

## VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT

**Veteran's Name: Louis R. Perez**

**Interviewer: David Meyer (O'Shea)**

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**Transcriber: Carol Slezak**

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**Interviewer:** I'm David Meyer O'Shea, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry. Today is July 15<sup>th</sup>, 2010. It's 10:17 in the morning. We're in Union Station [Los Angeles], right near the entrance to the Metro red and gold lines, and today I have the great pleasure of conducting an interview with — Sir, could you say your name?

**Louis Perez:** Louis R. Perez.

**Interviewer:** And Mr. Perez, could you spell your last name?

**Louis Perez:** P-e-r-e-z.

**Interviewer:** And also sitting here is Mrs. Perez.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And you just came back from a reunion?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, a reunion in Chicago, Illinois.

**Interviewer:** Chicago, and Indianapolis?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And Indianapolis. And that the reunion of your shipmates from what ship?

**Louis Perez:** The USS Sheridan, APA 51. That's Amphibious Personnel Attack ship.

**Interviewer:** At the beginning of these interviews, I ask a few basic questions, and then I loop back. What was your birth date?

**Louis Perez:** Six, ten, twenty-five. [June 10, 1925.]

**Interviewer:** What branch of the service were you in?

**Louis Perez:** The U.S. Navy.

**Interviewer:** And we're talking about which World War?

**Louis Perez:** World War II.

**Interviewer:** What was your final rank?

**Louis Perez:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Class Boatswain's Mate.

**Interviewer:** And what's your address?

**Louis Perez:** My address is 3208 East Avenue, S-1, Carmel, California.

**Interviewer:** And your zip code?

**Louis Perez:** 93550.

**Interviewer:** And from what I saw with the Sheridan, it looks like your service dates, at least on the Sheridan, may have been from September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1943, to March 1<sup>st</sup>, '46. Does that make sense?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** When did you join the service?

**Louis Perez:** On June the 10<sup>th</sup>, 1943. I was in the, I think it was the 11<sup>th</sup> grade, and there was an army officer talking to all the students to tell us to be prepared to go in the army as soon as we graduated. And I went home and told my mother that I wanted to quit high school, because I didn't want to go in the army. I wanted to go in the U.S. Navy. And she said, If that's what you want, do it. And I quit high school. And when I came back from the navy — I don't know how they got my...that I was back — they called my mother. They said, Is he back? My mother said he just got back a month ago. And they wanted to know if I wanted my high school diploma. And I told them no, I didn't want it.

**Interviewer:** So what made you want to go into the navy? Why the navy?

**Louis Perez:** Because I told my mother if — you know you're fighting and it's hand-to-hand. I said I don't want to do that, I want to go in the navy. And she said, Go ahead. And my mother and my dad took me to the union station on a certain date. I forget the date, but I can get that information for you. And she said, Go ahead son. Join the navy.

**Interviewer:** Which union station? This one right here?

**Louis Perez:** This one, yes.

**Interviewer:** So back in June of 1943, if we were here, we could see you walking through this station.

**Louis Perez:** This whole area here when we came out of boot camp, it was loaded, completely loaded, of U.S. sailors.

**[TIME 5:00]**

**Interviewer:** Really, this whole area?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. And they didn't want us in here; they wanted us in that area, just on the other side of that wall.

**Interviewer:** Oh, outside, in the courtyard.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, outside. It was full.

**Interviewer:** And they didn't want you sitting down in here?

**Louis Perez:** No, they didn't want us to be in here. So when I was here I called my dad and mom. And at that time they had party lines, and I couldn't get a hold of my mother and my dad to come here, to see me go away [laughs].

**Interviewer:** No! Oh, that's too bad.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** I'm going to loop back for a second. Where were you born?

**Louis Perez:** I was born here in California. In Los Angeles.

**Interviewer:** Were you born in downtown Los Angeles?

**Louis Perez:** No, it was...

**Mrs. Perez:** They call it the Compton District.

**Louis Perez:** The Compton District?

**Mrs. Perez:** Yes.

**Louis Perez:** It was a little town — Watts, California.

**Interviewer:** So you were born in Watts when it was just a little town. And know it's synonymous with the scariest things in Los Angeles.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. It was nothing but Mexicans people and black people living in the town.

**Interviewer:** Did people get along?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. It was a little town.

**Interviewer:** What were your parents' names?

**Louis Perez:** My mother's name was Rosa (PH), Rose. And my dad was Miguel Perez.

**Interviewer:** Where were they born?

**Louis Perez:** They were born in Mexico. Came over here in 1917 from Mexico when the United States opened the borders because they didn't have enough employees to work in the farms. So they let them in, and my dad was working in ... that little town we went to see [discussing with wife].

**Mrs. Perez:** Oxnard.

**Louis Perez:** Oxnard. That's where they went. And my dad went and left my mother when I was a little kid.

**Interviewer:** And he worked up in the farms in Oxnard?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. They used to call it "Awk-iz-nyard." [Says this with Spanish inflection, laughs.]

**Interviewer:** Did you visit him there at all?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** So he'd go up there, and then come back...

**Louis Perez:** Yes, he'd come back.

**Interviewer:** How often?

**Louis Perez:** Once a week.

**Interviewer:** Did you have any brothers and sisters?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. Henrietta and Mike.

**Interviewer:** Where were you in the order?

**Louis Perez:** I'm the oldest.

**Interviewer:** And did you have any nicknames growing up?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Mrs. Perez:** Lunkhead. [Lughead?]

**Louis Perez:** Oh yeah, Lunkhead [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Why'd they call you...?

**Louis Perez:** I don't know why [laughs].

**Interviewer:** OK, OK. So you were born in 1925, making you 16 when Pearl Harbor was attacked. Do you remember that day?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** What do you remember?

**Louis Perez:** Well like I said we had a boys' assembly, and they said to be prepared to go in the army. And I went home and told my mother that I wanted to go in the navy. So I went to the navy recruiting station in Compton. They said come back in two months, or a month, or whatever. And I went back home and told them I wanted to join the navy.

**Interviewer:** So that was after Pearl Harbor, and you were filled with spirit. What did your father think about that?

**Louis Perez:** Nothing. He said, Go ahead son, you want to join the navy? He said, Go ahead and join the navy.

**[TIME 10:00]**

**Interviewer:** Did your brother join too?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Mrs. Perez:** Because he's 11 years younger than you.

**Louis Perez:** He's 11 years younger than I am.

**Interviewer:** So when you joined, what happened that first day?

**Louis Perez:** Like I said, they came here to see me go away at Union Station. ... What's the name of that [to wife]?

**Mrs. Perez:** The Federal Building.

**Louis Perez:** The Federal Building. We came there and that place was full of sailors! And this one guy came in and they pushed one side, the right side and the left side, and they said, He's going to ... the Great Lakes. And these people go to San Diego [laughs]. And that's how they did it. The guy came through — San Diego, and Indianapolis.

**Interviewer:** And you ended up going to San Diego.

**Louis Perez:** San Diego. The first day we had food and I guess there was an officer that was watching us. And I was always heaving because they had that "shit on a shingle," is that what it was called? And I'd eat it — I'd force myself to eat it — and then on the way back I'd heave. And this officer kept on watching me. And he said, What's wrong with you son?

I said: I can't eat that stuff.

He said: What did you eat at home?

I said: Beans and tortillas, every day [laughs].

**Interviewer:** That's a big change. Was that boot camp? Do you remember anything about boot camp?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah that was boot camp, where we were.

**Interviewer:** Was the physical training easy or hard for you?

**Louis Perez:** No, it wasn't hard, no. I mean, they put you on your knees, or stand up and then you clap your hand...Push-ups [clapping hands in mid-air]. ... Oh, and there's one sailor that we used to go and undress, and naked. You'd jump out of your bed, they'd come wake you up, and there's a chief petty officer always looking at you. And this guy wouldn't take his pants off [laughs]. You know, you'd go off to the showers and come back and dry, and then make your bunk.

**Interviewer:** So the guy who wouldn't take his pants off...

**Louis Perez:** No. He was scared [laughs]. So they let him go. They discharged him.

**Interviewer:** That's a great story. Was it strange that first night in a big barracks with strangers? What was it like?

**Mrs. Perez:** Was that where they had all the Coke machines?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. It was a big place, like an apartment, in San Diego. And it started off with Camp 1, Camp 2, Camp 3. You started here, and learned all this stuff about the navy, and then you'd advance to the second, and then go to the third one. And from that you finished that program and they reassign you to a barracks. And every morning we used to go from boot camp to — what's the name of that town [thinking]?

**[TIME 15:00]**

We were in San Diego, and we'd run about a mile and a half, or two miles, every morning. And there was a big, large swimming pool. That swimming pool was big. And you had your sailor uniform, your blouse and your trousers, and they'd make you jump...high, and jump off the platform, and then you had to take your shoes and everything under there, and clothes, and then get your blouse and tie it, and bring it up like this, and float.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so you had to jump into the water as though you had to abandon ship. And then you had to take off your shoes, your blouse, and wrap it around and hold them and float.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did those things help you float?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, it helps to tie your blouse together and get it like this...

**Interviewer:** And you had to jump...

**Louis Perez:** Well, it's about this high.

**Interviewer:** About as high as this ceiling.

**Louis Perez:** Well, maybe 20 feet.

**Interviewer:** So as though you're jumping off the deck of a ship.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, and it was a mile and a half from boot camp. And I think it was ... there were three camps, John Paul Jones I think was the last one. I have all of that information at home.

**Interviewer:** When we meet again we can look at some of that if you want. Now, when do you get assigned to the Sheridan? Or what happens next after the third camp?

**Louis Perez:** Well we went through different — it was about a mile and a half or two miles from boot camp, and to the north of the highway there was how to shoot a rifle.

**Interviewer:** Had you ever shot a rifle before?

**Louis Perez:** No. And I couldn't close one eye [laughs]. I couldn't close one eye. And the guy kicked me and said, What's wrong with you son? And I said I couldn't close one eye [laughs]. ... I don't know what side it was. He kicked me and said, What's wrong with you son? I said, I can't close my eye [laughs].

**Interviewer:** So did you end up getting alright with the rifle?

**Louis Perez:** Well, yeah. You can't shoot a rifle, so they just let it go.

**Interviewer:** Because you're in the navy, you're on a boat. It's not like you're a rifleman in the army.

**Louis Perez:** Right.

**Interviewer:** Had you been on ships before?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Mrs. Perez:** Tell him about your training on the LCM {Landing Craft Mechanized}. ... On that beach where the real fancy hotel is.

**Louis Perez:** Oh, when we got aboard the ship I wasn't assigned to the landing craft. But the night before our first invasion of Tarawa a guy fell off and broke his ankle. So in San Diego during boot camp I drove an LCM, and ...

**Interviewer:** For those people who don't know, LCM stands for landing craft...

**Louis Perez:** Mechanized. Because you could put a tank, a 20 thousand pound tank on this... You'd beach it, and sometimes they'd have to pull you off, because the tide went out.

**Interviewer:** So when you were in San Diego you learned how to...

**Louis Perez:** Drive an LCM. And there in boot camp they had little boats made out of wood and you'd haul them around. And they'd give you one, two, three; three lights. And you'd have to answer with two — one, two.

**[TIME 20:00]**

**Interviewer:** What did two mean?

**Louis Perez:** Two said that you received his message to go into the harbor in San Diego. Because in San Diego we'd go out into the ocean, and come around, and have practice landings on the beach. What was the name of the beach, Coronado [to wife]?

**Mrs. Perez:** Yes.



**Interviewer:** It could be Coronado, sure. Near where the hotel is.

**Louis Perez:** Yes. And then when you go back into the harbor they're challenging you to see that you wasn't the enemy. You know, so they'd give you three lights, and then you'd give two.

**Interviewer:** When they challenge you, is that through the lights also?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So you'd give them three lights.

**Louis Perez:** And you'd give them two.

**Interviewer:** And how did they respond then?

**Louis Perez:** That's it. And then you just go in.

**Interviewer:** And if you're the enemy...

**Louis Perez:** You don't know what to do.

**Interviewer:** You don't know what the signal is. And you're in little, wooden boats while you're doing that?

**Mrs. Perez:** You said it's like a toy.

**Louis Perez:** When we were practicing in San Diego they'd give you a little, shaped like a little ship, and you'd haul it around on the sand.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so they'd give you a toy, and you'd just haul it around the sand and practice.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Really! So they give you a toy, and you move it around in the sand, and then you would graduate to the boats?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And how long were the boats then?

**Louis Perez:** They were about 30' by 20' wide.

**Interviewer:** And how many of you were on them?

**Louis Perez:** The motor mac [motor machinist mate], two seamen and a coxswain. And the coxswain's the one who drives the landing craft.

**Interviewer:** And were you the coxswain?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. The night before the invasion of Tarawa, the guy fell off and broke his ankle — the guy that was supposed to drive the boat.

**Interviewer:** And you took over?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. Well they said, Who drove an LCM. And I said I did. I don't know why. They called us. I didn't know why they called us. Eddie Albert the movie star, they called us and said, Who drove an LCM. And I raised my hand. I didn't know what it was for. So I took the landing craft to Red Beach 3.

**Interviewer:** I'm going to skip ahead...

**Louis Perez:** I drove — D-Day I, the battleships, and the cruisers were just shelling the island.

**Interviewer:** So they're shelling the island, and you're coming in, and you're driving the...

**Louis Perez:** No. Wait awhile, until they get the all clear that the beaches are safe to land. I drove the LCM on Red Beach 3, and there was a doctor. And on the other side of the doctor was a merchant ship or a Japanese ship that kept on shooting at us all night. ... It had been sunk; it had been hit.

**Interviewer:** And so what was on your LCM when you were dropping it off? Tanks?

**Louis Perez:** There's a tank, and let's see, there's two seamen, a motor mac, and the driver of the landing craft.

**Interviewer:** So the LCM, is it on a deck of the Sheridan?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, on hatch no. 3. There's two LCMs on hatch no. 3.

**Interviewer:** And to get in the water...

**Louis Perez:** They hoist a 30-ton boom. And then drop you down in the water. And then you go around in circles until all the boats are on the water, and then somebody gives you the okay to go.

**Interviewer:** So when the boom picks you up are you already in the LCM?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you're in the LCM and this boom comes up and lifts you up and drops you in the water...

**[TIME 25:00]**

**Louis Perez:** Yes. There's two LCMs on the no. 3 hatch.

**Interviewer:** And then you go around...

**Louis Perez:** Around and around in circles. And I have pictures of that.

**Interviewer:** That will be great to see. In addition to the two LCMs you also had other landing craft on the Sheridan, didn't you?

**Louis Perez:** How many aircraft [to wife]?

**Mrs. Perez:** Well there was no aircraft, honey.

**Interviewer:** I mean other landing craft.

**Louis Perez:** Oh, okay [thinking]. On hatch no. 1, there's two LCVPs.

**Interviewer:** And that stands for landing craft...

**Louis Perez:** Vehicles.

**Interviewer:** Okay.

**Louis Perez:** No. 2 hatch there's also two LCVPs. No. 3 hatch is two LCMs. And no. 4 hatch there's two LCVPs. Yeah, that's it.

**Interviewer:** I want to talk about Tarawa. It says you arrived off Tarawa early on Nov. 20, 1943, began debarking groups shortly after noon and cargo in mid-afternoon. And then the next day you began debarking troops, boats, and casualties. And then you sailed back on Nov. 24<sup>th</sup>. So you're there around four days. Did you have to go back to the beach and pick up any casualties?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Tell me about that trip if you can.

**Mrs. Perez:** When it when those marines got on board and said, Wait, wait!? When the marines were putting red crosses on the injured?

**Louis Perez:** Oh yeah. There was a lot of injured marines and they put a cross on their forehead.

**Interviewer:** So you came back to the ship, then you went back to pick them up? Or did you wait there?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, you circle around until all the injured are picked up. Then you just go around there and then you wait there until they call you to go alongside the ship.

**Interviewer:** During this time was there still shelling and gunfire?

**Louis Perez:** No. There was some shelling but they didn't want to shell in there because you're in there picking up marines and everything.

**Interviewer:** So are the Japanese inland?

**Louis Perez:** There was a big bunker, a seamen bunker on the west side or the east side, I don't know. And they went in there, they were throwing hand grenades. And that wasn't doing anything. So they got these ... some tanks inherited ... the ... gun — it shoots flames.

**Interviewer:** Sure, a flame thrower kind of tank.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. And they burned them up alive in there.

**Interviewer:** So that's how they got them.

**Louis Perez:** Yes. Because that bunker was completely down — all they had was an opening to see out to the ocean.

**Interviewer:** How far were you on the beach from the bunker?

**Louis Perez:** Oh it's about a mile and a half, or a mile.

**Interviewer:** So you could hear the fighting going on.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Mrs. Perez:** Tell him about how the Japanese were shooting at you, too. The bullets were flying by. Remember?

**Louis Perez:** Oh yes, they were shooting at us. They made it difficult for the landing crafts to hit the beach because they had these logs. And the marines couldn't jump over the logs because if you jumped over you'd show your body and they'd shoot at you.

**[TIME 30:00]**

So finally they got them flame throwers that go way over and burned them all alive.

**Interviewer:** Oh so the Japanese are hiding and they're hoping the marines go over the logs, but then they bring in the flamethrowers and they shoot over the logs and burn the people. So those flames when they shot over the logs, they went a long way?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. They had tanks back there in the back. And they'd go in there, get so close, and they'd shoot those flamethrowers and they'd go way in there. And there's a lot of them that came out; they'd wait a while to see if they'd come out. There was a lot of them that came out; they were ...

**Interviewer:** Were they natives or were they Japanese?

**Louis Perez:** They were natives; I think they were natives. They lived on the island. And they came out with their hands up. I don't know if it was the east or the west. They didn't even shoot them. They were working for the Japanese. They had them working as slaves.

**Interviewer:** How were they dressed? What did they look like?

**Louis Perez:** They had little shirt pants — well they weren't really pants, they were just like a rag you'd turn around so you wouldn't show your testicles. And a lot of them came to the beach and they were raising their hands up and they took them aboard ship.

**Interviewer:** When you come back and pick up the casualties, are the casualties on the beach?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Do you help load them on?

**Louis Perez:** They had the marines bring them in.

**Interviewer:** And how many do you think they were able to bring in?

**Louis Perez:** Oh, quite a bit.

**Interviewer:** Like, 30 or 50?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. And they weren't really Japanese. They were some kind of race.

**Interviewer:** Okay, so they're natives — but are you bringing back marines, too?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you're bringing back a mixture of the natives and the marines, and some of the marines are wounded.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And all this time, people occasionally will be shooting at you still.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Mrs. Perez:** Tell him when the tide went out.

**Interviewer:** Oh, when the tide went out I was on Red Beach 3 taking marines in there, and the tide went out and I got beached on the beach. The LCM carries a tank. I sat there all night, and they were shooting at us.

**Interviewer:** You must have felt like a sitting duck.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. I had all their names — the guys that I worked with. And I went to see one of them and he told me, I want to thank you Perez for taking care of us. I said, I didn't take care of you — we did the job that we were supposed to do.

And I went to Washington. And we sat down and I treated him to lunch, or breakfast. And he said, Good to see you, Perez. And I said, Good to see you.

**Interviewer:** Well you know I talked to some people who were part of the Normandy Invasion. And I understand you saying that you're just doing your job, but I know some of the people were scared by shooting. Some said that the people who were in charge of their landing craft didn't want to go to the shore. So they dropped them off in water that was too deep and they saw a lot of their friends drown. So by going up to the beach you did your job.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah we hit the beach all the time.

**Interviewer:** In Tarawa how many trips did you make back and forth?

**Louis Perez:** Oh about six or seven times. The ship's about a mile and a half, then you take the wounded, and they pick them up. And somewhere in the house I have a picture of one [guy] that had oil all over his face, and he burned. And they were bringing him up.

**[TIME 35:00]**

**Interviewer:** When you're steering the LCM are you inside?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, on the LCM when the driver's on, there's a compartment. Just like this here [3'x3' space, so you won't get hit]. And the motor mac's down in the engine room. And then the other two seamen they're in back of me [they're outside]. It's like this: we're driving and the two seamen are back here.

**Interviewer:** Are they in a room of their own?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** They're just standing outside in the open area.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, right.

**Interviewer:** That's a great description. When I was at the D-Day Museum, they had those Higgins crafts, which are like LCMs in a way. But I didn't know where you stood, or where you were.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, an enclosed area that has a little slot [so you can see]. The two seamen are in the back of me, but they're outside the little compartment where you're steering the ship.

**Interviewer:** So your job is to steer the ship and get it there. What was the seamen's job?

**Louis Perez:** Well they'd throw lines out to anybody that wants.

**Interviewer:** Okay. And then you had a man in the engine room.

**Louis Perez:** Yes. In the motor mac.

**Mrs. Perez:** Tell him when you couldn't get the gate back up again until the motor mac came up to help you, or you came helped him bring the gate back up. Was that at Tarawa?

**Louis Perez:** Well the gate that you dropped down, we couldn't bring it up. So I had two seamen help me bring it back up. There's a crank that you have to bring it up — it isn't automatic.

**Interviewer:** Was that the time when it was beached? Why couldn't you bring it back up?

**Louis Perez:** Stuck or something.

**Interviewer:** So all three of you turned the crank?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, right [laughs].

**Interviewer:** I'm going to loop back just for a second and ask you a question. When were you first assigned to the Sheridan? Were you in San Diego?

**Mrs. Perez:** You went to Camp Pleasanton from San Diego. You went by train to Camp Pleasanton. That's in the Oakland area. Remember you said that that man kept saying, Welcome to Camp Pleasanton! And there was nothing but tents, like that TV show. Remember?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And they assigned you to ships from there?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** How long were you in Camp Pleasanton?

**Louis Perez:** I think it was a week, wasn't it?

**Mrs. Perez:** You told me before it was like three days.

**Louis Perez:** Oh, three days.

**Interviewer:** And was the commander's name Mockrish?

**Mrs. Perez:** Yes, Captain Mockrish.

**Louis Perez:** Oh, the captain.

**Mrs. Perez:** He was already in San Francisco.

**Louis Perez:** Mockrish.

**Interviewer:** And while I'm thinking of it, did you like him? What did you think of him as a commanding officer?

**Louis Perez:** A good sailor. A good officer.

**Interviewer:** What made a good officer?

**Louis Perez:** I don't know — I guess it's a rank.

**Interviewer:** A rank, but did you ever have a commanding officer who didn't know what he was doing?

**[TIME 40:00]**

**Louis Perez:** Well there was one officer that — he didn't know what the hell he was doing. I don't know how he got his rank as an officer. But I was up on the bridge and we were going through an area that had been torpedoed a lot. The ships were torpedoed. And we would have exercises. And there's two boatswain mates, two people, on watch. And he'd take it for an hour, and the other one would rest. And we were going through this area where a lot of ships had been torpedoed.

And I was steering the ship at that time. And I was switching the fore turn to the aft steering, and he said, You're doing it wrong Perez!

So I backed up, stood at attention, and then he started turning it the other way.

And then the other officer came out, and he said, McKenry (PH), you're doing it wrong!



And I wouldn't laugh but I wanted to bust out laughing [laughs]. It was good.

**Interviewer:** How many men were on the Sheridan?

**Louis Perez:** Well I guess it was about ...

**Mrs. Perez:** About 600, honey.

**Louis Perez:** Five hundred. About 500.

**Interviewer:** So did you get to know everybody?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, you know everybody, because... The ship is divided in half. Some people, which they called the first division, would sleep up forward. Like I said, no. 1 hatch, there was about four boats on one side and four boats on the other side. And no. 2 hatch, the same thing — two LCVPs, small landing crafts, two on that side and two on the other side. ... [interrupted by someone at train station making noise] ...

**Interviewer:** So you have the first division...

**Louis Perez:** Yes, the middle of the ship. The bridge is here, that's first division, second division.

**Interviewer:** Were you usually with one or the other?

**Louis Perez:** No, you're always on the same division.

**Interviewer:** And which were you?

**Louis Perez:** First division, forward of the bridge. The bridge is there, and all of the enlisted men sleep forward of the bridge.

**Interviewer:** And what were your main duties on the ship when you weren't in combat?

**Louis Perez:** Well I wasn't assigned to anything until this guy fell off the landing craft one night ... and broke his ankle. And then Mr. Heimberger, Eddie Albert the movie star, said, Is there anybody here that drove an LCM? And I raised my hand and said, Yeah, I have.

And he said, Tomorrow you're going on first wave to the island.

**Interviewer:** And what was Mr. Heimberger, Eddie Albert, what was his rank?

**Louis Perez:** Lieutenant.

**Interviewer:** He was a lieutenant on the Sheridan.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Did he ever come to any reunions?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Mrs. Perez:** He was too ill. We talked with him and he said to give his love to all the guys who were there, but he couldn't make it. The first reunion was in Des Moines, Iowa. He decided he wanted it in the middle of the country, to pull all the guys.

But tell him you steered the ship — that was one of your duties.

**[TIME 45:00]**

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, I steered a ship, that was my duty.

**Interviewer:** That's an important duty.

**Louis Perez:** Well, you know you have an officer in charge and a quartermaster. The quartermaster is supposed to know where you are at that time. They have a .. something where they look at the stars.

**Interviewer:** Like a sextant?

**Mrs. Perez:** Yes.

**Louis Perez:** They look at the North Star, and from there they find out where it's at, and then they go look at the chart, where you're at actually.

**Interviewer:** So when you're steering, are you up on the bridge?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, you're up on the bridge. Two people. [Him and another seaman.]

**Interviewer:** Are you up on the very top?

**Louis Perez:** Right on the top of the ship. This is up on the bridge where the quartermaster is, and the chart room — it's right there on the side. And the radio man is right in back of you. It's like a small compartment. The wheel's there, then you have the radio man in back of you, then the chart room; they'd look at the North Star and get a bearing on — what do they call that, I forget.

**Interviewer:** A sextant, I think.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, and then they go in there and actually find out where you're at.

**Interviewer:** You didn't grow up around the sea. What did you think of the ocean? Did you like it? Did you take to it right away?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. It was your job. You're young, you don't know what the hell... You're young, they tell you what to do, and you do it.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember anything while you were out there that caught your attention — sunsets, beauty, whales? I know you were young and just doing your job, but did you ever go out on the deck at night in the dark and just see the stars? I haven't been out on a ship at night, so I wonder what that's like.

**Mrs. Perez:** I love the full moon. So I asked him, Didn't you see the full moon when you were out at sea, nobody around? And he said he didn't like it, because it seemed to follow him.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah [laughs]. ... Everything's lit up. Well, I mean it's — really you don't know but they have curtains on board the ship.

**Interviewer:** Where did you sleep on the bridge?

**Louis Perez:** Forward of the bridge.

**Interviewer:** How many people were in your cabin?

**Louis Perez:** Oh, about 200.

**Interviewer:** So it's a big room?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, it's a big room.

**Interviewer:** Do you have cots, or hammocks, or what?

**Louis Perez:** Hammocks. They have a steel pole, then when you sleep you bring it down. And there's one, two, three [three hammocks high].

**Interviewer:** What was the food like on board?

**Louis Perez:** Good. Well, I mean I got used to it.

**Interviewer:** So after a while the "shit on a shingle" didn't bother you?

**Louis Perez:** No, it still bothered me. ... On the ship you've got the starboard side and the port side. The starboard side goes first and then the port side goes next. You ask the guys that come down after they have breakfast and you say, What are they serving? And they'd say, Shit on a shingle. You [would just stay asleep and not bother with breakfast].

**[TIME 50:00]**

**Interviewer:** So were you the port side?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So anytime they had “shit on a shingle” you would stay asleep.

**Louis Perez:** I’d stay in bed [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Did they have Coke machines on the ship?

**Louis Perez:** They had a canteen. The canteen is after the bridge; the bridge is here. Where the officers would sleep on either starboard or port side. Then they had a canteen down on the second deck. And you’d go buy cigarettes or whatever you want. The cigarettes used to be six cents for a pack. That’s why you see these movies and a sailor is going to transfer and they say, What are you going to buy? I’m going to buy a lot of cigarettes. And they take them out to an island, and they sell them. ... That’s what they do.

**Interviewer:** Sometimes I ask questions that I know some of the answers for, but because I think people who might listen to this in the future might not know. So I know after you got on the Sheridan initially you took a little training cruise from Oakland/San Francisco for a couple days. You took a shakedown cruise. Your first days on the ship, did it take you a while to get your sea legs? Did you have any trouble with seasickness at all?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** Did any of the men?

**Louis Perez:** There were some of them that got sick, but I never did.

**Interviewer:** So you were lucky, too.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** You sort of took to it.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** When you first got on the ship, how long was it before they gave you the job steering the ship?

**Louis Perez:** I don’t know. I don’t know why they gave me the job. They gave me the job to steer the ship, I don’t know why, I can’t remember. But they used to put another Mexican guy on, and he’d always screw up.

**Interviewer:** He would? By turning the wheel ...

**Louis Perez:** Yeah [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Where there a lot of different ways to screw up?

**Louis Perez:** I don't know why they put this Mexican guy. He lived out in Santa Monica. And I went to visit him one time. And ... Benny Montoya (PH), that was his name. I visited him, and then I went the second time to visit him and he'd passed away. You know you're really lucky when you got discharged. We got into a medical plan that [he didn't like]. And I told my wife, I don't want to go to that damn hospital anymore. Let's go to Kaiser Permanente. And we signed up, best insurance I have now.

**Interviewer:** So you don't go to the veteran's hospital anymore.

**Louis Perez:** No. I mean, if I get sick they'll send me to the hospital. Kaiser Permanente is one of the best insurance companies there is. I know my doctor. He was a lieutenant in the navy. ...

**-end part 1, start part 2 -**

**Interviewer:** When you were in the service, were you ever wounded?

**Louis Perez:** No, I never was wounded.

**Interviewer:** I was on the USS Missouri last January. And my brother was walking around, and didn't look where he was walking, and there were 1,000 places to trip. And he tripped, and hit his knee on something. Did you always have to watch out where you were walking? It seems like there's a lot of places to hit your head or hurt yourself on a ship.

**Louis Perez:** Well, every department has a door to get in, and you have to raise your leg to go over it. Because if they give the alarm that we're going to be attacked, everyone closes the hatches.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember the first time they gave the alarm like that?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah but it was just practice. They always kept you informed with that information.

**Interviewer:** So you had good training.

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** When you were at Tarawa, did shells come close?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, Tarawa.

**Interviewer:** Would they have said you were under attack and rung the bell then?

**Louis Perez:** No, there was a — we had several breaks. There was one guy that used to come in at night. I guess it was a Japanese plane. And they'd shoot at us. But I wasn't on the sand, the marines were already there. They used to call him "Washing Machine Charlie."

**Interviewer:** The guy who came in at night?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah [laughs].

**Interviewer:** And he'd circle the beach, or would he come out to the ship and shoot at you?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah...I guess about a mile out. Washing Machine Charlie, that's what they called him. He'd come at night. I don't know where he came from.

And after they secured that and there was a lot of natives — I don't know what nationality they were but they were working for the Japs. They were making them work for the Japanese on Tarawa. And they were real happy that we took over the island, and it was all due to those flamethrowers. Because that bunker, I don't know — it was thick, and it had a big opening to look out. And they had them flamethrowers and they'd shoot the fire in.

**Interviewer:** So you were on the beach in an LCM, and you'd see these guys shooting the flames?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah

**Interviewer:** And then was the battle still going on when you left to go back?

**Louis Perez:** You'd go back at night. In the evening. After the island was secured. But there was another Washing Machine Charlie before we left. He'd come out at night and start shooting everybody. And I have pictures of Mr. Heimberger, Eddie Albert the movie star, taking survivors on these big floating beds.

**Interviewer:** So you'd put them on a floating bed?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. They put all the wounded and take them out to the — hook up this floating thing, take them out to the ships and they'd pick up the wounded.

**Interviewer:** How many wounded would fit on this floating wharf?

**Louis Perez:** About 20. It's like a big life raft. It's big.

**[TIME 5:00]**

**Interviewer:** Were you ever caught in any storms out at sea?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. When we went to Australia. We went to New Caledonia, and there were some black people, black natives, they were real dark and red. And they were working for the United States.

**Interviewer:** Where they wearing loin cloths, too?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, little pants. And they said never have sex with them [laughs]. Every time you'd go they'd say, Don't have sex with them. And they were real dark. They were so dark they were kind of reddish.

**Interviewer:** Did you go there for R&R?

**Louis Perez:** No, we got off on the beach, liberty in Australia.

**Interviewer:** Did you like Australia?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** What did you do for relaxation during R&R? Would you go try to find the natives?

**Louis Perez:** No, because they always told us don't ever mess with them [laughs] — you'd die.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that you'd get some sort of disease.

**Louis Perez:** Yes. Some did, and they'd come back with the ... what the hell did they call it?

**Interviewer:** Like the clap...

**Louis Perez:** Yes, that's it. The clap. Yes, several got it. They didn't say "the clap," they said something else. Two words. Yeah, they were infested.

**Interviewer:** If you think of those two words, tell me later on. But for you, you're a young man, you get to Australia, and you have a little leave. What do you do?

**Louis Perez:** Well I bought their newspaper — I still got it in my house. I saved all that stuff. I don't know what for [laughs] — other than give it to an organization.

**Interviewer:** You know what? I can talk to the Veterans History Project and see what sort of things they keep, just in case you want to give some things to the Library of Congress. I know they take original letters, I think they take maps. There's a whole list of things. Extra photographs, manuscripts, diaries, service records...

**Louis Perez:** Well like I said, this officer that really liked me a lot, gave me a lot of things. The Whalen family. And I got a book that's already been copied.

**Mrs. Perez:** It's on the Sheridan website, too.

**Interviewer:** Good!

**Louis Perez:** And you can get that stuff off the internet.

**[TIME 10:00]**

**Interviewer:** Great. I know that after Tarawa you went to Hawaii for a little bit. When you pulled into Pearl Harbor, where there still any remnants of the Arizona poking out of the harbor?

**Louis Perez:** It was all torn up. At first when you go into the harbor ... you go in and the USS Shaw is the first one that's all tore up. I forget the other names of the ships but as you go in you can see all of that.

**Interviewer:** What do you think when you see that?

**Louis Perez:** Well the last time I was there ...

**Mrs. Perez:** No, at that time, honey. When you were coming back from Tarawa, what did you think?

**Louis Perez:** Some of the guys we saw like the I think it was the Oklahoma first, no, the Shaw's first, the Oklahoma, and the Arizona ... the Utah... they were real bad.

**Interviewer:** All wrecked and sticking out of the water?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** You know they still have oil coming up from the Arizona.

**Louis Perez:** They say that, yes.

**Interviewer:** I was there in January visiting my brother, and I was on the Missouri in dry dock. They moved it from dry dock, towed it across Pearl Harbor, and put it back next to the Arizona. They said it was going to take four hours. It took 10 hours, because they'd never had anything that big in dry dock. And someone heard the person who was trying to take it out say, Forward ahead two feet, stop two feet. It just kept changing because they had to go back and forth.

But when you're up there steering the ship are you getting your directions from...?

**Louis Perez:** From the captain. From the officer on the deck.

**Interviewer:** And where is he?



**Louis Perez:** Up on the bridge. And he's got the ... he's on the deck and they got their chart room, then right in the middle of the bridge is the officer of the deck. He's there.

**Interviewer:** And where are you compared to him?

**Louis Perez:** In the center. Back of me there's a radio man.

**Interviewer:** So the captain is giving you the commands. And you control the speed too?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** Was there ever a time when things got confusing up there?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** And you had to keep a calm head no matter what.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Was Tarawa where the enemy shells hit about 100 yards away from the Sheridan?

**Louis Perez:** Yes I got all wet. I was on the LCM and I was circling around and the steering, when you're in a battle zone they tell you where to go around. And like I said they give you two blinks and then you pull around the starboard side or the port side, then they tell you where to go. And they throw the lines to hold the landing craft from going out. Then the marines they go down the net.

**[TIME 15:00]**

And once in a while these real rough waves and they go up, the boat goes up and down.

**Interviewer:** So where there ever any injuries with the marines coming on?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** So the boat's going up and down, and up and down. And you have a strong stomach, that's a blessing.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah [laughs].

**Interviewer:** So were you on the LCM when the shells hit near the Sheridan?

**Louis Perez:** No, but the captain was really anxious to get out of there.

**Interviewer:** Now you said the water splashed up on you?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Was that when the shells hit?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. I was on the stern going around and around, waiting for them to call me. Then a shell came in from the island, and the water went way up, and I remember [someone] saying, Hey Perez you got your ass all wet [laughs]! You know, I really was scared, but after a while you're not scared. You're gonna get hit, you're gonna get hit.

**Interviewer:** Before I forget, you went to a lot of places. You went to Kwajalein, right?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. Oh, what happened there is they took me off the boats. And they put me up on the 5-inch gun forward. And they made a couple of landings. Maybe at the beach. But they put me up on the forward 5-inch gun.

**Interviewer:** And what was your job there?

**Louis Perez:** Catching the shells after they shoot it. You've got gloves. And when that casing comes back at you. Then you throw it over the side.

**Interviewer:** And is the casing hot?

**Louis Perez:** You've got to catch it just right [laughs]. You've got a vest [for protection].

**Interviewer:** Do you catch it right up against your chest?

**Louis Perez:** Well, you catch it on the side.

**Interviewer:** So they're shooting these guns and you're catching shells and you throw them over the side. Do they fire rapidly?

**Louis Perez:** Well, yes.

**Interviewer:** A couple times a minute?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So you're always catching.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, and throwing them overboard.

**Mrs. Perez:** Honey, how about that time when the ships were leaving and you guys were stuck on the coral?

**Interviewer:** Was that in Saipan?

**Louis Perez:** I don't know where it was; I forget.

**Interviewer:** But tell me about that — you were stuck on coral?

**Louis Perez:** Well the tide went out, and our ship got stuck. ... Okinawa, it was in Okinawa. ... [We were] stuck on the reef; and they called the ship and came and pulled us out. The first thing they've got a rifle that's got a weight; and as you're shooting you've got a line that goes way over here, then you start pulling one inch and then two inch. And then they tie it on to the back of the ship and you pull them back out.

**Interviewer:** That must have made you nervous.

**Louis Perez:** Well what was bad one time they changed the uniform of the marines. I can't really know what happened but they changed the uniform of the marines and a lot of marines got shot by our own people.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember where that was?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**[TIME 20:00]**

**Interviewer:** I see here [reading from research/Wikipedia] it says Kwajalein, January 8, 1944. After you came back from Pearl Harbor, you went back to San Diego, did some practice landings in Oceanside in December 1943.

**Louis Perez:** Yes, we did.

**Interviewer:** And you were there at the New Year, 1944; and you did exercises at San Clemente in January 1944. And then you received a combat loadout of troops and supplies, sailed from San Diego on January 13<sup>th</sup>, 1944. You stopped in Maui to refuel and arrived on the beaches of Kwajalein Atoll on January 31<sup>st</sup>. ...

**Louis Perez:** Kwajalein [correcting pronunciation].

**Interviewer:** Kwajalein. You participated at the landings at Roi. Sheridan remained at the beaches offloading cargo, and you acted as a temporary hospital ship, pending the arrival of the USS Solace. You were there from February 1<sup>st</sup> through February 8; then you took troops and cargo to Maui, and then moved to Pearl Harbor for repairs.

So sometimes the Sheridan would be like a hospital ship, was that true?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** So are the men just on the deck all the time?

**Louis Perez:** The wounded?

**Interviewer:** Yes, the wounded.

**Louis Perez:** No, they got compartments.

**Interviewer:** So was there ever a time you took in a lot of wounded?

**Louis Perez:** I think Okinawa. I can't remember really ... But the natives were jumping off this cliff. And there was a Mexican kid, and his parents died, and he was raised by a Japanese family. And he got on the microphone when the mothers and fathers were jumping off this cliff. I don't know where it was at.

**Mrs. Perez:** Saipan.

**Louis Perez:** Was it Saipan?

**Mrs. Perez:** Yes.

**Louis Perez:** And this Mexican guy was raised by a Japanese family because his mother died. And he started talking to them in Japanese. He said: Don't jump — the Americans are here to help you!

And they quit jumping.

**Interviewer:** Just because you said that?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. He said, I'm a Mexican...

**Mrs. Perez:** He was a Mexican-American from Los Angeles. His name was Galbaldone (PH).

**Louis Perez:** And they quit jumping.

**Interviewer:** Now was he on the Sheridan?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Mrs. Perez:** Oh, I don't know. I'm not sure about that, honey.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** But you were there and you heard him talking?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, I heard it.

**Interviewer:** Do you remember seeing those people jump?

**Louis Perez:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** It must have been horrible. What did you think?

**Louis Perez:** Well, you really don't think nothing. You're worried about getting hit. And on the island they had a, they dig a trench, and the Japanese would weave some kind of material that would cover the trench with a wrap, and when you're coming down they would start shooting at you, and they would kill a lot of them that way. So from then on when we were advancing everybody would start shooting.

And this one tie a lady started crying and she had a little child with her. And I didn't know — I know that she'd come out of there and they'd quit shooting at them. And this Mexican that was raised by a Japanese woman said, We're not going to harm you; we're here to help you. And they quit jumping.

**Mrs. Perez:** Tell him about the baby born on the ship. Was that Saipan? I don't know.

**Louis Perez:** What happened there?

**[TIME 25:00]**

**Mrs. Perez:** About the lady she was crying, and she was in pain. And Whalen and his medical group thought she looked like a Filipino-Japanese.

**Louis Perez:** And she gave birth. Oh, okay.

**Interviewer:** What happened?

**Louis Perez:** On the island of Saipan they made the invasion, and I can't remember...tell me.

**Mrs. Perez:** It was Mr. Whalen and a couple of the medical guys. ... And they heard this woman moaning and groaning.

**Louis Perez:** In Saipan, some of the officers got out and there was groaning, somebody groaning, on the beach. And they saw there was a woman. And she was giving birth to her child. And they took the lady on board ship. The captain got really p.o.'d. You're never supposed to take a woman on ship. That's a no-no [laughs]. They thought it was a Japanese woman, and it was a Filipino woman they took on board, and she gave birth to a little kid, a boy, and they named him Roberto Sheridan.

**Interviewer:** Oh, after the ship.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Mrs. Perez:** Kiobete (PH) was his last name.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, Kiobete.

**Interviewer:** How long did she stay on the ship after that?

**Louis Perez:** Until she got well. Then they sent her back to the island.

**Interviewer:** So the captain relented.

**Louis Perez:** Well, you know, he felt sorry for the woman. But the sailors thought it was a Japanese.

**Interviewer:** Oh, so if she had been Japanese they wouldn't have had sympathy?

**Louis Perez:** No. Well, I don't know what they would do.

**Mrs. Perez:** The chaplain baptized the baby.

**Louis Perez:** The chaplain baptized the baby. Roberto Sheridan. And we found out that he died of malnutrition.

**Mrs. Perez:** He was about seven years old.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, seven years old.

**Interviewer:** So somewhere around 1951 or 1952,

**Louis Perez:** Our lieutenant commander, he found out.

**Mrs. Perez:** Whalen's son, honey.

**Louis Perez:** Whalen's son? Yeah, he found out where he was buried at.

**Mrs. Perez:** You know, it's a small world, too, because Mr. Whalen and his family live in Florida, and the son shops a lot at ... WalMart. And he got friendly with one of the greeters, and one of the greeters was Filipino. And he got friendly with them and they were talking about vacations and stuff. And the Filipino man said that he was going on vacation to the Philippines, where he was from. Leyte, the island. And so the name clicked. So Mr. Whalen's son told him, Well that's where the ship went, and the lady had her baby there, and that's where they left him off the ship.

So he had relatives. And when he went on his vacation he started looking in the phonebook for them. It's probably a very common name. And after calling several of them, about the eighth one, he found a relative. And she was an aunt. And she knew the history, she knew the story. So she took him to the cemetery, and they took pictures of the cemetery, of his birth certificate, of his death certificate. So it's, you know, verified that he was born.

**Interviewer:** Isn't it interesting how people run into other people.

**Mrs. Perez:** Isn't it a small world? It's just amazing.

**[TIME 30:00]**

**Louis Perez:** There in Guam, we got attacked by the Japanese and ... Well, we thought it was Japanese. And the airplane start coming in. He wasn't shooting at anything. The pilot was wounded. And he came in there. They saw him to general quarters. And I was up on the bridge and the 20-mm. gun and — boom, boom, boom — shooting at him. And pretty soon it came over aboard ship that it was an American pilot coming in. ... Then Mr. Jameson (PH) said, You just shot an American pilot down.

And I told him, I said, An American pilot was always told never to come in the transport area, because it's dangerous [laughs].

**Interviewer:** So did he make it in?

**Louis Perez:** He was alive. The plane got hit but he came in for a landing.

**Interviewer:** So your marksmanship was good. You hit him but you didn't kill him.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah [laughs].

**Interviewer:** You were absolutely right, he was in the wrong place. It's like the marines and their uniforms, nobody ever tells people. But I guess in war, everything is confusing. In Leyte, I know it was October 20<sup>th</sup> through 22<sup>nd</sup> of 1944. This is after Saipan, which was in June. So you were in Saipan for a long time. What did Saipan look like from the water?

**Louis Perez:** It was a real white, sandy beach. Real wide. For some reason, it was a beautiful beach. It was like from here to that doorway over there [100 yards, approximately]. Beautiful white sand.

**Interviewer:** And where were the cliffs that the natives jumped off? Was that a cliff?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, it was a big cliff that they jumped off.

**Interviewer:** Did you travel to different parts of the island?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** So the beautiful white beach, with cliffs on one side?

**Louis Perez:** I don't remember if it was another island or what.

**Interviewer:** That's okay.

**Louis Perez:** This beach where we were, it was a ... well what happened there is I was taken off the landing crafts and I was put up on the 5-inch gun. And they sent another sailor to take the landing crafts in. And that's when that American plane, I don't know where he came from, but he started coming down and everybody started shooting at him. And one of the officers said, That's an American pilot coming in! I said, An American pilot was always told never come in the transport area, because we're not as educated as the others on battleships or cruisers.

**Interviewer:** Sure.

**Louis Perez:** They're probably regular navy and we're probably enlisted in the war. But this one officer said, You just shot an American pilot. And I said, Well the pilot was told never to come into the transport area.

**Interviewer:** Now this is what they [Wikipedia] say about Leyte: it was your fourth major operation. You departed Pearl Harbor on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1944. You stopped at Eniwetok and Manus, and arrived on October 20 in the transport area off Leyte, where you put troops ashore in the first waves. Before I forget, you were on the LCM in Tarawa. Were you there at Kwajalein too?

**Louis Perez:** On Kwajalein I drove ... an LCVP.

**Interviewer:** ...What did Kwajalein look like? Do you have any vision of it?

**[TIME 35:00]**

**Louis Perez:** How far away from Japan?

**Interviewer:** I'm not sure. When we meet again I'll have more maps. Let me ask about...

**Louis Perez:** Where did they raise the flag?

**Interviewer:** Oh that was Iwo Jima.

**Mrs. Perez:** He wasn't there in Iwo Jima.

**Louis Perez:** Iwo Jima — I made two deliveries.



**Mrs. Perez:** No honey, you were not at Iwo Jima.

**Louis Perez:** No?

**Interviewer:** You went to Leyte. Then you went to Luzon, the Lingayen Gulf landings. Then it says Okinawa. But in Leyte, back in the Philippines, that's where they took on the woman who was pregnant, right?

**Louis Perez:** Oh, okay.

**Interviewer:** And then it said you were in Leyte October 20<sup>th</sup> through the 22<sup>nd</sup>. And then you sailed for Humboldt Bay, same day. Then you stayed in Humboldt Bay [now known as Yos Sudarso Bay, Philippines], wherever that is, from October 22<sup>nd</sup> through the 5<sup>th</sup>, then you went to Noemfor Island.

**Louis Perez:** Humboldt Bay is where?

**Interviewer:** I'm not sure. That was after Leyte. So it must be near the Philippines.

**Mrs. Perez:** Isn't Leyte where they took off MacArthur?

**Interviewer:** Were you part of the operation that took off MacArthur? ... No, no, this was after. But Leyte is where they took off MacArthur. Then they said you were part of the Lingayen Gulf landings in Luzon.

This is what they said, and tell me whenever a memory comes up. If you don't remember anything, don't worry about it. It said you that you arrived at this place Manus on the 24<sup>th</sup> of October, then you sailed on the 28<sup>th</sup> for Torokina in Bougainville. You arrived in Bougainville on December 1<sup>st</sup>, and there you combat loaded army troops. Then you moved to Lingayen Gulf in New Guinea for a final rehearsal on the 19<sup>th</sup>. You went back to Manus, and then you sailed on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 1944, on New Year's Eve, as part of an assault troop bound for the Lingayen Gulf.

I was going to ask you, I know sometimes when you pass the equator there's a celebration. Was there ever anything like that?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, Shellback.

**Interviewer:** What was that? Tell me about that.

**Mrs. Perez:** Pollywog...

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, Pollywog. You haven't been — you're not a deep sea sailor until you pass the equator. ... I'll find out about it.

**Interviewer:** I know one ship told me when they passed the equator they had an hour where the seamen became the bosses and they were allowed to make fun of the officers; and the officers couldn't say anything. Did anything like that happen on your ship?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, yeah.

**Interviewer:** It did? That must have been fun.

**Louis Perez:** [Laughs.]

**Mrs. Perez:** What's the name of the king of the sea?

**Interviewer:** King Neptune?

**Mrs. Perez:** Neptune. Yeah, one dresses like King Neptune...

**Interviewer:** Someone dresses like King Neptune?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah I think we did [laughs]. Yeah, we had a celebration. But I think — that's when we're going to New Zealand.

**Interviewer:** New Zealand, which is...

**Mrs. Perez:** Probably near the beginning.

**Interviewer:** Probably near the beginning, yes. Before you go to Tarawa, you went to New Zealand. So you probably crossed just at the beginning. Before you saw action you crossed the equator. And that was when things were still happy.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** After you crossed it that one time, are there still celebrations every time you cross?

**Louis Perez:** No, just once. The call 'em Slimy Slimy Pollywog [laughs].

**[TIME 40:00]**

**Interviewer:** It says on the Lingayen Gulf landings that first you combat loaded army troops. Then you moved to New Guinea. In December 1944 you were part of an assault troop bound for the Lingayen Gulf. And on January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945, you encountered heavy air opposition. Do you remember coming into a lot of Japanese planes?

**Mrs. Perez:** Was that the Turkey shoot?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Mrs. Perez:** That's what he said they called it — "the Turkey shoot."

**Interviewer:** I remember hearing about the Turkey shoot. What was that like?

**Louis Perez:** I know that we went somewhere and I can't think of it right now, but there was a — you said we didn't go to Okinawa?

**Interviewer:** You went to Okinawa.

**Mrs. Perez:** You didn't go to Iwo Jima.

**Louis Perez:** ... Okay. It was an air attack by Japanese. I think there were three airplanes that came in. At that time I was up on the bridge, and ...

**Interviewer:** When the Japanese planes are coming in, who spots them first?

**Mrs. Perez:** Don't they have a guy up on the crow's nest? And it's his job to spot?

**Interviewer:** You're doing really well by the way. Everything's fine. Do you remember anything about that Japanese air attack?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, there was a ship in back of us. And that Japanese plane was coming like this so that ship ... he was coming right toward that ship. And they were shooting at him. And the officer on the bridge jumped off the bridge, because he was going to get killed. ... And for some reason that airplane just took off that way and hit the ocean. And I saw the officer jump off.

**Interviewer:** When he jumps off, does he jump to another floor?

**Louis Perez:** In the ocean. ...I can remember that clear as a bell.

**Interviewer:** That's high...

**Louis Perez:** That's high! What would you do [laughs]?

**Interviewer:** I'd jump.

**Louis Perez:** I was up on the bridge when that happened.

**Interviewer:** Now, if it was coming at you would you have jumped off into the ocean?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, I would [laughs]!

**Interviewer:** Now if you jump that far...

**Louis Perez:** It's far.

**Interviewer:** It's higher than this ceiling, isn't it?

**Louis Perez:** Well, maybe up to the third window.

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay. And you've already practiced doing that back outside of San Diego — so you know what to do.

**Louis Perez:** I'd have jumped off [laughs]. And for some reason the airplane just took off like that. And before the airplane took off that officer on the bridge jumped into the water.

**Interviewer:** So that's probably January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1945. They said the Sheridan didn't get hit, and you landed your troops the next day. It said you took on board 108 casualties from the navy, and also survivors, mainly from an escort carrier called USS Ommaney Bay.

**[TIME 45:00]**

And you sailed to Leyte, arriving on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Then you went to La Paz, which was in control of friendly guerillas. You anchored in San Pedro, Philippines, on February 1<sup>st</sup> and stayed there until March. So, during the whole Lingayen Gulf landings you have that day when you're attacked, then you take on navy casualties. All during this time, your job is to steer the ship.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. I was up on the bridge most of the time. There's two seamen.

**Interviewer:** And how long do you do it at a time?

**Louis Perez:** One hour, then the next one takes an hour. And then you take another hour. It's a four-hour watch.

**Interviewer:** And then do you go to sleep?

**Louis Perez:** You come back and relieve two other sailors.

**Interviewer:** Do you come back in four hours, or in eight hours?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. Eight.

**Interviewer:** ... They say after the Lingayen Gulf, you stay in San Pedro from February 1<sup>st</sup> until late March, while the war is growing closer to Japan. Then on March 14<sup>th</sup> you load troops for your final assault on Okinawa. It said you trained in the Philippines, and the transport sailed with an assault force March 27<sup>th</sup>, and put your troops ashore in the first waves in Okinawa on April 1.

You stayed in Okinawa until the 5<sup>th</sup>. Then you went to Guam, Pearl Harbor, and you went back to San Francisco on April 29<sup>th</sup> for a major overhaul.

What do you remember about Okinawa? You're so close to Japan right there.

**Mrs. Perez:** Is that when the cavalry came on and they had dogs instead of horses? Remember you said they had well-trained dogs?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah.

**Mrs. Perez:** Was that in Okinawa?

**Interviewer:** Even if it wasn't tell me about that. Cavalry came on with dogs?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. They had these dogs that were well trained. And they smell. You know, like they have on the border now — they have dogs that sniff? Them dogs were great.

**Interviewer:** What did they use the dogs for?

**Louis Perez:** Try to locate for mines. ... They were trained.

**Interviewer:** And you liked them.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. ...

**Mrs. Perez:** He told me that these dogs were so well trained they didn't speak words to them; they blew whistles to give the commands. Even to relieve themselves they couldn't until they heard the whistle.

**Interviewer:** Speaking of which I have a dog, and I have to take my little dog out on the grass to go to the toilet. Now these dogs are on board the USS Sheridan...

**Louis Perez:** Yes, they trained, and they could smell. And every morning they'd go out the No. 3 hatch and the no. 2 hatch, and they'd train the dogs with guns that had a rifle on them. ... [T]he dogs would [makes dog growling noise].

**Interviewer:** Really? So they put the rifle and [growling noise]. Now this will sound silly, but where did the dog go to the toilet on the ship?

**Louis Perez:** They'd take them to the no. 2 and no. 3 hatch, and they'd do their potty there. They'd pick it up.

**[TIME 50:00]**

**Mrs. Perez:** Sir, it's 12 noon — we've already kept you two hours.

**Interviewer:** Oh you have? Well let me ask you a few more questions. I know you're getting tired. We can always meet again. Because you know, you saw so much, and your memory of it is so wonderful. You might think you don't remember, but your details of the man jumping off the bridge, or the full moon over the Pacific, these are things that people don't talk about. And when I talk to someone else, I might ask him: so what do you think about the full moon? And he'll think that I'm smart.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, one day — like I said, there's two seamen up on the bridge, and I don't know why they put on this other Mexican guy, he was kind of silly. Naturally we used to try and make — they did, I didn't, I didn't drink the tuba juice. Tuba! And every time we had cherries they'd mix something with it and try to ferment it into liquor [laughs].

Oh, I know what they used to it. They used to take the — there's little barrels made out of wood, and they'd empty the water, and then they'd ferment this, whatever they used, and make tuba out of it [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Did you drink back then?

**Louis Perez:** No, I didn't drink then. No, I didn't drink.

**Mrs. Perez:** Tell him about your best friend that was so drunk he fell in the latrine.

**Louis Perez:** Oh yeah, Billy Mentoya (PH) must have drank too much tuba! And he went to heave in the toilet. The toilet is just like a canal and you sit down, and you got to watch it, because the ship goes this way, and you're over here, you get hit by the water. So you got to get up.

And another thing too is when we used too much water on the bridge, it turned salt water on the pipes. And one day I went to take a shower, and I used regular soap, and my hair went up like this, and I says, Oh I'm dying. Scared the hell out of me [laughs]. Salt water and soap don't go together. I thought I was gonna die [laughs]! I don't know what I thought — my hair got stiff. They had turned the regular water and they put salt water.

**Interviewer:** Were all the showers cold water?

**Louis Perez:** They were regular — you could adjust them.

**Interviewer:** I was going to ask if you remember a time you felt nervous, but that's a good story. Is there any other time you remember that you felt nervous?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** But when your hair stood up...

**Louis Perez:** I got scared.

**Mrs. Perez:** And he had a full head of beautiful black hair. And it was curly. He was very handsome.

**Interviewer:** And still are! When you look back, who do you think was the most important person to you?

**Louis Perez:** Who was the captain on board ship?

**Mrs. Perez:** Mockrish.

**Louis Perez:** Mockrish. No.

**Mrs. Perez:** He wrote a beautiful letter to the guys before they attacked Tarawa, and we have a copy of it. And then after, thanking the guys that they did such a good job. That was Mockrish — remember he wrote you guys the letter?

**Louis Perez:** Oh, yeah. Mockrish.

**Interviewer:** Now what was Eddie Albert's real name?

**Louis Perez:** Heimberger. Eddie Albert was Mr. Heimberger.

**[TIME 55:00]**

**Interviewer:** And were you friendly with him when you were on the ship?

**Louis Perez:** The only one I really liked, and he liked me a lot, was [to wife] what's his name?

**Mrs. Perez:** Whalen.

**Louis Perez:** Mr. Whalen.

**Interviewer:** What was his rank?

**Louis Perez:** Lieutenant Commander.

**Interviewer:** And he liked you.

**Louis Perez:** He liked me.

**Mrs. Perez:** See, the officers ate separately from the enlisted men. And so they never mixed. It was not socially correct.

**Interviewer:** But you knew that Whalen liked you.

**Louis Perez:** He was a very good officer, and we had one of the reunions in Florida, right?

**Mrs. Perez:** Des Moines.

**Louis Perez:** And he really liked me, because I guess I did my job very good.

**Interviewer:** I know some people would carry lucky charms, or prayers from home. Did you have anything you carried?

**Louis Perez:** No.

**Interviewer:** And you admired Lieutenant Commander Whalen?

**Louis Perez:** Yes. He sent me some pictures of our first reunion. I'll give you a copy of it.

**Interviewer:** And do you remember where you were when you heard that Roosevelt died?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. I was already a civilian, right?

**Interviewer:** I think you were in Okinawa.

**Mrs. Perez:** That's right.

**Interviewer:** Where were you when the atomic bomb was dropped — do you remember that?

**Mrs. Perez:** You must have been in Okinawa, too.

**Louis Perez:** Okinawa?

**Interviewer:** That was in August. That was almost 65 years ago.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, after they dropped the atomic bomb we went into Okinawa.

**Interviewer:** Were you all happy? Were there parties?

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. Well, you know, we were young and, you know, the war's over. So we didn't want any....you guys did a good job. But there was about two or three officers that I really liked, and they liked me.

**Mrs. Perez:** Whalen was one.

**Louis Perez:** Whalen. And the other one was a banker; they wouldn't open the door of the bank, and he forgot something, and he went back...

**Mrs. Perez:** Oh, Fenton (PH).

**Interviewer:** Fenton, yes.



**Mrs. Perez:** I think his name is Charles Fenton.

**Louis Perez:** He died about three years ago.

**Mrs. Perez:** No, not even that long ago. And he was about 93 when he passed away.

**Interviewer:** Oh, okay. Well only a few more questions. Did you receive any medals?

**Louis Perez:** Uh, one sailor — I forget his name — somebody awarded the marines the Congressional Medal of Honor. And this sailor got mad, and he wired somebody or called somebody and said, Why do the marines get the medal of honor? ... And they also gave us, the people that drove the landing crafts into the beach, we got the Presidential Unit Citation.

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's great. Would you recommend military service to people now?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, if you know — I don't know why I joined the navy, because they had a boys' assembly, like I told you. They said be prepared to go into the army, and I went home and I told my mother, I want to quit high school. She said, What's wrong?

I said, We had a boys' assembly they said be prepared to be drafted in the army. I want to go in the navy. So I wasn't quite 18 and I went to the Federal Building and they said come back in two weeks, were rolling out. And so I went back in two weeks. That's what I did.

**[TIME 60:00]**

**Interviewer:** If your great grandchildren said they wanted to join the service, what would you say to them?

**Louis Perez:** Well, I think it should be their decision. You leave that up to them. I have a couple of nephews that are very intelligent. One of my grandsons, they went to a public school. What's the name of the public school [to wife]?

**Mrs. Perez:** Who you talking about — Aaron (PH)? — that's a Christian school.

**Louis Perez:** They went to a Christian school and got really high grades. I think they should make the decision. I made my decision because I like this country. Like I said, my mother and dad entered the United States in 1917. They came over when the Mexican people were allowed to work on the farms. ...

**Mrs. Perez:** That's because World War I was on [and they needed the labor].

**Interviewer:** How was it once you came back? Was it easy to adjust to civilian life?

**Louis Perez:** Yes, for me it was.

**Interviewer:** And where did you go back to work?

**Louis Perez:** I went to work for North American ... no... One of my cousins during the war worked for North American Aviation. And he says, Perez, they're hiring at North American, they're hiring nothing but veterans! You get into the job. So I went there. And they hired me right away. And they said, What do you know how to do? I said, Nothing!

So they put me in the receiving dock. After the war ... North American Aviation was receiving a lot of material that was sent to ... Texas, and they were shipping it back. So I got a job in the labor pool. So then one guy took a liking, he said, Oh. This other guy was in the war too. I forget his name. And he said, Why don't you go over there and ask that guy that you know how to file and all that. So I went over there and told him I knew how to file and everything. They got me in there and I worked there.

And then we moved to Palmdale area, and my wife and I bought a house over there and I started working over there in the plant in Palmdale. I started there on the receiving dock, and then the manager called me up to his office and he said — what did he say when he gave me that job [to wife]?

**Mrs. Perez:** I don't know, honey [laughing].

**Louis Perez:** Well anyway — Oh, no; the manager called me up to his office and he said I'm going to give you a job. He said, We're getting these bills for air reduction, what's all this billing here? Paying \$10,000, \$5,000.... He said, I want you to go out there and find out what the hell's going on.

So I went in the engineering building where they do all the testing for wings and everything. And I said, You're holding this damn trailer here. We're paying \$35 a day for keeping it here and you ain't got nothing but \$10 worth of gas in there. So I took all this information to my boss, the manager of the warehouse. So he called them and said, Perez is going to be the one that determines whether that trailer goes out or stays there.

So the guys in the engineering building got mad. Then they found out I got a ...

**Mrs. Perez:** A thousand dollar reward.

**Louis Perez:** A thousand dollar reward [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Because you shaved all that money.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah. The president of the company called me up to his office and he presented the check to me, and he gave me a medal.

**[TIME 65:00]**

**Interviewer:** Oh, that's nice.

**Louis Perez:** And every time I used to see him in the freeway he used to call me moneybags [laughs].

**Interviewer:** You mentioned going to a reunion recently. Who were the people you just saw? Any friends you want to remember?

**Mrs. Perez:** Montoya (PH)?

**Louis Perez:** Benny Montoya.

**Mrs. Perez:** And Louie Gomes (PH), from San Diego. They hung out a lot. They'd get liberty and they'd go to the bars [laughs].

**Interviewer:** Next time we talk, I'm going to ask you some questions about the bars, too.

**Louis Perez:** Well there was one in San Diego. I have pictures of it. We're all standing there and I took some to the reunion this time to tell me who they were, what their names were. And I have pictures of all these guys. And like I said, this — what was the name of the one who lives in Florida [to wife]?

**Mrs. Perez:** Whalen.

**Louis Perez:** Whalen. He took a good liking on me, and he'd give me good jobs to do.

**Interviewer:** I have two more questions. One is how did the war change you?

**Louis Perez :** Well I was very happy that the war ended. Because like I said, there were several things that — I thought I was going to get discharged from the navy. I don't know what I did but I thought it was because I was heaving that SOS [shit on a shingle] I couldn't stand.

**Mrs. Perez:** He wants to know how did the navy change you?

**Louis Perez:** Oh.

**Mrs. Perez:** You were very organized...

**Interviewer:** Well it made you be able to go into another job and see where there was inefficiency.

**Louis Perez:** Well yeah, I said I was a supervisor or manager over at Rockwell International? And then I retired from Boeing, because Boeing bought off the North American Aviation division.

And there was certain duties I had to do, like I knew all the parts of an airplane. And one time somebody called me from the Palmdale factory. And I left my wife at home, and the new home that we had just bought. She didn't turn the key to get back into the house. So I was calling her telling her I was going to stay there another 10 minutes, and I wanted to get a call from her.

**Mrs. Perez:** Well, it was 12 midnight when they called him, so I was stuck in the garage. I couldn't get back in the house, and I couldn't get out of the garage [laughs].

**Interviewer:** How long were you stuck there?

**Mrs. Perez:** About an hour. And it was cold!

**Interviewer:** You got out of the service in March of 1946. And the war ends September of 1945. First, do you remember the day the war ends? Is there a celebration? ... What did you do between the time the war ended and you left the service? Did you stay on the Sheridan or what did you do?

**Mrs. Perez:** Yes, they stayed on the Sheridan and they went down the Panama Canal, and then up to ... No, I'm sorry. You got discharged in Mobile, Alabama. And by train. They gave him, and he was put in charge three, four other guys to bring them by train back to California. They still weren't discharged. They still were in the navy. And they had to go to Terminal Island to get their discharge papers.

**Louis Perez:** I was called to go report to some navy station and they gave me paperwork and they says, Perez you're going to be in charge of three or four guys.

**[TIME 70:00]**

And I said, Why me? You've got a yeoman there, a smart guy. A yeoman was a secretary. He says, You're going to take them. And I couldn't say nothing. I was mad. So I brought these three sailors to Los Angeles. I said, You got a damn yeoman there; he's smarter than I am. So I brought them on the train. And one of them, I said, I want you hear a half hour before that train pulls out of New Orleans. And the train was already on the move and we had to pick him up. He was running alongside the train and we pulled him up. You sonofabitch [laughs]!

**Interviewer:** That's a great story. Here it said you were seaman 2<sup>nd</sup> class, V-6. But you're saying your final rank was seaman...?

**Mrs. Perez:** That I don't know.

**Louis Perez:** Seaman 1<sup>st</sup> class, I think.

**Interviewer:** And so far in the way you've lived your life what do you think is important?

**Louis Perez:** I don't know [laughs].

**Mrs. Perez:** Money, money, money.

**Louis Perez:** Money. We're doing pretty good. My wife's the bank. We invested in stock. We're doing very good. She takes care of the money, I have to ask for a dollar or two.

**Mrs. Perez:** When I met him he was very organized. Being in the navy and then working for Rockwell taught him... I mean, like his garage, everything was in place. It was all stacked up neatly, very orderly. So he taught me indoors, in the house, how to be orderly. And that was his big asset. And that's how he was on the job. They had a huge move of the warehouse from Inglewood to Palmdale. How big was that warehouse you had to move — it was like three football fields? And he told them don't take anything out of the bins. And he told them he wanted tons of newspapers. He thought of it himself. He doesn't have a college degree, but he's smart. He's very common sense. He's very good at things like that.

**Louis Perez:** I'll give you a set of DVDs — where's the DVDs, in the room?

**Mrs. Perez:** We'll give them to him next time, honey.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, DVDs of the war. There was a store that had a lot of WWII memories, so I bought them all out. And I took them to where we're at, and I started selling them. Three dollars apiece, and I only paid 99 cents for each.

**Interviewer:** That's so smart! At the end, here's a question I'll ask you again next time, too. I met Ken Burns, who's making that show on the war. And I asked his producer what her favorite question was. Sometimes something will click, sometimes it won't. I asked her what her favorite question was and she said, Tell me a story you've never told anyone before.

I said, That's a big question — so what do I do?

She said, If you're talking to someone at the end, just ask them to close their eyes, take a couple deep breaths, ask the question. And if something bubbles up in your mind — a memory, or anything else — you can tell me about it.

**[TIME 75:00]**

So what I'm going to ask you to do, just for a second, close your eyes. Okay, now you can close both eyes [as Mrs. Perez laughs]. Take a deep breath, just relax.

Anything that comes to mind right now?

**Louis Perez:** Oh, when we went into Japan, I was on the bridge with Mr. Whalen. And he was giving me the orders. And for some reason he said: left 15 degrees right rudder. And I said: left 15 degrees right rudder — I had to repeat what I heard and then holler back at him RIGHT 15 DEGREES RIGHT RUDDER [shouts]!

And he said, RIGHT. And I start turning right [laughs]. And that was Mr. Whalen. He was a good officer. An Irishman. And he gave us a pamphlet of his stories.

**Interviewer:** Well thanks so much. It's been my great privilege to talk to you. This is David Meyer O'Shea, son of Earl D. Meyer, Company H, 379<sup>th</sup>, 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry. It is now 12:28 in the afternoon; I've had the great pleasure of talking to Mrs. Perez and Mr. Perez, can you say your name?

**Louis Perez:** Louis Perez.

**Interviewer:** Louis Perez. U.S. Navy.

**Louis Perez:** Yeah, U.S. Navy.

**Interviewer:** Thank you very much.

**Louis Perez:** Thank you for coming.

**-end of tape 2-**