been used as targets because we wasn't in range to do any damage with our own guns. But we stayed out there and they were firing at us. But on shore I guess they did a little of course I never seen what they did.

Interviewer: Since you were on a destroyer and you had the capacity to wage war against a submarine pretty effectively were you more afraid of a submarine attack or running into a Japanese battleship or cruiser?

Carson: We were more afraid of planes because the Japanese had a lot of planes out there. And they I was standing on the deck on the fantail one day and was talking to a guy and I didn't notice anything. All of a sudden I seen a pop pop pop just like that and I said what was that. He said that's a plane firing at us. We headed the other direction. But planes would try to get a destroyer if they could knock them out they could go in there after the battleship. But now some people may disagree with me but that's the way we seen it. But we stayed in fact our job was to attract attention anyway to keep them off the battleships or cruisers. Sometimes we were on cruisers and sometimes we were on carriers we stuck with cruisers a lot because the cruisers would go more out and the battleships and the carriers would pretty well keep a straight line as long as they could.

Interviewer: Did you ever have to deal with any kamikazes or did you see any kamikazes attacks?

Carson: Yes we seen quite a few of them. They missed us a couple of times right long side of us they would come in and we'd be firing and they'd still come right straight on down. But the Captain was very good because he was maneuvering a lot so we didn't get close to being hit but they was close enough that it wasn't comfortable. I never will forget this one plane he was this Japanese plane was diving us real bad and we were traveling along about 20 knots probably. And this Japanese plane was coming along after us and he was just so slow he would gain a little but he was in bad shape he was really in bad shape. And just before he got to the ship he hit the water. We were not very unhappy.

Interviewer: How did that make you feel the first time you realized the Japanese were willing to engage in suicide attacks no knock your ship out?

Carson: Well we were taught that they were fanatics and they were. Because you know we tried to pick them up I know we tried to pick up one guy because we wanted information and I had a 20 millimeter and he was down in the water and I didn't want to kill him you know. For one thing I wanted them to pick him up so we could get information but he just kept firing he got a little closer and finally I had to shoot him. I was never really comfortable about that because he was so close but now I'll say one thing the Japanese were brave people to do what they did. Of course as the war went on they started losing more and more. Of course when we first went in there we just was nothing against the Japanese they were well organized and everything and we were not. We did the best we could but it wasn't what we needed to do.

Interviewer: Did you take part in the Battle of Coral Sea?

Carson: Oh yes we were in that. We were in every battle in the Pacific except I think it was one and that was because we had come to the U.S. to have our ship repaired where it had been damaged by gun fire. But I believe it was yeah that's the only one we were out of. We took every little island over in the Pacific that we went into. We took a lot of them out too but the Japanese I guess Guadalcanal was one of the toughest ones we went to. They really resisted on that that of course that was that was a big

island it was a chain too. And they did not want to lose that and of course we fought for a long long time there. But now we had a sister ship Jarvis and she got hit and so she pulled out and we wanted to go with her and help her out because she was our sister ship. But she got slightly out of the harbor before they sunk her.

Interviewer: You were in the Battle of Midway and they always say Midway was the turning point in the Pacific. How did you feel after that battle took place?

Carson: Well it was a big battle and it was a distant battle it was not as close as most of the battles. Of course we were excited that it did but still we felt that in a since that we were not doing our part. Of course there was a lot of ships out there and so we had a lot of attacks and so forth. It didn't mean really that much to us we knew what it was all about but it was not like when we had hand over hand like the other battles that we were in. And we were in I can't remember how many battles well I was in every battle in the Pacific except Pearl Harbor.

Interviewer: I know in the Battle of Laitia Gulf the Japanese felt their capital ship were able to catch the American fleet with their capital ships pretty much gone. And I know a lot of the destroyers had to practically make almost suicide runs against these battleship and cruisers. Did you happen to be one of those destroyers that got caught in that situation?

Carson: Well we attacked so many things so many times I can't remember too much about that but we were there we were always there. Because those destroyers they really fought because of course as I told you before our job if a battleship or cruiser or whatever we were beside of now we were out here a little distance from the battleship or cruiser or whatever. But we could survey the water and so forth with radar and make sure you know if the submarines were there or not. But we stayed we would dive in and out we didn't get too close to the battleships or so forth because there again they were afraid we would attract more fire.

Interviewer: Which battle did you suffer the damage that you spoke of earlier?

Carson: Pardon

Interviewer: Which battle did the destroyer you were on suffer the damage that you spoke about earlier where you had to go back to the states?

Carson: I don't know I don't I've forgotten I believe that was in Guadalcanal.

Interviewer: What happened?

Carson: Well it was they came in on us I remember quite well. I was on the bridge at that time watching out and I seen these destroyers coming around the corner it was at night of course it was usually at night. But I seen the ships coming around very close to the land but I kept telling them there coming around that corner nobody really paid that much attention. And then by the time they got in they started shooting and everybody took attention. That was to me that was one of the worst battles we had in Guadalcanal and the Japanese did not want to lose that at all. And it was a hard fight.

Interviewer: What kind of damage did your ship suffer during that battle?

Carson: Okay our ship the bowl was pretty well shot off and what we had to do was go very very slow. We went to another little French island over there I can't remember the name of it now and they put a little false valve wooden valve that we could use and we could still go very very slow. Now we came back to the U.S. by our self nobody escorted us in we weren't that important.

Interviewer: Were you aware of the air war that was being waged against Japan the closer and closer we got fire bombings that were taking place in Tokyo and the islands?

Carson: Would you repeat that?

Interviewer: Were you aware of the bombings that were taking place in Japan by the Air Core and the U.S. Naval aviation the closer and closer we got to Japan? Did you hear about the fire bombings we launched against Japan?

Carson: Yes we heard about that but most of the time I think we did get female eventually but most of the time we listened to the Captain. He'd call it out over the speaker but we just didn't the destroyer didn't have much at all although that wasn't a real old destroyer at the time. I use you seen the destroyer in the window there but it became obsolete in a hurry. But our sister ship was sunk too.

Interviewer: Do you know if your destroyer or sister ship were equipped with sonar or radar?

Carson: Do what?

Interviewer: Were you equipped with sonar or radar?

Carson: Oh yeah well see we got all of that stuff when we came back to the U.S.

Interviewer: Okay

Carson: Because we really had almost nothing to protect us out there. Just a five inch shell the shell weighed 54 pounds and I learned in a hurry because we had a chain to get into the gun. We'd pass that 54 pound shell all the way in to the last guy and one poor guy one day he went in and we'd get down on one level and the gun would be on the second level he'd put it in there. And it triggered fast and it just tore his hand off all the way up to his elbow. He was really bad and I'll tell you what we weren't really anxious to get in there and push those shells up that hill. I don't know what happened it never did that before or after either one but it did that one time. And there was a little flap on the barrel there since and he pushed it in there and shoved that door closed and it would automatically go up. But it went up before he got ready to close the door and the guy had his hands in there and he it was a mess.

Interviewer: Were you ever able to hear any news about what was going on in Europe?

Carson: Very very little very very little. And really I don't think we had too much interest in it because we had our hands full over there. But I just don't remember much at all about the war over there.

Interviewer: How often did you keep in touch with your folks back in the states?



Carson: Well I still have a lot of the letter you know I think it was photographed there and sent back to U.S. and they put it in a little mail there. I've got about 50 letters still and but that's there again we could not send out any information what so ever. If we did they just crossed it out. But we got quite a bit of mail but sometimes it would be weeks before we'd get mail so when it did come in we'd have a lot of mail. But I have a lot of letters and I gave them to my twin sons so that when I passed on but it was those are sort of history in themselves. Although we did not give any news away but we would get all around it.

Interviewer: What did you remember hearing about VE Day?

Carson: It was very very close to the end before I found out and as far as I know the ship was not really made an issue of it. Because sometimes we'd get good news the Captain would come over the line and you know tell everybody. I don't remember that coming over the line it might have.

Interviewer: Who was your Commanding Officer? I know your Captain was in charge of the boat but who was above the Captain what group were you with?

Carson: I don't know as far as group see I fought up there too because everybody did. A lot of time we had four hours on and four hours off and sometimes we didn't get the four hours. But I really don't too much about that because a lot of times I was in the fire room down there and that was not the safest place on the boat either. But I know a lot of times at night we would crawl up over the machine shop and go to sleep. Four or five of us would lay up there and go to sleep for four or five hours because the other time we were on four hours on and four hours off. It was what bothered me worse though we had one bad battle one night and I had to stay up there and I slept up there but I slept with five dead people up there on the above the machine shop. But I didn't really pay that much attention to it because I was so tired. And I never will forget one battle that we were in this one guy he was Biker was his name and he was he and I always seemed like we worked together. We were standing up there on the deck we were shooting and he I don't know what was happening we were shooting at the Japanese somewhere I don't know where. It just happened so fast but all of a sudden they came running up there and I was bloody all over and my friend that I've known for a long long time he was just shot all to pieces. And of course I didn't hesitate I just kept on doing what I was doing with the guns I was shooting. But they took him down of course he was dead before they got there then they came up after me and I told them I said no I'm alright. And he said no you're not your bleeding and I said no I'm not bleeding but my clothes were just as bloody they were all red. And finally they drug me until I got close to where we'd go down in the ship to the doctor's office but finally they decided I knew what I was talking about. But I didn't see any need in going down there. I believe that was the night too that the Japanese as I was telling you about a while ago they was out there we was trying to pick them up of course we tried to pick them up for information. But I didn't want to kill the guy and my friend didn't but he just kept shooting and he was getting closer and closer all the time so we had to shoot him I mean we had to. And most of our action like that was not very close or personal because you really was at a distance. But that is one thing that's always stuck out in my mind having to shoot him in the water and he was wanting us to kill him because he didn't want to give us information. Now the Japanese were very dedicated people and I

mean they fought. But we did too and if we hadn't the economy hadn't been so good here in the United States from building ships and so forth the Japanese would have taken the war I believe.

Interviewer: Was your ship ever successful in picking up any survivors any Japanese captives?

Carson: Oh yes well that's one of the things we were trying to do. Yes we would but they surely wouldn't let us now sometimes they would. Now we were in destroyers so if a plane was shot down they would send us out to pick them up and bring them in of course we would transfer them to a hospital ship the ones that we was taking care of. But it was very active I mean we didn't have a lot of leisure time.

Interviewer: Were you ever able to actually to meet or interact with the Japanese that you would take prisoner or did they pretty much disappear on the ship?

Carson: Yeah we didn't have any contact with them if they were alive they went into integration right away and but we didn't have anything to do with them. In fact I didn't want to have anything to do with them although I think they are the best friends we have in the world today. And I hated them until the day I left the Navy but they seems like they have been very loyal friends.

Interviewer: How did you feel from what you knew at that time how did you feel FDR handled the situation until his death?

Carson: I thought he did real well of course we were heavily trained in that direction too. And of course I was just a country boy and I it was easy to teach me because if I was told to believe something I usually believed it. But we thought Roosevelt was a great guy I believe he died when we was over there didn't he?

Interviewer: Yes

Carson: Yeah we were grieving over that I remember that. But we never had any our ship never had any ill feelings towards him at all I don't know about the other ships.

Interviewer: Do you remember hearing about his death over there?

Carson: Yes I remember it was sad for us on our ship. We almost felt like the war was over the we had lost because we depended a lot on him. Now what he did or whatever I don't know but it was something we well we had to worship somebody. I don't know what the other ships and so forth even thought about him I don't know. But we were taught I'll have to check my diary and see on that although I never put any actions in there and so forth I put dates and so forth where we were which I still value today because you know you can forget. Of course I still go on the computer into WWII you know you there is stuff in there too that will give you a lot of information.

Interviewer: Did you or anybody that you knew of did they keep up with some of the big names in the Pacific like MacArthur and Nimitz?

Carson: Of yes now MacArthur I remember quite well there was a line if we crossed we were in his territory and he could take us. We stayed away from there we didn't want to work for MacArthur. We

always thought he was a little above himself but he was something else. I never cared much for MacArthur I felt like he done dirty on the last there you know when they was changing command in Japan. I can't remember who was taking over but he was a little I always felt like he was conceited. We stayed away from his territory we didn't cross that line we didn't want to be in MacArthur's Navy.

Interviewer: You think there could have been a better choice for his position other than MacArthur?

Carson: Well I don't know I don't know he was seems like he was probably from what I understand of course I never seen him. But from what we understand he was doing a good job but we didn't see it. All we heard was most of the negative stuff about him of course he was always infringing on our rights.

Interviewer: When did you remember hearing about the atomic bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

Carson: Well we heard see we were as I told you before we were bombarding the coast of Japan from Okinawa and they told us we got word not to go that night. We had been going regularly and bombarding the coast and the next morning that came over to us that they had dropped the bomb. Of course that was the end of us because there was nothing else to do then. We didn't know we had funny feelings on that because here we were all of a sudden we were just limp there was nothing to do except go home.

Interviewer: Now considering the other option of invading Japan which was in the works do you feel that dropping the atomic bombs was necessary that that was the right thing to do?

Carson: I do because they would have still killed a lot more people if we hadn't have done that because the Japanese were vicious people. I don't feel that they are today but they were very very vicious and we also kept up with the soldiers on the islands that we would go into and a lot of times we would have a lot of them on the ship. And I always kept a bunch of c-rations for the guys and the men I didn't smoke but cigarettes was only a nickel a pack. And I would buy a carton you couldn't buy one or two so but I would put them in my locker until we picked up flyers or handicapped people that were shot down and I'd always make sure they had cigarettes.

Interviewer: When you were supporting like the invasion of Okinawa or whenever you were by an island where the soldiers and Marines were fighting on there what were your feelings? Did you feel a little helpless that you wanted to help those guys out?

Carson: Yes we did because sometimes we couldn't get in close enough to bombard but the Americans would be up quite a ways and if we fired we had the danger of killing our own soldiers. So a lot of times we had to in fact the destroyer is not as strong as a cruiser their range (tape skipped several words) other ships would mostly bombard rather than us in the area where the Americans had just went on. We usually assisted the men on shore. We'd go in and bombard the coast until the soldiers could get started and get over there.

Interviewer: Were you also a little thankful you were on that destroyer and not (tape skipped several words).

Carson: Well yes because for one thing it wasn't my type of fighting. There was not much places to hide on a destroyer.

Interviewer: When and how did you find out about the atomic bombs actually being the atomic bomb and not just some conventional weapon that we dropped on those two cities?

Carson: Well of course as I said before we were raiding the coast of Japan at night when close by and that's when we heard that they were doing what they were doing. There was nothing really simple would you ask your question again I don't think I

Interviewer: I was just asking of course they dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki but did you know when they told you what had happened did you know and the men that you served with did all of you understand the magnitude of this weapon how enormous this weapon was that it was a new technology that had been developed?

Carson: No I don't think we now I'm not sure about this but I don't think we even knew about the bomb we may have but I don't think we did. Because the way it came over to us it was a mass you might call it murder but I wouldn't call it that because we were fighting for rights. But it was a little puzzling we didn't really know anything about it but of course we were educated right away. I guess they wanted to get us educated before they sent us home. But that was laziest time in my life you know after that bomb dropped didn't do nothing.

Interviewer: Did anything change when they formally surrendered to MacArthur on VJ-Day?

Carson: Well it was routine with us but there again we were out of it there wasn't nothing to do. I'm surprised that the Captain didn't have a lot of problems out of us because we just didn't we didn't know what to do because we were used to a lot of times four hours and four

hours off for 24 hours. And sometimes even on our time we'd be sleeping close to a gun or something so.

Interviewer: What did you do though how did you end up coming back to the states? Did you do any occupational duty in Japan or did you come straight?

Carson: We came straight our ship was pretty well shot and so they might have thought that it may not make it but we went into New York. And of course that was the only time we was ever in New York. The comment was made they were going to make razor blades out of it so I don't know what they did with it but I wasn't interested in razor blades I didn't ever shave anyway.

Interviewer: How did you get to New York did you go around

Carson: We pulled up into the harbors there in New York.

Interviewer: Did you go through the Panama Canal?

Carson: No

Interviewer: Okay you went through the Straights of Magellan south of South America?

Carson: I guess so I'm not too clear on that because I'm a little I'm not really clear how we got back except I knew we were coming back when we got back. The first thing I knew we was in New York. Usually you was going this way and this way and this way and we just went straight. I didn't understand that.

Interviewer: Now I know that captains of cruisers and aircraft carriers and battleships and anything that rather large and made a nice target for a submarine they were required to weave in and out. Was the destroyer required to do that?

Carson: Yeah we did a lot of that. But that was one of the ways of detecting submarines and also protecting the ship that we were alongside. The battleship usually we didn't get a battleship we weren't that high up in the deal. We would get a cruiser or a carrier we stayed with carriers a lot.

Interviewer: And you said that your ship was decommissioned in New York. Did that end your enlistment therein New York?

Carson: Yeah that was it. It was in nothing flat. But you know I notice today when after that a lot of the guys were welcomed great welcomes and all of that stuff I don't remember any of that. I think I'll go back and get my share. But now I might have been on the wrong side of the building I don't know.

Interviewer: Were you ever promoted during your time in the service?

Carson: Well our rating there again there was very little transferring from one ship to another we just stayed. And I got up to second class and I would have made first class. I really wasn't interested in going for the rank position but I was pretty well happy with what I was. There was some of them went over me but of course they were more aggressive than I was. I just did my job.

Interviewer: Okay did you ever give any thought to making the military a career?

Carson: No not really for one thing I was a jeweler and I couldn't imagine myself doing jewelry work with the ship going this way and that way. So I don't think so I think it was over and as far as I was concerned I was ready to go back and start all over again. And it was pretty rough getting out I had to go to college for two years because there just wasn't any jobs so.

Interviewer: Well during your time in were you ever able to tell the difference in behaviors difference in how they carried themselves between people who were already in the military at the time between who were enlisted and who were drafted? Did they seem to act any differently?

Carson: No and of course now as far as the Navy is concerned I don't know of any drafting there may have been. Of course I was over there all the time I wasn't here and I guess they probably did draft some for the Navy. But I only knew I knew the volunteers seemed like we had enough but I guess your right they probably did have to draft some because we did have to have a lot bigger Navy.

Interviewer: Well this may seem like a silly question but how was the food on the destroyer? Was it palatable or was it pretty bad?

Carson: Well the food was alright until well I was sea sick when I first went in for quite a while I remember going into Sidney Australia and they had turkey and I liked it. But all of a sudden I got sea sick and I went to the mess hall five times and ate one right after the other and went right up on the ship and vomited it up. But after that I was okay I didn't get sea sick no more. But yeah Australia was we were in Australia a lot. They were very very good to us they would come to our ship and ask us for so many people to go with them at night. The women the older women would come and take us to dinner and to their house and so forth. They were really nice I never met a nicer people than they were in Australia now we were in there a lot. But now we were protecting them to you know so they really appreciated us because without us they would have taken Australia that's what I believe anyway.

Interviewer: Were you fortunate enough to not have lost any family members in this war? Or were you the only one serving in your family?

Carson: In my family? Well I lost my half-brother but he was in Germany or France one I can't remember which. No I'm wrong about that he was there something's wrong about that I don't know what it was but I seen him after the war. His father was killed in the first World War yeah he was killed over there in France. And my brother he was in he spent most of the time in my half-brother in France fighting there. He didn't get killed in that but he was injured but he was never the same.

Interviewer: The first time you were involved in a battle or the first time you had actually saw somebody who had been injured or killed were you surprised by the way you acted or behaved?

Carson: No we were under so much pressure we just did what we were told to do. And a lot of time we would be as bloody as we could be but it still didn't bother us that much we just went on and done what we were supposed to do because we were all working an emergency type situation. We had a lot of that to do to carry the people from one side to the other when they was shot we'd have to take them off of the deck. And one of my best friends his name was Barker he was he was I can't remember how he was killed but he was a close friend of mine. They buried him at sea now I can't be sure of this but I think they just put a 54 pound shell to his body and threw him over the side. Now you see the destroyers did not have the room for too much people other than what was on there. But when they the rule was if they had the time they would put them in they would sew them up in canvas then the next day they would just roll them out one of the customary things and just let them sink. They'd put some type of weight like a 54 pound shell that would pull them down below.

Interviewer: Well during your time in the Pacific were you able to get a grasp of the magnitude of the entire war? Did you ever feel like you were ever involved in humanities greatest was during that time?

Carson: No not really. I always felt like we were sent there to do a job and we were doing it. That's all I could really think too much about as far as I didn't get into the future or anything like that. I just figured we were fighting for our lives for our country. But and that was a fulltime job too.

Interviewer: Throughout the time did your boat did your destroyer suffer many casualties or did you consider yourself pretty lucky?

Carson: Oh yes we were all lucky on there. I remember one time I don't think I told you this but another guy and me was standing on the fan tail of the ship and we was leaning over the rail like that and the water started pecking five or six feet from us. And there was a plane up over head shooting right down out us. I think we made a move. But I never had came that close that I could see that I was being shot at. I imagine they was getting pretty close to us. Now all the battles we had gosh I don't know we were in every battle in the Pacific except for one. Because destroyers were very very important people because they could go in places and do things that the bigger ships couldn't do.

Interviewer: Did you feel that Harry S. Truman did an adequate job do you feel that he made the right decisions and carried on FDRs operations of the war?

Carson: Well yes I there again I didn't I just had confidence in our government and I didn't think too much about it what they were doing that they were doing it. I felt like everything was going as it should. The only one I objected to that was a higher ladder was MacArthur. Most sailors didn't care for him. But I guess she was great man but I never knew that much about him but he was a smart alec. Of course he had the rank to be I wouldn't want to desize him or anything.

Interviewer: Well that's about all the questions I have for you. If there's anything you would like to add or anything you'd like to say you may do so.

Carson: Well I don't the only thing I can say is this, of course I may be wrong about this, we fought the Japanese real heavy but I feel like today they are probably one of our best friends. Of course I could be wrong and of course I don't keep up with it that much but I do follow it to some degree. But I think well at least they've got to be the best friend we've got in that area.

Interviewer: Alright with that I think you very greatly for your time and Austin Peay is very appreciative in you sharing your experiences with us.