

Earl Printy Arthur

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Interviewed by Leah Cohen

Transcribed by Sonix with corrections by Leah Cohen & Brandon Driver

Edited by Leah Cohen

Web biography by Leah Cohen

Production by Brad Guidera & Angel Melendez

Cohen: [00:00:00] Today is July 22nd, 2020. My name is Leah Cohen. I'm the Oral History and Reference Manager at the Pritzker Military Museum and Library, and I have the pleasure of interviewing Earl Printy Arthur on behalf of our institution. One could say that Mr. Arthur has had a diverse military service. He was both a hospital corpsman attached to the amphibious battalion [of the US] Navy, oftentimes treating injured Marines under heavy fire in the Pacific Theater and on other time[s] lifting the spirits of the servicemen by getting them up to dance on the dance floor by playing trombone in military bands. His son, Mike Arthur, is joining us today too. So I thought we can start with some questions about your background. When and where were you born?

Arthur: [00:01:08] Born? Well... Sherwood, Ohio.

Cohen: [00:01:12] And where did you grow up?

Arthur: [00:01:16] 1924.

Cohen: [00:01:21] And what was it like growing up? I believe in Arlington. Is that correct?

Arthur: [00:01:27] Yes. Yes. Well, my dad was a Methodist minister, so we moved around quite a bit. I was in five, I think, five different schools up through high school, so, Arlington was only the last three: sophomore, junior and senior year.

Cohen: [00:01:49] Um, what was it like moving around a lot?

Arthur: [00:01:54] What was my thought, Ma'am?

Cohen: [00:01:57] What was it like for you moving around a lot?

Arthur: [00:02:03] Oh, it was the sort of thing that you adapted to. You become used to it. As far as I was concerned, I always felt it was a an advantage being able to move around. You kind of began to socialize. You make new friends every so often so you grow up and capable of handling normal social situations.

Cohen: [00:02:36] That's true. It's true. What was it like being a preacher's son? Did you agree with your parents' religious values?

Arthur: [00:02:49] Well, what was it like being a preacher's son? The son is sort of special. Yeah, you always have the back of your mind that your dad was a minister. You are a little special, because people, all the people, congregational people who are nice for you and you kind of grew up feeling like you were special, even though you weren't.

Cohen: [00:03:27] [Laughter] Which courses did you take in high school or like which subjects did you like?

Arthur: [00:03:35] I didn't understand that question, Ma'am.

Cohen: [00:03:38] Which subjects did you like at high school, like which classes interested you?

Arthur: [00:03:48] Enjoy going to school?

Cohen: [00:03:50] Which which ones did you like? Math, biology, music?

Arthur: [00:03:56] Yeah, I had a ball. I played basketball and football before. I had a lot of fun in high school.

Mike Arthur: [00:04:05] Hey, Dad. What Leah was asking was what was what were some of the courses you liked? And I know you had a special relationship with with the choir director and music in high school.

Arthur: [00:04:24] Well. I took music because, you know, when you grow up as a preacher's kid, you're always exposed to music...So I grew up singing an awful lot. So it became natural that music would be something that would be important for me my entire life.

Cohen: [00:04:53] Had you sung at church choirs?

Arthur: [00:04:59] Yeah, I sang in the church choirs. Yeah, sure. Oh, the nice thing about that, church choirs, when I was at that age, they were most of my high school, high school kids and recent graduate from what was a younger, younger group than most church choirs than today as you well notice. The problem is that there are always older people and not enough younger people.

Cohen: [00:05:32] Yeah. When did you start to play the trombone?

Arthur: [00:05:39] I started in the seventh grade. Band director came in and they had a bunch of horns. I wanted to [play] trumpet. He says, "No, you can't play trumpet. You're going to play

trombone." So he gave me a trombone. I think I paid a buck a month, rent back in 1937, and I guess that would be '38. And that's the way I got started playing in a high school band

Cohen: [00:06:13] It's nice. What type of part-time jobs did you do?

Arthur: [00:06:23] What was that?

Cohen: [00:06:24] What did you have any part time jobs when you were a teenager?

Arthur: [00:06:32] Any what?

Mike Arthur: [00:06:35] Dad, she's asking if you had... What jobs you did in high school jobs?

Arthur: [00:06:41] Oh jobs, are you kidding? Oh, we just worked anywhere we had an opportunity, mostly in those small towns; they were farm communities. So he's always had a farm place that you could get a job if you wanted it. The only thing is they paid, I think, 25 cents an hour. And you did heavy work. I did a lot of stuff on the farm. Mostly, that was what I [used when I] grew up growing for spending money. Later on, I had a paper route, and other than that, I don't have any full-time work.

Cohen: [00:07:32] Did you do some work for a veterinarian?

Arthur: [00:07:40] Yes, I worked for a one one summer. How do you know all this? [Laughs]

Cohen: [00:07:46] Well, I know your son Mike sent me your interview with the Library of Congress.

Arthur: [00:07:56] It's okay. That's okay. We, you know, I worked for a veterinarian one summer and got the urge to become a vet. And when I started out in college in the fall, the fall of '42, I took pre-veterinary, which is pre- everything. You know those core curriculum-- you take English and Math and Biology and Chemistry, even though...it's a precursor for the advanced classes in veterinary [school], and they had to go to veterinary school for that.

Mike Arthur: [00:08:43] Hey, Dad. Leah has watched your video with Jim [i.e., Richard] Baranowski and she's also done research on the side. So she's here because he's the consummate interviewer. She knows more about you than you do probably.

Cohen: [00:09:04] [Laughs] No, not really. But but I did try to be thorough. So I was wondering what motivated you to enroll in the pre-vet training? Like why did you choose the pre-vet program rather than another program?

Arthur: [00:09:30] I'm missing this. What is it, please?

Mike Arthur: [00:09:33] Dad, she wants to know at Bowling Green why you chose pre-vet and maybe not music or something else.

Arthur: [00:09:45] I was thinking pre-vet. What was that? What was that?

Mike Arthur: [00:09:48] No, why did you... Why did you study that at Bowling Green and not music or something else? Why was your major pre-vet and not music or history or something?

Arthur: [00:10:05] Pre-vet is just like pre-law, pre- ummm... Anything. Educational, if you want to be a teacher you took the same courses in the first year. Was the kind of vet. It was called pre-vet. Then you weren't actually taking anything that would help you at Vet school, other than chemistry and biology.

Cohen: [00:10:31] Mm hmm. You mentioned in your interview with Mike [i.e., Richard] Baranowski – is that his name-- that you decided to drop out of the second semester of Bowling Green in 1943 so that you could enlist in the military? Why did you do that?

Arthur: [00:11:00] Why did I do what about the military?

Mike Arthur: [00:11:02] Dad, Dad, at some point at Bowling Green you decided to enlist and dropped out of school? Tell her a little bit about that thought process.

Arthur: [00:11:16] The fall of '42, everybody was going into service and at the fall of '42, I finished my first semester, and I knew I was going to be drafted, so I just said, "What the heck. I'm going to go in now, anyway." So I dropped second semester, I didn't go and in March I was gone. I went to the vet [sic], went to the draft board, and told them was ready to go...

Cohen: [00:11:51] Okay, so why did you choose the Navy in particular? The Navy versus the [US] Army, for example.

Arthur: [00:12:02] Oh, well, I was there when I got to Toledo, they went to the medical... You took a physical exam and there were three recruiters sitting at the table, a Marine, a Navy and an Army. And they said, "Well, which one do you want?" And I said, the Navy. Now, that's very particularly, very, very interesting, because within a week, the Navy enlistment was closed for that month. If I had come later, I wouldn't have gotten into the Navy. So, that's that's a key point in my... in my military career. Was the selection, having the option of taking the Navy.

Cohen: [00:12:59] Yeah.

Arthur: [00:12:59] That's when I went off to the Great Lakes for my boot training in the fall or the spring of '43.

Cohen: [00:13:10] Oh, so what was the training like at Great Lakes?

Arthur: [00:13:17] What was that like?

Cohen: [00:13:18] Yeah.

Arthur: [00:13:20] Well, for a preacher's kid from small town, Ohio it was an adventure, I got into... There is another... It so happened that they were forming a choir company. They did this every so often, not regularly, or not all the time. So I got into the choir company of 120 guys from the company. And I never... We were divided up into tenors, second tenors, baritones, and basses. I was a baritone and so I got into that church [i.e. Navy] in that choir. And we did our boot training or like everybody else. We also rehearsed and sang. We sang every Sunday in church and other... Sometimes, they'd have a kind of like a party and a bar. We would sing for them and, you know, that sort of thing. Then that led to me being auditioned and selected to sing in the chaplain's choir of forty voices.

Cohen: [00:14:42] Oh, wow.

Arthur: [00:14:44] Yeah. That was always a great honor.

Arthur: [00:14:47] I got in that choir, and we sang with the Chicago Symphony. We sang many [at] different places. What was I gonna say? Oh, we sang. We sang on Meet Your Navy. We on all of our televisions, it wasn't [any] television. It was a radio show that was based in the Great Lakes and came out one hour show every Friday night. And it was called Meet Your Navy. We sang on that show every... night, every Friday night. For the good of the. The experience of singing with that group was... It was an exceptional.

Cohen: [00:15:35] Did you like the music that they selected?

Arthur: [00:15:43] Did I what?

Cohen: [00:15:44] Did you like the songs that were selected for the choir?

Arthur: [00:15:51] Did I like the songs?

Arthur: [00:15:54] Yeah, I loved them. Why?

Cohen: [00:15:56] Yeah, no, I don't... I just wondered what what it was like and and and what was the choir leader like?

Arthur: [00:16:04] Oh, he was a professional. The guy's name was Bob Key, as I remember, excuse me, and we were one year in that choir. We just rehearsed all the time and didn't have any other duties. We got every weekend Sunday noon to Monday night midnight. We got

liberty. And as I said, we were rehearsed. And it was it was an exceptional experience to sing with that group.

Cohen: [00:16:43] Where did you go on liberty?

Arthur: [00:16:48] Say that again.

Cohen: [00:16:50] Where did you go when you had liberty? Would you travel anywhere, would you--?

Arthur: [00:16:58] Oh, yes. We went around Chicago.

Arthur: [00:17:03] Yeah, we didn't go far, but we sang up at the -- summer. What was the name of...?

Cohen: [00:17:14] The... Oh, Ravinia.

Arthur: [00:17:17] For the Chicago Symphony has their summer, had their place and we sang there... They made records. And I was in that group for about three months, the summer of '43.

Arthur: [00:17:35] Then I went on to Corpsman School; Hospital Corpsman School.

Cohen: [00:17:41] Why did you decide to be a corpsman, considering how well things were going in the admiral's Bluejacket Choir?

Arthur: [00:17:54] I didn't have a choice.

Arthur: [00:17:56] We sang in for three months, but they moved us on. They added new people to the group. That was so, you didn't become a...

Cohen: [00:18:12] Um, so what inspired you to become a corpsman?

Arthur: [00:18:24] Yeah, I was a hospital corpsman, that was my training. So that was the corp school I went to, and that was at Great Lakes. And after that, you went, you went, you're ready to go on from there.

Cohen: [00:18:42] Well, what was... What was what was it like... Like what type of courses or training did you do?

Arthur: [00:18:51] Oh, it was wonderful, the corps training was basically First-Aid techniques, all the first aid, giving shots, bandages, all the necessary techniques that you needed for assisting an injured military man or military or [US] Marine or an Army guy...that the training there.

Cohen: [00:19:28] Did it help having, having had worked for a vet or having gone to pre-vet school?

Arthur: [00:19:37] What was that, Mike?

Mike Arthur: [00:19:39] What she said was, "Being in pre-veterinary at Bowling Green, did that somehow influence your choice or their choice of being a hospital corpsman?"

Arthur: [00:19:53] Absolutely. It was directly related to that. I told them that I was interested in med school. They said, "Well, did you want to be a corpsman?" I said, "That's okay with me."

Cohen: [00:20:08] So, okay, it sounds good. So, so, it sounds like have Great Lakes, you learned First Aid and how to attend to basic injuries, but it sounds like it... Was there some more training as a medic? Like, look, I'll start again. After Great Lakes, did you go for more training?

Arthur: [00:20:34] No, no, we were sent. Well, the next stop was Little Creek, Virginia. And I was assigned at that time. To the you're going to have to... This is going to take a little explanation.

Cohen: [00:20:55] Okay, it's all good.

Arthur: [00:20:57] The U.S. Naval Amphibious Battalion. Now, that's a special group. And I've got to explain to you how we were trained, what we were trained to do, and how we fit in with the ships that we were on. There were forty-four men, eight corpsmen, an ensign. And a lieutenant J.G. [junior grade] who was a base master, and we had a doctor that was assigned to our group. Forty-four men. We then were transferred to Fort Pierce, Florida, and we trained down there over... The over the holidays, the Christmas holidays. We were down our three months taking Marine training for landing on beaches from the beach with these forty-four men that were made up of seaman signalmen, radioman, carpenters... What all? A whole bunch, plus the eight corpsmen of which I was one. And we went down to Florida, we train down there for three months, then we came back, and we were assigned to a troop transport. Now, this is the ship that I was on, the troop transport. The main purpose, we weren't a fighting ship. We had a five-inch gun on the bow, on the foc'sle. But that was pretty small stuff. We were mostly transporting Marines or Army people, fighting people. And we could take about fifteen hundred aboard our ship. And we were assigned to the side of the ship.

Arthur: [00:23:09] When we came back from Florida, we came back to Little Creek, Virginia, and I was assigned a ship, the APA 48 USS Leon. Now, the forty men, forty men were assigned to the ship, and we became assimilated into our various divisions of which we were specialized. The [first] corps[men] worked in the sick bay, the second one worked with the Signal radiomen ...the radioman and so on and so forth. That's the way, we were considered part of the ship's

company. But come time for an invasion that we all. were pulled out and put together with the troops that we had aboard, that we're going to make the invasion assault landing.

Cohen: [00:24:14] When you were on the USS Leon, were you and the corpsman and the doctor responsible for the medical care of the Marines or the people on board? For example, was there an infirmary on the on the ship?

Arthur: [00:24:36] What about when I was on the ship there, Mike?

Mike Arthur: [00:24:41] So, so, Dad, when you were on the Leon just in the United States before you did an invasion, when you were in the sickbay, did you did you, doctor, treat all of the people aboard the ship?

Arthur: [00:24:58] We were assigned to the sickbay, the corpsman, and we actually pulled duty, just like the regular corpsman that were there, we worked in the operating room, we worked in the recovery room, we worked at the hospital part where the beds were and we were assigned -- we had regular duty, just like everybody else.

Cohen: [00:25:31] What was a frequent health issue that came up?

Arthur: [00:25:39] Excuse me.

Cohen: [00:25:41] Like what was a health issue that came up frequently?

Arthur: [00:25:48] What issue came up?

Mike Arthur: [00:25:51] Dad, she's... She's asking what was a typical health issue aboard the ship? That you would have to doctor them for?

Arthur: [00:26:03] The typical what?

Mike Arthur: [00:26:05] Health, health issue, like, like the people aboard the ship, why they can't, why do they come to see that you guys posted to the most to the business of the sick bay at that time or for colds, hay fever? Well, you know what? Any normal, normal activities. I'll make this comment: We had several guys that had to have a special shot because of the venereal diseases they brought aboard.

Arthur: [00:26:52] And were you yourself seasick on the [USS] Leon?

Arthur: [00:27:00] What about the Leon?

Cohen: [00:27:01] Were you seasick? Did you get seasick?

Arthur: [00:27:07] Did, I what?

Mike Arthur: [00:27:09] Dad, did you ever get seasick?

Arthur: [00:27:13] Oh.

Arthur: [00:27:14] No one. We... We went from I was assigned to the Leon at Little Creek, Virginia. We pulled out of there and went south through the canal over to Hawaii and that first day I was slightly. Oh, a little bit. But I never got seasick, I never got seasick like that. I got lucky.

Cohen: [00:27:42] Okay, that's great. So, what did you do once the ship reached Hawaii?

Arthur: [00:27:53] We got to Hawaii in April of '44 [i.e., '43]. And the first thing they did was load up with the 4th Marine Division. Parts of it. We had fifteen hundred... And fifteen hundred Marines, then we practiced invasion techniques over on Maui. Back [at] Maui was-- Boy, you can't get on Maui, now...You gotta pay money to breathe over there.

Cohen: [00:28:31] So what... Could you describe what a typical practice looks like? Like what was the first step? The second step? Like for people like me who don't know. What was involved in practicing these techniques of invasion?

Arthur: [00:28:48] All right. What we did was... We, we, of course, we were dressed like the Marines. Our outfit was the same. We carried .45,.45 caliber pistol. That was as a corpsman. The other parts of the ship, the other part of – the beach party, they called them...they carried carbine rifles, .30 caliber rifles. And what was the question?

Cohen: [00:29:27] Could you describe a practice of the invasion on Maui for...Like ignorant people like myself, like what happened first, what happened second, so on?

Arthur: [00:29:40] Yeah, yes, we did. We had to go over the side down to the cargo nets down into the LCVP [landing craft, vehicle, personnel] ... You know what a LCVP is?

Cohen: [00:29:52] Yes.

Arthur: [00:29:53] Landing craft vehicle personnel. And we would practice going down the side end of the boat and we would circle the way we always do it, as we take off for the beach and then we would wrap and go down or we'd run to the beach and set up our stations, so forth, and that...That way. We're all the way we're practicing getting off the ship into the landing craft and into the beach and...

Mike Arthur: [00:30:30] Say, Dad, Dad, describe the circling while all the ships, the boats with LCVPs were forming.

Arthur: [00:30:38] What about 'em?

Mike Arthur: [00:30:40] What, describe for Leah the circling. You said the LCVP was circle and then go into the beach?

Arthur: [00:30:49] All right, come time for an invasion, we would come down and we had I think we had about eight boats, LCVPs aboard that we lowered into the water. And then the troops would get into those boats down the side, just like I mentioned, down the cargo net at the end of the boat and then those LCVPs would circle. Say, eight of them, but circle one way and another circle would go the opposite way. And we would circle waiting for the time for the invasion, the reason that circles were opposites was so that the boats, as they approached each other, was not hit head on. They just bounce off each other. And that was usually at night. I shouldn't say at night but at darkness. And then when the signal was given, then all of the boats would turn towards the beach, and we go.

Cohen: [00:32:03] Oh, so okay, this prevented accidents. And how would you set up the first aid station? Like was...would the carpenters build a little hut? Like what was involved?

Arthur: [00:32:18] They were there for I don't know what the hell they did, we set up an aid station. I guess whatever whatever construction was needed...they would be there for that. But... But you got to understand what the beach party did before we get that. But we... When it came time for an invasion, okay...our ship was assigned a certain 300 yards, about 300 yards of the beach that we were going to land our troops over. And the.

Arthur: [00:33:09] The beach master, then, Lieutenant JG [junior grade] of the Beach Party, of which I was a group of forty-four.

Cohen: [00:33:20] Mmhhmm.

Arthur: [00:33:20] Sergeant of that beach. no, nobody can tell them what to do. He had full power right there. And your job was to get to empty the 1500 hundred troops to make sure that those troops got across that beach, and they did it by those boats run in and they come back and get another load. Another wave, another wave. Another wave. So, they'd go in, in two or three or four waves before they got them up over there. But the interesting thing is that... That... Where was I going with that?

Cohen: [00:34:04] Um...

Arthur: [00:34:06] Ask me another question.

Cohen: [00:34:08] Okay, how would J.G. [Lieutenant junior grade] know which part of the beach? Like did he have a map? Did you guys have maps?

Arthur: [00:34:18] The signalman, well somebody held, that's supposed to know where the hell they were. Or the part of the beach they were supposed to go on. All we did was follow along. And to tell you the truth, when we landed at Saipan. We landed on the wrong beach.

Arthur: [00:34:41] And well, I... I've skipped part of your story.

Cohen: [00:34:47] Well, we can go back to Saipan soon, you know, so so right now you're practicing the invasion in Maui and what happened after that?

Arthur: [00:35:01] Well, we rendezvoused in the Marshalls, The Marshall Islands. We were getting ready for the run, that would be in June, early June of '44, and we have, all flotilla battles. Everybody rendezvoused there. And at that time, you know, what an LST is?

Cohen: [00:35:31] Yeah, it's that's a landing ship, I think. A tank, right?

Arthur: [00:35:35] Landing ship tank. It's a big flat bottomed on a boat that opens up and the bow goes, the bow opens up sideways and...the tanks, and the heavy equipment are stored inside the LST, and they go off down the ramp. Well, I was assigned...as a hospital corpsman to go with that group, from our ship on the LST, so from the Marshalls to Saipan [one of the Mariana Islands], I was on an LST. The rest of my group [who] were still aboard the Leon with the 4th Marine Division. So, when we got through to Saipan, then we were all there together. And our group got on the wrong beach. And so when I land, I landed with an AMTRAC [Amphibious Vehicle, Tracked] coming out of the bowels of that LST. We landed. I jump over the side of the side and hell, there was nobody, there. It was the wrong beach from my... I had to find my way all the way down, it would have been the north side, yeah. North, along the beach. I found my group so, I was with them, then.

Cohen: [00:37:12] So, sorry.

Arthur: [00:37:14] Question?

Cohen: [00:37:17] I was wondering... and I'm sorry that I interrupted. I was wondering why the LST was on it's own, like what was the purpose of the LST versus the purpose of the rest of the troops on the [USS] Leon?

Arthur: [00:37:38] What's the question, Mike?

Mike Arthur: [00:37:41] Well, even I don't know this one, Dad. She's describe[ing], asking why your LST took off and the rest of the troops were on the Leon. Is that because they were going to be on their own LST?

Arthur: [00:37:58] No, no, no, no. The LST was in addition to the troops, the LST was to transport our heavy machinery.

Cohen: [00:38:11] I see.

Arthur: [00:38:13] The tanks, they might have a four by four, they might have a great big CAT, you know, earthmover, all sorts of this, all sorts of heavy material, heavy machinery. Then that in the support of the 5th of the 4th Brigade. That was, they would take that stuff off the beach and go inland with it as they fought their way through. So, they the troops were going across and the LST - we were all supposed to be on the same beach. But we weren't [Arthur and Cohen laugh]. We got together, took about an hour.

Mike Arthur: [00:39:05] So, Dad, you had trained a different way, though you had trained to go in with your troops?

Arthur: [00:39:13] No.

Mike Arthur: [00:39:13] But you had, okay.

Arthur: [00:39:16] No. Our job was to stay out on the beach.

Mike Arthur: [00:39:20] What I meant; was you were trained to land with the troops?

Arthur: [00:39:24] On the beach for a reason. Amphibious and naval amphibious things [are] in... The Navy didn't go into fight flight to battle, the Marines did. But this part of the Navy went in on the beach and to support the boats and the ships in the beach. I mean, they they would be followed the directions that they would go on to the beach. And we were there probably.

Arthur: [00:40:00] two weeks and then we were called, well, we have called back before that. So that's another story. We were called back to our ship, finally, and our forty-four men and the doctors and all... and the Lieutenant JG and his crew. We came back to the ship.

Cohen: [00:40:26] Okay, I see.

Arthur: [00:40:29] And this part of the story, if you're interested, when we got back to the ship, our ship, I was still in my dungarees, well my Marine outfit, and as the ship was taking casualties coming in from the beach, they come in by LCVPs, and bring them up and they bring them into the ship. Well, they wanted to transfer some ambulatory patients over to the hospital ship in the bay. Now, there is a big hospital ship over there and they wanted these ambulatory patients, it's probably a dozen or more, they needed a corpsman to go with a them in the LCVP. So I'm down over the side of the LCVP and I'm off to the... to the hospital ship. We unload the men, the casualties. Get them all over. And my LCVP. Yeah, my LCVP brings me back. And my ship's gone!

Cohen: [00:41:53] Oh, God.

Arthur: [00:41:56] If I could see it go through the smoke.

Cohen: [00:41:58] Oh, God. [Laughs]

Arthur: [00:42:01] They made smoke. So, here I am, hung out to dry. I'm without a ship. So the only thing for me to do is go back to the hospital ship. So I'm back in the hospital ship, climbed aboard that. And what was going on was that they the Navy had received information that the Japs were going to send a great big wave of paratroopers and dive bombers and so forth, Air people coming in. And so, they gotta get the ships out of there before they could get there. And that's why they left, and why they took off. Well, I get aboard the hospital ship and we go out into, and we pull away from the bay, we go on out and they turn all the lights on, on the on the hospital ship. But that's the way it's supposed to be. Took me by surprise because we had been travelling all night with lights out. But there were were in the hospital ship...Now, if you're interested, I went on.

Cohen: [00:43:20] I am interested. But can we back up a little bit, please, and then cycle back? I was wondering when you heard about the invasion of Saipan. Like at what point of time did you know that there would be the invasion of Saipan?

Arthur: [00:43:45] What's the question right now?

Mike Arthur: [00:43:49] Leah was asking, "Back when you're at Hawaii and you were practicing, when did you hear or how did you hear that you were going to invade Saipan in June"?

Arthur: [00:44:05] We had no idea where we were going. That was top secret. We got aboard those. I got aboard the LST. All the rest of the guys got on on the Leon on the 4th Marine Division group. The whole flotilla took off. Once, we got at sea, then they made the announcement over the PA system where we were going. So we didn't know until a day or so out at sea before we were told where the hell we were going.

Cohen: [00:44:44] I see. And this is not maybe an essential question, but sort of fun when... When the Leon crossed the equator, was there any Shellback Ceremony or or...

Arthur: [00:44:58] We did. Yes, we did. That was after... After, that had to do, after we landed on the Philippines in October.

Cohen: [00:45:15] Oh, oh.

Arthur: [00:45:18] We were going to go on to Guadalcanal Tulagi. I think this was the time we did that. I'm not quite sure. And picked up...The 6th Marine Division. Yeah. And came back after we crossed the equator. But yeah, they did. They arrested me and they had all sorts of crazy

things going on. The captain got put in the brig and, you know, a lot of crazy stuff that [happened?]

Cohen: [00:45:57] And was the ship doing a lot of zigzagging to avoid mines, in general? like?

Arthur: [00:46:07] Mike?

Cohen: [00:46:08] Like I understand that, you know, there are a lot of mines in the Pacific to try to blow up the ships, so like, how did the USS Leon deal with that? Did it have to, like, change its course frequently to avoid them?

Arthur: [00:46:28] What does she want to know, Mike?

Mike Arthur: [00:46:32] Dad, she was asking, in general, how the Leon and other ships would avoid, for instance, enemy contact, including mines, submarines, etc., what would they do any kind of... How would they travel to avoid contact?

Arthur: [00:46:58] Avoid contact with mines?

Mike Arthur: [00:47:01] We have with the Japanese submarines and mines and there weren't mines out in the open ocean, right?

Cohen: [00:47:10] [interrupts] I don't know which part, but I know some parts...

Mike Arthur: [00:47:16] Hold on, Leah. Yeah, well, so did the task force do any kind of zigzagging or things like that?

Arthur: [00:47:26] What's that?

Mike Arthur: [00:47:29] Did your ship travel during the day time? Did it zigzag to avoid submarines? How did they try to stay hidden?

Arthur: [00:47:42] We had no idea about that. If there were subs around, we didn't know what the flotilla...there may be anywhere from up to 100 ships. And they were we, they were under the command of one admiral, and they would take us where they wanted to take us. We didn't know whether they were zigzagging or whether they were going straight or what. We didn't have that information.

Mike Arthur: [00:48:15] Were there any mines laid by the Japanese and in the landing area at Saipan?

Arthur: [00:48:27] If they did, it was cleared out. Well, I never... I never experienced any explosions from mines.

Cohen: [00:48:38] So, you know, I was reading that the invasion of Saipan was very was very difficult because the fact that, yes, they established a beachhead on the first day [of the invasion] on June 15th. But the fighting was tough because the US troops had to clear caves and other defensive positions with grenades and flamethrowers. So, there were a lot of injured and casualties. So I guess what I'm wondering is, what was it like for you on June 15th? What were you doing on June 15th, the first day of the invasion?

Arthur: [00:49:18] I think I know what I mean. Immediately upon getting together with my group, after we hit the wrong beach, we were back there for three days, three consecutive days. We were under mortar fire. We believe it was sort of like you count to ten and then there's an explosion. So we had our foxholes and they knew there were times that you can see the mortars are coming across the dune lines over the trees that were left and they would go. You could hear 'em go, "Shsh shsh, shsh," As they go through the air, they hit the water. I think [that] probably saved us as much as anything but through that three days of constant mortar fire, we were working on casualties coming in from the field and shipping them off to this hospital ship or wherever I think they took them. And then, oh, then apparently, they got the... They got the mortar... they killed, shot, you know, killed up the Japanese right on those mortars. And they stopped after three days. We had one casualty in all of that. And mortars were flying around us pretty good. I was amazed that we didn't have somebody get hurt badly, but we didn't. That we were there up until the time, that the Japanese staged that the big air battle developed after we left. When I say we left, we left. When I got on board the hospital ship, the air battle was going on. I think, about the 18th, 19th, or 20th of June when we killed. Oh, I think about 300 of their planes and we lost thirty, something like that. It became known as the [Great] Marianas Turkey Shoot because Saipan in in the the Marianas.

Arthur: [00:51:57] Yeah. Yeah. That was why our ship was going off.

Cohen: [00:52:06] Okay, how about just going back to Saipan, like when did you dig the foxholes?

Arthur: [00:52:16] When did I what?

Cohen: [00:52:16] --did you dig the foxhole?

Arthur: [00:52:22] What is the question, Mike?

Mike Arthur: [00:52:26] Describe when you when you got to the right beach at Saipan, you must have immediately dug a foxhole. Or was that later on? And I wanted to know what it was like that night, staying in a foxhole. I know we had you had no protection, right? If it hits your foxhole, that was it.

Arthur: [00:52:54] We were told to watch out for paratroopers, they had a pretty good information that...they were, they were going to drop paratroopers. Well they said, "Be careful at night." Well, we dug our, we had our foxhole and we crawled out of those foxholes to sleep, if you could if you could sleep. And well, fortunately, the paratroopers never came. But you slept in a foxhole and only body that you knew anything about was those damn sand crabs. The sand crabs and the beach were terrible.

Cohen: [00:53:46] Ach. They would get into your body like on your head...

Arthur: [00:53:49] No, they'd crawl around in the sand or flat or underneath you.

Arthur: [00:53:56] Yeah.

Mike Arthur: [00:53:56] So, Dad, you had no protection from the mortars. It was just a matter of luck, right?

Arthur: [00:54:04] Any protection from what?

Mike Arthur: [00:54:06] The mortars. It was just a matter of luck whether you lived or died.

Arthur: [00:54:12] You were open. If you were standing up and a mortar went off you got it.

Cohen: [00:54:18] So that was something I was wondering about too. Like when you were at the aid station, you know, helping the Marines or working with the casualties, like, did you have to, I would imagine, you would have to stand up a lot.

Arthur: [00:54:35] Yes, you did that. You just got lucky. That's what he's he's talking about. A lot of what dropped in the water behind us, and that I think it had a lot to do with muffling the shrapnel. I had one go off, and I wasn't in the foxhole, but I wasn't standing up fully erect, it blew my helmet off...So, I knew it was close. That was, that was for the first three days. After that, it was pretty quiet for us.

Cohen: [00:55:18] And then you mentioned the Great Marianas Turkey Shoot, which caused for the USS Leon to leave, and you went back to the real hospital ship until you could go back to the Leon. Is that correct?

Arthur: [00:55:40] Say that, again.

Mike Arthur: [00:55:41] She's just reiterating that after the Leon made off making smoke and you went back to the hospital ship, and then eventually you got back to the Leon. Were they really happy to see you?

Arthur: [00:56:00] Being part of my career, adventure. When I got back to Marshall... See the hospital ship went back to the Marshalls and so did all the troop transports went back to the Marshalls. I get back to and I'm not sure whether it's Kwajalein or Enewetok. Doesn't make any difference, places...where the hospital ships [were located]. So I get off on the hospital ship, but I was kind of like freelance or rather trying to find out what the heck I was supposed to do. And then I eventually found out that Leon was over in Kwajalein, which was opposite the other island, the main island. And so, I figured, well, I got to get to...How do I get over there? They said, "Well, they fly over their mail routes and go back and forth. So I go down to the airstrip and there's a LST--, no a DC-3, ready to go. He's going over the other place. So I get on the plane and I...hop across an hour or and got down over there and I go down to the beach where the boats come in from the ship and there's a LCVP sittin' there with APA-48 written on it. That's my ship. So I said, "Hey, Coxswain, you guys goin' back to the ship, soon?" He said, "Yeah, in about an hour." So I come back down there hop aboard, I get aboard board, I get back to my ship. Now, I've been gone at least a week and I come back aboard to my division, and they didn't even know I was gone. [Laughter].

Cohen: [00:58:08] So your name appears on the roster rule even though you were there.

Arthur: [00:58:15] Say that again, please.

Cohen: [00:58:16] I'm I'm wondering if your name appeared on the rosters or on the muster reports, even though you were not there that week.

Arthur: [00:58:29] What does she want, Mike?

Arthur: [00:58:30] She was just commenting that nobody noticed you were gone. And that is a funny story.

Cohen: [00:58:41] Yeah, yeah, yeah. So when you were back with the USS Leon on, were you getting news about what was happening in Saipan? Like the there was a Banzai charge on July 6 that the Japanese charged against the Marines. I guess my point is, would you hear news about the front?

Arthur: [00:59:08] What's the question, Mike?

Mike Arthur: [00:59:12] When you when you were back aboard, when you had left Saipan, did you guys hear news about what was going on and how well that was going? And when did you hear about the Banzai attack where those 3000 Japanese just charged and got killed?

Arthur: [00:59:39] Well, yes, we heard we we we heard, of course. After we left the Marshalls, coming toward Saipan, we heard about D-Day over in Europe and

Arthur: [01:00:02] We also when we got back on the ship, we had and heard that the air strike that they had planned, they gave us was well, well defended. That's that Turkey shoot, I was talking about. The most of the other stuff we heard about later. We probably were. One interesting thing I thought that I didn't mention, while they had their set-up there, after the first three days, we had a bunch of the natives rounded up. We had a sort of like, you know, in a little screened-in area. When I say screened, I mean chicken wire. And they were they were little people, old people, and kind of walk around with that look on their face about, "What the heck is going on and who are you people?" And they were most of them were naked and they were scared to death that we were going to go to hurt them.

Cohen: [01:01:15] Yeah.

Arthur: [01:01:15] And we turned them over to the sort the powers that be and any way that that leads me to the story than I heard later that you're leading up to - was the, was the north cliffs on the north side. Or the families threw each other overboard, over the cliffs killing themselves when they thought that the Americans were going to come and rape them and kill them and all that bad stuff.

Cohen: [01:01:49] Yeah.

Arthur: [01:01:51] We heard about that later.

Cohen: [01:01:55] When you were on the ship, did you receive letters from home? Did you receive the newspaper, *The Stars and Stripes*?

Arthur: [01:02:07] Yeah, if I got the question right, we had a communication and they had the radio on, we could get Tokyo Rose [both laugh] and other things, but mostly it was just they would make news reports every so often. So we kind of kept up to date as to what was going on.

Mike Arthur: [01:02:31] Did you receive letters, and did you ever read the *Stars and Stripes*?

Arthur: [01:02:38] Oh, yes. Yes. *Stars and Stripes* as a favorite, V-mail, victory mail, V-mail, I think we ever got a V-mail. Was that right? They photostat of your letter? You know, on film. And then they ship that to you or letters you got covered, then they would reproduce them again. What the hell were they called, V-mail?

Cohen: [01:03:12] Yeah, yeah, yeah, I believe it's called. Thanks for explaining how it worked. I never knew. Yeah.

Arthur: [01:03:20] I forgot about; you know.

Cohen: [01:03:24] Well, this is a side question of the museum here is going to have an exhibit of the cartoons of Bill Mauldin. And I guess I was wondering if you saw any of his cartoons in the *Stars and Stripes*. Or maybe not, maybe that was more on the European front.

Arthur: [01:03:50] Yeah, *Stars and Stripes*. You want to know, the funniest cartoon I saw in the that thing?

Cohen: [01:03:56] Yeah.

Arthur: [01:03:57] You know, there were two guys I don't re-- one of them was Joe. The other guy was Sam; I think but two bedraggled Army [chuckles] guys in a foxhole and they're playing with their rifles. And the one guys says, "Hey, Joe, look, a-here this can opener fits the end of my rifle".

Mike Arthur: [01:04:30] So Dad, I remember you telling me about that bayonet. What was that, a Bill Mauldin. You know that name? Bill Mauldin.

Arthur: [01:04:41] Bill Mauldin.

Mike Arthur: [01:04:43] Yeah, that that's what Leah was that way was asking you. Was that a Bill Mauldin? And did you like his work?

Arthur: [01:04:50] Yes, very much. He turned out later to be a little bit political, but he was good. He was good for the-- the Army or the service people. He got in trouble, I guess, for a while, but--

Cohen: [01:05:09] Yeah, he had quite a career. So, going back. So let me get this straight. So we. Sorry go on--

Arthur: [01:05:21] You ask about Saipan. Leon made four more other invasions.

Cohen: [01:05:30] Yes, so that's us wondering what happened next. Like now you're with the Leon and Kwajalein in the Marshall Islands. So where do you go next?

Arthur: [01:05:43] I can't understand her, Mike.

Mike Arthur: [01:05:45] Well, Leah, you're actually breaking up, now.

Cohen: [01:05:49] Oh, I'll try again.

Cohen: [01:05:54] We left off with your father's story at the Marshall Islands after he joined up with the Leon again, which was close to Kwajalein

Arthur: [01:06:07] Wait a minute. Wait a minute, guys. Hold up. Mike.

Mike Arthur: [01:06:13] Yes, Sir.

Arthur: [01:06:14] Yes, if you don't mind, yeah, would you hang up and see if I could, if I could hear her any better?

Mike Arthur: [01:06:23] Well, maybe you should hang up and I'll answer for you. You don't think that's funny? All right. I'm going to hang up, except I think I'm going to, she's going to lose you because I'll tell you what. Leah?

Cut 01:06:42-1:08.15 exchange about hanging up phone and calling again]

Cohen: [01:08:17] Hello, can you hear me now?

Arthur: [01:08:19] Yes, of course I can. [laughs]

Cohen: [01:08:22] Okay, well, that's a start. Okay, so the last part of the story was when you rejoined the Leon at Kwajalein. Where did you go next?

Arthur: [01:08:41] The next invasion was Peleliu in the Carolinas, the Peleliu that was September 15th, '44.

Cohen: [01:08:56] And were you part of the first landing group?

Arthur: [01:09:04] What about the landing?

Cohen: [01:09:06] Were you part of the beach party? Were you part of the first group that that arrived?

Arthur: [01:09:18] We were held in reserve and there was a little island off of Peleliu called Anguar A-N-G-U-A-R and we were held in reserve for the main invasion, and then finally, they turn them...our Army guys like they turn 'em loose and we landed on Anguar, but there was no, no resistance, there. So we were we really didn't have any action whatsoever.

Cohen: [01:09:57] How long were you there?

Arthur: [01:10:00] At the the Peleliu area?

Cohen: [01:10:03] Yeah.

Arthu: [01:10:03] Oh, we were there a week.

Cohen: [01:10:07] So so because you're on reserve, you didn't have to treat anyone. Is that is that right?

Arthur: [01:10:21] Could you say that again?

Cohen: [01:10:21] I'll say it better. Did you have to treat any of the injured when you were in the Peleliu, area?

Arthur: [01:10:34] I still don't know what you really want, Leah.

Cohen: [01:10:36] Oh, sorry, sorry. Well, basically wondering, what were you doing when you were in Peleliu area? What were your what was your task?

Arthur: [01:10:47] We had a we had a group of Army soldiers and we were there on reserve and we waited. Nothing happened when they landed on Peleliu. That group went on. We went over and dropped our troops off at Anguar...we actually didn't go on the beach at all at Anguar...

Cohen: [01:11:18] Okay, so in your previous interview, you had said that it was a big mistake invading Peleliu. And I know some other people think the same way. Do you want to talk about this?

Arthur: [01:11:39] About Peleliu?

Cohen: [01:11:41] Why you think it was a mistake.

Arthur: [01:11:44] The only thing I know about Peleliu, the rumors that we heard later is that there were discussions about bypassing Peleliu and going on to the Philippines but MacArthur wanted Peleliu taken care of, because he was worried that they [the Japanese] would set up an air station, you know, a flight strip on Peleliu, and they could reach the guys, reach the Philippines and he was worried about that. So if they went ahead, Nimitz said, "Well, we won't stop 'em. They're too far ahead. Let 'em go." So Peleliu could have been bypassed like they did with Truk [Atoll]. But as it turned out, it was a mistake. They should have stayed away from it. That was a pretty bad, pretty bad invasion. Pretty bad.

Cohen: [01:12:56] Yeah. After after you were in Peleliu, where were you sent to next?

Arthur: [01:13:06] ...Well, the next action we had was October 20th at the Leyte Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, we we had gone down and picked up Army troops[?] in the way that the divisions were set up in the Navy. The way it was set up, was that Nimitz [fleet admiral of the United States Navy] was in charge of the naval invasions up the middle of the Pacific and MacArthur was in charge of the Army on the western side of the Pacific. And when it came time for Leyte Gulf in the Philippines, we joined up with the MacArthur group, our ship did, and we

brought a bunch of Army guys from from the... Gosh, I don't know where we got 'em. We picked them up somewhere down south, came back up and as we were third or fourth wave and there again, we landed in the Philippines and the action was pretty much quite a bit inland. And we didn't see much action there at Leyte, at all. But we got out of there. We were reported, they told us to get our tail out on our after our ship was empty because they expected the Japanese navy, came up through the the islands coming in from the west, going east and trying to trap us in there. We got out of there and then that one developed after that was the China Sea, what they call it, China Sea, or largest naval battle in the history of United States Naval, Navy. The big, big, big ships were hitting each other down there.

Cohen: [01:15:25] Oh, what was this part of the Battle of Leyte Gulf?

Arthur: [01:15:34] Yeah, that was October 20th.

Cohen: [01:15:36] Okay, okay, now I was reading that in October, there began a lot of kamikaze attacks whereby Japanese pilots would try to crash their aircraft into the enemy ships and they were loaded with explosives. Was they were there any kamikaze attacks on the Leon?

Arthur: [01:16:06] Wait a minute. The kamikaze, the first ones we saw was -- we made a run up to Lingayen Gulf which is up in Manilla - it's up at the top of the far western part of the Philippines.

Cohen: [01:16:23] Okay, a little bit later, okay?

Arthur: [01:16:26] We saw kamikazes, we had several of our ships got hit by that, but there wasn't all that many coming back, what you're referring to? Well, I don't know if that's fair. But what most people forget that the big kamikaze attacks from the Navy was when we hit Okinawa...April, April of '44, [corrects himself] '45, and then we had a ring of battleships and cruisers and destroyers and aircraft carriers had a ring around Okinawa and the Japanese kept coming at us with Kamikaze and everyone that actually, the Navy, the took more casualties and damages in that battle than they did all the rest put together.

Cohen: [01:17:29] Okay, so so okay. So that was the worst part. Was there was the Leon ever hit by kamikaze attacks?

Arthur: [01:17:44] Did I ever see one?

Cohen: [01:17:45] Yeah.

Cohen: [01:17:46] When was that?

Arthur: [01:17:49] That was that was - it was during a trip up to up Lingayen Gulf, Manila Bay way up at the top around the corner. We have some kamikaze hit our our group. Three or four of them but none of them hit us.

Cohen: [01:18:15] Was there was part of the ship damaged?

Arthur: [01:18:21] Yeah, I'm sure they come straight down, explode, there's a bomb aboard, the bomb goes off and there's fire. Yeah.

Cohen: [01:18:31] Wow.

Arthur: [01:18:33] Well, it's pretty rough, yeah.

Arthur: [01:18:38] So we landed on Okinawa on April 1st, '44; '45, I mean, on April 1st. Interesting was Easter Sunday.

Cohen: [01:18:50] Yeah, yeah.

Arthur: [01:18:52] And on top of that, it was April Fool's Day. [Cohen laughs]

Cohen: [01:18:58] So were you were you, did you land as well on Okinawa?

Arthur: [01:19:05] Yes, we did. We were. We were.

Arthur: [01:19:09] I don't know, second, first, second wave, I don't know, but we had our regular, regular procedure, we followed it, we landed on the beach, and nothing was going on. The Japanese had changed their techniques. Instead of fighting us on the beaches, they pulled back. And built defenses, in this case, down at the south end, heavily divided defenses down to the Shuri Castle area of Okinawa. And when we landed, we were there three or four days. I had little or no casualties whatsoever.

Cohen: [01:20:01] Oh!... So for you personally, it was it was quiet,

Arthur: [01:20:07] Yup, we went back and got aboard our ship. And a couple of days later, we got out of there because there again, the kamikazes were doing a pretty good up job on our on our ships.

Cohen: [01:20:22] So, I mean, we were people killed? Like how what was happening with-?

Arthur: [01:20:28] I'm sorry.

Cohen: [01:20:29] Were people killed on your ship as a result of the kamikazes?

Arthur: [01:20:36] No, no kamikaze ever hit our ship.

Cohen: [01:20:39] Oh, good. And, um, one thing, that one invasion that we didn't talk much about was the invasion of the Lingayen Gulf on January 9th. So I was I was reading that from the Navy perspective, the landing would be challenging because it's a long way up the western side of the Philippines and that it would have been in range of Japanese airfields. So were you aware of this? Were there any bombing attacks from airplanes when you were going up the Gulf?

Arthur: [01:21:24] We didn't know. They [didn't] keep us up to date on stuff like that.

Cohen: [01:21:29] No, no.

Arthur: [01:21:31] We heard most of us were scuttlebutt, that's the Navy word for rumors.

Cohen: [01:21:40] Yes. It's hard. Okay, so okay. So so in the Lingayen Gulf, at what point did you land, like like you and the other corpsman?

Arthur: [01:21:54] What? Slow it down just a bit.

Cohen: [01:22:00] When did you land? Like when the ship goes to the Lingayen Gulf, did you come ashore right away?

Arthur: [01:22:11] Lingayen Gulf? Again, we did have to go in. We just dumped our troops off and got out of there.

Cohen: [01:22:19] Okay, thank you. Sorry I missed that.

Arthur: [01:22:24] We didn't set up any aid station on that one. The worst one was Saipan.

Cohen: [01:22:32] Saipan. Yes, it sounds like it was it was really the worst. Did the Marines who were injured ever make a personal request of you? Like do they ever asked you for something?

Arthur: [01:22:53] I'm missing that

Cohen: [01:22:54] Did they ever talk to you, the people who were injured?

Arthur: [01:23:00] Say that again, Leah.

Cohen: [01:23:00] When you were treating the injured Marines on Saipan, did any of them talk to you like, "Hey, please give me water" or "Hey, will you mail this letter to my girlfriend?"

Arthur: [01:23:20] When we were training, you want to know if I had a girlfriend?

Cohen: [01:23:24] Oh, well, I was wondering when you were when you were when you were treating the Marines on Saipan like you're you're helping the injured, did any of them ask you for something?

Arthur: [01:23:41] When I was on Saipan--

Cohen: [01:23:43] Yeah. You're helping you're helping the the injured Marines. Did any of them talk to you? Uh, well, maybe it's not like I was wondering I was wondering if anybody was to talk to you, would say, "Oh, could you mail a letter for me or could you bring me some water or—"

Arthur: [01:24:12] I don't know what you mean.

Cohen: [01:24:15] Okay, uh, um, well, maybe it's not important. Maybe it's not that important.

Arthur: [01:24:27] Are we finished?

Cohen: [01:24:29] So so we're nearly, nearly finished. After so after Okinawa, where did you where did you go?

Arthur: [01:24:39] Where did I go when?

Cohen: [01:24:39] After after the campaign at Okinawa.

Arthur: [01:24:45] Oh, we came back to Pearl [Harbor].

Cohen: [01:24:47] Oh, so what did you do there?

Arthur: [01:24:51] I got transferred from the ship to Aiea Naval Hospital...naval hospital there above Honolulu. I was stationed up there and I was transferred up there. And that's what I. Yeah, Mike told you this story -- is what got me and the Big Band [i.e., called the Musical Medics] ,the jazz band.

Cohen: [01:25:30] Oh, okay, so how did you get into the Big Band?

Arthur: [01:25:35] Then I what?

Cohen: [01:25:36] How how did you get into the Big Band? What was going on?

Arthur: [01:25:41] Well, the hospital had a big dance floor and an outdoor band shell. And when I was doing duty, I heard this band and I thought, "Wow, what a what a break." So I went

to the guy and I said, "You need another trombone player? He said, "Yeah". [Cohen laughs] So, of course, I had experience in college playing on the jazz or the dance band. So I had gotten hold of horn, got my left in shape and to tried out, got in the band, sent for my horn from home and enjoyed the best part of the Navy career...playing in that dance band on permanent duty. So it was it was it was a lot of fun that summer.

Cohen: [01:26:48] So you told a wonderful story about how you prevented getting shipped overseas again. Do you want to tell the story, like you said, that they wanted to assign you to a ship going back to the front, but you succeeded in avoiding that? Do you want to tell that story?

Arthur: [01:27:15] Which story now?

Cohen: [01:27:18] The story about why you were not shipped overseas again.

Arthur: [01:27:25] Oh, yes, Mike's told you this. I'm playing in the band and I get a call from the personnel officer and I go down and I said after reporting, he said, "Arthur, you're being transferred to Guam." Now, this was during the summer of '45. And I said, "What's that?" He said, "You're being transferred." They need a hospital corpsman out there. And I said, "You can't transfer me." And he said, "Well, what are you talking about?" I said, "I play trombone in the Big Band"[Cohen laughs] And he laughed and. So I go back to my CPO [Chief Petty Officer], the guy in charge of the band, telling the story. He calls somebody who calls, somebody who calls somebody. Then there's this guy called me back in, personnel officer. He said, "I'll be a son of a bitch." He says, "I could be transferred anywhere in the world." He said, "I can't transfer you to Guam because you play trombone." [Cohen laughs]

Arthur: [01:28:49] But I got permanent duty.

Cohen: [01:28:54] Wow. Wow. And when when did you hear about V-J Day?

Arthur: [01:29:03] Did I what?

Cohen: [01:29:04] When did you hear about the end of the war and the victory over Japan Day?

Arthur: [01:29:11] Oh, I'm sorry. I missed that.

Cohen: [01:29:13] Oh, when did you hear about V-J Day [said slowly] The the the victory, the victory over Japan.

Arthur: [01:29:27] I'm sorry, what are you saying, Leah?

Arthur: [01:29:31] When did you hear that the war was over?

Arthur: [01:29:37] You're breaking up.

Cohen: [01:29:37] I'll try again. When did you hear that the war was over?

Arthur: [01:29:46] I tell you what. You call Mike and tell him all the things that you want to tell me.

Cohen: [01:29:52] Oh, okay. So should I call the other number now?

Arthur: [01:30:01] Yes, you can call him if you want.

Cohen: [01:30:03] Okay, maybe I'll just try it. I'll just try this one more time. How did you know about the end of the war?

Arthur: [01:30:14] How did I find out about the end of the war?

Cohen: [01:30:16] Yes.

Arthur: [01:30:17] Oh Lordy. We were at the hospital, at Aiea Heights, of course, we had heard about the bomb. And a week or so later, the second bomb, that was very long after that, the Japanese surrendered, and all I can tell you is, well, you have to know this: We worked with the Big Band there in Honolulu. We weren't allowed to charge money for playing. We played off of our base. We played [at] a lot of officers' clubs all over the island, and instead of paying us in money, they had all the beer we wanted on the stand and plus food. Why don't we take a break? We can have all the food we want to eat. So we had food and beer. Then the guy in charge of the band, would go over and they would give him the choice. Take your choice of three fifths of liquor, any time you want. You want Scotch, you want Bourbon. Do you want Tequila? Whatever you want. So he takes three and put it in his locker. He had fifteen men in the band, and it didn't take very long for him to have more than fifteen. And he'd call us down there and say, "You guys take your pick. You have one bottle apiece." So we picked whatever we wanted and stick it in our locker. I wasn't drinking the heavy stuff at all. I was drinking beer a little bit, but I wasn't drinking anything else. But V-J Day came along, I had three fifths of liquor in my locker. [Cohen laughs] I became the most popular guy on the on in the barracks that night. There was a lot of guys got married, I think. [both laugh] One more little story. When we were playing, the jobs that we were playing, I had my trombone case and it's what they call a coffin case. It's squared long and I used to keep my mute inside the case. And one night, I took the mutes out, I had them out and playin' and I picked up two cans of beer and I could get ten cans of beer. [Cohen laughs] So I loaded up my case with beer, and when I leave, there was no on at it, they couldn't care less anyway.

Arthur: [01:33:31] So I get back to the barracks about 3:00 [A.M] in the morning and I open up. These guys, two or three guys that come out of the bunk, out of their bunk, "Oh Arthur, you saved our lives [Laughter] because beer was free.

Cohen: [01:33:55] That's enough, is that what you said? Yeah, yeah, oh, uh, do you want to talk a little bit about your life after the after the war, after your service?

Arthur: [01:34:08] Yeah, I went back to Bowling Green, to school.

Arthur: [01:34:12] What did you study?

Arthur: [01:34:16] Well, I studied pre-vet, yeah. And there were only ten vet schools in the country. I went to Ohio State, which is what I. And the guy says there's fifteen hundred applications for, I think, sixty openings. And he said, "My best advice, if you want to get into vet school, you've got to come down here and take your pre-vet, here". Well, I didn't want to do that. I went back up to Bowling Green and then I was playing in the band and playing in the dance band and singing in a choir. So I just shifted over to music. [Cohen laughs]

Cohen: [01:35:07] Right! Where did you meet your wife?

Arthur: [01:35:11] Was I what?

Cohen: [01:35:13] Your wife.

Arthur: [01:35:14] Oh, yeah, we met, we met in an education class. There was a there was a building that was armory surplus, that was a theater type thing, and he'd come in and he'd stand behind that desk. And a bunch of us would come in, students, sittin' like it was a theater and he'd for an hour. We were paying no attention to him whatsoever. Well, three of us, three, two fraternity and brothers myself and-- oh these gals would come behind me-- and said

Cut [Speaks to person] Oh, I got this longer phone call.

Unknown: [01:36:11] I saved you noodles for tomorrow.

Arthur: [01:36:14] You what?

Unknown: [01:36:15] I saved noodle for tomorrow.]

Arthur: [01:36:18] Okay. Thank you very much. So anyway, the three girls sat behind me, one of them was was my wife. Eventually, was my wife. We met. We met in the educational class. She was a freshman. And I all I was I was a sophomore, I guess. I had some credits. I ended up with two degrees. Graduated 1950. Married, married Jo, the smartest thing I ever did, the greatest woman. We had seventy years.

Cohen: [01:37:02] Wow. Wow.

Arthur: [01:37:05] Well, she is responsible for all of those five wonderful, wonderful. kids. She took such good care of them.

Cohen: [01:37:15] Oh, my goodness. Is she still with this?

Arthur: [01:37:19] Pardon?

Cohen: [01:37:20] Is she still alive?

Arthur: [01:37:22] No, we lost we lost her a year ago. In fact, her birthday is tomorrow. She died August 1st last year.

Cohen: [01:37:35] What a beautiful tribute that you had seventy wonderful years together.

Arthur: [01:37:41] Oh, yes... We travelled all over the world, got in fifty states, all fifty states. We we just out a ball.

Cohen: Did you ever want to travel back to to Saipan?

Arthur: [01:38:03] What...I said?

Cohen: [01:38:04] Did you ever want to go back and visit Saipan?

Arthur: [01:38:09] I have no desire. [emphatically]

Cohen: [01:38:11] Yeah.

Arthur: [01:38:11] We lived sixteen, about sixteen years in Florida. I liked that weather. Not hot weather. Sandy beaches. No, I don't have any. Saipan doesn't mean anything to me other than just was part of my life. Other than that, no, I don't have any desire.

Cohen: [01:38:35] Yeah. What was the moment that you're most proud of?

Arthur: [01:38:43] My most proud moment?

Cohen: [01:38:45] Yeah, like when you were in the service.

Arthur: [01:38:48] Oh, when I was in the service. Oh goodness. Hmm.

Arthur: [01:39:01] I suppose I was selected for that that admiral's choir at Great Lakes. It was a great moment in my life, musically, and it was a lot greater than I thought about it later on than it was when I was doing it, you know. But I don't know – the proudest moment? I don't think I have any particular proudest moment. The day I got out? [Laughter]

Cohen: [01:39:40] Is there something that you would like to talk about that we did not talk about yet?

Arthur: [01:39:47] Oh, goodness, let's see, I think...events...

Cohen: [01:40:06] Actually, I do have a question that I didn't think of before. What was the camaraderie like between you and the other corpsman? Did the corpsman get along well? What was it like?

Arthur: [01:40:22] I don't know. I missed that. What I was going to say, there was time, time I got we got. I told you I was on that hospital ship and then I flew across to Kwajalein to get to my ship.

Cohen: [01:40:42] Yes.

Arthur: [01:40:43] I got back to my ship, the Leon, had been turned to a hospital ship and they had a whole bunch of casualties because of the heavy casualties of Saipan, they dumped a whole bunch of them, put a whole bunch of them on the Leon because the hospital ships were crowded. And so, when I got back to the ship in the Marshals, I had to serve meatball surgery, you know, like you saw in M*A*S*H.

Cohen: [01:41:24] Oh.

Arthur: [01:41:25] So we we had the surgery one right after the other. And the doc used to leave us, his gown on, he'd changed his gloves, his surgical gloves, and then go right back to surgery. So we worked ten, twelve hours a day. And I came up to one and I said, "Doc, I said, "I'm gonna to have to leave you." [laughs] He said, "Oh, what's the matter?" I said, "Well, you've got this young kid covered in, well, you're going to amputate that leg", and said, "I'm not going to watch. I can't watch that one for you." So I begged off and got out of that. But the hospital ship, that experience, I mean being on the Leon as a hospital ship, it was pretty hectic for a while.

Cohen: [01:42:27] Yeah. How would you assist in surgery? Like, what type of things were you doing?

Arthur: [01:42:36] What was I doing when?

Cohen: [01:42:38] When you're helping the doctor with surgery.

Arthur: [01:42:45] You just do the best you can because you're overextended, you're doing things that you weren't really trained to do, assisting the surgeon and the regular and that's also just a-- They also had a biology...what was it? Chemical lab, take all the tests, and so forth

but it was just like you would imagine. You do whatever everything you could. You're dressed up in your gowns and your gloves and your masks and everything and yeah. For a twenty-year old, preacher's kid out of a small town in Ohio, it was an adventure.

Cohen: [01:43:43] Yeah, it sounds like you got to see a lot of life. Yes. Did you ever feel squeamish?

Arthur: [01:43:56] Anything else you need to know, Leah?

Cohen: [01:43:59] Oh, I was wondering, did you ever feel squeamish, like when you were helping with the surgeries?

Arthur: [01:44:08] No, no.

Cohen: [01:44:10] Well, you're able to handle that. Yeah.

Arthur: [01:44:12] I outgrew that. I fell in love with music too much.

Cohen: [01:44:16] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That sounds wonderful. Yeah. Well, I don't think I have any more questions. Is there another event that you would like to talk about?

Arthur: [01:44:31] You have my telephone number. Or for that matter, give Mike a call.

Cohen: [01:44:40] Well, okay, okay, I really thank you on behalf of the museum and library, I very much appreciate you talking with us today and we will send you a challenge coin in the mail as a token of our appreciation.

Arthur: [01:44:56] Thank you so much for your patience.

Cohen: [01:44:58] Thank you so much. It was a pleasure.