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INTERVIEW WITH WILL CLOVER

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W: (Talked about spending 3 days on a raft and their rescue.)

We listened to Tokyo Rose for amusement when we were at sea. She would say things to encourage the American forces to give up because the Japanese forces had invaded the United States. And there was one time something to the effect that the Japanese had invaded the West Coast and had progressed as far as Kansas or Oklahoma or something in their progress of going across the United States.

C: Did you believe it?

W: Oh, no. We had reports and everything--we had other reports of our own and I was in Communications so I was in direct contact with the latest news items and stuff.

C: So you knew it wasn't true?

W: Yeah.

C: Was this news announcements in a male voice or was it Tokyo Rose?

W: She would announce it. She started and concluded her programs--they would play American music that they knew the Americans liked, like Glenn Miller and different big-name bands at that time.

C: Do you remember which ones she would end with or start with? Did she have any special theme song?

W: I don't remember quite that well--it's been some time. I do remember at times I might lend an ear to the radio when she was on, just long enough to get a chuckle or two and then go on about my business.

C: Can you tell me what division or what branch of the service you were in?

W: I was in the Navy and was in radio communications. I had a security clearance that was top secret and used to be involved with coded messages and that, and when coded messages came in I would have to take them down and set up the code machines and decode messages or encode messages for transmittal.

C: Where were you stationed when you were doing this work?

W: I was at sea. Most of my service was at sea. I was at Pearl Harbor when Pearl Harbor was attacked and I was on a light cruiser named the USS Detroit, later transferred to a destroyer, the USS Meredith. It was on the USS Meredith that I went down into the New Hebrides area on a mission that we were assigned from there. We were escorting--two destroyers were escorting a sea-going tug that was towing a great big tank raft--they called them lighters--that was towing gasoline for the planes on Guadalcanal and when we were about 90 miles from our destination some Japanese air-carrier based planes attacked us and sunk us.

C: How long--was that when you were in the water for 72 hours?

W: About 2 to 4 hours longer than 3 days--76 hours.

C: What did you hang on to?

W: I got to a raft. The first raft I started to go to I changed my mind because the Japanese planes stayed around the vicinity and as the sunken sailors of the U.S. destroyer were gathering around the raft the Japs would peel off and come down and strafe them. So I made my way on the waves to one off to itself and that's the one I went to. When I got to it there was an estimated 25 or so on it. When we were rescued 3 days later there was only 9 of us left.

C: What did you do with the ones who died? Did they stay on the raft with you?

W: Well, you know, during the war we wore dog tags or identification tags around their neck. As they would either die or--some of them we didn't get their dog tags because some of them had illusions and would see islands and ships that weren't there and they'd start swimming for them and of course get away from the raft. We had no control over them. On the raft the first night or first afternoon of the first day we had the executive officer of the ship that was with us but being in Communications and everything and as quickly as we were attacked and sunk--we were sunk in probably

about 7 minutes--when I got to this raft the executive officer asked me if I was ever able to get a contact with a shore station about our contact with the enemy and of course it was negative because the Japanese knew our frequencies and they used to block them. If we tried to send a message out they had transmitters on the same frequencies and send a bunch of gibberish to block them. So we had no way of knowing whether our contact message--I sent it out 2 or 3 times in what we called "sending it in the blind"--but we didn't know for sure whether there was any contact. So anyways this executive officer explained that we were, by the currents of the waters as he knew them and by our last known location and so forth, if anyone of us felt strong enough or wanted to just wait for the currents to carry us we would eventually end up next to a certain island--I can't remember. But by morning he was gone, so we don't know whether he tried to take off or not. But as different ones passed away or died we just had about a 15-man raft and there were 25 of us on it to begin with, approximately, there was fellows that couldn't hack it or they'd lose their minds or have hallucinations--and we had no food or water because this raft had been blown from the ship during the bombing when we were sunk--we were hit with several torpedoes and bombs and strafing, so as near as we

could recall we were sunk within . . . there was probably about 30 aircraft and our one ship because the skipper of our ship had been placed in command of our task force of 3 ships. He had ordered the sea-going tug to abandon ship and be prepared and we went alongside and we took the personnel off. Then we swung away--the other destroyer that was with us--our commanding officer ordered the other destroyer to high-speed run on into Guadalcanal, a distance estimated around 90 miles, so we were all alone when the planes showed up. We had radar that picked them up. But as we swung away from the sea-going tug our skipper slowed our ship down and ordered a torpedo fired into the sea-going tug and light our gasoline so the Japs wouldn't be able to salvage it. But as we slowed down, the Japs made their first appearances and came straight down at us and dive-bombed us and we never did get to fire a torpedo into the sea-going tug. It was later thought when we were on the raft that--'cause we could see the tug and the lider quite a distance away from us when we raised up on the waves. At that time the executive officer was with us and he warned us against trying to make for it because he said the Japs probably had submarines alerted and they were probably watching it and if we got on it they would probably sink us again. So we left it alone and stayed away from it. We lost

sight of it overnight the first night. We finally ended up--well, overnight and after what the executive officer said about our contact with the enemy he decided to, apparently, try it on his own to get to this island and we never did hear from him. It was later learned after we were rescued--those of us that did survive used to make contact with the Commander of the Southwest Pacific Forces whose headquarters were in Australia--and we learned of the survivors' names but his never showed up, so he apparently didn't make it.

The lighter of gasoline and the sea-going tug later they were . . . When I was rescued, a Navy PB4Y spotted us and he flew over us a few times--we'd seen him several times making passes but he never did spot us--it was quite some time later of the day that they did find us--and when they did find us they dropped us what they call a smoke bomb and then he flew up the horizon and he'd come back and eventually there was two or three masts showed and they were sea-going tugs and destroyers and they came over and the sea-going tug came alongside and there was only 9 of us left. They came alongside of us and they tried to get us to come aboard and we didn't have the strength to climb the sea ladder to board even a small tug, so they had to use a boatswain's chair to lower over the side and bring us aboard one at a time that way.

I recall as I got on board the sea-going tug a couple of guys helping me to sick bay--I heard a lot of machine gun fire and I asked these guys, in my rather adverse condition, if we were under attack. They said no, those guys were having machine gun practice on all the sharks that were in the vicinity of our raft--he said there must have been 50 to 100 out there. Then I was taken to sick bay. (Told about all the rations normally tied to the raft having been blown from the raft so they had no food or water.)

(Talked about tying himself onto the raft so that if he fell asleep his head wouldn't go into the water. Saw an article in the water and swam for it--it was a big piece of bark. Chewed pieces of bark and spit it out after it was pulp. Several did it--those who did survived.)

C: Was it exposure or thirst or hunger that . . . ?

W: (Talked about being rescued and taken into Guadalcanal and a destroyer going to make a high-speed run to the hospital ship USS Solace to transfer these men to it. Submerged in salt water from neck on down for the entire time on the raft. The destroyer found the sea-going tug. Put a skeleton crew on the tug and finally got it on into Guadal- canal, so the Japanese never did anything with it.) (Talked about seeing a submarine about 400 - 500 yards away on the morning of the second

day, and the fact that subs had to surface to recharge batteries then. Turned and moved toward them. Talked about swimming away, and sub then submerged before it got to the raft. Saw shark fins in the water.)

(Talked about bodies being taken by sharks. Also talked about some of the men being attacked by sharks.)

C: That must have been the hardest part--not knowing whether you were going to be there forever.

W: (Talked about fate--not being a Christian, etc. Remembered the saying "Through the power of a living God I will live through this." Thinks that saw him through it.)

Re Tokyo Rose--they listened to her quite frequently. Turned the programs on for amusement and entertainment but they never believed anything because they had access to all the information themselves. Received it with a big laugh as they knew it was propaganda.

C: Did you ever compare the intelligence you received with what you heard on the broadcasts?

W: Not really. (Talked about his security clearance--was the only one on board ship including officers who had the rating.) Knew that Tokyo Rose was just propaganda and was a way for the Japanese to get the Americans to give up.

C: How about music?

W: Well, she used to, in between her announcements and her little statements about trying to encourage us to forget about fighting for the United States and to turn ourselves in to the Japanese forces, she would play popular music at that time like Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and all those big bands that played jitterbug music. She had some records from the Andrews Sisters-- but her program consisted of playing popular music that the American forces enjoyed along with her little comments.

C: Did the music make you homesick?

W: Any time away from home--especially like myself I had been at Pearl Harbor and when I was finally rescued I ended up on the USS Solace at New Hebrides, then they took me and others to Suva Fiji and there they had an Army base hospital there (Johns Hopkins) with very reliable and highly-trained doctors and nurses there and they took real good care of us.

(Told the story about a nurse waking him up every night and taking him into the office for hot chocolate. He thought she had a thing for him but when he asked her she said he had such bad nightmares she had to wake him up so he wouldn't wake up all the rest of her patients.)

(Talked about not selling his story because he felt he would be selling his buddies' lives for the story and the money.)

C: (Said you would be putting together a story about Tokyo Rose.)

W: Well, I think that's about all I can tell you about her. We used to turn on the radio--we knew her schedules--and we'd turn on the radio just to hear what she had to say that we knew wasn't true. She did try to impress in her programs that the American forces should just give up because the Japanese--like I say, she had one time she had a program that the Japanese forces had invaded the West Coast of the United States and had progressed to Oklahoma.

C: Did anyone around you appear to be affected by hearing this?

W: I don't believe so. I know we all got a big laugh out of it. In fact, it kept our morale kind of high because we knew she was making statements to the effect that the Japanese forces were doing this and that and the other and were winning the war, so she speak, and we . . . I remember when the Midway battle was on she had a program about that and she told how badly we had been beaten in that battle. Well, that was actually the turning point of the war because that was when the Japanese didn't know exactly how many carriers we had left to operate and they were making preparations to attack and destroy Midway and they had a diversion action up there in the Aleutians where they attacked

them and bombed Dutch Harbor, hoping to divert any American forces away from Midway. But the American forces had decoded some of the Japanese messages and they were aware of what their plans were, so in trying to outwit the Japanese they put the three remaining carriers that we had at the time in a position where they could either help Midway or, if they did make an attack on the West Coast, they would be able to get there in short order. They were in a position where they could get there in short order and yet they were in a position where they could help at Midway. It's all military strategy.

(Talked about the movie "The Battle of Midway"-- said it was fairly accurate.)