Walt Radosevich was born 4 January 1921 in the industrial city of Lorain, Ohio, near Cleveland. After graduating from high school he worked for a short period before enlisting in June 1942 in the US Marine Corps. Walt’s three brothers also served in the military during World War II—one in the Army, one in the Navy, and one in the Army Air Corps.

For Walt, Basic Training at Paris Island, South Carolina, was followed by several short assignments and then sea school; in February 1943 he was posted to the 137-man Marine contingent on board the newly commissioned USS Iowa (BB-61). Walt remained on the Iowa for the remainder of his enlistment, until June 1946.

The USS Iowa was a 45,000 ton battleship with a complement of 2,800. She served briefly in the Atlantic (1943) before transferring in early 1944 to the Pacific Theater; there she was involved in campaigns in the Marshall Islands, Caroline Islands, Mariana Islands, and the Philippines (all 1944); Okinawa, and off the coast of Japan (both 1945). The Iowa entered Tokyo Bay with the occupation forces on 29 August 1945, and served in Japan as flagship of the US Navy's 5th Fleet from January to March 1946 before returning to the US; this ended her World War II-related service.

Following his military service Walt returned to Ohio. In 1946 he married Dorothy Rosenwald (d. 2002), and in 1948 the couple relocated to Minnesota, settling in St. Louis Park. There Walt worked as a carpenter and helped to raise four children. He officially retired in 1982, but continued to work part-time, stay active in his church, Aldersgate United Methodist in St. Louis Park (where he has been a member since 1953), and enjoy hobbies, including fishing and golfing.

Walt passed away on 29 January 2009.
Commissioning ceremonies on the ship's after deck, at the New York Navy Yard, NY, 22 February 1943.

Source: Official US Navy photo USNH C # 80-G-K-825, now in the collections of the National Archives.
USS *Iowa* (BB-61) in 1943.

**Source:** USN photo # 19lcm-42 from National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), College Park, Maryland.
Tape 1, Side A. Counter begins at 000.

T: This is 29 November 2001, and this is side one of the interview with Walt Radosevich. First, let me thank you very much, Mr. Radosevich, for taking time this evening to sit and have a conversation with me. Thank you very much.

W: My pleasure.

T: To start, let me ask when and where you were born.

W: Lorain, Ohio, on the 4th of January 1921. Delivered by a midwife, at home.

T: And you had siblings, too, right?

W: Yes.

T: Were you the youngest?

W: No, I was the fourth of the group. We had two brothers and a sister ahead of me, and one younger brother after.

T: What did your dad do for a living?

W: He was a superintendent of a blast furnace for US Steel, in Lorain, Ohio.

T: Did you go to high school in Lorain, too?

W: I went to high school in Amherst, Ohio. (pauses three seconds) It’s where I graduated, from Amherst, Ohio.

T: What year?


T: Now you were born in 1921, right?

W: Yes.
T: So you were still living at home with your folks when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor?

W: Yes, I was.

T: What were you doing when you first heard that news?

W: A group of us always met downtown to the ice cream parlor. (pauses three seconds) We just couldn’t believe what happened, and we were concerned. Now Germany was going pretty heavy then; we thought, they declared war, so we felt we’ll probably all have to be drafted into the service. Which most of us were ready for anyhow. We thought, “Let’s go, and get this over with.” We couldn’t figure why the Japanese had hit Pearl Harbor, but this is what happened.

T: Do you remember how your folks reacted when they first heard that news?

W: Well, my dad was real concerned about it, because of the three boys, of all four of us boys then. My next oldest brother, Nick, was the Air Force. He was the first one drafted out of Ohio, in 1940. He was drafted as: “Good bye, dear, I’ll be back in a year.” But the war broke out. He was drafted and went through flight school in Colorado, I think, someplace.

T: He was in before Pearl Harbor.

W: Yes, he was in in 1940.

T: How about your dad? Was he a World War I vet?

W: No, he wasn’t. He was born and raised in Yugoslavia; came here, I think, when he was fourteen or fifteen years of age, and started to work in the steel mill.

T: So he came right to Lorain, to Ohio?

W: No, actually he came to McKeesport, Pennsylvania, to meet a cousin of his. McKeesport is a small steel town in Pennsylvania. He then, when he started working there he went to Lorain, was transferred to Lorain, and I guess that’s where he met my mother. They were married there in Lorain, Ohio.

T: So all your siblings were born in Lorain, too?

W: Yes.

T: You were not drafted, but rather you enlisted, right?

W: My dear buddy is gone, but his uncle was a Marine in World War I, and he always talked to us about the Marine Corps and everything, and he wanted us to be
Marines. So Jack says, “Well, what do you think about it?” We went to the recruiting station and found out I was tall enough, but Jimmy was a half-inch short to get in the Marine Corps. You had to be five foot eight [5’8”], so he says, “I’m going to go home and start stretching!” Finally, when we came back for the second examination, he passed, and we both entered the Marine Corps then. We graduated [from high school] the 28th of May [1942], and the 5th of June we were on a train heading to the Marine Corps base in South Carolina. One week later.

T: Why did you volunteer?

W: (laughs) Well, I was talked into it, really! I would have either been drafted, because of my age—I think it was nineteen then—and I probably would have been drafted into the Army. My oldest brother George was also in—he went in before Pearl Harbor—and he says, “You may as well go into to something you want to go into.” And I wanted to go in the Marine Corps.

T: As opposed to being drafted into something you didn’t want.

W: Yes.

T: Okay, I see. (pauses five seconds) How did your folks respond to you joining the Marines?

W: Mom didn’t like it. She didn’t like any of us being in there now, because of the war; the way Hitler was going, and the way the Japanese were doing different things. She was really, really unhappy. My dad also. But he also said, “Go to what you want to go to. Now if you want to go in the Army, with your brother George, or do you want to go in the Air Force with Nick.” Well, my youngest brother, Mike, was not in yet; he went in 1943 or 1944. (pauses three seconds) Late 1943 he joined the… No, he was drafted in the Navy. Out of the four of us, he was the only one that was drafted.

T: So off you went to Paris Island, South Carolina.

(1, A, 123)

W: That’s right.

T: South Carolina, was that a new part of the country for you, a place you hadn’t been before?

W: It was God’s forgotten country, I felt! (laughs) It was nothing but sand dunes and sand fleas, fiddler crabs. When we got there they put us all in two-man tents, little pup tents, out in this desert field, really, or ocean field, I should say. It was (pauses four seconds) really, really… Many times I asked Jim, my buddy, why in the hell did you talk me into this?! (laughs)
T: He was in the same unit there?

W: Yes. In fact, we bunked together because he was Wilhelm and I was Radosevich. So the two, “R” and “W”, he was next lowest in line so we were both in the same tent together.

T: How come you guys were in tents?

W: At the time there wasn’t enough barracks for the full company that was down there. I can’t recall how many, but we were all down there in cattle trucks once we got to Georgia. Then they hauled us... actually, we were just like cattle in the truck when they took us to the base. We stood up for about a two and a half hour drive, just like a big cattle truck, wide open in the back. And everybody was packed in there; if you tried to fall, you couldn’t, because there we so many of us in there.

T: Guess you didn’t go to the bathroom on the truck, either!

W: No! *(both laugh)*

T: What about Basic Training there at Paris Island, what was that like?

W: That was hell. Really. Four o’clock in the morning our drill sergeant would holler, and we’d have to get out, run, get into formation right away, count off, line up. And then we’d start our routine, and this was before breakfast. Usually breakfast was from 6:00 to about 8:00. And everything was move together; your whole squad, or your whole platoon, would move together. We’d do all our exercises, our drills and everything, before breakfast. Then run to the chow hall, have breakfast. You all stood up in front of the table, sat down, got your food, back up again, same routine. Then out to drill again, they just kept drilling, drilling, drilling, until, well, from four in the morning til dark.

T: I bet you were exhausted at the end of the day.

W: But they kept pounding in through our heads, “Nothing like a Marine, you’re a Marine, there’s no one in the world is going to beat you. You can’t be beaten by anybody.” Actually I’d say they brainwashed us. Well, if you believed everything. They said, “You’re tough.”

I found out after boot camp, when I was up in Philadelphia, I wasn’t as tough as I thought I was, as tough as our drill sergeants said we were. Got in a fight, and I thought I could knock out six or seven sailors. I was on my butt before I knew it, and that was it! *(laughs)*

T: What was it like, your first time away from home?

*(1, A, 177)*
W: Lonely as hell, really. I know there was one young Marine from Cleveland, a young Jewish boy, his folks had a big shindig before we left for there. And he cried all the time he was there in the boot camp training. And they finally discharged him, because they couldn't do a thing with him. He just was so homesick. I was too, but I figured, “Well, damn it, you're a Marine. You don't cry, you don't do this. You just keep jumping around and... You asked for it, so take it.”

T: Were other guys homesick, too?

W: Yes. Oh, I’d say 90% of us were. We were all eighteen to twenty years old. I think we had... This one picture, I got Pappy in there, and I don’t know how he got in there. He was thirty-six years of age, going through boots. And he had seven children.

T: And they let him enlist?

W: He was in! We never could figure that, how he could get in, or why. Well, he says, “There’s a war. I want to fight, just like you do. That’s why I joined the Marines.” Pappy Schaeffer.

T: And he made it through boot camp?

W: He made it through boots. I don’t know what happened to him after that. He probably went into the infantry someplace out in the Pacific, and he may have been gone there.

T: Did guys wash out of boot camp?

W: There was probably two. We had a young fourteen year old boy from... what part of Mississippi? (pauses four seconds) I can't recall what part of Mississippi he was from, but he lied about his age to get in. Out on the firing range I shot a 248 out of a possible 250, and he shot 250. Three times in a row, on the target range. And they were going to make him an instructor for rifle until they found out he was only fifteen. So they had to discharge him, him and Besser, this boy from Cleveland. They discharged both of them. Besser was practically (pauses three seconds) going insane because he didn’t want to have anything to do with it. He was so homesick that they finally had to let him go.

T: He had enlisted, though, right?

W: No, he was drafted.

T: Oh, I see. That’s not the kind of person you’d want next to you in a difficult situation, is it?
W: No, no way. This is exactly what drill sergeant Pennington said. He was from North Dakota. I often wondered, I should go up there and find out if there’s any Penningtons up there. He was a farm boy from North Dakota, our instructor.

T: What kind of person was he?

(1, A, 216)

W: He was strict, disciplined. His discipline was so great. The better rating he got, the further up the ladder he would go, based on our performance as a platoon. And he was a great teacher on all firearms, as far as the rifle, the automatic rifle, the pistol, everything. He was really, really schooled. He had been in the Marine Corps, I think, twelve years previous to that. He was in China, and back. He helped us so much, and wanted every one of the platoon—sixty-four men in a platoon—to become as good as he was. Strip the rifle down blindfolded, put it back together blindfolded, strip the pistol, strip the automatic rifle. And this is only six weeks we had to do this all in. So he really, in that short time, he really got us all set. He got us set for combat, the whole squad. That was his job.

T: Do you have one particular memory of Basic Training that was positive, or a good story?

W: (laughs) I could relate a funny story.

T: Sure, let’s hear it.

W: You always called your weapon a rifle. The minute you said, “Oh, what’d I do with my gun?” well… I said that, so, when we went to our noon lunch, he made me stand on a box. And I had my rifle with me. “This is my rifle, this is my gun. (holds left arm up, as if holding rifle; grabs crotch with right hand) This is my rifle, this is my gun.” (laughs) I had to say it among all the Marines coming in.

T: It’s a mistake you make only one time, I guess! (laughs)

W: One time. He heard. I was just saying it to Jim, and I don’t know how he heard me say it to my buddy. Then he had me in front of our whole platoon, and then I had to do it there at the lunch with all the other guys coming in.

T: Why the distinction between rifle and gun?

W: Well, golly, (pauses five seconds) I really… Well, a rifle’s a rifle. That’s your buddy, that’s your love, that’s your life. The rifle was. Because you took care of that like you took care of your mother. You had to make sure it was clean and operating, everything was right. Every time. And when they inspected it, it had better be, because if there was one little flaw, you really suffered for it.
T: The platoon suffered, or the individual suffered?

W: Individual. And then the platoon leader, or the squad leader—thirteen fellows in a squad—the squad leader would be in charge, and he’d make sure, because if our squad didn’t come to the qualifications our drill sergeant wanted us to, bango, you’d suffer for it. He’d make you run around the damn desert until you dropped, with a full pack! *(laughs)* Probably about sixty-some pounds on your back, with your rifle and everything else, your boots, your shoes.

T: And it was June or July in South Carolina. What was that weather like down there?

W: Hotter than Hades. That’s what I said, it was nothing but sand fleas and fiddler crabs. Those darn little crabs. And sand. Sand, sand, more sand.

T: When Basic Training ended, were you posted immediately to your next assignment?

W: Yes. I was so surprised. I guess they go through your previous records, your high school records and everything. I was a pretty good athlete, basketball and baseball and that, and I had taken a lot of clerical, typing and that, in school. And so they thought, well... Wilhelm and I both were in typing classes and that, and I knew a little shorthand, so they were going to send us in for clerical school. To sit in the office and take it easy! *(laughs)* But when we got there in Philadelphia, the school was filled. So they told us we’d have to wait probably two and a half, three months, and they wondered what we could do. So they looked at our records again, and said, “You can try out for the baseball team.”

So I tried out for the baseball team, and made it. Jim didn’t, so he became guard at the Philadelphia Navy Yard. And when my baseball season was over there, they called me and says, “You’re going to be a prison guard with your buddy Jim at the Naval Prison.” So I went there.

T: So by now we’re talking late Fall 1942?

W: Yes, this is probably September. September our baseball season was over, latter part. Early November. We got to see the Army—Navy game at Philadelphia, at that great stadium there.

*(1, A, 291)*

T: What about this baseball? That’s the first I’ve heard of this. Was this a team that...?

W: A Marine Corps team. We flew down to New Jersey, and we flew to, in fact we played the Paris Island team, in Carolina. They flew us down there, and flew us back. We played up in Boston, played a Navy team. We played service teams; they
were all service affiliated baseball teams. That ended quick, it seemed like, because that was beautiful duty! All you did was play ball and chase women.

T: What was the purpose of those leagues? Was it PR for the military?

W: I believe so, yes.

T: Did civilians attend the games?

W: Yes. And Marines and sailors. Army boys would watch us; we played Army teams. (pauses three seconds) I think it was in Paducah, Kentucky, that we played.

T: So you got around as part of this baseball team, didn’t you?

W: Oh, yes.

T: You liked being a part of that?

W: Yes. I kind of hated to see it end, but then they said, “Now you can go back to clerical school.” But then when we got to clerical school it was filled again, so that’s when they put me in the Naval Prison as a guard there. Standing in these towers, like you see in these prisons here, the same thing. They were all Navy deserters, Marine deserters, Army deserters. It was really a (pauses three seconds) prison for all enlisted men, or drafted men that had gone over the hill, or done things they shouldn’t have.

T: Deserters only, or those convicted of criminal activity, too?

W: Criminal activity also. There were a lot of them in for theft, and there were special groups and that. Between that and Portsmouth, Virginia, they had two big prisons, and they were big and rough, I mean, really.

T: These guys in these prisons, you mean?

W: The guards were rougher than the guys. Well, the guys in prisons, too, they tried to always pull some deal. We took them out on work details and that, to different projects that the government had.

T: How big was this prison? How many inmates?

W: Well, there was probably 2500 prisoners in there, deserters, AWOL [absent without leave] boys—boys that come in late, they’re called AWOLs. We didn’t have any major dishonorable discharges in there. We had some that were, or would be, bad conduct discharges, which wasn’t as severe as others. There was just a few of them. But most of them were guys that just wanted to go home. They took off without leave, and when they came back they had to go into prison. They’d be there
for two, three, four months at a time, I guess. And then they’d try them again, or discharge them. If they were discharged, then they got a bad conduct discharge or a dishonorable discharge, whatever they came up with on their verdict.

T: How did you feel about that job?

W: I hated it. Because I felt sorry for a lot of them, you know, because they didn’t want to be in. They were like I was, first time away from home, and they were lonely and everything else. Ninety percent of them that we had, that I got to know in the short time I was there, were homesick kids. I mean, they were young, eighteen, nineteen year old kids that had never been away from home. None of us had. But they just didn’t have the gumption to stick it out. They were both Navy and Marine, Army personnel too.

T: And they got caught.

W: Say if they were at a base, and they were on leave, they’d have a weekend pass. They’d stay over five, six, seven days, instead of staying just their seventy-two hour pass. They’d stay longer, and that’s when they got caught. Not realizing what was going to happen to them when they came back.

T: Now you didn’t do this job very long, did you?

W: No, I think it was two months, two and a half months. New Years, I did spend New Year’s [31 Dec 1942 – 1 Jan 1943] on a tower. I think the next, probably the first week in January, or the second week in January, they sent me down to Virginia. How I did that, I don’t know.

T: You didn’t request it?

W: No, the major called me in, and he says, “Well there, private, we’re going to send you to sea school.” And I says, “What? What’s sea school?” “You’re going down to Virginia to get on a ship. You going to be on a ship, in the Navy, someplace.” “Well, Major, I didn’t join the Marines to…” “Don’t say that to me. Pack your stuff; tomorrow morning they’re going to come and pick you up and take you on to training. You’re going down to Norfolk, Virginia.” “Okay,” I said.

It still isn’t clear how or why I was sent down so fast. Maybe if you went down the alphabet and I was the lowest one! (laughs) It could have been, I don’t know. I feel today it was just so fortunate for this to happen, which I didn’t want to happen, that I was sent here. It was just... gosh.

And when I got to Brooklyn, New York, to the Navy Yard, when this other Marine come out to pick me up, I looked at this ship [Walt was posted to the USS Iowa, a 45,000 ton battleship launched in 1943] and I thought, “My god.” Because in my senior year in high school, between my junior and senior year in high school, I worked at the shipyard in Lorain, Ohio. My dad knew the president of the yard, and got me in there for a summer job. And then I thought, “This would be nice, to get on
a ship, and sail the Great Lakes.” But here I come, and that thing is three football fields long.

(1, A, 365)

T: And she was brand new, right?

W: She had never been out to sea yet, when I got on her.

T: And you boarded her in Brooklyn?

W: Yes, the Brooklyn Navy Yard.

T: Now the crew of this ship, how large was it?

W: It was 3500.

T: And how many of those were Marines?

W: There were one hundred thirty-seven of us out of the 3500.

T: Were there other service branches on the Iowa, too, besides the Navy and Marines?

W: No, just the Navy and the Marines. The best part of the Navy, I keep saying!

T: No Army or Army Air Force?

W: No, no. Just the Navy.

T: Once you got on board the Iowa, what was that like?

W: Well, it was like being in boot camp again. You know, you had to do things, you had assignments. You were assigned to a gun, to a gun mount. You had a sergeant who was in charge of the gun mount. You had to do scrubbing and cleaning and washing and that, and you had to clean your compartments where you were on the ship. You had to make sure everything was spic and span all the time. That’s the Marine Corps—they’re spit shine, and everything was polished all the time. In fact, we had three galvanized garbage cans. If you goofed off, you’d be assigned to polish those. And when they were through polishing, they looked like a piece of silver.

T: You meant it when you said spic and span!

W: Well, that’s the Marine Corps! Spic and span. Everything spit shined; you had to shine your shoes, you shined your buckles, you shined everything.
End of Side A. Side B begins at counter 000.

T: When did the Iowa put to sea?

W: It was February... (pauses five seconds) It was either late February or early March [1943], we went on a shakedown cruise up to Newfoundland. That was our first shakedown cruise. We went up to Newfoundland, and they were saying there was a big German ship up there; that we may encounter the ship, or we may encounter submarines on the way up. So we went up to Newfoundland, and got as far as Greenland, turned around, and came back and headed to Bangor, Maine. Pulled into port at Bangor, Maine, for three days. Left Bangor, Maine, went down to Boston, and we were coming into Boston for provisions, I think, or something, get rid of our heavy clothes that we didn't need after we were up there in the North Atlantic. We run aground in Boston, so they had to keep the ship there for six weeks.

T: Six weeks?

W: Yes, to put a new metal plate in the bottom, where the navigator must have run us aground. So we had to stay there for six weeks. And that was a party.

T: You were still on board ship?

W: Yes. We pulled into the Boston port there, and they put us in dry dock; they had to have the ship out. While you’re in dry dock all you do is stand guard or go on liberty and party. Boston party, a Boston tea party, we always said we’d have. Scully Square and all the old seaports that you talk about or hear about. Whenever you went on liberty it was just a party, out looking for women and having fun. (laughs)

T: Do you remember any specific occasion when you went on liberty?

W: Most of the time we got so damn drunk we couldn’t remember what had happened! (laughs) Out at the bars, the Silver Dollar bar and that. Party, party, party. And looking for women, everybody looking for women. And it seemed like the women went nuts over Marines, more than the sailors. I don’t know why. But you could pick out what you wanted.

T: How do you adjust to that, from being in a more stressful situation? It seems like a real contrast.

W: You drink. I think that was it. Almost everybody would be dragging them back to the ship. We had to be back by eight o’clock in the morning, and if you didn’t get back you went in the slammer right away. You’d leave at three o’clock in the afternoon.
T: So you had the whole night, then?

(1, B, 068)

W: Yes. Each watch. See, we had three watches on the ship: one, two, and three. Every day there would be two watches off and one watch on, so you had a twenty-four hour watch on the ship one day, and then you’d have two days off. But you had to be back to the ship every morning, to be there for report. You had to check in every morning, then you could go out again after you come back in. So you couldn’t stay off a full two days. I’d say the biggest part of our crew, the Marines, were from around Boston area, so they all knew where the party rooms were, where the food was, where the girls were, and everything. So that was a big blast.

T: Six weeks later you had to go back to the real world.

W: Yes, then we went back to Norfolk, Virginia, and that’s when we started to prepare the ship to take Roosevelt [President Franklin Roosevelt] to the Cairo conference [held November – December 1943], and back to Norfolk, Virginia. We didn’t know why we pulled in there. So they had to do a lot. We had government men all over. The USS Iowa is the only ship in the Navy that had an elevator to transport a person, and a bathtub, on the ship. Because of Franklin Roosevelt coming on. We were preparing to take him to the Cairo conference.

T: Did you guys on the ship know what you were getting ready for?

W: No, we had no idea. We heard... They called it scuttlebutt, you heard different things. “Why, why, why?” Oh, some of the workers that came on, doing the remodeling of the captain’s quarters, said that, “You guys are going to go on a special mission, but we can’t say what it is.” Well, it wasn’t any more secret than anything else! (laughs) After a while, I think it was about two and a half to three weeks after we were there, everybody knew: we’re going to take the president to the Cairo conference. How it leaked out, it’s probably the same way it leaks out today. It just keeps going from one to another.

T: What was that like, the experience of transporting the president?

W: It was really a thrill. I happened to be, I was fortunate enough to be on duty when he came on the ship. No one was supposed to... Out of all the men, everybody, I think there were twenty-seven or twenty-eight men who were above deck, so we could see the president’s yacht come up alongside the ship. We shot a gangplank out from the ship, and here came President Roosevelt. And Harry Hopkins [US politician and diplomat who acted as Roosevelt’s special envoy during the war] and the aides and that were following him across. We got him on the ship and right up into his cabin. I was fortunate enough to see that, because I was on duty.
T: Otherwise you wouldn’t have?

W: I wouldn't have, no; I'd have had to been down below. They didn’t want anybody out.

But what a beautiful ship. Talk about polish—that thing shined like a diamond.

T: So this was the first real mission that the ship went on.

W: Yes.

T: When the president was on board, there were other dignitaries there, too, right?

W: Yes, like I said, we had General Eisenhower, General Arnold, General Marshall, Admiral King, and Admiral Leahy on, plus part of Roosevelt’s staff was on. They were on, it took us a little more than seven days to cross the ocean, so Eisenhower and Marshall and Arnold were every morning out parading back and forth, getting their exercise on the ship’s deck. They would stop and talk to men that were on duty, and ask where we were from. Admiral King stopped and asked me, and I told him. Admiral King was born and raised in Lorain, Ohio, and then I told him that I was born and raised there. “I wasn’t raised there all the time,” I said, “but I was born in Lorain.” “Well, good.” Really we had a good conversation.

T: It wasn’t every day you got to meet people like that.

(1, B, 143)

W: No, not with all this high brass. This was our complete command of all forces, except the Air Force.

T: Was there a convoy going over there, or were you pretty much alone?

W: No, we had six destroyers with us, and ourselves, that went across. We cut way down through the lower part of the Atlantic, down, and we made a complete loop and came up into Algiers. We went through the Straits of Gibraltar, got to see that, and into Oran [Algeria]. Then after we’d dropped the president off, and all the dignitaries... Oh, gosh, I missed one. When we were in Newfoundland, Churchill [British Prime Minister Winston Churchill] came aboard our ship. Why he was there in Newfoundland we don’t know, but he came aboard the ship and talked to the crew for a little bit, and left.

T: Was he there to meet somebody?

W: I don’t know, it might have been. We don’t know why, but he was there. (pauses five seconds) As we were going across [with President Roosevelt], one of our destroyers was practicing for in case of an attack, and they fired a torpedo off the
destroyer straight at the center of the Iowa, as we were going along. Here this torpedo was coming at us, Roosevelt was on the second deck at the turret, sunning himself, he and... I can’t think of that black guy’s name...

T: His personal valet?

W: Yes. They were up there. And they quick wheeled him off, and the ship turned and the torpedo went straight along port side of us. Or it would have hit dead center where he was. The captain of the destroyer was court-martialed, and discharged. They claimed it accidentally went off, but it was headed directly for where Roosevelt was; it would have hit right in that area where he was. But he was up high enough I don’t think it would have caused any damage to him. I think it’s in the book here (motions to privately-published book on USS Iowa).

T: Did you encounter German aircraft or submarines on this trip?

W: No, we didn’t. But right after we had dropped Roosevelt and his whole echelon of people, they said that Oran was heavily bombed by German bombers. They knew that we were in there, but we had already gone back through the Straits and down the west coast of Africa, through Freetown. And then from Freetown we went to South America, where this German battleship was sunk. The captain sunk his own ship, in Argentina.

T: That was the Graf Spee [German battleship scuttled in the River Plate in December 1939].

W: That ship was sunk near to where we went. There was another party time there.

T: This trip from Africa to South America, is this where you crossed the Equator?

W: Yes, this is when this all happened (points to commemorative magazine of the traditional ceremony of crossing the Equator for the first time).

T: Could you say, what is so special about crossing the Equator?

W: Well, it’s an ancient order, I guess, that you belong to. It’s just like belonging to the Knights of Columbus, I feel, or the Masons, or any organization. You were a pollywog [term for those who had not yet crossed the Equator], and then you became a shellback [term for those who had crossed the Equator]. But the treatment, or initiation, was the most amazing thing, to me, to go through. They had prepared this whole week for us, when we crossed the Equator. They took over the ship, all the shellbacks. Davy Jones came on and took the ship over, and they raised the Jolly Roger and everything else. They did all that. Then they started their big mass initiation of the whole crew. (laughs)

T: Now this initiation, what were the different parts of this?
W: Different parts? Whenever a shellback came up, you would have to stand at attention. He would ask you your name, and you said, I’m a pollywog, my name is Walter, or Joe, or whoever you were. You had to repeat after them, and then they’d give you some crappy assignment, go scrub out the head [toilet] or do this or do that. It was so many different assignments.

T: The shellbacks had the ship?

W: They had the authority of the ship. They took it over, like pirates taking over a ship. They had the authority until we all crossed the Equator. Once we were through the initiation then...

T: Then it was back to normal?

W: Yes, then we went back to normal.

T: What other parts were there to this initiation?

W: Well, like I said, you had to go through this line [men standing on both sides], where they’d use these darn electric prods, and they’d hose us down, and beat your butts until they were blue.

T: With wooden paddles?

W: Wooden? They had like shilleLAGHS of leather, salt water soaked, it was just as hard as a whip. When you’re on all fours, trotting down on the deck, they belted you on the butt and hit you on the back and everything. And asked, “Who are you?” “I’m a pollywog!” You couldn’t say you were a shellback yet, because you hadn’t been through it yet. If you did say shellback, you went right through the same thing again.

T: Cattle prods, too, you said?

W: *laughs* I don’t know how they got those electrical things, but, boy, they sure give you a zap!

T: And most of the crew, you said before we began our on-tape interview, they had not been through this ceremony, right? There must have been a lot of guys suffering!

W: Like I said, out of the 3500 men, there were probably about four hundred and some that were shellbacks. The rest of us were scum, like they called us! *pauses three seconds* You ready for more coffee?
T: Yes, please. *tape paused briefly*

T: The ship made port in Brazil, is that what I saw in your publication about the *Iowa* during the war years?

W: Yes, that’s right.

T: Now what were you doing in Brazil?

W: Well, it was just to pick up supplies: bananas, monkeys, everything. We could buy a stalk of bananas for seventy-five cents. You could get the biggest steak you ever ate in your life for fifty cents. Everything was not expensive at all down there. We were just in there for three days, and then had to turn around and come back to pick up President Roosevelt and the crew.

T: Did you have liberty in Brazil?

*(1, B, 243)*

W: Yes, that’s what I said, guys would go in and buy a bunch of bananas; they bought the whole stalk. But they wouldn’t let us bring them on the ship.

T: No bananas on the ship?

W: They wouldn’t let us. They brought bananas on, but if you went and individually bought a stalk of bananas you had to eat them there or leave them on the dock.

T: Why was that?

W: They didn’t want, oh, some kind of contamination or something they thought could be in there. But we ended up with three little spider monkeys on the ship.

T: On purpose?

W: Some fellows smuggled them on. So after we got underway, they figured, gosh, they found the monkeys, and what can we do? Here we are, fifty, sixty, maybe a hundred miles out at sea, what are you going to do with the monkeys? So they built them a little raft, and put them on the raft and put them over the side and let them go. We also had a dog. Captain McRae had a little dog. I’ve got a picture of her here *(shows picture of dog)*. It was on the ship since she was commissioned, until Captain McRae left, then he took the dog with him. Which was probably four years. But we had this dog as a mascot on the ship.

T: And the dog was allowed to stay?

W: Yes, the dog was.
T: But monkeys no.

W: Monkeys no. *(laughs)*

T: Did you have liberty yourself when the ship was in Brazil?

W: Yes, that what I said, you got the steak for fifty cents and you couldn’t eat it all. Guys I went with. No women; we tried to get them but we couldn’t.

T: You didn’t speak the language there, right?

W: No. They knew who we were. Some guys did, but not most.

T: Not like being in Boston?

W: No, no way. Foreign country.

T: What did you think of this place? This was the first time you had been in a country like this, right?

W: I thought it was beautiful. I never saw such white beaches as they had there. The sand was just beautiful. Entering the whole port, you know, the deep blue of the ocean, and the sand was pure white. And then you’d see all these dark-skinned girls running up and down the beach, you just go ape! *(laughs)*

T: But when you went ashore there wasn’t much luck with them.

W: No, we couldn’t get... We didn’t have time. Didn’t have time for maneuvers with the women! I only had one day. See, there was three sea watches; each watch got a day. One day. So you had to do it all quick in one day.

T: After leaving Brazil, you say you went right back to pick up the president?

W: Yes, back to Algiers, and picked him up there, and brought him back up the Potomac, and let him off there.

T: You did a lot of traveling, distance wise.

W: You see, it’s all drawn out here *(points to map on table, detailing Iowa’s voyages 1943-45)*. It shows, there should be some... I’ve got maps of how our ship traveled during the whole war. It’s not in this Iowa book here, but I’ve got it here someplace anyhow.

T: After you dropped the president off, was the ship transferred to the Pacific?
W: Well, we went back to Norfolk, Virginia, to prepare for the Pacific, and got down through the Panama Canal. I think that was about five or six weeks later. We went through the canal. The canal area there, they had to have the water as high as possible, because our ship was too wide for the canal itself. So the lock had to be filled right up to the top. Because we were so wide, we would scrape the sides of the canal, of these locks, where you went through in there. It took us about four days to go through there. And at the end of the canal we got into a freshwater area, and they said it was supposed to clean the barnacles off the side of the ship. And that's where we got liberty in Balboa.

T: That's in Panama?

W: In Panama. And that's where the prostitution girls were lined up by the dozens, waiting for the guys to come out. You'd have, well, we had three watches, so three days, and each day you'd have off, you'd go. And girls were there, fifty cents.

T: Fifty cents?

W: Fifty cents, or a pack of cigarettes, or anything. You could have your doings, and go back. But that's where we... The liquor there, you could buy a quart of Canadian Club for about seventy-five cents, or any booze. So four of us got together and says, damn it, let's get booze and haul it back on the ship so we can have it when we're underway in the Pacific. So we did. We packed it in our socks and our pants, and stumbled back like we were so drunk, and they let us on the ship and the officer of the deck said, “Okay, take him down below.” Well, we ended up with sixty-seven quarts.

T: Where did you put it all?

W: *(laughs)* Down in the double bottom, in our sea bags, down below. We hid it, sixty-seven quarts of booze. The second day we went back out to sea, when we got into the Pacific, Commander Quaggle [spelling may be incorrect] wanted an inspection, because he had an inkling that something was funny, that guys were doing this. So right away we went to our... what the heck was his name, the captain, our Marine captain... *(pauses three seconds)* Anyhow, I went to him and says, “Gosh, if they're going to inspect our sea bags, down in the double bottoms, where we stored our stuff,”—Haskins, Lieutenant Haskins was his name—“we've got sixty-seven quarts of booze down there.” And he says, “What in the hell? How did you get it on?” “Well, four of us would run back and forth, back and forth, and get the booze, and we brought it in. We'll split it with you—whenever you want a bottle of booze, you can come get it from us.” So when he led the inspection down where we had it hid in our bags, he stood by them so the commander wouldn't find them. And we got away with it. Because you couldn't get it. Guys were making raisin jack [a fermented alcoholic beverage] and everything on the ship, trying to make some kind of booze.
T: So could you sell this stuff to other sailors or Marines?

W: We didn’t want to sell it to anyone; we wanted it for ourselves. There were four of us, and Lt. Haskins.

T: Did it last a while?

W: Yes. It probably lasted at least eight months anyhow. But one kid got caught drunk, and they wanted to know where he got the booze and everything. Well, he says, he was drinking alcohol, strained alcohol, is what he told them. He didn’t say where he got the booze from. But I think we must have given Haskins about two dozen bottles out of there. He helped with other officers of the ship; they would (**). They had booze all the time, the officers.

T: Legally, though?

W: Yes, officers had it. We couldn’t.

T: Was drinking a problem on the ship?

W: No, no. I mean, we were so watched. We’d have to sneak, and half the time you might’ve had one or two drinks every three or four days, and you didn’t get drunk from it.

T: That would be a dead giveaway, wouldn’t it?

W: Yes, that would be, oh yes. Then they’d wonder where. Old Commander Quagle, he had a nose for everything. He didn’t like gambling. You could gamble, but you just had to gamble for chips, for nothing. And he’d walk through, when the guys would be playing poker and that, sitting there, and we’d have a bunch of chips. Well, we all paid so much for each chip. He’d come through and look around and say, “He hasn’t got very many, and he hasn’t got very many.” So we had the cards on a blanket, and he’d just throw all the chips together. “Now divide them up.”

T: He really didn’t like the gambling.

W: No. He said, you know, “Why should he win and you lose?” I don’t know. Sometimes you’d be thirty or forty dollars ahead, and you ended up nothing. I mean, you’d divide it up between six guys. So nobody lost. And then when he’d leave, “Come on, I was...” How you going to argue with a guy?

T: Did tempers sometimes flair over cards?
W: Oh, yes. Many times. With the close quarters and everything, you agreed sometimes, and sometimes you didn’t agree. There were fights. Then they’d put on the boxing gloves, and the whole ship’s company would watch them fight. They’d bring you out on the fantail and, “These two guys want to fight? Okay, put the gloves in them and let them go. So they want to knock each other out, or something.” They just let you fight it out.

T: As opposed to having some kind of hostility building up?

W: Yes.

T: You seemed to suggest that boredom was a problem on board ship. Is that right?

W: Yes, it could be. The same routine; every morning you got up, you had to stand watch or stand inspection. (pauses three seconds) And then go to your duty, scrub the floor, wash this, do this, do the laundry. It was the same routine all the time, every day, day in and day out. Clean your gun, polish this, and do that. It got to be... And you’re looking at the same guy for, gosh, every day. The whole thing was...

T: How did you personally handle the level of boredom?

W: Well, I ended up sewing for guys. If they wanted their shirt sewed, or buttons on their shirt, I’d press their shirts. In the Marines we always had to have three stripes on the back and two stripes right down the middle of the thing. They’d starch them, and I ran the laundry for them for a while. Did the sewing. If a guy got a promotion, I’d put his chevrons on, sew his chevrons on. I got paid probably fifty cents, or a dollar, and when I pressed a shirt it was fifteen cents a shirt. Make a little change to go down to the locker. You could buy a carton of cigarettes for fifty-five cents, you could buy a box of candy, twenty-four bars, for fifty cents. Ice cream, you could get a half-gallon for twenty-five cents. Different things at the PX, we called it, where you’d buy all your stuff.

T: Was the PX open all the time?

W: All day long, yes. And then the ice cream parlor was open. Well, they’d have chocolate topping or strawberry topping, those were the only two. And then we always ended up, I mean like... Their meals were really crazy. You always had beans, every morning, some way.

T: Beans in the morning? For breakfast?

W: Yes. Beans and that SOS. That shingle stuff [slang term “shit on a shingle”, creamed beef on toast]. We’d have that. But that was good; I liked that. It was a hamburger with a cream sauce.

End of Tape 1. Tape 2, Side A begins at counter 000.
T: This is tape two with Mr. Radosevich, 29 November 2001.
   Everything, the food, was powdered, is that right?

W: Powdered eggs, powdered biscuits, powdered this and powdered that. You’d have scrambled eggs, you never saw an egg that you could look at and say, “Oh boy, there’s a yolk.” It was all powdered. Powdered milk we had, plus powdered eggs. We did have a good Thanksgiving dinner, though. I don’t know where they got the turkeys; they must have been frozen.

T: Is this 1944?

W: Yes. They had turkeys and, in fact, when we crossed the International Date Line, we had turkeys two days in a row. Because we went over on Thanksgiving, and coming back on Thanksgiving. So one time we had two days of Thanksgiving. So we had turkeys twice.

T: When you arrived in the Pacific, where is the first place the ship went?

W: First place we went through was Eniwetok [in the Marshall Islands; captured by US forces February 1944], where they first tested the atomic bomb [postwar atomic tests]. We were there probably with... (pauses three seconds) the battleship South Dakota was there, Iowa, and two small CVE carriers [US Navy escort carriers] were in the port when we were. So every third day, and I think we were there for about eight or nine days, because we went to the beach twice, they sent each watch to the beach every three days, and you’d get three cans of beer on the beach. And then you’d be drinking warm beer and you’d get so damn drunk.

And Bob Feller [US professional baseball player] was on the South Dakota as a special officer. He would pitch to anyone that wanted to bat against him. So I thought, “Well, I’m going to try it.” I went, and I hit one foul ball is all I could hit from him. But this guy’d scare the pants right off you, the way he fired the ball. He was just keeping himself in trim with that, but he’d ask guys, “Get up there and bat; I won’t hit you.” And when he fired that ball—I never saw a ball go that fast. Sometimes you didn’t see it, you just swung, from fear. (laughs) Yes, I hit one foul ball. But that’s the way he kept himself in shape.

T: You had played baseball yourself, so you had seen some pitching.

W: Yes, I’d seen pitching before, but nothing like that. That guy was just amazing. I think we had one fellow that got a hit off him, out of probably twenty of us that tried to hit him. He just said, “Come on up, get up there. Next batter.” He’d throw four or five pitches at you, and that’s it. Then the next guy’d get a chance.

T: Was the Iowa there on some kind of combat assignment?
W: We were waiting for assignment then. We were going to go to a little island, probably fifty miles away, to practice shelling. So there were two ships, the South Dakota was behind us, and we were in front, and we’d go and shell this island. They knew it was a Japanese stronghold, but there were no planes around it, because our Navy bombers, off the carriers, would go over there and drop bombs on it. Well, all of a sudden, here we are, just like watching a movie, watching these big sixteen inch guns fire, blast away and hit the island. All of a sudden, we looked in the water and said, “What the hell is this?” We could see little splatters all around. So the sky control would tell us, they are firing back at us, with small caliber machine guns. You’d see it, put-put-put-put, in the water. All of a sudden, here we’re sitting, and shhh-BOOM (like the sound of shell approaching and exploding) and a big eight inch shell hit us. They fired from one of their cannons, and hit the ship right in the turret, in number one turret. The only person that got hurt was a guy, the turret spotter, that fired the gun. It ricocheted into the glass and hit him in the face. And he’s the only one of us that really ever got hurt through the whole war.

T: Really?

W: Yes. He was Navy, firing the big guns.

T: So the Iowa was a number of different places, but the casualties were almost nil.

W: Nil. We lost a couple overboard during typhoon, guys that were washed overboard. They should never have been out, anyhow, on the deck, because the typhoon—I’ve got pictures I can show you—you would have 135 foot waves. We saw two, the Hull and the Spence, both destroyers, our escorts, were both lost in the thing. They completely capsized, and only seven came off the Hull, and I think twelve came off the Spence. But both ships were sunk.

(2, A, 107)

T: They went down in the typhoon?

W: Yes. Because you can’t believe it. We’d go up, and just like you’re on a ski hill, down. But the waves, if you’d look straight out, you couldn’t see the top of them. You couldn’t see the destroyer next to you, you just saw the water. Once you see him, and the next time you wouldn’t, because he was in the wave. The swells, 135 foot swells.

T: In this respect it was definitely beneficial to be in a larger ship.

W: Yes. At that time we had Captain... Well, he was a submarine captain. McRae had been relieved, so we thought he was trying to sink us, trying to make us into a submarine! (laughs)

T: You just had to ride the typhoon out?
W: Yes.

T: How long did it last?

W: Probably five days.

T: No kidding!

W: Yes. Your speed was only about eight knots. Usually we’d be in the thirties, when we were moving around the Pacific, all over.

T: There must have been some pretty sick sailors and Marines on that ship.

W: I think there were probably, out of our 134 guys, there were probably seven of us that never got sick. I got sick once. I crawled out of my bottom bunk, and the guy on the top bunk leaned over and heaved all over me! (laughs) So I quick went in the shower, showered up, and my buddy Callahan says, “Kill him!” And I says, “No, he’s dying anyhow. No need to kill him.” He was just so sick. So what I did was, I went up topside and slept. Because the odor and everything... Everybody was upchucking down there. Couldn’t have the ventilation on, because the waves would be coming in. There was just stagnant air.

T: How do you eat and even do ship’s business in a storm like that?

W: When we knew we were in a combat area, you ate C rations out of a can. You didn’t go down to the galley. We could send a guy down to the galley and get coffee. But the galley was closed during air raids from Japanese planes and that. I think we knocked down probably twenty-some Japanese aircraft in the time I was out there. Usually our fighter escort from the carriers were doing all that. These guys would go up and knock them down. But every night you had, they were called Mavis planes, they would drop flares and the whole ocean would light up.

T: Japanese planes they were?

W: Yes. Then we’d see our fighter planes would be up there. You could see their red tracers [bullets], and then pretty soon down they’d go, they knock them out of the sky.

T: Was your ship occasionally attacked? Can you describe one of those raids, what happened on the ship?

W: We were off the Mindoro Straits [Philippines] and, in fact, our spotter plane from the ship had spotted a Japanese heavy cruiser, which was twenty-two miles away from us when he spotted it. So we fired one salvo, one nine-gun salvo, at that heavy cruiser, and sunk it. But in the meantime, they had fired six torpedoes at us, so we
fired at the torpedoes coming at us. And our ship maneuvered enough, and got by them, or they would have hit us. We fired at the torpedoes and tried to blow them up with our anti-aircraft battery, because you could see the wake where they were coming.

(2, A, 170)

T: You couldn’t hit the torpedoes, or was it hard to hit them?

W: Well, they’re under the water. They’re probably ten feet under the water and, you know, a shell will just ricochet off the water anyhow. But at that time, when we sunk this heavy cruiser, I was in charge of number one turret, a forty millimeter turret on the bow. We had an all clear; there were no enemy planes, bogies they called them, around. So I told the guys, “Relax and sit.” I was in our control tower, and I just happened to look up, and I called sky control, which is what we always had to contact with. I says, “Well, there’s an unidentified plane right above us.” Before I could say anything, this guy started to dive. And we were all laying, just looking at him, and he was coming straight down at us. Right away sky control hollered at the conning tower, and they maneuvered the ship so that the shell [the bomb dropped by the Japanese plane] hit within fifteen feet of us, in the water. It exploded, and the water splashed all over the place. We saw the Japanese guy veer off, and then two of our fighter planes from the carrier came over and knocked him down. But we could see him just like he was sitting right next to us. The guys, some of the fellows on my gun mount, “I’m hit! I’m hit!” But all it was is, they were splashed by water. (laughs) But he [the Japanese pilot] missed; he could have put the thing right down the stack of our ship, had he not been in such a hurry.

T: Did maneuvering the ship make a difference? Throw off his aim?

W: Yes, it did. Because he was coming straight down for us; I could see him, just diving straight down at us. (pauses five seconds) These are the kind of shells we shot (shows photograph of sixteen inch shells); they were six foot high. (pauses five seconds) This is a picture of the whole crew (points to picture of Iowa crew). (tape paused)

T: Pick up where you left off.

W: The sunsets, you could not believe. The ocean would be just as calm as this table, and when the sun would set you’d see every color of the rainbow. The ocean would turn those colors. I tried to paint it, but couldn’t. It would turn a deep purple, then orange and everything. You’d see this big ball, the sun setting. The ocean would completely change colors, the colors of the rainbow.

T: What a contrast to the typhoon sea that you just described. Here the ocean is completely calm.
W: We couldn’t go fast enough when we were at Mindoro Straits to launch planes off the carrier, and we were going thirty-seven knots, the fastest any one of them could go. There wasn't enough wind. In fact, they said the cooks would crack eggs—they had picked up eggs in the Philippines—on the deck of the ship and fry them. It was 135 degrees temperature, and not a breeze. So everybody was sleeping up above.

T: It must have been miserable.

W: Yes. The ocean, you’d look down like you were looking down into a big aquarium, when you sat on the bow. I always did at night. I got out on the bow of that ship, I’m all by myself out on the bow of that thing, just looking and watching the porpoises play around the front of the ship, dive down and everything. It really was a great, great scenery.

T: Sounds like you kind of liked being on the ship.

W: Oh, I did, after I got on it. Thank god I ever got on there. Here’s our goony birds that we had, our spotter planes. (shows photo of ship, with ship's planes) See, I’d get right up in front. (points to bow of ship on picture) Our compartments were right below the guns.

T: All the Marines bunked together?

W: Yes, that’s right, underneath turret one, the first deck.

T: What was the purpose of having those Marines on the ship?

W: We were bellhops, is what they called us. We were orderlies for the captain, for the admiral; we manned guns; we kept, oh, we were really the policemen of the ship, is what we were.

T: How come they didn’t have Navy guys doing that?

W: Tradition, I guess.

T: Marines on board Navy vessels?

W: Yes. Now, see here we are in Honolulu, at the submarine hotel, the Royal Hawaiian hotel. (shows photo of himself with several others in front of Royal Hawaiian hotel in Honolulu, frequently used by Navy submarine personnel on leave)

T: Let me ask you: on board the Iowa, were there African Americans on that ship?

W: Yes. Those poor guys. I got to know five or six of them from the Carolinas. They were down on the third deck. They were just cooks, mess boys; they worked in the galley all the time. Stewards, they were really, for the ship. And were always in the
captain’s quarters, I mean officer’s quarters. That was their special job. But they did man twenty millimeter guns, anti-aircraft guns.

T: So they had a battle station.

W: Yes, they had a battle station, right along here (points to anti-aircraft guns on photo of the ship), and up here in the bow (points again). They were good sailors. They were real nice. See, I was born and raised there in Ohio, five miles from Oberlin [town in Ohio], and that was underground railroad for the blacks. So I grew up with blacks, and I still have very, very good black friends back there in Ohio that I grew up with, went to school with, danced with the girls and that. (pauses five seconds) Some of the fellows didn’t like it, especially the Southern boys. “You don’t talk to a nigger.” That was what they said. They would come through our apartments to go to their jobs, and to go to the mess hall, and everything—they had to come through ours—and these Southern boys would just be on them all the time. I often said, “What are you guys hollering at them for? They’re here like we are. They’re the same as we are.” They cook, they clean, they do everything for the officers. They didn’t do it for us, but still, they were there, they had a job to do, and they did it. (laughs) I used to get good peanut butter and jelly sandwiches from those guys.

(2, A, 270)

T: Now when you went on liberty, was it the same, were blacks and whites mixed when you went on liberty?

W: No, no. No, they didn’t. They had their group to fit, especially in Philadelphia. South Philadelphia is all black. And they had their group. (pauses three seconds) Jim and I and another fellow, in Philly, would go to these black clubs. And they’d look at you kind of funny, you know, but they never did say, “What are you doing here, man? What are you doing here?” (*** “How come you can talk to me?”

Well, I have to say, when I first went to, when we got to Savannah, Georgia, off the train, before Basic Training, I stopped and asked a black boy for directions. This policeman, I’ll call him Buford, from Carolina, comes up to me and he says, “Hey, Yankee, you don’t talk to them god damned niggers, because we don’t let anybody talk to them and ask them. You want any information, you ask me.” And I told him, “Listen, I was born and raised with these kids. I feel to him as much as I do you.” “You nigger-loving Yankee,” he said, “next time I see you do that, you’re going to jail.” I says, “I’m going in the Marine Corps, man, and if I’m out and find you, you’d better hide.” But, I’ll tell you, I grew up with them, and I had no problem with them.

T: You’d have had a rough time living down there, wouldn’t you?

W: Oh, god yes. We really would, yes, because even with the fellows here (points to photo of several Iowa Marines), we had a lot of Southerners, and they just hated them. In fact, one fellow says, “I was raised by a nigger mammy, on a plantation.”
can’t understand why they would hate them so much. After the war, I worked with two black carpenters, and these guys knew everything you had to know about constructing a home. In fact, the history shows that most of the plantations were designed by blacks, carpenters and that. They were the tradesmen; they did all the work. Why there was, why there is so much hatred for them, even today, I don’t understand it.

T: Shifting the focus a bit here, was there a person who had an impact on you during this time, a person, enlisted or officer, that you looked up to?

W: Well, I’d say, and he’s gone now, Captain Bennett. He was Second Division Marines, came off, and got on the ship later. He really just about had me just about convinced I never should get out of the Marine Corps. I really admired the man for everything he’d been through—he’d been out on the islands, got himself pretty well beat up. He left such an impression with me.

T: What kind of a person was he?

W: For a Marine, he was gentle, kind, and considerate of all, no matter if you were black or white. We had a couple of black Marines later on the ship, and it didn’t make a difference to him—they were Marines, and he was, and he had such care and thoughtfulness for all of them. He’s gone now, this last year, I think, we lost him.

(pauses three seconds)

T: Let me ask you about leave. You didn’t have leave once you were on the ship, did you? Like to go back to the States.

W: No, we didn’t. Once you were on, you stayed there. The only leave you had is when we pulled into one of these atolls, or islands, and could go ashore.

Like I said, when we shelled Saipan, it was like watching a movie. We saw wave after wave of our barges going in, and we were shelling over top of them. It was just like watching Saving Private Ryan [US feature film of 1998], seeing the bodies floating all around us there, Marines and Japanese bodies both, floating there. Caught between the ships. We’d pick them up, pull them out, and give them a burial at sea. I just thank the dear Lord that I (voice trails off) I was there, and it was just like watching a movie. They’d fire at us, and we’d fire back.

T: How far off shore was the Iowa?

W: We were probably 1500 yards off shore.

T: That’s very close, isn’t it? Can those sixteen inch guns be used so close to shore?

W: Oh, yes.

T: They must have had a murderous effect.
W: The holes that the shells would leave, the guys could sit... This guy, he's down in a shell hole. *(shows photo of Marine standing in a shell crater that's approximately ten feet deep and thirty feet wide)* This is a Marine, on Saipan.

T: When you saw this, this pretty serious combat like at Saipan, was it times like this that you felt fortunate to have the duty you had?

W: Yes, many, many times. We had a nice clean bed to sleep on, we had clean sheets every two... we changed sheets in the ship twice a week. So these poor guys on the beaches and that, they didn't have that.

T: And people were shooting at them.

W: We shot at people on Tinian [in the Mariana Islands; captured by US forces August 1944]. Also we saw the Japanese there running from one barracks to another, so we'd shoot our forty millimeters and five inch guns at them. We saw the charge, the last banzai charge of Japan, on Saipan, when they drove, there were probably 2200 or 2400 soldiers and Marines at this one hill, and there were probably maybe 2000 Japanese that drove them right down into the ocean. When they came down the hill on their last charge, and we saw women and children jump off the cliffs, commit suicide, because they thought if they were captured by US troops, Army, Marine, or whoever it was, they thought they'd be tortured. Which they weren't. We kept telling them that they would not be tortured at all.

T: Walt, if you didn't have leave, how did you stay in touch with family and loved ones back home?

*(2, A, 358)*

W: Well, we would write and get mail probably, oh, every once a month you'd get mail. The ships would bring it from Hawaii. They'd come out, and dump the mail off to us. Our boxes of cookies and everything would be all crushed up, sent through the mail. *(laughs)* All our mail was censored. Whatever we wrote out, they were censored before they got back home. My wife and my mother and sister and that, I would hear from them maybe once a month or twice a month.

T: How important was mail to soldiers and sailors away from home?

W: Oh gosh, it was like Christmas all over again when you got mail, everybody. Especially if we got packages of cookies and that. “Oh boy!”

T: Did you get stuff like that sometimes?

W: Yes. My sister always seemed to send to me, and my cousin also.
T: Was the stuff still good when it got to you?

W: Well, some of it’d be crunched up and that. I had a cousin, Mary, that was a great candy maker, chocolate and stuff. She always sent me a box. I’d get maybe every two months a box from her. So I’d share it with guys in the crew. “Golly, home cookies!” Pictures and that, too. I wrote to my brother that was in the Air Force, and I wrote to the others. All three of them were over there in Europe, and I was in the Pacific.

T: How long did it take for mail to get back and forth from the Pacific and Europe.

W: Sometimes six weeks, sometimes eight weeks. All depended if they could follow you, to get to where you’re at. With a ship you’re moving all the time. My brother Nick, he was under Jimmy Stewart [US film actor, served in Europe as pilot with Air Force], that was his commanding officer in the Air Force...

T: So Nick was flying B-24 Liberators? [US heavy bomber]

W: Yes, Liberators. So I knew where he was, and I’d write to him. My brother Mike was just like me, with a destroyer, so you didn’t know where he was. But we kept in contact with each other.

End of Tape 2, Side A. Side B begins at counter 000.

T: Did you make lasting contacts during your time in the military? People that you stayed in touch with?

W: Oh, yes. Most... Well, we’ve lost so many already, but, yes, we get together, we have a reunion every year, in different parts of the country. The Iowa Association reunion.

T: Navy and Marines?

W: Yes. We met in Peoria, out in Boston, in Virginia, in San Diego. The next one, we’re going to have our next one where the ship is now, in San Francisco.

T: The Iowa is in San Francisco?

W: Yes, it’s there as a museum. It will be a museum in San Francisco. In fact, it’s in or by Oakland, in the bay. And it will be a museum there, and that’s where she’ll rest now. She’s decommissioned now. This next June, I think it is, we’ll be there in San Francisco.

T: June of 2002?

W: Yes.
T: Walt, what’s the importance to you of unit reunions?

(2, B, 035)

W: The importance to me is to see comrades that had all been together many years, (pauses five seconds) and the fellowship, and to see what’s happening to all of us as we get older and older. It’s fun. It’s not fun for the women, it’s fun for the men! Because we can sit back and talk about, like those pictures in Japan (motions to photos of himself on liberty in Japan after war’s end), how we drink sake [rice wine], and how we drink their rice beer and everything. Talk about being there and how this went, and that went.

T: Have you always attended reunions?

W: I tried to, yes, as many as I could.

T: Why is it that some guys don’t seem to want to have anything to do with these reunions?

W: This bothers me, too. I mean, there are some that live right where we are having the reunion, like in Peoria or in New York or Virginia. Most of our original crew was from the East coast; my sergeant, Mr. Lapore, is from Pennsylvania, and we had New York, we had Boston. It was a short trip for them. You’re from Minnesota it’s a bit longer trip, but that didn’t bother me to go. I just wanted to come back and see how they’re doing and everything. In fact, I just got a letter from one of the boys from Texas. They’re hoping to be in San Francisco also. And the older we get the harder it is to get there anymore. Well, my wife won’t be able to travel, so I don’t know. I want to go to San Francisco and see the ship one more time.

She got to get on the ship when we were in Long Beach, California, and she was so amazed at how everything on there worked, and how everything on there was so clean. Well, you had to be clean. If you didn’t, you could cause such sickness and everything on the whole darn ship. Everything was just white, sparkling all the time. When we brought British boys on, they came on the ship, they couldn’t believe how our ship was compared to theirs. “What the hell do you guys do? All you do is shine these things?” “No, you’ve got to keep it clean.” They didn’t. The only thing good about the British ship is, they got their rum every day, and we didn’t! (laughs)

T: Let me shift the topic and ask you where you were when President Roosevelt died in April 1945?

W: We were out in the Pacific.

T: Do you remember hearing the news about him?
W: Oh yes. It was a sad day for us because, had he not died, the treaty [surrender document signed on 1 September 1945, on board the Missouri] would have been signed on the Iowa. President Truman took over for Roosevelt; we had spent all our months out there in the Pacific, and Missouri [US battleship] hadn't been out there at all. So what happens? They told us, “They are going to sign the treaty on Missouri.” “What the hell? We’ll sink that damned tub! It didn’t do anything yet.”

T: Who made the decision that the surrender document would be signed on Missouri?

W: Truman! He was from Missouri, and he’s going to have it signed on there. So we went right to MacArthur and says, “You can’t do this! We’re the ones that have been out here the longest of the four Iowa class battleships, the Iowa, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Missouri, the 45000-ton class. Hell, we’ve been out there. We’ve had all the admirals on there! We bombed this, and shelled that!” We shelled two-and-a-half hours in Hokkaido, Japan, a steel mill. We shelled the hell out of that; it burned all the rifling off the gun. We fired 270 rounds within two hours. That’s firing those big damned shells into this steel mill, and then we pulled out.

When they dropped the Bomb [atomic bombs were dropped on Japan on 6 August and 9 August 1945] and that and were getting ready, we went into Japan, into Yokosuka [port city, on Tokyo Bay], to take over and get ready for the treaty. Well, all of a sudden here comes the Missouri, and we’re tied right together. I think I’ve got pictures of where they signed the treaty, pictures with MacArthur and them, when he was there. Our ships were tied together, and I could see them just as plain as I can see you, signing this thing. No, this really hurt us. What the hell, the Missouri didn’t do anything; they were back in the States, parading around and getting ready to come.

T: Were you a Roosevelt man yourself anyway?

W: Yes.

T: How about those around you? What kind of different reactions were there to the president dying?

W: Well, no there wasn’t. They always called me the Russian, because my mother is Russian, and they thought, well, you and Stalin—Joe, they called me Joe, see—you, Joe Stalin, and Roosevelt. Well, Stalin was a damned crook anyhow. He turned their country against ours. We helped them out so much, but he ended up turning his guns towards us.

(2, B, 139)

T: It wasn’t long after the president died that the war in Europe ended, in May 1945. Now how did that impact you, in the Pacific?
W: We thought, well, good, now we can have them all come over and help us get this over with, Japan. That’s when we went in and shelled this steel mill, getting ready for Okinawa. She [Iowa] was in there, but I wasn’t on it when she bombed Okinawa, when she was out there.

T: The battle for Okinawa was April to June 1945. Where were you by that time?

W: When she went in to there, I went down to San Diego, I think, at that time. (pauses three seconds) No, the ship was back in San Francisco then [Iowa was on the West coast for an overhaul during the first months of 1945, but arrived off Okinawa late April 1945].

T: She had been in Okinawa, or not?

W: No, we were by Okinawa, but we never got on the beach at Okinawa.

T: Was the Iowa at Iwo Jima, in February and March 1945?

W: No.

T: Okay, so the ship missed both of those. (pauses five seconds) Did you think about your brothers in Europe, and how they were now?

W: I was so happy that now they could come home. My next oldest one, the pilot, he was out, he was discharged. He flew sixty-seven missions over Germany. That’s when he lost his two planes. So he was home free. My youngest brother, in the Navy, he came over to the Pacific and was close to me, but I had already been on the beach. We were taking over Yokosuka, and their government center and that, so we didn’t get together. His destroyer was over there, but at that time they were getting ready to sign the treaty, so we never did get to see each other.

T: He was close, but that’s all.

W: A couple of kids I went to high school with, I met them; they were out there, on different ships and that.

T: Where was the Iowa, and where were you, on V-J Day, 15 August 1945?

W: We were in the Pacific, in Japan. Right outside of Japan, off the coast of Japan.

T: How did the news of Japan’s surrender hit the ship?

W: Oh gosh, everything went, just went crazy. Because as far as you could see, our fleet was from horizon to horizon. No matter which way you looked, north, south, east, or west, all you saw was American ships, carriers and everything, just one big mass. We just couldn’t figure how this really happened. Once they surrendered,
then we went into Yokosuka and saw their battleships, sunk in the harbor, a couple of them, small destroyers were sunk, cruisers were sunk.

Then when we went to shore, we couldn’t believe it. If we had not dropped a Bomb, it could have been another ten years before the war was over, because they were dug in. Planes would come out of the mountains, and off the ground, at least a hundred feet off the ground, before they came out of the mountain. They had them so dug in. We had gotten to Tokyo Rose’s [Japanese wartime radio announcer; broadcast in English to US troops across Pacific] radio setup, and this mountain had seven layers of, well, they made it like an office building, covered by a mountain. All their radio equipment was in this mountain. Now to bomb it, today with bombs they could probably get to it, but you couldn’t then. All you could do is bomb the entrance on the whole thing. You couldn’t destroy it, you couldn’t destroy the mountain.

T: Was there a party on board your ship at V-J Day?

W: Oh, yes, everybody celebrated. Jumped up and down, and the geisha houses caught hell, after we got into Japan.  (laughs)

T: At the time, did you feel the US government was correct to use the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki?

W: I was thankful it happened, until I saw Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

T: And you were there in August 1945, weren’t you?

W: Yes, so we got to see it. We were probably fourteen miles away, on another mountain from it. And the devastation. I thought, my god.  (pauses three seconds) Well, maybe it was right, and maybe it wasn’t. And then to see the people, how they were, I mean, little kids burned, women, men. Everyone begging for help, and we didn’t. And to drop two of them in there, to get them both, you know, it was really... (voice trails off, followed by three second pause) Never again, we never should, anybody. This is why I was so afraid of Russia, and what they would do. You don’t know. And even bin Laden [Osama bin Laden, leader of terrorist group al Quaida and held responsible for 11 September 2001 attacks on US targets], what he would do, if he’s got it [Bomb]. What good did it do to drop something like that, devastating everything? Who’s going to fix it? How are you going to bring it back to life, where it was? You can’t.

T: Sounds like seeing the results and the physical devastation really made a difference for you, an impact.

W: Oh, yes. It was really, really... (voice trails off, followed by three second pause) After, I think, probably about a month and a half after, I thought, “My god. War, war. What? Innocent people.” I mean, they were gone according to their ruler. How this ever could happen. Many times I have prayed it would never happen again. Golly,
what’s our children going to do, our grandchildren going to do, if these guys get a hold of something like that. All the energy and atomic stuff.

T: How long did the Iowa, and you, stay around Japan after August?

W: We came back to Long Beach, California, then turned around and went right back to Japan, and for what reason I have no idea. We were there for about three and a half or four weeks, and then back to Long Beach again. We made a trip back and forth. This was into Christmas 1945. I stayed on the ship until June [1946], or I should say May 21st or 22nd, then I went off the ship and down to San Diego to be discharged.

T: You were on until the end of your enlistment, weren’t you?

W: Yes.

T: Did you begin to wonder, after the war was over, what the heck you were doing on board the Iowa?

W: I often asked myself, “How did the good Lord ever let me? Why me? How did this all happen, the whole sequence of Paris Island, then Philadelphia, then to the ship?” And that was it.

T: I have talked to a lot of guys, and you were in one job, in one place, for the longest period I’ve heard. Did guys rotate in and out of the Iowa’s Marine contingent?

W: Oh yes. We had guys, it seemed like every three months they were going out in the infantry. And we infantry men come on. This is what I said, when Captain Bennett came on, he was Second [Marine] Division, infantry. He came on, O’Neill came on, Callahan came on. They were all combat veterans.

(brief pause of the tape)

T: You were on the Iowa until May 1946, which means you spent a lot of dead time, time after V-J-Day. Some of that time in Japan, or off Japan?

W: In Japan, we must have spent eight weeks over there.

T: Were you on land, or on the ship?

(2, B, 259)

W: We were on the ship, and then we were assigned on land. Right when they said the war was over, there was one platoon of us that went in barracks on Japan, to this little town, well it was a big city, to Yokosuka. We went to the mayor, confiscated all the guns they had, and whatever the government wanted us to get from them. This
is when we went into the radio station where Tokyo Rose was, and to see all her equipment and everything in this mountain.

This big Joe Lapore, he was six foot six [6’ 6”], and those Japanese just couldn’t believe it. They looked at him, they worshiped him. The kids hung on him because he was so damn big. They just couldn’t get over it. He’d always, “Get out of here! Get out of here!” He’d lost a brother in the war there, and wasn’t too kind to the Japanese.

T: What did you think of this occupation duty? You were on land for a while.

W: Like I said, they were people like we were. They had to get into the war, their country wanted them to fight, just like our country. (pauses three seconds) The way they lived—Tokyo was so bombed out. We had these B-29’s [B-29 Superfortress bomber, a long range heavy bomber of the US Air Force] dropping bombs all the time. It was just completely flattened out. The main ginza downtown, and everything.

We got to go on liberty there, down in the heart of Tokyo, in the ginza, and we went down to a café, downstairs in this bombed out building. And here an all-Japanese band is playing Sentimental Journey [popular US jazz tune of the war years] and that. I said, “What the hell is that?” But they played it just as good as a band in the United States. Then they had these geisha girls, they’d be there, and you could dance with them. They looked like dolls. Never changed the expression on their face. Beautiful little girls. The guys really… They had geisha houses, they were houses of prostitution, and guys would go there like flies.

T: Pay there with dollars, or cigarettes, or how?

W: Cigarettes, whatever. Whatever they wanted, they got. For a carton of cigarettes you could be king there, because that only cost fifty-five cents, and they couldn’t get cigarettes.

T: Fifty-five cents, and king for a day.

W: Yes.

T: You left the Iowa in May 1946, and were discharged in June. What was your initial reaction to being out of the military?

W: While I was down in San Diego waiting to be discharged, Major Thompson [Walt’s commanding officer] was just hounding the heck out of me. He says, “You’re a regular Marine. You weren’t drafted, you came in because you wanted to.” I said, “Major, I just want to get home. I want to go back to the farm, and I want to be a farmer.” Well, when I come home my dad had sold the farm, so there was no farmer for me. But I was just so thankful to get out, and thankful for where the Marines had placed me, where the government had placed me, on the ship. I didn’t have to go...
through what all these boys in the beach parties [slang for the Pacific island invasions] had to.

T: So after being upset initially by the fact that you were stuck on the ship, you came to treasure what it meant.

W: Yes, after a while. It took a while, because I thought, “I didn’t join to be a damn nursemaid to a bunch of sailors.” But I really wasn’t a nursemaid, I was part of the Navy. The best part of the Navy, I always say. We had duties to perform, and we fought. We were up at nights, couple, three, four nights in a row. These guys would bomb, drop bombs, and try to… We saw carriers get hit, and guys get killed on the carriers. The Intrepid and the Yorktown [both US Navy carriers], I think the Yorktown was hit right alongside of us. We tried to protect her from these kamikaze pilots, so it was scary. The first two or three nights, I thought, golly! And here we’re on this big ship, protected, really, with all the armored plating we had, but still a bomb could have killed any one of us.

(2, B, 323)

T: When you got out, Walt, what was the very first thing you did, when you were discharged?

W: I went back to San Bernadino [California] to pick up my wife. I said, “Let’s pack up and go home.” I wanted to see...

T: You meant back home to Ohio.

W: Yes. Well, my wife says, “We’ve got to stop in Minnesota first.” So we had the train go right to Minnesota, and then from Minnesota we went to Ohio. That was in June, and the wife says, when we went to Ohio, she said she wanted to get a job teaching, so she got a job in Elyria [near Cleveland, Ohio]. She was teaching school in Elyria, and I was drawing fifty-two twenty [52-20; re-adjustment allowance for unemployed ex-servicemen, paying $20 for a maximum of 52 weeks].

T: You were a 52-20 guy?

W: Yes, 52-20. She says, “But you’ve got to find a job.” I said, “Well, I always wanted to be a carpenter.” In fact, I wanted to be a draughtsman instead of a carpenter. Now I had started the apprenticeship carpenter back in 1938, so I said, “I’ll go back to the union hall, and ask if I can get in.” “Sure,” they said. So I finished my apprenticeship, and came out here. And that was it.

T: How it was it to see your family and your brothers again?

W: Oh god, I just couldn’t believe it, because I had friends that we had lost during the war, in Germany and Japan, kids I grew up with and that. To see them it was really,
really a thrill. My wife says, "I just can’t figure you out. You’re just so close." All my classmates, we were like one damn family in school, because we were in a small school anyhow.

Jimmy was pretty shy. He was on Okinawa, and he got really, well, he was shell shocked. He was always in the hospital, nervous, problems and everything. It was a great feeling to have this damn thing over. I told her, "Well, we missed out on all the celebrations here in the country when the war was over." We were over there, still in Japan. All the fellows there on Japan, there were points, you could get out on points. But I was a regular Marine, so points didn’t mean anything to wipe my tail with. [Men drafted accumulated points for time in service, combat, etc.; a certain number of points brought discharge. As regular Marine, Walt needed to serve four years, with no early discharge possible for points.] I had to wait until my hitch was up, and then go.

T: What was the hardest thing for you with readjusting to being a civilian?

W: The hardest thing is trying to get out of all this polish and spit and shine and everything else. I always wore high-cut boots in the Marine Corps, they issued them, and my wife would say, "You aren’t going to wear those to church!" And I said, "Look at them—they shine just like a regular shoe." "You can’t do that!" And everywhere I’d go I’d have those damn high boots. I was getting out of the routine of being a Marine. Every day was inspection, and everything had to be ready. Clean shaven, clean clothes, clean shirts. But the boys in the islands didn’t have it. They were lucky; they’d be in their clothes for days. I kept thanking god that I didn’t have to… (voice trails off)

And I always felt for these Vietnam boys. I mean, I had nothing, and most of the Marines, well, I shouldn’t say most, a lot of them did. But Nam was, was so rough on our kids. My oldest boy, that’s passed [away], he had high enough (*** that he didn’t have to go, and his best buddy did. But he came out of it alright. David came out okay, but I know some of those young kids from church that were in there, that never came back. Which was useless. It was for nothing.

T: What was the easiest thing for you with readjusting?

W: (pauses three seconds) Golly, what would be the easiest? (pauses ten seconds) Oh, I don’t know, I really can’t think what would be the easiest thing with adjusting back.

T: Would you say you had a fairly easy time becoming a civilian again?

W: Yes. Once I got into to the construction business, then it was set.

T: As a final question, when you think back now, Walt, in what ways did the war change your life?

W: As far as travel, I can say I’ve been, golly, all over. The Atlantic, the Pacific, the South Pacific, South Atlantic, North Atlantic, every city on both coasts [of the US].
Bremerton, Washington, all the way to San Diego; from Bangor, Maine, down to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba; Florida, Virginia, New York, Boston, South America, all those. I never would have had any of that experience, had it not been for the war, and the Navy, being on the ship.

End of Tape 2. Tape 3, Side A begins at counter 000.

T: Traveling was one thing that you wouldn’t have experienced. What else comes to mind?

W: (pauses five seconds) I often wonder I what would done. I’d have probably been a farmer without the war, because I enjoyed farming, agriculture, cattle. (pauses five seconds) But I’m not sure.

And I might not have met my wife. I was going back to the ship in San Francisco in 1945, and we met on a train on New Year’s Eve. She was going back to San Bernadino, teaching school. She was home for Christmas, I was home for Christmas. Some guys, in the celebration, pulled a lever and flattened out the cars’ wheels, so we had to change cars and were delayed a day. I had three dates with her, I went back overseas, and we were married in April 1946. Just like that. And I couldn’t have found a better gal no matter where—all the geisha houses and all the cat houses and everything else.

T: You been married how long now?

W: Fifty-five years. She’s really something.

T: Anything else you want to add, Mr. Radosevich?

W: (pauses five seconds) If I had to do it over, I’d do it over. I’d do it again, but I don’t know if the same results would happen. It’s just fate that it happened to me. I often say to my wife, “How in the heck did this happen to me, that I went in the Marine Corps, went through the boots, up to Philadelphia, played ball, bango, bango, I’m on a ship.” And all the other guys had to go out and get their heads beat in, and all shook up. Then when I tell guys, they say, “What?! You were on a ship that long?” I says, “Don’t ask me. That was where they put me, and that was where I had to stay.” I was the longest of our group that stayed on.

T: The longest?

W: Yes. Especially because of the way they were shifting. We had just got out in the Pacific, and guys came on out in Leyte Gulf [Philippines]. They came on the ship, and replaced one-third of our crew, and they went into the infantry. Why the hell didn’t I go? Alphabetically it must have been, because Lou Vrog and I both, he was “V” and I’m “R”. (laughs) And hell, were they on us! “Stop complaining, you haven’t got it so good.” I didn’t realize then how lucky I was, but now, more and more. Earlier, after we were married, our first year and a half or two years, I used to tell my brothers,
“How in the hell did I ever get that?” And my oldest brother says, “He was looking after you.” I said, “Well, why me?” I don’t know how it happened.

T: Mr. Radosevich, thank you very much for the interview.

END OF INTERVIEW