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Convoy Project -- Charlie Baca -- Tape #1 -- Side A
[C775]

001 -- MH intro -- 22/II-1990 -- Armed guard messroom of Lane Victory
Charlie Baca (I slipped & called him Laba).
006 -- MH asks for story of gun tub being turned into swimming pool
& shooting at submarine & anything else CB wants to give.
008 -- CB was not the one who told abt. gun tub turned into swimming
pool, but tells abt. submarine. Byond Dateline out of
Honolulu on 4-8 a.m. watch w/ partner, taking turns.
Dawn coming, CB sees "cigar" across bow. Pulled gen'l
alarm, prep. to fire, Lt. gave order to fire. Signalman
gave challenge, sub answered. Was US sub.
026 -- If he had been enemy wld definitely have got him. CB fired
1st round over him; 2nd wld. have got him.
027 -- MH -- You were on 3" 50 in bow, same as gun being mounted
in stern tub of Lane V. today. CB -- Correct.
030 -- MH -- Rel'n btwn A.G. & MM. CB -- Very good. Never any problems.
033 -- Only problem was w/ a capt. Tells story abt. gawking at casting
off manoeuvres, being scolded by capt., gun off. says
don't scold my men, tell me & I'll take care of it.
045 -- CB tells story abt. whistling aboard ship. Capt. says, "Only
2 peo. whistle on ship -- bos'n's mate & damn fool &
you're not a bos'n's mate."
051 -- MH -- Did you sometimes go ashore w/ merchant seamen? CB-
Yeah, I sure did. Oiler good friend.
(Volunteer workers have brought pizza into messroom and are dividing
it very noisily. This lowers recording quality considerably.)
059 -- MH -- You were never on a Navy ship? CB -- Never.
060 -- MH -- I know you were on the Cedar Rapids Vic. What others?
061 -- CB -- 1st ship was a C-1, S/S Cape Friendship. 2nd was converted
tanker, from Lib., coastwise, didn't like. Did tour
(8 mo.), took leave, got Ced.Rap.Vic.
066 -- MH -- Why don't you tell me the story abt. seeing the BeatriceVic.?
068 --CB tells story. Wife's name Beatrice. In Okinawa saw other
Vic. ship named Beatrice Vic. Met a sailor from that
ship aboard Lane Vic. After the Okinawa trip.
080 -- MH -- Other interesting experiences besides shooting at US
sub? Lots, but sub most interesting.
082 -- MH -- Rec? CB -- Not much. Played cards. Had boxing gloves.
Eat, sleep, get fat, stand watch, maintain weapons.
Good duty. Enjoyed it.
089 -- MH -- Nicknames? CB -- For instance? MH -- "Refrig. commandoes"
for A.G.? CB -- Yeah, but paid no att'n; kept on eating.
Went from 170 lbs. to 192. Well fed.
098 -- MH -- Rel'n btwn depts? CB -- Everybody got along well.
Majority of gun crew slept in stern. Lt., radio op.,
signalmen slept amidships. No problems.
108 -- MH -- Fools' errands? CB -- Not in Navy. Heard when he was
kid in CC camp -- get sky hook, water flagpole, etc.
Didn't get hooked himself.
114 -- MH tells "hank of yarn" story.
122 -- CB -- Had 3 separate incidents that cld have caused to go
to prison for rest of life. Unavoidable. One was accident.
One was threat from ensign aboard tanker.
126 -- Tells story. Was on 50-cal. machine gun. Demonstrating.
Ensign started to pull trigger. CB hit in chest & knocked
down. Ens. mad, said wld. court martial. CB said no,
see what wld've happened. Showed that wld have fired,
killed MM crew. MM ready to throw ens. overside. No
court martial.
160 -- Tells story. On Cedar Rapids on 12-4 a.m. watch. Bored.

Charlie Baca #1 -- Side A

160 -- Tells story. On Cedar Rapids Vic. on 12-4 a.m. watch. Bored. Partner suggests going to messroom, playing poker. Did. CB argues, but they did it -- secured watch all but one man. Never got caught, but cld. have been shafted.

169 -- Other time on same ship almost killed one of shipmates. Tells story. Anchored. On watch. Went to messroom to play cards. Had pistols. Got bored w/ cards. Started playing w/ .38s. No safety, just empty chamber. Arguing wh. way it turned. CB aimed above friend's head; fired. Cook just come on duty: "Playing cowboys & Indians?" Room full of smoke. All scared, CB worst. Hole in bulkhead. Nobody else heard. Safe. Camouflaged hole, changed pistols.

207 -- To this day, CB will not own gun. Young. Doesn't dwell on.

220 -- MH -- Not CB w/ swimming pool story? CB -- No.

224 -- MH -- Where on convoys? CB -- Only in one. Ulithe to Okinawa 6 days after invasion. In Pac. all the time. Desc.

237 -- MH -- How old then? CB -- 18. Now 65. Youngest in gun crew was 17. Oldest 35. Called "Pappy."

248 -- MH -- Married when 1st went to sea? CB -- No. Got married Feb. 1945.

256 -- MH -- Exciting experiences ashore? CB -- A couple.

258 -- CB & friend in bar, drinking beer. Marine came in & picked on CB. CB tries not to get involved. Gets called "Market Street commando. Shore Patrol comes in.

279 -- Recording interrupted by loud machinery working just outside. Interview changes venue to merchant crew's messroom & continues.

281 -- Shore Patrol walked in. CB told Marine trying to start fight, SP tells Marine to leave. When bar closes, CB walks out, meets Marine. CB hit him, he fell, screamed, "Marines!" Restaurant next door w/ 40 Marines. Chased CB & friend 2 blks. Caught cab & escaped.

301 -- Another story. Benicia CA. CB & 2 buddies came to crowd watching 2 civilians beat up sailor. CB hit one who fell & hit head on sidewalk. CB took off, thought he was dead. SP came, blew whistles. CB didn't stop. When friends got back aboard ship told CB guy was dead. Finally admitted he was OK, had been taken off in ambulance to have back of head stitched up where hit.

338 -- Doesn't know if other sailor got away.

349 -- CB was boxer anyway -- knew how to take care of self.

355 -- Enjoyed service. Only anxious to get out because married. If had stayed single would probably have retired from Navy. Enjoyed it.

368 -- MH thanks CB.

369 -- End recording.