

Wisconsin Veterans Museum  
Research Center

Transcript of an  
Oral History Interview with  
WALTON WALLACE  
Artillery and Infantry, Marines, World War II  
1999

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**Wallace, Walton.** Oral History Interview, 1999.

Master Copy: 1 video recording (ca. 60 min.); ½ inch, color.

User Copy: 1 audio cassette (ca. 60 min.); analog, 1 7/8 ips, mono.

**Abstract:**

Wallace, a Madison (Wisconsin) native, discusses his World War II service with the Marines in the Pacific. He talks about enlisting in the Marines, boot camp at Camp Elliott (California), training to fire a "pack howitzer," and transfer to Pago Pago Island (American Samoa) as a defense battalion for the island. Wallace describes the fighting at Guadalcanal Island, night raids by a plane nicknamed "Washing Machine Charlie," being hit with shrapnel and evacuated to New Hebrides Island, and returning to his unit at Saipan. After being reassigned to the 5th Marine Division, he details the landing at Iwo Jima, problems with the beach terrain, lack of cover for troops on the island, and feeling when they received hot food at the front. Wallace talks about rest and relaxation in Hawaii including working as a bartender at the officer's club, giving radio reports, and the food in Hawaii. Volunteering to fight on Okinawa, Wallace comments on seeing people he served with at Guadalcanal, reassignment to artillery, brief stay at Sasebo (Japan), and boat ride home. He touches upon use of the GI Bill and membership in the Disabled American Veterans.

**Biographical Sketch:**

Walton Wallace was born in 1922 in Madison (Wisconsin) and enlisted in the marines in 1941. He served in the Pacific Theater in World War II and saw combat in Guadalcanal. Wallace was wounded in combat and suffered from malaria. After the war, Wallace returned to Madison and bought a house with his wife. He worked in the laundry business and was employed by the Veterans Hospital for many years.

Interviewed by James McIntosh, 1999

Transcribed by Zachary Masters, 2011

Reviewed and corrected by Amanda Axel, 2012

## **Interview Transcript:**

- McIntosh: Alright. We're talking to Walt Wallace. It's the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, 1999. And where were you born, Wally?
- Wallace: I was born right here in Madison, Wisconsin.
- McIntosh: I see. And that was in 1922, right?
- Wallace: Yes.
- McIntosh: And you entered military service when?
- Wallace: July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1941.
- McIntosh: Where'd ya go?
- Wallace: I went to San Diego, California.
- McIntosh: And what unit were you in?
- Wallace: After I went through boot camp there, I came out and I got in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division.
- McIntosh: 2<sup>nd</sup> Division?
- Wallace: Yes. Mhm.
- McIntosh: And did you get any more training in the United States?
- Wallace: Ah yes, we got our training at Camp Elliott and Camp Pendleton.
- McIntosh: I see. Did they train you for any specific duty or were you just a rifleman?
- Wallace: I was in artillery when I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division.
- McIntosh: I see. Heavy artillery or what type?
- Wallace: Heavy artillery.
- McIntosh: What did you shoot?
- Wallace: The first time we went overseas, we shot 75[mm] cannons, and then we were issued 75[mm] pack howitzers.
- McIntosh: What was the difference in those two guns?

Wallace: Well, the only thing I can think of—one was smaller than the other one. Because your cannons were up about like this, just about like the thing you got down downstairs.

McIntosh: I see. Okay.

Wallace: And they had wagon wheels on ‘em, great big wagon wheels.

McIntosh: Pulled by horse or by jeep?

Wallace: No, we lugged ‘em around ourselves.

McIntosh: Oh my goodness. Two guys could pull that?

Wallace: Ah, well, they took about four guys.

McIntosh: Rubber tired wheels? Rubber tires on the wheels?

Wallace: Ah, no. The pack howitzers had rubber tires, but, uh, the 75[mm] cannons had steel tires.

McIntosh: Both seventy-five millimeter, but you said one was bigger then the other?

Wallace: Yeah, they were 75s.

McIntosh: And the howitzer, how’d that look like?

Wallace: Well, it had bloom tires on it, rubber bloom tires, and stood about this high, and every time you fired it, it would jump. Just like that, yeah. Yeah, we did, we knew that you would bounce around, kinda, the bloom tires.

McIntosh: Was the range a lot different between the two guns?

Wallace: No, they were the same.

McIntosh: So you were generally shooting at what distance, then?

Wallace: Ah, well we could shoot for a long range. It went by charges, though; we put different charges in there. See, we had different charges in bags.

McIntosh: But, generally what distance were you shooting ‘em, half a mile?

Wallace: Oh, it was farther than that. It’d be a mile, sometime two miles, something like that, that’s what it’d be. It’s pretty hard to say because we shot different ranges.

McIntosh: Did you use any of those for up close work?

Wallace: Uh, not very seldom, not very seldom because it would do an awful lot of damage. We let the machine guns and that take care of the first hundred yards.

McIntosh: So, where did you go from that training camp in Pendleton?

Wallace: Ah, from Camp Pendleton, after war was declared, we went to American Samoa Islands, Pago Pago, Samoa, for our advanced training there.

McIntosh: What was different about your training there, Wally?

Wallace: Ah, well, we had to take the 75[mm], and we had to take it up a mountain, and we took it up there to look over the beaches, and so on like that. And we'd go up in this mountain all the time and trained up there, train for firing and everything; and we'd fire out over the ocean, ya know, at different times. Because our artillery men, well, they trained in one spot, just about, they don't move around like the other guys do, they train in one spot. And then after that, we got on board ship, and we didn't know until we got halfway there, that we was gonna go to Guadalcanal. And then when we got to Guadalcanal, well, we went in there, and that's when we got our pack howitzers. We got our pack howitzers there because 75[mm] cannons were left back in the Samoa Islands on the mountain top. So we got our 75[mm] pack howitzers, and we were really glad to get them because we got tired of pulling that there other thing around. And after we got, we fought on there, and after we got secured, we went back in the river Acheron[?], and we was getting ready to go to New Zealand, and that's when I was on guard duty, and that's when I got wounded.

McIntosh: How did that happen, tell me how that happened.

Wallace: Okay, I tell you how that happened. We have a plane that's flying overhead and they're called "Washing Machine Charlie," and he decided one night he's gonna drop a bomb. And so, he dropped a few bombs, and one exploded in the tree just over me, and I got my back all sprayed with shrapnel. And I hollered out and I warned the rest of 'em, and the next thing I knew I was being loaded on a jeep, and I was taken to the field hospital, and they took most of the shrapnel out. Then from there, they loaded me on aboard a ship and took me to New Hebrides Island [an island group in the South Pacific], and I stayed there for about a month. And then they let me go, and then I had to find my way back myself to my unit.

McIntosh: How could you find your way back?

Wallace: I hitchhiked, hitchhiked aboard planes and jeeps—

McIntosh: You were left to your own devices?

Wallace: Yeah.

McIntosh: What was your rank then?

Wallace: My rank was, uh, Private First Class.

McIntosh: PFC?

Wallace: Yeah.

McIntosh: I'm surprised they would let an enlisted man of such low [Walt laughs] level to be on their own. Usually they don't even let you breathe without an order.

Wallace: Yeah, I know it, but, uh—

McIntosh: Oh, that is strange.

Wallace: [Laughs] That is. So we hitchhiked. I hitchhiked on broad, like a jeeps, and, trucks, and planes, and boats to get over to my unit.

McIntosh: How long did that take?

Wallace: Boy, I couldn't say, I didn't even pay attention to how long it took.

McIntosh: [Inaudible] couple weeks?

Wallace: Oh, about couple of weeks, yeah, because it takes time. Well, in the mean time, I rested in an Army place. I'm a Marine Corps guy, but I rested in an Army place, and, uh, they let me rest there; and then they says, "While you're sitting around, do you wanna work in the post office?" I says, "Sure." I was getting bored sitting around, and so I worked in the post office for awhile; then I told 'em I was tired of that and that I was gonna get back to my unit. So I got back to my unit, and when I got back to my unit, then we went to the island of Saipan. We went to the island of Saipan, and we fought on Saipan.

McIntosh: Did you make the original landing there?

Wallace: No, we were already on that island, they were already on that island. And so I got there, and we fought there, and after we got that island

secure, then I got a thirty day pass to go home to rest up my back; and, well, I was kinda happy on that. [laughs] So I went back home there, and everything else, and boy, I had a good time. And then I reported back to Camp Pendleton, and when I got back to Camp Pendleton, I was—just one day-- I wanted to get in the 4<sup>th</sup> Division, and I just missed it by one day, and so I had to end up getting in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, and so I got in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, and see, that's how I got in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division there.

McIntosh: Why did you want to get in the 4<sup>th</sup> Division?

Wallace: Uh, I heard it was pretty good. I had a lot of good buddies in there and everything, so I wanted to get in there. And when I got in the 5<sup>th</sup> Division I didn't know anybody in there. But it don't take long to get acquainted, and—

McIntosh: So where were they?

Wallace: They were on Camp Pendleton there, in Camp Pendleton. So, we trained in Camp Pendleton, and so on like that. And—

McIntosh: Still with that howitzer?

Wallace: No. No, it was a different unit—

McIntosh: Now what did they have ya doing?

Wallace: Well, I was infantry then.

McIntosh: Oh, back to being a rifleman.

Wallace: Yeah, and then we trained there for awhile, and then, we went and got aboard ship, and we didn't know until we got halfway there, that we was going to Hawaii; there was an advanced training base.

McIntosh: You went in on the Atlantic coast and went through the Panama Canal and went over to Hawaii?

Wallace: No.

McIntosh: Oh, no. You're on the West Coast.

Wallace: Yeah. We're on Camp Pendleton, California.

McIntosh: Oh, I see.

Wallace: And then we got on board there, and we just went right across the Pacific there, and going to Hawaii. Hawaiian Island was a big island. And so we trained there for quite awhile. And then the next we knew, we was gonna get aboard ship, and we didn't know until we was halfway there that we was headed for the Iwo Jima. And so then the next thing we knew, before long, we had to hit the sack, and we get up the next morning, and there was the island Iwo Jima there. And you could see the airplanes around there, and the ships, and everything, that they were bombing and shooting up Iwo Jima and everything else. But that place was pretty well fortified, boy.

McIntosh: What was the activity when you got there? They just made the landing or the day before, or after, or what?

Wallace: Ah, no, nobody made landing yet.

McIntosh: Oh, your [inaudible] made landing when you were gone.

Wallace: No one. No, we was all on board ship there, and nobody's made landing, and the battleships, and the planes, and everything, they were pounding, getting the soften up, so when we got in there. And we could stand on deck there, we could watch 'em blow all this stuff, and everything else. And boy, we was watching 'em, and boy, they were really pounding that place. And finally, we got the order over the side. And they get in their LSGs, and so on like that, to make sure, and so the next thing we knew, we was climbing down that rope ladder, and everything, and getting down there.

McIntosh: What'd you get on, landing barge?

Wallace: Yep, mhm.

McIntosh: How many in the barge, roughly? Fifty, thirty?

Wallace: Well, let's say about fifty, it's pretty close to that. We're packed in there like a bunch of sardines, anyhow, but I'm telling ya, it was scary, it was really scary. At first, wouldn't think so, but boy, I was scared going in there. And next thing we knew, we was in there, and boy I'm telling ya, they just let the front end down, and we was running. And it was hard going because this hill was all volcano ash, ya know, sandy volcano ash—yeah, it was black like—and you'd try to get up there, and you'd get up there, you'd slide down, you'd get up there, and you'd slide down again, and you couldn't even hardly get a foothold in that or anything; but there wasn't hardly anything going on right away, and so we was trying to advance, and then all at once—they was waiting for a lot of us to get in

there—and then all at once they opened up, and it was worse than the 4<sup>th</sup> of July then.

McIntosh: Mortars and machine guns, both?

Wallace: Yeah, machine guns, quite a bit of machine guns fire; 'cause, see, they was in these pillboxes, these pillboxes and everything, and they was sitting in there, and it was mostly machine guns, and that's what done the damage, and everything. And just about the only way you can get 'em outta there is, ya know, go in there with a flamethrowers, flamethrowers and hand grenades.

McIntosh: Yeah, but, getting close enough to use those things was difficult.

Wallace: Yeah it was, because you had to stand up, see, in order to use 'em you had to stand up; and well, when you stood up there you was a target then, and that's what they was waiting for. But when they had flamethrowers, and everything, we had a bunch—there would be side guards guarding this flamethrower guy, and so on like that; but, uh, it was terrible. Then finally after about thirty-six days, then we got that pretty well.

McIntosh: How long did it take you to get inland, so you had some protection—

Wallace: Oh, it took—

McIntosh: An hour?

Wallace: Uh, no, it took longer than an hour.

McIntosh: From the time you got off the landing craft?

Wallace: I wanna say closer to two hours myself, trying to get in there, work your way in there. But once we got in there, it seemed like we could, ya know, get along a lot better. You can make progress then. It was hard making process, and everything else, because—

McIntosh: You were less exposed, is that correct?

Wallace: Uh, no, you're still in the open air, but see, the beach went up like this, it went up kinda at a slope, but when you got there, it kinda leveled off like, and you could make, uh, yeah, you could move a little better. But still, that sandy stuff just was, it was hot, and everything else, hot, and, oh, it just burnt out the soldiers shoes, and everything else; but it was no picnic, it was terrible, is what it was. And, uh, \_\_\_\_\_[?] went days, and days, and days in holding them; but boy, you could even smell yourself and everything else, and you didn't have time to do this, and you didn't have

time to do that, or anything else, and you were tired, and you're exhausted and everything else.

McIntosh: Where did you stop? When you went in that day, where did you stop; what kinda place, some cover or something? You couldn't stop right out in the open.

Wallace: No, but that's what you done, stop out in the open. That's all you done is hit the deck, and you just lay flat down, just flat and—

McIntosh: Wait till it was dark any?

Wallace: Ah, no, you wouldn't wait. You'd wait from the command from your section leader to give ya the okay to move on. See, that's what it was, you waited for commands all the time, yeah, you had a section leader there and he would give ya the orders, he was the head man, he'd give ya orders. "Move on, hit the deck, stay there till I tell ya to move." And you had to do the same thing there ya done back in the States.

McIntosh: So how far inland did you get in the first day?

Wallace: I'd say about three or four miles, something like that, the first day.

McIntosh: Were you constantly exposed?

Wallace: Uh, yeah. Yeah, you was constantly exposed there, yeah, because see—

McIntosh: How about when you got closer to the mountain, you had some protection?

Wallace: Yeah, well, in the mountain, no, you didn't; you didn't have that much protection. There was some shrubbery around there, where the mountains was, there was some shrubbery, but still yet, there wasn't enough to hide ya in there. But after you got quite a ways in, there was a few like boulders, and so on like that, but, uh, not too awfully much, though.

McIntosh: So, you got away from the constant attack from the Japanese—

Wallace: Yeah, the beach was the worst, that's what it was—

McIntosh: So, you got inland, there wasn't as constant machine gun fire.

Wallace: Uh, there was a lot of machine gun fire, yeah. But see, you could mostly get out of the way of it. Yeah, you could get out of the way of it a lot better than you could on that beach; that beach is the worst, it's like that on every island, the worst is—

McIntosh: So, when did ya get some water and some food?

Wallace: Well, uh, not for quite awhile. Of course, when ya drive 'em in, and you got a lot of area that we claimed was ours because we drove 'em from that area, then they'll get some warm food up there, and everything else, because you don't have any enemy back of the back of the lines. They all up there in the front, and they'll get warm food up there if they possibly can. And I say maybe that was, oh, I'd say maybe three or four days after that. See as what you're doing, you're not starving because you're carrying rations all the time in your pack, and then you got water in your canteen so unlike; water was just about the worst problem, water was.

McIntosh: Getting enough cause it's so hot and all.

Wallace: Yeah, see water was the worst problem.

McIntosh: Ain't no place to replace that.

Wallace: No. Once in awhile there will be a little stream or something like that, and then you'll reach down, and you'd fill your canteen but you don't drink until you get iodine pills like, and then you drop those in the canteen, and they're supposed to settle any dirt, or germs, or anything to the bottom; then you'll drink it.

McIntosh: Did the guys pick up canteens of the guys who were killed on the beach to get their water supply?

Wallace: They probably did, I wouldn't recall that, though.

McIntosh: Okay, alright. So you stay put there after the initial push for how long before you moved further inland?

Wallace: Well, I can't say, the only thing is we just kept right on going, we just kept right on going.

McIntosh: Did you climb that mountain?

Wallace: No. No, I didn't climb it.

McIntosh: That's good; that's pretty steep.

Wallace: [Laughs] Yeah, I was on the bottom of that though. I was on the bottom of that, yeah, when they raised the flag and all that stuff. But I didn't climb it though.

McIntosh: So after you secured the Iwo Jima, how many men of your platoon were left?

Wallace: Uh, well, there wasn't too many. I couldn't say myself. Mm, the only thing that I can say is there was quite a few of us that came back. There was quite a few us that came back though. I know all of 'em didn't, but quite of 'em; I lost some best friends and everything there, too. Of course, you can't hardly cry over that; you feel bad, but you can't cry over it, or anything like that. Well, then after we got that secured, and everything else, we boarded ship, and we came back for our mighty long rest back to, uh, Hawaiian islands.

McIntosh: You left there and then the Army took your place.

Wallace: Yep, yeah, they took our place for occupational duty.

McIntosh: Then they took ya and sent ya back where did you say?

Wallace: We come back to the big island—

McIntosh: Hawaii.

Wallace: Yeah, Hawaii there. And we didn't have to do anything because it was all our time, they says, "You can do whatever you wanna." And we done that for just a couple weeks, whatever we wanted to do.

McIntosh: Is there any bars to go to?

Wallace: Uh, well, [laughs] you got me operate one. I operated a bar.

McIntosh: In the city on the island?

Wallace: Just on the island, yeah; Camp Traws[?] is what they call her, Camp Traw[?].

McIntosh: And that was an enlisted man's bar?

Wallace: Yeah.

McIntosh: Just for Marines?

Wallace: And officers wanted to come to it, they could come to it, too.

McIntosh: Was it just Marines or any service?

Wallace: No, just Marines.

McIntosh: So, you became a bartender now?

Wallace: Yeah, they ask me if I wanted to do it, and I says, “Sure, I’ll take it over,” [laughs] because I knew right well I was assured some beer there. Yeah, it was a lot of fun. And one of the [inaudible] had me doing that, and I run a radio station, too. Well, it wasn’t exactly it, ya know, a big outfit like they got in Madison here, but it was something that I could do in the morning, ya know. I had a certain themes, and everything in the morning, and I’d try to read off the weather, and everything else. [laughs]

McIntosh: Play some music.

Wallace: Play some music, and everything, and then—

James Did that take you long to learn that?

Wallace: No, it didn’t take me long, it didn’t take me long at all. It was a lot of fun. I really and truly enjoyed it, and still I was getting my rest too, and everything else.

McIntosh: And not getting shot at.

Wallace: Not getting shot at, that was the main thing.

McIntosh: They have good food when you got back to Hawaii?

Wallace: Oh, we had delicious food.

McIntosh: Did they make extra special efforts to give you good food then?

Wallace: They did. It was wonderful food. Boy, I’m telling ya, it was better food then we ever did have. And, uh—

McIntosh: So, you were there two weeks—

Wallace: Uh, yeah, we rested for two weeks; we was there longer than that, but we rested for two weeks; and then after that, we had to get back into training again. And then after, oh I’d say about two months, he told us we was gonna have to get back on warship, and then we head for Japan. In the meantime, when we was going over there they asked for volunteers to, uh, join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division—see, I was outta 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division—but to join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division, and help ‘em out in Okinawa.

McIntosh: So, you could get back to your original outfit?

Wallace: Yeah, and I was glad because I could get back there where a lot of my buddies were; and so right away I was one of the guys to volunteer because, boy, I wanted to go to that, and then some of the other guys volunteered, too. All together there was, oh I'd say about thirty-six, I think it was thirty-six, I am pretty sure it was thirty-six of us guys that volunteered to go in; and so, uh, another ship was gonna come along side there, and pick us up, and so we got to ride one of these here—what do you call 'em, its kinda like seats, ya know, and then they have ropes that pull us over—

McIntosh: Jacob's ladder.

Wallace: Yeah, and, boy, [laughs] we thought that was pretty neat that we rode over like that. And so we went over there, got in there and got right on board ship there.

McIntosh: What kind of ship, do you recall?

Wallace: Uh, this here was a troop ship, it was a troop ship, is what it was. Yeah, big one, big troop ship, that's what it was; and we all rode in there, and about 3 days later, then we disembarked off that ship, and joined the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marine Division; they were already on 'Nawa. [Okinawa]

McIntosh: You joined them in Okinawa?

Wallace: Yeah. And they were really glad to see me. Oh, Christ, they were.

McIntosh: How long had they been there by the time—

Wallace: Uh, they only been there day and a half. And they were really glad to see me and ask me how I was getting along, and what happened after I got wounded, and so on like that, and I told 'em, they couldn't believe that I had to hitchhike my way back, oh Christ, they couldn't believe that. **[End of Tape 1, Side A]** And, so after that, well after they got that secured, then I got board ship, and everything else, and I joined my other outfit, the 5<sup>th</sup> Marine—

McIntosh: Wait a minute, what did you do with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marines at Okinawa?

Wallace: Well, I was in artillery then. Got back in artillery because the 2<sup>nd</sup> Marines is artillery.

McIntosh: So you're right back to your original duty?

Wallace: Yeah, right back to my—yeah.

McIntosh: And that's what you did in Okinawa?

Wallace: Yeah, that's what I done on Okinawa, see.

McIntosh: How long were you there?

Wallace: Uh, Okinawa, I can't recall how many days I was. I was even trying to look it up at home, see how many days.

McIntosh: Well, roughly, a month, two months?

Wallace: Uh, it's less than a month.

McIntosh: Well, they made the landing in April so you got there two days after they made the landing so—

Wallace: Yeah, a day and a half.

McIntosh: Well, then its April till whenever you left.

Wallace: Yeah, I think it was March, I think. April, I think it was about the first of March.

McIntosh: Okay, I thought it was the first of April but whatever.

Wallace: Yeah, I don't recall because you don't pay any attention to dates when you're in, uh—

McIntosh: Once they gotcha there, why didn't they keep ya?

Wallace: No, I had—see, I was just a loaner from the 5<sup>th</sup> Division, that's all it was, us guys. And all of us guys, well some of us got killed there, but what was left we had to go back to the 5<sup>th</sup> Division—

McIntosh: You were there long enough to shoot your guns again?

Wallace: Yeah, mhm. It felt good to get back in the artillery again, because that artillery is really good, boy.

McIntosh: But then they said, "No, that's enough," and then now you're gonna do something else. Then what?

Wallace: After we got that secured, so I went back—

McIntosh: What secured?

Wallace: Okinawa.

McIntosh: That took a couple months, you know?

Wallace: Yeah, I know that took awhile, boy.

McIntosh: So, you must've been there a couple months, at least.

Wallace: Yeah, mhm.

McIntosh: Yeah, okay.

Wallace: Okay. Yeah, I knew that there took a long time there. After we got that secured, then we got board ship, went and joined our outfit on board ship there—

McIntosh: 5th Marines.

Wallace: Yeah, and, then we headed for Sasebo, Japan, and that's where I ended up, in Sasebo, Japan, after the war, yeah. I got on the back of the paper here. I got this all at home, about the signing and everything else.

McIntosh: So, in Sasebo, you were ashore, stationed ashore or where you just there to visit?

Wallace: Ah, no, we was just there to station. And we took charge of the great big naval base here, we took charge of that, and—

McIntosh: It's a big naval base, I've been there.

Wallace: Oh, you been there?

McIntosh: I was there [inaudible] and during the Korean War, I was there for awhile.

Wallace: Well, anyhow, we took over the naval base there.

McIntosh: The 5<sup>th</sup> Marines did?

Wallace: Yeah.

McIntosh: Well, it's lucky you didn't have to make the landing on Japan. You were very lucky.

Wallace: Yeah, oh, I know it.

McIntosh: Probably wouldn't have made it then.

Wallace: We thought for sure we was going to have to do that, but uh—

McIntosh: They told you? Did they tell you that you were going to have to do that?

Wallace: No, we just thought that we was going to go in Japan, and straighten ‘em out there.

McIntosh: How did you hear about the atomic bomb?

Wallace: Mm, how did I hear about that? Um, I think it came over a speaker.

McIntosh: Well, wait a minute.

Wallace: I don’t even know where I was at that time. Tell the truth, I wish I knew, but—we seen the island, where they dropped one atomic bomb, and it was just flat, nothing was there. Well, I take that back, what was standing there, it looked like a lifeguard. It looked like a lifeguard seat, ya know, way up in the air, looking out at the ocean. That’s all we seen, and maybe that was something that they put up there afterwards, I don’t know, because the rest of it was black and flat—

McIntosh: Did you visit Nagasaki?

Wallace: Uh, no. We seen that when we was aboard ship, and we was just, uh—

McIntosh: Yeah, I was there.

Wallace: Was you there? We seen that aboard ship and it was just, ya know, just passing. They slowed down real slow, and they told us to go over there and take a look.

McIntosh: So, you must’ve been aboard ship then when the atomic bombs were dropped.

Wallace: Yeah, I could’ve been, because I do not recall where I was when it was—

McIntosh: So by this time, the 5th Marines were settled down and accessible. And how long were you there [Sasebo, Japan]?

Wallace: Ah, I don’t know how long they were there, because they come up one night there I was on guard duty, and they came up and they says I had enough points and everything to go back to the States, get discharged. And if I would’ve used my head I would’ve stayed in, but I was so homesick and everything else, and I wanted to go home and see my folks; and he says, “How about it? Do you wanna go?” and I says, “Sure,” and he says,

“Well, you got fifteen minutes to pack up your gear and get down there to helo [helicopter transport] to board ship.” In fifteen minutes, ya know, and so, boy, I grabbed everything up and I headed back, and boy, I didn’t fold these things up, I just took everything, I poured it in my sea bag there, and went as hard as I could to get down there to helo, boy, and I boarded ship there, and—

McIntosh: You had helo?

Wallace: Yeah, helo awhile.

McIntosh: In Hawaii?

Wallace: Mhm.

McIntosh: You didn’t tell me about getting back to Hawaii from Okinawa.

Wallace: Oh, no, wait a minute, I’ll take that back. No. I’m in Japan.

McIntosh: That’s what I thought, there wasn’t helo—

Wallace: I got that—I mistaked that.

McIntosh: Yeah, it was heading from Sasebo, wasn’t it?

Wallace: Yeah, Sasebo, well, I got down to harbor, and you know.

McIntosh: Oh, okay.

Wallace: And got aboard ship, and went back, and I had malaria all the way back. I had to turn in to the sick bay—

McIntosh: Weren’t you taking your Atabrine tablets?

Wallace: Yeah, I was taking that, but it didn’t do any good.

McIntosh: Still got chills and fever?

Wallace: Yep. I even had attacks after I got home, here. I had quite a few attacks, and everything. I’d be on the street there, and I’d get an attack of malaria then, and I just fall down, you just fall down just like butter.

McIntosh: Weren’t you taking your Atabrine then?

Wallace: Oh, when I got out?

McIntosh: Yeah.

Wallace: No. No.

McIntosh: The Atabrine make your ears ring?

Wallace: Uh, no, but it made my skin turn yellow.

McIntosh: Yeah, everybody's skin turned yellow, but some guys had ringing in their ears or—

Wallace: No, I didn't have any ringing in the ears.

McIntosh: So when you got back, did they transfer from Japan back to United States, or did you stop at Hawaii?

Wallace: Uh, no, I went right straight back to the United States.

McIntosh: By ship?

Wallace: By oil tankers, is what it was. That was a regular oil tanker.

McIntosh: That took awhile then.

Wallace: Boy, that did. I thought we was never gonna get there. Yeah, and I was the only Marine that was on there, and so I never had anybody to talk to, and the guys who were on board that ship couldn't talk English.

McIntosh: Couldn't talk English?

Wallace: No, and so I—

McIntosh: What did they talk? What did they speak?

Wallace: Some kind of language I couldn't understand.

McIntosh: You never knew where they came from?

Wallace: I never knew.

McIntosh: Italian or—

Wallace: I never knew, 'cause I had malaria, and I was so sick on malaria that I didn't care. I didn't hardly eat or anything; and I ate a little bit of food and drank a little water, but I was just so sick I thought I was going to die.

McIntosh: Where did they dump you off in the United States?

Wallace: Uh, think they dumped me off in California there. No, San Francisco, yeah, San Francisco, California. They dumped me off there.

McIntosh: And then what?

Wallace: And then from there, uh, I went to, they had a big hospital there, and they took me in there because I had malaria. There's a big hospital, naval place, and they put me in there, 'cause I had malaria, and everything, and then when I got fixed up there, and everything, he says for us to wait there because then they're gonna ship us to Milwaukee. They're gonna ship us to Milwaukee, and one night there we got bored sitting around, and everything, so we jumped base there, and about, oh, there's about fifteen or twenty of us that took off and went in town there in San Francisco and just tore the place apart. MPs [Military Police] come after us, and everything else. Yeah, and they took us back to the base, but they never done anything. They never done anything, they just tell us to stay put. And from there, they sent us to Milwaukee, and then we got discharged from there.

McIntosh: You ever keep track of any the fellas that were in your—either the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> Marines?

Wallace: [Sighs] I try to, but I can't get a hold of anybody. I go to a lot of these here reunions, and everything, for the 5<sup>th</sup> Division and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, but I haven't run into any of my buddies at all.

McIntosh: You didn't write to anybody?

Wallace: No, I tried to locate 'em; when I did locate some, I'd write to 'em, but I never got any answers.

McIntosh: Ah, I see. So, then did you join any veterans groups?

Wallace: Well, the only one I belong to D.A.V. [Disabled American Veterans] because I belong to the Elks [Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks] and I'm awful active in the Elks there, and there's such a thing as you can belong to too many outfits. And the D.A.V. I haven't been to a meeting, haven't been to one meeting there, and the reason is because I go to all the meetings of the Elks, and I'm active in the Elks. They been after me to join, uh, V.F.W. [Veterans of Foreign Wars]

McIntosh: V.F.W. coming on hard times because everybody is dying.

Wallace: [Laughs] Yeah, I think it's all over. We having a lot of 'em dying over there at the Elks, too.

McIntosh: Well, people aren't so interested any more.

Wallace: No, not like they use to be, so—

McIntosh: So did you use your GI Bill that you got?

Wallace: Uh, yeah, I used that on the first house when I got out of the service.

McIntosh: Got your five percent loan?

Wallace: Yeah.

McIntosh: Yeah, that's kind of nice. Yeah, I did the same.

Wallace: Mhm, because I bought a house shortly after I got out.

McIntosh: Went back home in Madison?

Wallace: Yeah, because there's no place like Madison, boy.

McIntosh: So what did you do then?

Wallace: Well, I sat around for awhile before I went to work, to rest up and everything, and then I went to—I worked for the Clean Towel Service [F.W. Means Clean Towel Service], I don't know if you remember that or not. Yeah, I worked there for about five years, and then I got out of there, and then I decided I would go out to the V.A. [Veterans Affairs]. They was building that place out there, and I wanted to get in the Veterans Hospital out there, so I worked there for thirty-one years, out to the Veterans Hospital.

McIntosh: Doing what?

Wallace: Ah, in the laundry there. Yeah, laundry work, and I worked there, and I enjoyed a real lot out there. I really liked my work out there, I didn't mind going to work in the mornings or anything. And, then when I got, uh, from there, then outta there, retired from there, then I didn't hardly do anything but just work around the house and held my wife, then I joined the Elks there, and got involved with Elks.

McIntosh: That's a nice career.

Wallace: Yeah, I do a lot for the Elks, so that's just about it, unless you got something—

McIntosh: Yeah, sure. The medals you received was for Iwo Jima, and Okinawa, and Saipan, you got medals for each of those places?

Wallace: Uh, well, I haven't got for Saipan, and I haven't got for Okinawa.

McIntosh: They didn't offer any special—

Wallace: Because there wasn't any—

McIntosh: Special medal for those—

Wallace: No, there isn't anything for them.

McIntosh: Just Iwo, then.

Wallace: Yeah, Iwo, and Guadalcanal.

McIntosh: [Inaudible] a unit citation, was that for the 5<sup>th</sup> or the 2<sup>nd</sup>?

Wallace: That was for the 2<sup>nd</sup>. Yeah, that was for 2<sup>nd</sup>.

McIntosh: Oh, you spent some time in Guadalcanal, too.

Wallace: Yeah, there was quite a while in Guadalcanal.

McIntosh: What'd you think of that place compared to the others? That was a little more jungle-like—

Wallace: Uh, yeah, there's a lot of jungle in there.

McIntosh: Different then the other two islands, is that right?

Wallace: Yeah, mhm. Iwo was just about the only one of those really opened up. Boy, you looked up there, and I'm telling you, there was nothing to hide.

McIntosh: No trees or—

Wallace: No, nothing to hide behind at all.

McIntosh: Just rocks.

Wallace: Yeah, there's rocks on there, but it's open, boy I'm telling you, it's open.

McIntosh: That's why it's so dangerous.

Wallace: Yeah, that's dangerous there. See, some of my stuff, I had to squeeze in there because—

McIntosh: Sure, that's fine. Ok, so you say you had a hard time adjusting when you got back to the United States or when you become a civilian?

Wallace: Oh, yeah, I had a hard time adjusting. I thought I was never gonna be adjusted. It was like when the car backfired, you'd hit the ground, just like when somebody shooting at you, you know, you hit the ground.

McIntosh: How long did that take?

Wallace: Uh, that took me quite awhile to get out of that.

McIntosh: Months?

Wallace: Yeah, it was months and months before I could get adjusted, and then I was awfully nervous and shaky. Oh, I was, I'd pick up a cup of coffee and it just go just like this.

McIntosh: You think that related to your war experience or the malaria?

Wallace: Uh, no. It's the war is what done it. I couldn't even hold a glass of milk in my hands or anything, it just all spilled out, and everything, and I'd get—you know, I'd feel kinda shame. I go into a restaurant there, I want a cup of coffee, I'd get it up there and just go like this. Yeah, I try to grab it, try to hold it with two hands, and you'd just shake and just like this, and it'd all spill all out. They'll come over there, and they'll wipe that up, and everything and they'll say, "Don't feel bad over this, don't feel bad."  
**[Long Pause]**

Wallace: —I can't think of anymore. Well, when I had malaria is what I would do is one good thing they always told us if you didn't have any pills, or anything, is take lemon, and just cut a lemon, and suck the juice out of there.

McIntosh: It stop the shaking?

Wallace: Uh, no, just, you know, it was medicine until you can get back to get some. You know, like, if you had it at home, and that.

McIntosh: But how did it help?

Wallace: [Laughs] I don't know, but, boy, it really helped.

McIntosh: What'd ya mean, it'd stop your shaking or?

Wallace: Uh, no, well, I didn't shake at all when I had malaria. All I was doing, I'd be cold and I'd break into a sweat; you're cold and your head's just going back and forth, you're just there, you're just shaking your head, and everything, back and forth. But I'd tell my wife, we'd be on State Street there and I'd have an attack of malaria, and I would say to my wife, "Go into a store there, and get a lemon." And, you know, if he got a knife, just to cut off the top of the lemon and just squeeze it, and I don't know, some way or another, boy, that helped out. That's what they told us to do if, you know, we didn't have any pills in our pocket to take or anything like that.

McIntosh: Did your temperature go up very high when you had those attacks?

Wallace: Yeah, mhm.

McIntosh: Did you ever take your temperature to find out high it went?

Wallace: Oh, yeah, it'd be in the hundreds.

McIntosh: Should be.

Wallace: Yeah, it'd be way up in the hundreds. And, see they can't do anything for ya, they gotta catch you in the act of malaria, because we even had civilian doctors, and everything, come out, man. By the time they get out there you're over it.

McIntosh: When was your last attack?

Wallace: Boy, that's been quite a few years ago, that's been a few years ago, quite a few years ago since I had an attack of malaria. And I hope it's gone now, because, boy, it's no fun, because you get weak and you're sweaty, and everything else.

McIntosh: Did you feel the chills beforehand?

Wallace: No, uh uh, because it just comes on to ya, just like that.

McIntosh: Classic case, of course, is you get chills first, but your temperature is going up so fast, and after you shake from being chilly, all of a sudden you break out into sweat when your temperature hits the top, and then you suddenly break out, sweat pours out, then you get heated. That's the standard, usual characteristics.

Wallace: There's different kind of malaria, though, isn't there?

McIntosh: Yeah, but the attacks are generally about the same, so yours is unusual in that regard.

Wallace: Yeah, because I never knew it was coming on until I'd be walking along the street, and all at once, bang, she'd come on me; and I just melted just like in butter.

McIntosh: You had to sit right down?

Wallace: Yeah, I had to sit down.

McIntosh: And the attack usually last what, fifteen minutes?

Wallace: Oh, it'll last fifteen or twenty minutes, something like that. It's not very long, though.

McIntosh: Did you get any treatment from the Veterans Hospital for this?

Wallace: No, mm mm, I didn't.

McIntosh: Did they see you about this or give you advice—

Wallace: Uh, they didn't even give me any advice because it wasn't even on my records.

McIntosh: The malaria was not on your records?

Wallace: No, it was never on my records, at all. In San Francisco, I turned into a hospital in there when I was aboard that there oil tanker, and they dropped me off there; I turned in there. And I don't think they even put it on my records, because it was never on my records, and I had quite a few attacks when I was home here. It's only one I got to verify for it, I guess, is my wife.

McIntosh: She took your temperature, though, when you had these attacks.

Wallace: Mhm. Yeah, she took real good care of me.

McIntosh: Well, sir, I think that's about it. I can't think of anything else. Did you have trouble getting ammunition on the beach? Did you run out of bullets, on Iwo Jima?

Wallace: Uh, no, we never did. We always had ammunition, yeah, plenty of ammunition, and everything. When we was in artillery, and all that, we had plenty. We never did say, "I'm on my last bullet," or something like

that. We had plenty, because I carried bandoliers over my chest, and everything.

McIntosh: And the medics, see many of them when you were on that beach?

Wallace: Yeah, there was quite a few medics around, so we never had trouble there. And when I got wounded on the 'Canal [Guadalcanal] there, and I hollered for a medic, and everything else, there's one right up there, boy, just right up there before I even had a chance to close my mouth, he was there. But otherwise, it was pretty nice, I really enjoyed the service. I like the service, myself, I didn't like the war part of it, but the civilian life was really nice.

McIntosh: And you said you were sorry, you thought you made a mistake when your outfit gave you a chance to go home and you took it, how was that a mistake?

Wallace: Uh, well, I liked the service, but I was homesick, and I got out and I was a disabled veteran, and I tried getting back in, and they wouldn't take me.

McIntosh: Why were you disabled?

Wallace: Because I was wounded there on Guadalcanal.

McIntosh: Yeah, but that's not permanent.

Wallace: Yeah, I know it, but they wouldn't take me back in. See, when these wars, like, they wouldn't leave me in before, but the Korean War and all that, ya know, when they wanted guys to enlist for that, and I tried getting back in. I'd go through the line for the physical and I'd be okay all the way to the end and that doctor look at me and he'd reject me. He says, "You never should have been in this line, who sent you that notice?" See, I got a notice that I was being drafted for the service again, and I wanted to get back in, and they wouldn't take me. I even—

McIntosh: But you weren't disabled, that's why—

Wallace: I know it. See, I'm considered as a disabled veteran, I got point ten.

McIntosh: You get money every month from that?

Wallace: Yeah, mhm.

McIntosh: Maybe it's from these attacks that you have had?

Wallace: No, see, my back is all shot up.

McIntosh: Yeah, but you have no disability you said.

Wallace: Oh yeah, I got a disability.

McIntosh: How does it bother you?

Wallace: Oh, I have quite a bit of trouble with it.

McIntosh: What kind of trouble?

Wallace: Uh, my back giving out on me. See, my back gives out on me.

McIntosh: So, what percent disability did they award you?

Wallace: I only get a forty percent because I'm able—

McIntosh: Forty?

Wallace: Yeah, because I'm able to walk around, and that. I don't get a hundred percent because I'm able to work and I'm able to walk around, which I feel very lucky to do, and I can do anything that another person could do; and I feel very lucky over that. I even feel lucky that I'm alive. See, shortly after I got out of the service, my back gave out on me, and there wasn't a hospital out here and so they had to take me by ambulance down to Woods Hospital, and I went down there on account of my back—

McIntosh: I see.

Wallace: Because, see, it gave out on me, and—

McIntosh: By giving out, you couldn't stand up or?

Wallace: I couldn't stand up, I couldn't sit up, or anything, I couldn't raise my arms up, I couldn't raise my legs up, or anything.

McIntosh: What was that from?

Wallace: My back.

McIntosh: What happened to your back that made that happen? Were you lifting something?

Wallace: No, I was just walking around, and then all of a sudden, bang.

McIntosh: Right, but I mean, the wounds that you had gotten in Guadalcanal were superficial wounds so they would have no relationship to the back.

Wallace: Uh, yeah, it sprayed all over. See, it shot away my muscles, and everything, on my back. See, I only got a little bit of muscle in the back there, and not that much. And so, they took me down there and they put me in traction down there, is what they done; and I stayed down there for a few weeks, and finally they let me go home. And then I was going to a place down here on University Avenue, over the First National Bank, when they had the First National Bank down there. There's some doctor's office down there, and I would get twelve shots in my back.

McIntosh: What was the doctor's name?

Wallace: His name was, uh, Dr. Middleton, William Middleton, of the V.A. Hospital here.

McIntosh: He didn't have an office down there.

Wallace: Yeah, he had an office down there, uh, quite awhile ago. Shortly after I got out of service, he had an office down there in '45 and '46.

McIntosh: But that's not the Middleton that ran the V.A. Hospital, he never was in private practice.

Wallace: Wasn't he?

McIntosh: Never.

Wallace: Well, this guy's name was Middleton too, I mean this guy that I was going to; and he'd give me twelve shots in the back there, and I don't know, my back would go up about like this. Someway it's supposed to pull the tissues, I don't know, he explained it to me. I used to go in there, and he used to say to me, he says, "You're not related to this George Wallace, are ya?" Ya know, he was governor at the time, and I says, "Nope."

McIntosh: Well, alright, sir. Thank you.

Wallace: Well, I hope I done alright.

McIntosh: You did well, you did very well.

Wallace: I tried to. That's the only thing that was bothering me. I--

McIntosh: Yep, we got it all.

**[End of Interview]**