



## Douglas County History Research Center Oral Histories

Oral History Interview with

**Daryl L. Tennial Jr.**

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*Veterans History Project*

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**SUMMARY:** Daryl L. Tennial Jr. recounts his experiences in the U. S. Marine Corps during World War II. At the conclusion of boot camp, Tennial became a member a 19-man Battalion Marine Corps Band sent to the Pacific. When he was not performing with the band, Tennial participated in campaigns on Guadalcanal, Tulaghi and Guam. During fighting on Guam, Tennial received a shrapnel wound in the neck. He also contracted malaria during his time in the Pacific which continued to affect him after he left the service. Following his return to the United States, he married Arlene Thaut and they spent the last months before his discharge in October of 1945 in San Diego, CA. Tennial kept in touch with several of the men he served with after the war.



fouled up but that's to be expected, I guess. It went through a county courthouse fire.

**BELT:** Oh, I see.

**TENNAL:** But that was a long time ago. I'm getting into the point of our service connections. At the point of coming into service, I enlisted in World War II, for World War II, sometime after Pearl Harbor.

**BELT:** What did you enlist into? What branch of service?

**TENNAL:** U.S. Marine Corps.

**BELT:** Now, why did you choose the Marine Corps?

**TENNAL:** Because I wanted to be in an outfit I'd be proud of.

**BELT:** Oh, okay.

**TENNAL:** One of these things, I always thought if I was ever going to do things, I'm going to do it the hardest way possible and I want a name for it.

**BELT:** [*Belt laughs*] And the Marine was the toughest one, huh?

**TENNAL:** That's about the way I seen it. So, anyhow, I went into the Marine Corps and went into boot camp.

**BELT:** And when you joined the Marine Corps, you joined it in Colorado?

**TENNAL:** Yes, in the Recruiting Office down in the Denver area. And they give you this song and dance. You can have your choice about this and this and this and this. And I just wanted to be in the Marine Corps. That was the sum total of it. And so I passed my physical and was accepted, and they told me I was ready to go.

**BELT:** What did your family think about you joining the Marines?

**TENNAL:** Well, my mother didn't like it. My girlfriend, which is now my wife, she wasn't exactly happy about it either. My father, I don't think he really cared too much one way or the other. So, that was the whole bit, and when I went in I was kind of a

mama's baby. The Marines took that out of me real quick.

**BELT:** Was boot camp, tell me about boot camp.

**TENNAL:** It's tough. It's the closest thing I think you can say to hell at that time. If you [unclear] and find out what hell's really like later on. But, in the boot camp when I was a mama's baby, they said had to come away from that point to where I followed orders, I learned discipline and I learned a big deal of patience. There were times I would have liked to have got my DI [*drill instructor*] and beat his head in, but he said no.

**BELT:** Why was it so tough? Why makes it, why was it hell for you? Or for everyone. It was hell for everyone.

**TENNAL:** It was one of these points. They had to get us ready for war, instantly. And we were drilling, marching and drilling, with broomsticks. We didn't have rifles. And, again, it's one of these points where I have a great deal of questions about what goes on in the country, even today, because of lack of preparedness. And, it was one of those things that, everything you had to learn, you learned instantly. And then you had to drill and drill and drill you never forgot it. And then it comes back to you when you need it. It's second nature. And this is why the Marine Corps boot camp is where a lot of them go for training, in many of the different branches of service. They come back to the Marine Corps boot camp.

**BELT:** Do you have regrets about joining boot camp, the Marines?

**TENNAL:** At the time, probably. [*Laughter from both*] But after I finished, never. And I never regretted the point that I was a Marine. As matter of fact, I wear a Marine ring yet to this day. And I'm very proud of the Marines.

**BELT:** Do you remember your instructors at all from boot camp?

**TENNAL:** I had two drill instructors. It's when they play "bad cop, good cop" on you out there. One is tougher than nails and the other one is your friend. And the one that was my friend Dewwhite, Dewitt [*sp*], and I can't remember his first name. As I said it was a good many, many years back.

**BELT:** And you were probably about 20 years old, right?

**TENNAL:** 19, 20. And just out of high school, working on the railroad. And Pearl Harbor hit and I wanted to go then.

**BELT:** You were in boot camp when Pearl Harbor?

**TENNAL:** No, that was after. Pearl Harbor as in '41 [1941].

**BELT:** '41, that's right.

**TENNAL:** And I joined up in '42. I just couldn't stand it any longer. I had to get in on it. [*Tennal chuckles*] But, I did my hitch in boot camp and the whole point is that you've got to learn everything. But there starts on my history in service. It was kind of confusing to me. Notice, I was in the Marine Corps Band also, and when the graduation out of boot camp, when you served your time there, which was seven weeks if I remember right, the big Marine Corps Band gives a concert. And you march in and you're seated and you listen to the concert. Well, at the time of the concert they mentioned, "We're looking for some new band members.". Well, I had marched in band ever since junior high school.

**BELT:** What did you play?

**TENNAL:** I played trumpet and French horn, both. And I played in, as a matter of fact I was in the VFW [*Veterans of Foreign Wars*] Band before I was even in service. They needed me. There was a contest going on and it ran from, I think, [unclear] down in Denver. They were in this contest, and they didn't have a French horn player. And they came out to the high school, junior high school, to see if there was anybody around. And two of us volunteered. We went with them. We weren't old enough to go to a bar but we were able to go to the VFW. [*Belt and Tennal chuckle*]. So, anyhow, then I played in a lot of bands. The VFW band and the Union Pacific Band, a lot of them, high school and junior high school and all that. [*Short pause*] Huh?

**BELT:** That's okay, Arlene. You can--

**ARLENE:** North High School.

**TENNAL:** Yeah, I was in North High School Band. And the funny thing there. I had an instructor, I was president of my band there when I was a senior.

**BELT:** So, the Marine Corps came to you and asked you to join the band, or is it just something that you--?

**TENNAL:** I'm leading up to this. But anyhow, back in the high school period of this thing, I asked my instructor, in high school, if he would write to the Marine Corps Band and ask if I could have an audition. And he said, "Well, it wouldn't do a dang bit of good." He says, "You're not good enough, you never will be." And he says, "There is no sense even writing about it." He says, "I don't know why you'd want to bother with it." Well, that [unclear] that I thought "To hell with you." So I put that on the back burner for a while, and as I say, when this band, their band, appeared at the end of boot camp and they asked for members I thought, "Hmm. This can't be too bad." But, unbeknown to me, somehow my name had already been entered. Because when we broke up after we were dismissed--

**BELT:** You mean after boot camp?

**TENNAL:** Um hum. My drill instructor came over and he says, "You wait here." He just pointed to a spot on the parade grounds. Well, you learned, you take orders. I wouldn't have moved from that spot if hell froze over. [*Belt chuckles*] But, anyhow, I'm having a hard time trying to clean up my language. I waited. Pretty soon a guy comes down in a jeep, says "Throw your sea bag in the back." I did. We got in. All we did was drive to the other end of the parade ground! He said, "This is Headquarters Company up here for the San Diego area." I said, "It is?" He says, "Drop you sea bag there, a man will meet you." "Okay." Well, I find out later this was where the band was stationed! That guy comes out and gets me, takes me in, fills out some papers on me. I haven't answered any questions yet, hardly. I mean, he's been just writing down things. And he says, "Oh, you can take your sea bag and go upstairs and put it by a bunk up there." He says "That's where the bands are formed up at." "Okay, yes sir, aye-aye sir." I go up there. Anyway, I go up there and I find these, oh, four or five other guys setting around in there. They tell me that I'm in the band!

**BELT:** So, you didn't have to audition?

**TENNAL:** I didn't have to audition, I didn't have to do a thing! [*Belt chuckles*] And I'm sitting there and I'm thinking, "Where did they get this record? How do they know who I am? What happened?"

**BELT:** Now you're in San Diego, right?

**TENNAL:** I'm in San Diego. Headquarters Company in San Diego in the U. S. Marine Corps Band. Well, they start their directions, blah blah, and the whole nine yards. And we form a band. Well, I find out then that they formed bands at this point to go overseas. You have battalion bands, you have division bands, and you have all of this in there. Well, I thought, "This can't be too bad. I wonder what we do over there." Of course, I'm a Marine and I figured you were qualified on just about anything that happens in a war. And I'm puzzled, I'm really at loose ends. They literally formed us up, and there's nineteen of us. "You're going to be a battalion band." And we started from rehearsals and practice, and we're still marching and doing all the other things that a band does. And we trooped colors with the big bands and we, you know, the normal part of so-called band work that goes on.

**BELT:** When you're in the band are you wearing dress blues, or what are you wearing?

**TENNAL:** No, you're wearing your greens.

**BELT:** Greens, okay.

**TENNAL:** Or tans. Summer uniform is a tan type uniforms. This was in the winter time and we were in greens most of the time, with the brown shirt and tie. Most of the people don't even see a Marine with a tie on unless you're main blouse is off. But, anyway, we served our time there and we come up and we finally get orders that the band's been formed. And at that time, as soon as they formed the band, the band gets its ranking. And this is after you've been assigned and you've been accepted, seemingly. And they start posting on the bulletin board. Well everybody was a private at that time. The next day, here everybody's names on the board over there and you're a PFC [*Private First Class*]. You get one stripe. A couple days later, another bulletin board posting and the next rank comes up. It says corporal. My name was on that one. Well, what do you know? I'm a Corporal!

**BELT:** How did you feel about that?

**TENNAL:** Well, I felt like it was pretty good. [*Belt chuckles*]. Meanwhile, we formed quite a few buddies in this group. You know, our nineteen men being together all the time.

**BELT:** So there's nineteen men in the band?

**TENNAL:** Being together all the time, naturally you buddy off into different groups. Well, there was three of us that accepted buddy-ship pretty well together. So a couple days later the posting come out and I didn't get a ranking as sergeant, but some of my friends did. So, for the three of us left together, there was a guy by the name of George Beck, and he's now deceased, and Bats Belfry, he's deceased, and myself.

**BELT:** Bats Belfry?

**TENNAL:** Well, Bill Belfry. [*Laughter from Belt*] We called him Bats for Belfry. Everybody carried a nickname somewhere.

**BELT:** What was your nickname?

**TENNAL:** Jerry, and don't ask me where I got it.

**BELT:** Jerry.

**TENNAL:** Everybody called me Jerry. But, anyhow, so later on then there was a band that formed and you got your rank, and everything else. Then you're assigned. You're going overseas to a certain point. We didn't know where we were going. We had no idea. But we shipped out. And I don't know the date exactly. I don't think I have it anywhere. Nothing that I can remember, anyhow. And, if things come to me later, I'll tell you about it then.

**ARLENE:** January '43 [1943].

**TENNAL:** Okay, the wife had a date there so that's--

**BELT:** January '43. That's when you're shipped out.

**TENNAL:** That's when we shipped out.

**BELT:** Do you remember the ship?

**TENNAL:** It was the Jane Adams. It was a Kaiser Liberty Ship. It was nothing but a tin can, I don't think. [*Tennal chuckles*]

**BELT:** That's what they called them then, wasn't it? Tin cans?

**TENNAL:** More or less. Because Kaiser was turning them out real rapidly and the armament on them was very obsolete, more or less. [*Henry J. Kaiser, American industrialist, his assembly line production methods rapidly produced WWII Liberty ships*] And we took off for Pearl Harbor. We were going to, that was our first staging area, was Pearl, and from there we would be assigned to wherever we were going.

**BELT:** What did you think about going to Pearl Harbor?

**TENNAL:** Cold chills.

**BELT:** Really.

**TENNAL:** And I don't think we got over it. On our way over--

**BELT:** Let's get back to "cold chills." Because of what had happened?

**TENNAL:** Well, I hadn't heard a lot of things in boot camp. But different fellows and so forth, their brothers and fathers or uncles and such had went over, went down in Pearl Harbor and had been killed. And some were in my outfit. And so that kind of puts you in the edge already. That you're familiar with the area. You're thinking of the area.

**BELT:** Right. And you had lost friends.

**TENNAL:** And I figured I had friends that were either over there, dead, or down, or something. I didn't know. But, anyhow, on our way over we were in convoy. And half way, or maybe three or four or five or six days out, I don't know, we burned a main bearing on the ship, the Adams. The convoy left us.

**BELT:** What do you mean, the convoy left you? You mean--?

**TENNAL:** The convoy goes on its route. We're sitting out in the Pacific all by our little lonesome.

**BELT:** So you're talking about little ships following you? Is that what you mean by--?

**TENNAL:** A convoy is a whole group of military personnel being moved at one time. It may be five ships, it may be ten ships, it may be a hundred ships. This convoy, if I remember right, was probably, oh, maybe twenty, twenty-five ships. We had a couple of destroyers, and a couple of cruisers, and that was about it.

**BELT:** So you're all going out together to Pearl Harbor?

**TENNAL:** In formation, more or less.

**BELT:** In formation. I see.

**TENNAL:** And, anyhow, they left us. So we're sitting out there like sitting ducks and we're thinking, "Hey, whoa, back off." Nobody slept for the night. It took thirteen hours for a new bearing and in that time nobody slept.

**BELT:** So you were in the Pacific when this happened?

**TENNAL:** Just drifting.

**BELT:** Just drifting.

**TENNAL:** Well, they got it fixed. We went on, caught up with our outfit again, in Pearl. There they said, 'All right, the next port, you'll debark here, and you're going to New Caledonia.' Well, I'd never heard of New Caledonia. I don't know where it was at.

**BELT:** How did you receive those orders? How did you get those orders?

**TENNAL:** They came to the officers in charge of our group.

**BELT:** They just make an announcement, "This is where you're going?"

**TENNAL:** Yeah. They call you to attention, to a group meeting, and say this is where you're going and you're leaving on a certain date and you're going to go on this ship. We'll be loading and, pow, you're there. You're in a military formation.

**BELT:** Okay.

**TENNAL:** Well, we got aboard ship there and we go down to New Caledonia. I forget exactly how many days we were getting down there. I know it seemed like forever.

**BELT:** You're on another ship?

**TENNAL:** Another ship, totally different. I don't know the name of it. I don't remember the name of it. I had a book at one time that carried all the names of every ship I was ever on and I think I was on about, more than most people were getting involved with. But, anyhow, before we got into Caledonia, the day before we got in, we caught fire. The ship did. And we've got aviation gas on board.

**BELT:** So this was just an accident aboard ship.

**TENNAL:** Um hm.

**BELT:** Okay.

**TENNAL:** Well wouldn't leave us in the harbor in New Caledonia, because we're on fire. We could blow up! So we have to abandon ship, leave our ship by nets. Go in the side out in the rough water. Some of the boys didn't make it. Because your landing barge is bobbing up one side and down the other and you're ship itself is going up and down. You try to come down the net and, boy, you step into the landing barge and you want to get both of them somewhere both close together so you don't break an arm or a neck or a leg. Well, as I say, some of the boys didn't make it. They fell in between them and got crushed and died. So we didn't wind up with our full outfit. Our nineteen was still together, but many of the others weren't.

**BELT:** Was this a--?

**TENNAL:** By that time we were becoming a battalion. Well, there was quite a few of us. I think there was about, maybe a thousand aboard the ship when this happened.

**BELT:** Did the ship go down, or--?

**TENNAL:** No. They got the fire put out. And they brought it on into harbor and everything else and--

**BELT:** Did you go into New Caledonia? They let you go in there?

**TENNAL:** Yeah, the landing boat brought us in there.

**BELT:** Brought you in.

**TENNAL:** Well, we had lost quite a bit of our equipment and stuff, but they let us reform up and everything. So, at that point, then they reload us again, when we get some new equipment and some other stuff. And we go on. But they don't tell us where we're going. But we're in another convoy. And the day before we come in on Guadalcanal--

**BELT:** A ship convoy, or a truck?

**TENNAL:** Ship. Everything is by ship, because we're on islands. Because we're going island hopping. And before we get into Caledonia, the day before, maybe a day and half before, they say--. Or not Caledonia, pardon me. When we're going into the island that we're scheduled to go in on, this is Guadalcanal. Everybody's heard about Guadalcanal. I mean there was the number one battle in the Pacific right there. It hadn't been solidified yet and was still pretty much an iffy situation from what we--

**BELT:** So there's active fighting going on?

**TENNAL:** We assume that it still is. When we get in on Guadalcanal--

**BELT:** What year do you think this is? Still '43 [1943]?

**TENNAL:** About there somewhere. I'd have to check back for the dates. Anyhow, they got in there, and we were a defense battalion backing up the First Division, Marine Division. That's what had been formed then. And, well, this is a defense battalion. In other words, we had everything from 155 guns up to thirty caliber rifle. Down to thirty caliber rifles. So at that phase, they come in a couple of days after that. And meanwhile, you bivouac where you can.

**BELT:** So, you've landed in Guadalcanal?

**TENNAL:** Our group did. Yeah, it's already been occupied, but not secured, let's put it that way.

**BELT:** Not secured, okay.

**TENNAL:** So they come in and they're going to get us a little ship in there, and this is a fairly little ship, and they call our nineteen together and they said, "You're moving over to Tulaghi." Now this is the capital of the Solomon Islands. Guadalcanal is one of the Solomons, it's a British-controlled island.

**BELT:** Wait a minute. How long are you in Guadalcanal? How many days?

**TENNAL:** Oh, a couple days.

**BELT:** Just a couple days and then they're sending you again?

**TENNAL:** They're sending us on again. Well, we found that we're on our way into Tulaghi. And we're coming in at night. They had loaded us in the evening, at nighttime, and they take us out on this little ship. And, as I say, it's a very little ship. I would say it wouldn't hold over maybe fifty to a hundred at best.

**BELT:** Do you have any orders? Do you know what you're going to do there?

**TENNAL:** No, we don't have no idea what we're going to do. We're going to Tulaghi. So we're going in there, and before we get to Tulaghi, we're almost there, a speaker comes on from somewhere. I don't remember if it was a speaker or a shot. I think it was a speaker. And we were told to halt. And then we stopped ship. And big floodlights hit us, hit that ship, flood lights. "Identify yourself." Well, we don't know what the hell is going on.

**BELT:** So you don't know who's asking you these questions?

**TENNAL:** But the signalman on the ship, he gets on the blinker deal, you know, the light, and he signals in what we are, who we are, where we're from.

**BELT:** This is like--?

**TENNAL:** They're answering someone right there on the island. And we get the orders then to proceed, to come on aboard, come on in. We get in there, we identify ourselves. Oh, we're part of the Third Marine, Third Division, Coastal Batteries of

Defense, 14<sup>th</sup>. Part of our outfit had already went in there. So we're the tail end part coming in.

**BELT:** So they just weren't sure who you were.

**TENNAL:** They had no idea who we were.

**BELT:** It must have been pretty scary.

**TENNAL:** And we had no idea who they were. [*Laughter from Belt*] At that point the island of Tulaghi was still somewhat under siege.

**BELT:** I never heard of Tulaghi.

**TENNAL:** There's a lot of the islands over there. And I'll give a little rundown on part of them. The group of them, Tulaghi was the capital of it. Guadalcanal was the bigger one. Next to us was Florida Island, which I have yet to see mentioned by anybody, hardly. And next to them was Gavutu and Tanambogo and, let's see, there was one called Sing Song, and Seven Sisters and, oh, what the heck, there's another island in there and I can't think of it right off hand. It'll come to me somewhere along the line. But, anyhow, we get in there and we report, naturally, to the officer of the day, the whole bit. You're coming aboard and you're on an island now. And you're waiting orders to see what's going on. Well, as I say, nineteen of us were band members! We get in there and we report in, and the only thing the colonel said was, "What in the hell am I going to do with a band?" Well!

**BELT:** Did you have your instruments with you?

**TENNAL:** No.

**BELT:** [*Laughter from Belt*] You couldn't do much, could you?

**TENNAL:** Not a whole bunch. But, anyhow, one of the guys spoke up, I don't know which one it was, but he says, "Look, there ain't nothing on this island that you've got here for armament that we can't handle." He says, "All right." He put us over in one section of the island. We went up there. He said, "Dig in." And we paired off in what are friendship groups, more or less. The three of us were together in this and we had a Master Sergeant take us over there. He says, "You three are going to be here. You

might as well dig a hole and put yourselves in it." And he says, "We'll send over machine guns for you a little later."

**BELT:** So you're concerned about the Japanese.

**TENNAL:** Oh, yes.

**BELT:** Not the Germans, the Japanese?

**TENNAL:** The Japanese. And so, we dug our holes and built a machine gun emplacement, and later on we got our 30 caliber machine gun. They gave us a old water-cooled U [?] which was, like, ancient. But, I was the gunner and Belfry fed the ammunition to me. He should have been gunner. He was the sergeant of the group. And Beck was feeding belts for me. So we formed up that way. We were machine gunners from then on, and it kept us pretty well occupied for a while. In the meantime, oh four or five days later I guess, we got some instruments in there and we started getting our band back together again. And we'd go out in the evenings and play for the other companies in there. We had Able Company, Baker, Dog.

**BELT:** Now, I thought you had no instruments. How could you play?

**TENNAL:** Well, they brought them over from 'Canal or somewhere. Some ship had them on board. They weren't with us, but some ship had them.

**BELT:** Oh, so you got your instruments.

**TENNAL:** Well, we got a box of them. [*Tennal chuckles*] We sorted them out and we got own instruments back where we could play. Oh, and then we got a big box of a so-called libraries. Well, we had music with us then, but we're still doing tour-of-duty more or less. Guard duty and everything else. On Tulaghi many things happened. We were there for almost a year in that point.

**BELT:** A year in Tulaghi, on a small little island.

**TENNAL:** Well, a group of islands. And we would tour the different, go to the different islands. We had little companies on each one. Able, Baker Company, let's see, Baker, Charlie, Dog, Easy, Fox.

**BELT:** Now what is this? What are you saying?

**TENNAL:** They're all by alphabetical number. Each one is a small company. They're either antiaircraft or 155 battalion coastal.

**BELT:** How are you receiving mail? Are you hearing from Arlene during this time?

**TENNAL:** No. No, we're not getting anything. We're not getting paid, we're getting no compensation, no nothing. At this point we met a neat guy. He was a Seabee. And he kind of took our outfit, the nineteen of us, under his wing. We had no, what we called "pogie bait." No candy, no toothpaste, no toothbrushes, no nothing. Well, somehow, he got supplies out of his outfit, and kept us going in cigarettes, and so on and so forth. Well, again, we find out that he's not long out of the States either, and his wife was having a baby. Well, we finally got paid, maybe two, three months later.

**BELT:** So the check would come to you?

**TENNAL:** Yeah, it would come to the paymaster, and the paymaster would call your name and you went up and got paid. But, what we done with this guy, we got off just a little bit there on that chief petty officer. We found out about his wife, so when we did get paid, the money didn't mean anything to us over there. What are we going to buy? I mean, there ain't nothing you can buy. Nowhere you can go. So we took it back, gave it back to the paymaster and told him to send it to back to his wife for the kid in our names.

**BELT:** Really!

**TENNAL:** Yeah, I heard later that they had done that. His was name was Chief Strange, a real nice guy. But we crossed our paths later on, in the war, one of those things. That's what happens during a war. You form friendships, you lose friendships, the whole bit. One of the things on Tulaghi too, real weird thing in there. We were in there and we got into some little shooting scrape. Nothing real drastic, but a little bit.

**BELT:** You mean some Japanese came?

**TENNAL:** They wanted to take the island back. But they didn't make it. About that time I get a letter from my Mom. Which we did get a mail call. I get a letter from her, and guess what? I'm called a draft dodger!

**BELT:** Oh my!

**TENNAL:** Well, my thoughts were, I took the letter and walked to see my commanding officer, which was a colonel. Here I am, a lowly little corporal, but I get in to see the Colonel, who's a neat guy, Sturgeon [*sp*] was his name. And I go in there and he says, "What's on your mind?" I says, "Well, I got a letter here and I'd sure love to answer it in person if I can." I handed him the letter and I said, "If you can arrange for me to get off this damn island, [*laughter from Belt*] I'd sure love to go! He reads it and says, "You go back to your outfit." He says, "I'll take care of this." I don't know what he did or how he did it, but I never heard another peep out of anybody. [*Laughter from Tennal*]

**BELT:** So he did handle it?

**TENNAL:** He must have, because I stayed there for a year, almost. That was one of the things that happened on the island. It was kind of funny.

**BELT:** It's pretty upsetting to get a letter like that after you're serving your country. That must have been painful, I would think.

**TENNAL:** I don't know about painful, but I think I could have tore everybody up right quick.

**BELT:** Yeah, anger.

**TENNAL:** There was a lot of anger involved. And one of the things you learn over there too, real quick, is you don't volunteer on a lot of things. You don't volunteer, period. Because I made the sad mistake of doing that one night. My buddy, Bill, and myself, there's a PT [*Patrol Torpedo*] flotilla over on Florida Island. A PT flotilla is, you know, all Navy. Of course, the Marines are not even in the Navy anyway. So they come over and a couple of their guys got shot up pretty bad, and they wanted to know if anybody wanted to go out with them one night on a PT boat run.

**BELT:** So, what would the run do?

**TENNAL:** Go out and try to sink a Jap [*Japanese*] destroyer, Jap [*unclear*]. Anything. They'd go out, two or three of them--

**BELT:** So you're looking for trouble.

**TENNAL:** Yeah, and they're going to get it too. But nevertheless, so old Bill and I look at each other and hell, we're not doing anything. "What do you say?" "Yeah!" "Let's go!" So, we jump over there to Florida and volunteered. "Okay, you're both machine gunners." You realize of course, this is a pair of band members who never do anything. [*Tennal chuckles*] But, anyhow, we go over there and so they tell us what we've got to do. We're going to take torpedoes. We're going out on a torpedo run. We're going out and try to sink a couple of Jap ships. To do this--

**BELT:** Are you thinking, "I better not volunteer."

**TENNAL:** I've already said, "Why the hell did we do this?" [*Belt and Tennal chuckle*] But, you're there, so you're going to do it. They told you how to get into the gun saddles and shoulder harnesses and stuff. And they tell you, "Now, you've got to let all your air out," because they're going to cinch you down tight.

**BELT:** What do you mean, let the air out? I don't understand.

**TENNAL:** Your breath. Collapse your chest.

**BELT:** Collapse your chest.

**TENNAL:** So you can get those belts as tight as you can possibly get them. Well, Bill and I both kind of horsed up a little bit, held a little air, and later we find out why they have this rule. But we go out on the run. If you've ever seen a run or know what they're like, have any idea whatsoever. The lead ships are something special. They're plywood construction.

**BELT:** The Japanese ships?

**TENNAL:** No, ours!

**BELT:** Oh, your ships.

**TENNAL:** Plywood.

**BELT:** Plywood? The United States, plywood?

**TENNAL:** We've got three motors in there, three Packard Marine 16 cylinder motors. They're strictly high-powered motors. We're carrying four torpedoes. We've got four machine guns on board. That's it!

**BELT:** How many people total on the boat?

**TENNAL:** Let's see, there's four gunners, the skipper, the navigator, and the engineer. I would say probably close to a dozen. Maybe more or less. I don't know. I didn't bother counting them. I'm trying to [unclear] *[Laughter from Tennal]*

**BELT:** But not very many. Yeah, that's not very many people.

**TENNAL:** No, and he starts making his run. When he finds a ship, they're going after it. And he zeroes in on that ship. Your job as a machine-gunner is to keep the Japs off from shooting back at you. So you're spraying their deck from one end to the other.

**BELT:** Is that what you're doing?

**TENNAL:** Yeah, with machine gun fire. The point is, if you keep the fire up there, you don't want to bring it down on your own crew. You keep it up. And you're bouncing on the waves and you're in a ship and it's rocking all over the place. It was fun! But, anyhow--

**BELT:** You're idea of fun!

**TENNAL:** At that time. After it's over with, it's fun. At that time, when you're into it, it's hell. But beings as none of us got killed, it was fun! So, when we come back and make the round and everything else, we dropped our torpedoes. I don't know whether we got the ship or not. I think we hit it, but I'm not sure.

**BELT:** How do you drop a torpedo?

**TENNAL:** You just kick them off of the tubes when you're running and they run along with you and then we turn out of the way. We turn out of the way, and the torpedoes just keep on going on in. And, so, you're close to the ship. But, anyway--

**BELT:** And they're firing on you, I imagine.

**TENNAL:** Oh, they're trying to. It's up to us not to let them. [*Tennal chuckles*] But, anyhow, it sounds like good story. But it wound up at the point where I saw why they said to let the air out, I can tell you that. Belfry and I hadn't done it. So when we get out there and we're running full bore now. Coming away from that ship, all three motors are going full blast. That ship is doing, I don't know how much speed, but it's a speedboat now. Him and I are swinging our guns around because we're going to be firing back now instead of in front.

**BELT:** Because you're leaving.

**TENNAL:** When we do this, the looseness in our belts, those belts start whipping us like a black snake, like a whip! And when we come in off that run that night, Belfry and I never reported for duty back to the Marine Corps for about three days. They had to get our backs healed up before we could go back around out there. [*Laughter from Tennal*]

**BELT:** That really injured your body.

**TENNAL:** Yeah. It cut the skin off of us. It was just one of those things. It's things that happen in war that nobody reads about, nobody knows about. There's no record. It's just things that happen. And that's fine. And we done a lot of those things out there. We'd seen some of the things on the island. And there was one I won't describe too much to you. It's painful. It's something that should be, I don't know whether I'll ever bring it up again, is the Island of the Seven Sisters. And there was a great deal of torture involved.

**BELT:** With Americans?

**TENNAL:** No. Well, yes. The title tells you everything, the Seven Sisters. There were seven Catholic nuns and one priest.

**BELT:** Oh my, okay.

**TENNAL:** And the Japanese killed and mutilated and tortured all of them.

**BELT:** Were you there, or you heard this?

**TENNAL:** We eliminated the Japanese.

**BELT:** After that happened?

**TENNAL:** And inside the other different islands, that I just won't bring up, and I won't tell many persons what did happen. That marked me in a way that I just can't accept the Japanese.

**BELT:** How did you hear about that story. I mean, is that what the government told you, or how did--?

**TENNAL:** We were there.

**BELT:** You were there.

**TENNAL:** It was our group that went in to clean up the island. We buried the nuns.

**BELT:** The government knows this happened?

**TENNAL:** I'm sure they do. It's some where in the records and it's just like, I'm sure my wife will probably tell you. She asked the VA [*Veterans Administration*] to check on my records several times. Some they found, some they didn't. Some are still classified, some are, who knows.

**BELT:** And they called the island Seven Sisters. Is it that to this day?

**TENNAL:** I have no idea. When we finally finished the island and after a year of it there--. I'm sorry, I've got to take a drink.

**BELT:** Would you like to stop a while? Would you like to rest?

**TENNAL:** No.

**BELT:** Okay.

**TENNAL:** I just need something so I can wet my throat a little bit.

**BELT:** Now the Seven Sisters you think is 1943, 1944? When do you think that

happened?

**TENNAL:** It was in forty-- It was when I was on Tulaghi.

**BELT:** So about '43 [1943].

**ARLENE:** '43.

**BELT:** Okay, and it's before Guam.

**TENNAL:** Oh yeah. Guam was towards the tail end of the war, really.

**ARLENE:** For you.

**TENNAL:** Well, for me, anyway.

**BELT:** Are you feeling pretty bitter after Seven Sisters? I mean your troops and your buddies. Are you feeling hatred?

**TENNAL:** Well, there was a sign on Tulaghi erected by "Bull" Halsey [*William Frederick Halsey, Jr.*], which was the admiral of the Pacific fleet, depicting a Jap. Just the Navy, Marines, the military. Your only job was over here to kill the s.o.b.s [*son of a bitch*]. And that was our feeling. And from then on, and I've told this story many a times. and I don't think anybody really believes me too much. I don't remember ever leaving an island where I seen prisoners come off that island.

**BELT:** That was your orders, not to let them off the island? No captured?

**TENNAL:** Well, they always told us that if we captured anybody we had to feed them. And I wasn't eating too well. So, anyway, that was that. After Tulaghi was over with and secured and everything, there was a phase in there when I'm not quite sure what happened. Where or how or what goes on with me. I know we went back to Caledonia.

**BELT:** From Tulaghi back to Caledonia?

**TENNAL:** Caledonia was kind of a staging area for us. That was where your initial orders came from and then, from there on, you got other orders. They came out of

Hawaii, it's where they came to. But we got them out of Caledonia. So, anyhow, as they say, we went back to Caledonia. We were a band again back there and we were playing concerts and that sort of thing.

**BELT:** In Caledonia.

**TENNAL:** Mm, hmm.

**BELT:** Are you enjoying this part?

**TENNAL:** Well, it is a blast because we came off of Tulaghi and come back to the Solomons.

**BELT:** So it's kind of a rest?

**TENNAL:** Well, our commanding officer, and I don't know exactly how this was pulled, but we hit Caledonia and we had thirty days of complete freedom. You try to leave, but you can't go anywhere.

**BELT:** Can you talk to Arlene now? Can you get on the radio and talk to her?

**TENNAL:** No. There was no radio contact, period!

**BELT:** Because some vets have told me they'd been able to talk to their loved ones. You did not.

**ARLENE:** Not during World War II.

**TENNAL:** She never heard from me. She never heard my voice from the time I left until I returned back to Treasure Island. That's the first time she heard my voice.

**BELT:** Wow.

**TENNAL:** That was three years and something.

**ARLENE:** He never got a furlough, he never got a leave after boot camp. You went from boot camp with the band. You went straight on over.

**TENNAL:** As I say, they had to train us in a hurry.

**BELT:** Right.

**TENNAL:** So, anyway, I'm not griping. I mean, if that's what they wanted us to do, that's what we did. But this guy I was starting to tell about, our commanding officer, Sturgeon some way had made arrangements with a rancher there in Caledonia for our battalion to have freedom up at his ranch for, I don't know, thirty days, maybe fifteen. I don't know. But he had dug three big barbecue pits and our outfit went up in there and we had the biggest barbecue you've ever seen in your life.

**BELT:** Barbecue. Of what? Like what?

**TENNAL:** Well, we had beef, and venison, and pork. And some ship had hit that island with a ship load of beer, and we had cases of beer stacked up as big as-- My own allotment probably would have filled this room. [*Tennal chuckles*]

**BELT:** Now, they didn't have drugs back then. You never saw drugs being, in there. Everybody was drinking and smoking, basically, right?

**TENNAL:** Smoking and drinking. If we could get a hold of whiskey, we got it when we could get it. We drank it and sometimes we made our own. [*Laughter from Belt*]  
This is true!

**BELT:** Making your own in Caledonia! Where are you making it?

**TENNAL:** Even on Tulaghi we made our own brandy and stuff. And pretty good stuff! Coconut brandy, coconut milk can ferment real well.

**BELT:** Really? And your officer didn't have a problem with that? Or he didn't know?

**TENNAL:** I won't make a comment. [*Laughter from Belt*] Because some of them, I think, were very close friends. As a matter of fact, let's backtrack just a second more, back to another point on Tulaghi. It was so funny. We had several things there. One night we had a cruiser come in, a U.S. cruiser. She'd been hit, lost twenty-two foot of her bow, on the front end of the ship. Of this twenty-two foot, it hadn't fell off completely. They were dragging it underneath the ship. She had [*tape stops in mid-sentence*]

**END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE**

**BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE**

**BELT:** Would you like to start again?

**TENNAL:** On the point there, the ship that had come in had been torpedoed and, as I said, they'd lost twenty-two foot of her bow. It was under it and you could still hear tapping there.

**BELT:** Tapping?

**TENNAL:** Yeah. There were some sailors underneath of it. They were alive, but there's nothing you can do for them. You know they're going to die.

**BELT:** Do you remember the ship? Do you remember the name of the ship?

**TENNAL:** St. Louis.

**BELT:** St. Louis

**TENNAL:** So, anyhow, our orders were to make her seaworthy so she could get to Hawaii, because there was a dry dock in Hawaii which they could fit her out in and repair it. Well, again, they come to the point, anybody volunteer for anything? There was a group of us, more or less, who, we could do just damn near anything. So we wade out and we brought along some undersea cutting torches, went down and put on masks and scuba gear, and went down and cut that part of the ship out. Let her drop. And then we put on steel plates, on the front of it, whatever we could anchor onto.

**BELT:** These are Marines doing this work?

**TENNAL:** Yes. Marines, Seabees.

**BELT:** Seabees.

**TENNAL:** We had a Seabee outfit around us most of the time. And we welded up steel plates on the front of that thing. Squared it off and welded what steel was left on the

ship. And it's seaworthy so that it could go from Tulaghi back to Pearl.

**BELT:** What an accomplishment, doing this from an island.

**TENNAL:** Well, it was done! Something had to be done, so you do it. I mean, that was the whole [unclear]. One thing that was kind of funny when we were there. It was starting the time we were about ready to leave Tulaghi. The army came in. Well, in true Army fashion, which I get in an argument every once in a while about it. They brought in the supplies first. We went in first as a rule, and then the supplies tried to catch up with us. And then it comes in, a whole ship load of beef. Can you imagine what a ship load of beef can look like to a bunch of Marines that haven't had a beef sandwich for years? Well, we found out about it and a couple of us went up to the colonel, as I said, he was a real good guy, and told him about this. "What do you guys want to do about it?" "Well, I'd like to have a requisition. I could go down to the motor pool and get a couple trucks." "So be it." Meanwhile, he throws his keys to his jeep over on the desk.

**BELT:** He wanted some beef too!

**TENNAL:** So, anyhow, we went down and requisitioned a couple of trucks, five or six of us, maybe a few more. And, so help me, maybe I shouldn't go into this too deep, but it's kind of funny and if they don't like they can erase it. I don't care. It was a colored outfit driving the trucks for the Army. It had to come through a cut, a deep cut, in the rocks on the main road coming through Tulaghi. And you had to come through there and you could only get one truck through at a time. Well, this is just right for a hijack. "What do you say fellows?" "Sounds good to me!"

**BELT:** So why do you want to hijack them? Because they have the beef?

**TENNAL:** Yeah. We're going to take the beef away from them.

**BELT:** Oh. The requisition was nonsense!

**TENNAL:** It's a [unclear] requisition.

**BELT:** [*Laughter from Belt*] Oh, okay!

**TENNAL:** So, anyhow, the first truck comes through, and we let it go through. And

the second one comes through, and it didn't get through. Two guys are setting to jump on the sideboards of the truck and they've got a machine gun looking in the driver's eyes. As I say, he was a colored driver. "Boy, you stop this truck. Now!" "Yes sir. I'll do that." Some of our boys jump onto the truck, we roll a truck in along back of it, load up a truckload of beef, half a truck anyway, and let him go on his way. So that night we took three truckloads of beef back to our outfit. Walk in and throw the keys down on his desk, the colonel's. "Sir, it's none of my damn business, but I recommend we put guards on those refrigerators out there. Somebody ain't gonna like us."

**BELT:** So none of this beef was meant for the Marines?

**TENNAL:** No way. I don't think so. [*Tennal chuckles*]

**BELT:** Oh my.

**TENNAL:** We didn't ask questions.

**BELT:** You wanted that beef.

**TENNAL:** So, anyhow, we were all freed of duty for maybe three, four days, the guys that were on our "beef detail."

**BELT:** I'll bet they just loved you!

**TENNAL:** Yeah. More or less. So, anyhow, we had steak for a couple of days. [*Tennal chuckles*] These are the kinds of things that happen that you don't hear too much about in the service, the military. It's what makes the service interesting.

**BELT:** And memories.

**TENNAL:** And memories. Well, these are the good parts you remember. And they eliminate the bad parts that you live through. Let's stop for a while. I'd like to go--

[*clicking noise indicates tape paused briefly*]

**BELT:** [*voices are quieter when the tape continues*] Daryl, would you like to continue?

**TENNAL:** Well, as I say, I was on my beef story, more or less. And it was kind of the

fun part. We were all having steak then for a couple of days in there, and everybody enjoyed that a whole bunch. But one of the things you must remember in this, as you're listening to this, is it's a fairly old man telling this, and in this phase in Tulaghi is where I first come down with malaria, and that has a big telling tale of its own.

**BELT:** When did you become sick?

**TENNAL:** I don't remember the exact times, it's so many of them. I was in the hospital, according to my records. I know sometime I had to have been in maybe a dozen times with malaria, throughout my period in there.

**BELT:** So you had several bouts of malaria.

**TENNAL:** Very bad ones. And this is something that kind of confuses you every once in a while. In this thing, I'm having a little trouble getting back on track right now, after that little break. But I remember that we talked about the ship and the beef. And let's see--

**BELT:** So after the beef incident you started to get sick.

**TENNAL:** Right after you get over in the Pacific, you're in the islands and you're in this mosquito-infested areas.

**BELT:** Were you not vaccinated for malaria?

**TENNAL:** [*Tennal chuckles*] No. There's no vaccination for it that I ever heard of.

**BELT:** Maybe there is now.

**TENNAL:** Maybe now, but I don't know then. All we ever took was just quinine.

**BELT:** Quinine. Okay. You took this daily?

**TENNAL:** No. Attabern [*Atabrine*] every day to keep you going. It was attabern, I think it was. You used to take a little pill just about every day. It was supposed to help, but it didn't seem to do too much good for you.

**BELT:** Was the mosquitoes quite bad?

**TENNAL:** Oh, they were horrible. They were such a [unclear] that the only other thing I've ever seen like them might be up in Alaska. They're big and there's a lot of them.

**BELT:** And they were all year round, or just at certain seasons?

**TENNAL:** Always. Always. Over there their seasons are so different. It's a tropical paradise, is what it is really. Not while you're there! [*Tennal chuckles*] One of the things I wanted to bring up in this too, as I mentioned, I was a band member, yet I was in a considerable amount of different areas. And this is one of things a band member can do. Many people don't realize this, but this opened so many doors for you. As an enlisted man you're locked into a given area, and that's where you stay and you're under orders. Well, a band member gets a lot of freedom. Because, first, you're playing in a band, they like entertainment and so you're playing at Officer's Clubs and you get to do that. You get to go aboard ships. Any ship that happens to come in where you're stationed, you get to go aboard, and you're playing on board ship. And so, consequently, this is why I got aboard so many different ships, in different places.

**BELT:** Are you playing different kinds of music or are you playing just Marine music?

**TENNAL:** Oh, no. [*Belt laughs*] We're playing a lot of the great Glenn Miller stuff and we're legally a dance band and we perform. We can do dance music. We can do anything militarily. And the only orders we put on ourselves, we would not dance, because we were in an area every once in a while where there are women, nurses. The Navy nurses would be around, or hospital nurses. And they were always with officers and, being as we were all enlisted, we didn't cross that path. We refused to cross that path. One night in particular, we were playing a dance band on, I don't even know what island we were on, but I remember it was an island. And there were some Navy nurses on that island, and one of them took a liking to Bill. He was a little guy, real cute, real nice looking guy. And she came over and asked him to dance. He says "No. We don't dance. That's impossible."

**BELT:** Because you are a corporal, or because--?

**TENNAL:** Because we're enlisted personnel. And officers, we don't want into that group. And so, anyhow, her so-called date, I guess it was, came over and said "You WILL dance with her." We said, "No, we will not!" And he took Bill up and jerked him out of his seat. And that was the wrong thing to do. Because all at once he had

nineteen guys right on his back and he wound up in a swimming pool.

**BELT:** They put him in the--! What do you mean, the swimming pool?

**TENNAL:** Well, there was a swimming pool in this Officer's Club.

**BELT:** Oh, there was a pool in the club. A swimming pool on Tulaghi doesn't sound too bad.

**TENNAL:** Well, this wasn't exactly on Tulaghi.

**BELT:** Oh, a different island. Okay.

**TENNAL:** But, anyhow, as I say, he wound up in there, the band folded up, and we went home. We got an apology from the commanding officer for the action of [unclear], and we told him that that was just fine, but don't ever ask us to come back again because we refuse to.

**BELT:** Now do you get movies? For entertainment do they bring movies in to you? What do you--?

**TENNAL:** Occasionally we'd get a movie, but after you've seen it once, you're going to see the same movie for the next week. So, no, it really wasn't called entertainment. We did have some, later in the war, later in the ports, after most things were secured and we were back into what we called civilization, which again we'll get into. I'll bring you back into that phase of it and I'll try to give you some answers on that. Because a lot of things went on there. After Guam was secured, we stayed there for a while, waiting before we came back to the States.

**BELT:** So you're on Guam, approximately 1945 now?

**TENNAL:** Somewhere in there. Let's go back. We haven't started yet again, have we?

**BELT:** The tape?

**TENNAL:** Yeah.

**BELT:** Oh, yeah. We're taping.

**TENNAL:** Well, anyhow, we get back into the line of things. When we left Tulaghi [unclear] and the Solomons, we went back to Caledonia. From Caledonia we had the big parties and such, and then we had some dance [unclear], and from there we came back to Guadalcanal.

**BELT:** Oh, back to Guadalcanal. Okay.

**TENNAL:** That was for brush-up training, to get ourselves back into training and the idea of war, because we've been out playing around for a little bit. Well, we get--

**BELT:** Are you feeling good now? I mean, your health is better now?

**TENNAL:** No. My health never got any better. As a matter of fact, when I came home one of the weird things in my life was when my, our first son was born in Denver. This is after I was out. After that, my wife was delivering my first son, and I'm standing in the hall as a prospective father. The nurse came by and she says, "You're out of the military." I says, "Yes, I am." She was an ex-military nurse. Now this is well after the war, and she says, "You had malaria." I said, "Yes, ma'am. And I've got it right now and it's going to take me down to the floor." She says, "Come with me." And so they always kid me, when my son was born, my wife was in the maternity ward and so was I.

**BELT:** Oh, my. So malaria--

**TENNAL:** [*Tennal chuckles*] That's how malaria hits you. That's just one of the stories. That's just an old down-the-line effect. But, anyhow, back to Guadalcanal. We're forming now up to get ready to go into Guam. Our orders come through that we're going to ship out and go to Guam. [unclear] On the Guam campaign, going up there we were in a convoy again, a big convoy.

[*clicking noise indicates tape paused briefly*]

**BELT:** Okay, we're beginning the tape again.

**TENNAL:** We're leaving Guadalcanal and we're forming up the group that's going into Guam. And on this Guam campaign, there's two islands to be hit simultaneously. Saipan is going to be attacked and Guam is going to be attacked. And we're going to

take them both. And the article involved in this is it's an Army/Marine deal. So it comes in there, and they're checking weather to see which island they're going to take first. Well, it so happened that Saipan fell first and so the Guam group backed off. We were backing Saipan push, but they got in and got it stuck. When you go in on an island, you're hoping you can stay there. And they got in and they got a foothold and they're going to make it. They're going to hold the island. So we swung then down to Guam. And we're forming up, ready to go in.

**BELT:** And Guam is being held by the Japanese at this time?

**TENNAL:** Oh, very definitely. And it's a big island, it's one of the bigger islands. And it's got everything on it. They've got airports, they've got everything on there you can imagine. And the Japanese Imperial Marines were on there too. But, anyhow, we form up out there. Now this convoy that we were in on this push was a great big **[unclear]**. *[brief pause while Tennal searches for the right word]* It was more than that. It was the company involved in it, the whole division was in on it. But, anyhow, in this convoy going in, we had many president liners involved, the U. S. President Liners which we would, you know, commandeer for troops.

**BELT:** President Liners being ships?

**TENNAL:** Yeah. And I was aboard the President Jackson. Monroe was also in this convoy. Well, we swung down and we're going to take Guam. Monroe went into the beach part and the Jackson, we swung around and are coming up on the cliff side of it. Which meant that we abandon ship, swim in.

**BELT:** Swim!?

**TENNAL:** Swim, under pack. And went on a cliff. Now, to do this, again I'm not trying to, I don't want to compete with the **[unclear]** heroes. No way. We're doing a job. We swam in. And you time your waves so that when you come to the cliff, instead of getting your head batted in, you're hitting the cliff feet first, and let the wave carry you up on the cliff so that you're standing up on the cliff, you know, the cliff wall, and then you shimmy on up like a spider. This put us in back of the Japanese. So, in other words, we had a scissor action then going. There was one Marine group of ours in front of them and us in back of them.

**BELT:** And you're in the back?

**TENNAL:** And it didn't take long to wipe that group out into where we could form up again and be one group, and we've got the island pretty well under control.

**BELT:** So you had to shimmy up the cliff?

**TENNAL:** Yeah. That was no big problem. Later on, getting that experience wound up a little later in Guam for me too, because, in the taking of Guam, the Third Defense Battalion, after they went in on this thing and they did form up and everything, we got transferred a little later from the Third Battalion, the Third Marine Defense Battalion. They reclassified us and put us into the Third Marine Antiaircraft Battalion.

**ARLENE:** I thought it was the Fourteenth?

**TENNAL:** Well, it was still, okay, yeah.

**ARLENE:** It's the Third Marine Division.

**TENNAL:** Third Marine Division, but we transferred then to the Fourteenth Antiaircraft Battalion. From then on we were known as an antiaircraft battalion. But, anyhow, in that phase, our duty was to go in there, eliminate the Japs, save the civilians, protect them, and eliminate the enemy.

**BELT:** These are your orders?

**TENNAL:** Yes. I think it states that in there somewhere. It does. Those are our orders. Well, in that phase in there, band work is out the window at this stage because we're in combat. In that phase of combat, one phase of it, we're pinned down with a bunch of Japs. They're in caves, much like these boys today are fighting today over in the Persian area. But in those days we didn't have rockets, and we didn't have a bunch of other things in there. We tried a ninety millimeter on one of them in the caves. You press the ninety millimeter down and try to blow them out of the caves with concussion. We could get a few, but not good.

**BELT:** And this is jungle, right?

**TENNAL:** Some jungle, some coral, it's just a general conflagration of everything. So, in this phase, and this is a phase that comes back to my memory when a friend of mine, one of

my buddies that was in this group, wrote a letter to me here a while back, and it brought up the things that I had eliminated out of my mind. And in this is a letter here that I will have, you can read it. I can't see to read it anymore. But it tells what we did in that platoon, the group of us.

**BELT:** Who wrote the letter?

**TENNAL:** A guy by the name of Mickey Maurer. He was in the band. He was in the group that I happened to be with, most of the time. But, as I say, our orders were to clean up the island, save the civilians, and get things in. Well, as I mentioned, I don't know whether I mentioned it or not a while ago. I may have mentioned it before. I was always kind of bitter because I never got a Purple Heart, and I was wounded. I never got credit for it.

**BELT:** And this is in Guam?

**TENNAL:** It was on Guam. Now this is the point leading to it, and I'll have somebody read that letter, or read part of it to you. But what it consisted of, basically, our orders were to go in and get those Japs out of the caves. Get them out of there. Well, the only way they could do that was, some of us had to go over the side, swing down on ropes, carrying grenades, and throw grenades into the caves. Well, I was one of them.

**BELT:** You were chosen? Or did you volunteer?

**TENNAL:** I don't remember.

**BELT:** You don't remember, okay.

**TENNAL:** It was a job that had to be done. I don't remember. But they tell me, this friend tells me in there that I was one of them on the ropes, and I was loaded with grenades.

**BELT:** And you have no recall of this?

**TENNAL:** Until the time I got that letter I had no recall. I had completely blacked it out of my mind. So, at that phase, I'll let it go. That's where I got wounded too.

**BELT:** Okay. You were shot?

**TENNAL:** No, it was with shrapnel and I assume it was either a grenade or a rock or something that nailed me. I still carry the scars on the back of my neck where they sewed me up. As I say, when this skirmish was over we went back to our outfit, and Belfry was there. He wasn't with me on this one. George was, and Maurer was, and a few others. But the thing was, when I got back there, Belfry come over and he says, "God," he says, "It's good to see you coming back." He says, "We'd almost figured you weren't going to make it."

**BELT:** And where were you when he said this to you? Where are you? In a hospital?

**TENNAL:** No. I was standing. I'm just joining the outfit again, got back to where they were all either dug in or laying around.

**BELT:** In Guam?

**TENNAL:** In Guam. And I said, "Well Bill," I said, "I have something on my neck. I wish you'd look at it." I said, "It itches." Well, he took a look at it and he says, "Oh God." He says, "You've been hit."

**BELT:** Oh, you didn't even realize it! I see.

**TENNAL:** Well, your adrenaline is flowing. You're not really conscious of what you're doing. You do it. Again, like the point I stated at the beginning, boot camp trains you to do things automatically. Well, seemingly that's what I was going on. So, anyhow, he says, "You've been hit!" So then they took me down to the hospital. It's a funny thing. It was an open hospital, like a MASH [*Mobile Army Surgical Hospital*] outfit in the middle of a field. And when I arrived, there was an old door off of something that they had for a stretcher, a table to lay on. I laid down, face down. They threw a towel over my back. The guy started digging some pieces out of my neck and I could hear metal every once in a while hit the tray that he was throwing them in. Finally somebody handed him some hair or something to sew it up with. He sewed up both sides of my neck. And he slaps me across the butt and he says, "All right. Go back to your outfit."

**BELT:** You must have been tough.

**TENNAL:** Oh well. [*Laughter from Belt*] Well, there's a Navy kid sitting there that was being worked on, too. A Navy kid who was sitting there watched this whole procedure

and he says, "My God, doctor. Do you mean he was conscious when you were cutting on him?" He says, "Hell, he's a Marine." And that was the whole bit. This is why I wanted to be a Marine. So, other than that--

**ARLENE:** Tell her more.

**TENNAL:** Oh, in the [unclear], just a couple days after that I guess it was, we'd killed quite a few. There was a lot laying around on the ground dead, some of us, some of them. You know, a battlefield. And don't ask me how, or why, or how come, I seen a baby. A baby! Now there's no business in God's world where that baby could come from, or how it got there. I don't know. I picked it up. And, I don't know, it was just a little baby. I put it into my jacket, I had a combat jacket on, put it in my combat jacket, buttoned it up, told Bill, my buddy, I says, "I'm going back to [unclear] the rear lines for a minute. I've got to go back and find the officer. I says, "I've got to go back and get rid of this kid." He says, "You've got a what?!" "I've got a kid!" "Where in the hell did you find that?" [unclear] Well, I went back there and I went back to the commanding officer, one of the officers, I won't say the commanding officer, just an officer that was there. I said, "Sir, I'd like to be relieved back here so I can go back to Agana," which is the capital of Guam. It was just a short distance away. I says, "I've got to try and find me a wet nurse for this kid."

**BELT:** So it's a real infant?

**TENNAL:** It's an infant! And he says, "Where did that come from?" I says, "Out there in the field." Well he didn't ask any more questions. He says, "You get the hell back to Agana if you can." I said, "I'll do that." Well, I got back there and I met a guy by the name of, he was in the Supreme Court Justice system in the natives or some deal back there. If I remember right his name was Money Boulcher [sp]. I don't know if he's alive or not. I know he had six or seven daughters, maybe five or six. I don't know. And the Japs had only got a hold of one of them. But the rest of them had been hid. I remember that. Anyhow, I turned the kid over to him and his daughters and I said, "Take care of it." And that's the last I heard of it.

**BELT:** Do you think it was a Guam child or a Japanese child?

**TENNAL:** I have no idea. It wouldn't be Japanese anyway because the Japs didn't have their own women. The Japanese, if you go back into history or you study any history, this is why there is hard feelings today between Korea and the Japanese. A

good portion of the women that the Japs had over there were Korean kidnaps they had sold. And I don't know if this has been published or not. Well, I take it back. I do know it's been published. It was in *Newsweek*, what, this last month, last week?

**ARLENE:** Last week.

**BELT:** How long were you in Guam? A year?

**TENNAL:** It was about a year, wasn't it, Mom?

**BELT:** 1945.

**TENNAL:** You want to stop that a moment?

*[clicking noise indicates tape paused briefly]*

**BELT:** Okay, we're continuing the tape now.

**TENNAL:** All right, that phase is where we found the kid and got it back over to where it was safe and sound and after that, from then on it was more or less the phase of winding up the island, of getting security. There's one thing I will mention in this phase. I was going to tell you. We were going into hand-to-hand combat one day, and that night we were listening to a radio. We had some small radio connection and Tokyo Rose was on. Now I am a corporal in the Marine Corps, which nobody on God's holy earth should know who I am, where I am, or what I'm doing. And she called me by name and said, "Daryl, better say your prayers tonight because tomorrow morning all of your relations are going to be mourning your death."

**BELT:** So how do you know she was speaking to you, Daryl?

**TENNAL:** She called me by name.

**BELT:** She said your last name, too?

**TENNAL:** So somewhere, someplace, somehow, somebody mentioned that Daryl Tennal was over on Guam.

**BELT:** I've heard that from a lot of veterans, saying things like that.

**TENNAL:** Still, no matter what you say or where you talk or who you're talking to, you may be in a bar, you may be at a dance, you may be anywhere, keep your damned mouth shut! Now I'm going to turn it over to my wife because I'm about ready to come back home anyway, and thank God for that.

**BELT:** When you got out of the service you went to Treasure Island, I understand, and that's when you finished your career.

**TENNAL:** Back in San Diego.

**BELT:** In San Diego. Okay. And then you left San Diego and you went back to Denver. You went back home where you are today.

**ARLENE:** Just on leave. He wasn't out yet.

**BELT:** Oh, he was not out.

**ARLENE:** Okay. This was in August when he came back.

**BELT:** Okay. And when he was finally out of the service was 1945?

**ARLENE:** August 2, 1945 he came back to the States.

**BELT:** Okay. And his career service was over. [*Tennal was discharged 10/6/1945*]

**ARLENE:** Um hm. He left Treasure Island and came to Denver and we were engaged and married, and then he went back. He was supposed to have thirty days furlough, but on our wedding night, [*background noise, probably microphone being moved*] in the middle of the night, we got a knock on the door of the apartment that we had rented, and told him that he had to get back to base immediately. Well, in the meantime, his grandfather had passed away and we wanted to stay for the funeral. He wanted to stay, I wasn't going back with him. So he went back. He got a three day leave so he could to the funeral and then he went back to California to San Diego. And he asked the officer why he was called back before his leave was up and he said he had too many points. They had to discharge him because he had too many points. And so, then I went out to California because he was there until the sixth of October.

**BELT:** What do you mean, too many points? What does that mean?

**ARLENE:** You were discharged.

**TENNAL:** You were discharged for points for tours of duty, time in service, things you had done, things you didn't do and things like this. You would gather so many points. And I was so far over the discharge deal that they wanted me out of there. One thing she hadn't mentioned, when I went back in to San Diego I asked the Officer of the Day why it was important that I got there so quickly. And he told me about this point situation and, being the bull-headed Irishman I am, I couldn't hold my temper anymore. I was mad they'd taken me from my bride and my wedding night, and so on and so forth, and I'm disgusted with every damn thing the country's doing. I reached across his desk, and I hit him as hard as I could hit him right between the eyes. So I wound up the next three days in the brig and, you know, that was the happiest three days of my time in service.

**BELT:** [*Belt laughs*] Well, you had a few other good times.

**TENNAL:** Yeah, but not that happy! [*Tennal chuckles*]

**BELT:** Did you keep in contact with any of your friends from the band?

**TENNAL:** I still have three of them left living.

**ARLENE:** Oh, we kept in--

**TENNAL:** I kept in check with quite a few of them.

**BELT:** Can you say their names again for me. Who you have kept in contact with?

**TENNAL:** Well, George Beck, my buddy was one of them. As a matter of fact, we spent several times together, his family and my family and such. And all of that. When he retired he was a Marine Recruiting Sergeant in Hawaii, and him and I played golf together in El Toro Marine Base [*San Diego, CA*] after the war's way over and such. And we played that just before he died, shortly before he died. Beck, I never did get a chance to go back and see him, and it was my own fault because I was a chicken. I wanted to go.

**ARLENE:** No, Belfry

**TENNAL:** Belfry, yeah, Belfry.

**BELT:** That's just what I was going to say, Bats Belfry.

**TENNAL:** Yeah. And he got married and they had a child and the kid, diving into their swimming pool up in Grosse Pointe, Michigan, hit the bottom and became a vegetable. And I never had the nerve enough to go back and see him. And some of the others, most of them I--

**ARLENE:** Heckner.

**TENNAL:** Heckner. I know I contacted Dan a couple of times. Harris I knew something about. There was a good many of them, I knew their names. I can go through the whole band, basically, by name but I don't have time or the inclination.

**ARLENE:** Douglas.

**TENNAL:** Douglas is up in, right now up in Michigan. His wife is very ill and he had to go up there so they could be closer to his kids because he's all crippled up and he can't walk hardly anymore; both legs are gone.

**BELT:** So you did continue keeping up with friends?

**TENNAL:** Friendships never die.

**ARLENE:** And then there was Maurer.

**TENNAL:** And Maurer I hear from frequently. We call each other. One day he called, the first time he called me really, not the first, but one time I remember so well, he wanted to talk. We all love to talk. But I had to cut him short because I was going to a flag-raising that afternoon. I'd had a flag flown in, got a flag that our County Commissioners here in Douglas County had had flown over the White House, and it was going to be raised at our cemetery up in--

**ARLENE:** No, our park.

**TENNAL:** Our park over there, yeah. We've got a park built up there in the South Platte area for kids and such and had this flag coming in, so I had to cut him short. But later on I called him back. We sat down and hashed over a lot of it. That's when he told me he had these records that I'm going to turn over a lot of them to you. I'm trying to get the originals rooted out of the Marine Historical deal.

**BELT:** Now, Arlene is going to read a letter that you received from a combat buddy with Daryl, and so I'm going to turn this over to Arlene to read this letter and explain the letter. Why don't you explain the letter a little bit first and the date, Arlene, and then tell what you'd like to tell about the letter.

**ARLENE:** The person's name is Mickey Maurer. He was in Daryl's outfit when he was in the Marine Corps [*background noise, possibly microphone being moved*] and he wrote this letter to Daryl. [*background noise, possibly microphone being moved* He had tried to get their, a copy of the Presidential Citation that was awarded to the battalion that Daryl was in. And that was the first part of the letter, and then he started reminiscing about the things on Tulaghi and Guam, and he said that he had told them all about that so that he could get this Presidential Citation, which he finally got. We're in the process of trying to get one also, a copy of it. So anyhow, he was talking about it and he says, "Every time I think about Tulaghi I remember all the times we ran for the bunkers when the bombers came over. I remember the night you and Heckner and I tried to follow the tracer bullets with our thirty caliber rifles and see if we could zap a bomber. We were young and wild in those days. Also the night I was running for a bunker during the Condition Red and fell in a shell crater and knocked the wind out of me. I thought I was going to die right there. Remember that first night on Guam? You and I had a forward outpost foxhole with the Nips crawling around in the jungle like cats. I was really concerned that they might get behind us and cut us off from the rest of our outfit. The whole perimeter line was in a firefight that night. In the middle of the night I wheeled around and almost shot one of our own guys, thinking it was a Nip that got behind me. He didn't give the password until he was almost by our foxhole. He was only inspecting the line, but how was I to know? I remember that patrol, I remember that big patrol you were on to seek out Nips in the craters. You were lucky and happy to get back from that one. As I remember, you were one of the, they let down the cliff to go, excuse me, down the cliff on toggle ropes with grenades to check the caves. It's been a pleasure to have you for a friend. Love, Mick."

**BELT:** What a wonderful, wonderful letter.

**ARLENE:** I never met him.

**BELT:** You never met him.

**ARLENE:** I went back out to California after Daryl found out he was going to be there a while when he was discharged, and I did get to meet some of them. They were still there in California, but Mick wasn't one of them.

**TENNAL:** They were a great group.

**ARLENE:** They were just everyday guys. Nobody was, [*background noise, possibly microphone being moved*] thought they were better than the other guy. They were a very close-knit group and we did keep in touch with most of them. Christmas time we got letters for years back and forth, and we still hear from some of the wives.

**BELT:** Real quickly, you are submitting two pictures to be photographed and returned to you. One picture is Daryl Tennial in his dress blues, and the second picture is Daryl in his Marine greens. Daryl, is there anything else you'd like to add since we're almost at the end of the tape?

**TENNAL:** No.

**BELT:** I would like to thank you so much for your time. It definitely was an honor to hear your story. This is an important part of your life to share, and it's definitely part of history. Thank you very much.

**ARLENE:** We were glad to do it.

**END OF CONVERSATION ON SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE**