

Harry Foster

Interviewer: Okay I'm going state your name please:

Foster: My name is Harry D. Foster.

Interviewer: And what's your date of birth?

Foster: My date of birth was April 29, 1919.

Interviewer: And did you enlist in the service or were you drafted?

Foster: I volunteered for the service.

Interviewer: When was that?

Foster: Early 40s

Interviewer: That was before Pearl Harbor?

Foster: Yes

Interviewer: Why did you why did you enlist at that point?

Foster: Well I enlisted because at that time they said you could serve a year get out and get the service behind you said wed we back in a year so I volunteered.

Interviewer: Where did you get your basic training?

Foster: I got my basic training in Camp Wheeler, Georgia.

Interviewer: Okay after that where did you go?

Foster: After that we went to Unix permanent Unix Company M 103rd infantry division 43 division.

Interviewer: Is that what you served in throughout the war?

Foster: I beg your pardon.

Interviewer: Is that what you served in throughout the war Company M?

Foster: Well I served with Company M I guess about 2 years I think I don't know exactly.

Interviewer: After you left Georgia did you go to some other post in the United States or

Foster: Well when we left Georgia we did a lot of maneuvering we had we did a lot of maneuvering Georgia and Carolinas and places in Florida.

Interviewer: When did you go overseas?

Foster: We went to we went to the South Pacific to Gaudi Canal, New Georgia Island, Bunda Airport, Latte, Southern Philippians.

Interviewer: Okay where what port did you leave from when you went to Gaudi Canal? Someplace on the West Coast I presume.

Foster: We went to Gaudi Canal. Where did we leave from?

Interviewer: Yeh

Foster: We left from we went to New Zealand and set up for combat and we left New Zealand and went to New Calibella from New Calibella we went to Gaudi Canal.

Interviewer: What port did you leave from in the United States though?

Foster: From the United States?

Interviewer: Yes

Foster: Fort Orr, California.

Interviewer: Okay what kind of training did you take to prepare for Gaudi Canal? Did you practice amphibious landing?

Foster: We had maneuvers all simulated we simulated 88 millimeter mortars, heavy machine guns.

Interviewer: Did you practice any amphibious landing?

Foster: We didn't practice they didn't have amphibious landing.

Interviewer: Okay so when you went to Gaudi Canal did you take part in an amphibious landing or not?

Foster: An amphibious landing?

Interviewer: Yes

Foster: Yes it was we boarded LCIs I believe is a landing ship a small landing ship.

Interviewer: And I believe you've told me in the past that you when you got off of the LCI you were in about 20 feet of water and you couldn't swim is that right?

Foster: We got into water way over our head but the thing that interested me the most I didn't know how to swim but I learned quick.

Interviewer: So you swam to dry land hay?

Foster: Yeh I felt better when I got on dry land even though it was infested with the enemy.

Interviewer: When you got onto dry land were you under fire or were they holding back?

Foster: Well we got on dry land we started they told us what was out there and what they expected to be out there and we started digging holes setting up the perimeter digging fox holes.

Interviewer: Yeh were you what kind of weapon did you operate were you a machine gunner or mortar man or a rifleman or

Foster: We were the heavy weapons platoon we had 81 mille mortars and 50 caliber machine guns.

Interviewer: Was Gaudi Canal a hard fight or did they collapse pretty quickly or what?

Foster: Gaudi canal was the main point for the Japanese they get out there it was a big place and easy to get to and they had set up they had I think they call them pill boxes but they were everywhere and you didn't know it until you run up on them.

Interviewer: After Gaudi Canal where did you go?

Foster: After Gaudi Canal we went to Russell Island and we set a perimeter from 90 millimeter antiaircraft.

Interviewer: Okay were you attacked by Japanese planes while you were over there?

Foster: Yes on Russell Island we were attacked by Japanese planes they were called Zeros the Rising Sun. And they could fly low and maneuverability was great and they could be on you before you knew it and they were close enough that you could see the pilot sitting in the seat.

Interviewer: Did they drop bombs or did they fire machine guns?

Foster: They were firing we were firing 50 caliber machine guns at them and I don't know for sure but I believe they were firing something like 20 millimeters. I don't really know.

Interviewer: Okay after Russell Island then

Foster: After Russell Island we went to Bunda Airport.

Interviewer: Munda Airport?

Foster: Bunda Airport

Interviewer: Bunda was that on another island out there?

Foster: I really can't recall I know we set a perimeter around the airport so they could deliver supplies or whatever.

Interviewer: You say you went to the Philippians as well Latte?

Foster: After Bunda Airport we went to Southern Luzon I think it was the southern tip of the Philippians.

Interviewer: Was that

Foster: I think it was Latte.

Interviewer: Latte okay. Was that a pretty tough battle or

Foster: Well we were still cleaning up resisting Itabe and our job was to ease on up and try out best to get rid of them.

Interviewer: So the initial combat was done by somebody else and ya'll were moping up is that what ya'll were doing?

Foster: Excuse me?

Interviewer: Say the initial fighting was done by somebody else and ya'll were mopping up is that what you're saying?

Foster: Yeh

Interviewer: Okay well after Latte then where did you go?

Foster: I think from Latte we went to I might have it mixed up it was either Latte first then Mindanao or Mindanao first then Latte cause we went to Latte and Mindanao.

Interviewer: Now the main island that has the city of Manila on it is that Luzon?

Foster: I believe it was.

Interviewer: Did you ever go there?

Foster: I don't think so.

Interviewer: You never did to go Manila then? You never went to Manila?

Foster: No I didn't.

Interviewer: Okay well after the Philippians did you go elsewhere go to some other island or something?

Foster: Well after the Philippians we come on up to Honolulu and from there we come home.

Interviewer: Okay so after the Philippians you were mustard out then?

Foster: Yes

Interviewer: You didn't persist or go to Okinawa or any of those places?

Foster: No we didn't.

Interviewer: Okay

Foster: No we didn't at that time I had enough points to get out and they excused me and I left for the United States.

Interviewer: After you got out the war continued what for another year or so?

Foster: I got out I got out July 13, 1945 but I believe I forget when the arms deal was signed but it might have been after I got out I don't remember.

Interviewer: I think maybe it was September of 1945 so you served almost to the end I guess.

Foster: Yes

Interviewer: Since then have you maintained any contact with people that you met in the service friends of your or not?

Foster: Yes we maintain contact through from February 1945 to I believe it was in the late 90s that we were in contact with a gentleman from the 43rd division he spent all his time in the outfit. But he kept in touch I've heard from quite a few of them in the whole outfit.

Interviewer: Have ya'll ever had reunions or anything like that?

Foster: they had reunions but we had sickness in the family and sometimes it was just impossible to attend.

Interviewer: What rank did you end up as? What rank did you end up with?

Foster: I thought I think I wound up with a T2.

Interviewer: Would that be a Private First Class or First Sargent or what?

Foster: That was a little different it wasn't really the rating I had then it was in the kitchen it was the second cook. But they needed me worse in the field than they did in the kitchen.

Interviewer: Okay who was you're who were your commanding officers do you recall their names?

Foster: My communing officer was Lieutnenat Barnes.

Interviewer: Was he a pretty good officer?

Foster: He was great.

Interviewer: Real good huh.

Foster: He was nice.

Interviewer: What would you say is the most dangerous situation you ever got in during that time?

Foster: Well you know when you're in the service like that and you were facing a hostile force you have bad days you have good days. But I believe the worst situation when I got off the landing craft and I got into water over my head I could have been gone then. Be drowned in service instead of shot in service.

Interviewer: So that very in other words at the very first

Foster: That was about the worst experience I had in a long time.

Interviewer: The very first day you were in battle then was the worst day because you thought you were going to drowned.

Foster: Well see when you were on the ground and in a hole you could kindly get around but out there in the water you couldn't do no good.

Interviewer: When you got in the water did your ammunition and your riffle and everything get wet?

Foster: Oh everything got wet my field pack, combat boots, M1 riffle, bands of ammunition it all went under.

Interviewer: Well would your ammunition fire?

Foster: I don't know how I could have shot if need be.

Interviewer: Would your ammunition fire after it got wet like that?

Foster: They might.

Interviewer: After you got out of the service what did you do next?

Foster: When I got back to the states?

Interviewer: Yes

Foster: Well we went down in Georgia and got our discharge.

Interviewer: Okay

Foster: I got discharged on the 13th day of July 1945.

Interviewer: And then you went back home?

Foster: Went back home yes.

Interviewer: And you got married right quick didn't you?

Foster: Got married got home on the 13th got married on the 21st of July 1945 and went to work July 31, 1945. Got it in reverse but it worked.

Interviewer: Where did you go to work?

Foster: I started working for South Central Bell Telephone Company one of the greatest concerns around.

Interviewer: Okay and you stayed with them for what 40 years?

Foster: I worked for them for 32 years but my wife worked for them almost 40. The only job I ever had that didn't seem like work.

Interviewer: Did you have some pretty close friends that got killed or badly wounded during those years?

Foster: I beg your pardon.

Interviewer: Did you have some close friends that got killed or badly wounded?

Foster: Well I had I had two or three close friends that last their lives out of the 31st division it was rough. I was just lucky.

Interviewer: When you were actually fighting could you see the enemy or were they

Foster: Why yeh you could see them they were within they were within 50 yards of you. You could see them moving around stealing your rations and all that kind of stuff.

Interviewer: So it was not a case where they were in the jungle and you really couldn't see them you could see them well?

Foster: You were well aware that they were there.

Interviewer: Is there anything else you want to comment make any comment about?

Foster: Well about the only thing I can say the experience was tremendous. I wouldn't care to do it again but back then I thought that was our patriotic duty and that's what I went in there for. And I didn't know I had like today people think they have a choice I didn't think I had any choice but to do what I was supposed to do.

Interviewer: Okay I believe that will I think that covers your experience pretty well and we'll just call it an end. Thank you