

Oral History Interview



T/Sgt. Clint Goodwin
U.S. Army Engineers
807th Engineers
World War II
Aleutian Islands, Alaska

November 5, 2014
December 14, 2014

Aleutian World War II National Historic Area
Oral History Project

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Interview with T/Sgt. Clint Goodwin

**Aleutian World War II National Historic Area
Oral History Program**

**November 5, 2014
Sparks, NV**

Interviewed by Joshua Bell, Volunteer Oral Historian and Researcher,
National Park Service

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with Donald Brydon was recorded with his permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been lightly edited.

[Start of recorded material at 00:00:00]

Joshua Bell: Today is November 5, 2014. My name is Joshua Bell volunteer Oral Historian and Researcher for the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area and I am joined here today by Clint Goodwin. Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed, Mr. Goodwin.

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:20] Thank you, Josh.

Joshua Bell: And could I have you say your name for the record?

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:25] Clint Goodwin.

Joshua Bell: And when and where were you born?

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:31] I was born April 2, 1920, in Arlington, California.

Joshua Bell: What were your parents' names?

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:41] My dad's name – my real dad – his name was Clint Goodwin also and my mother's name was Coralie, C-O-R-A-L-I-E, Coralie.

Joshua Bell: All one word?

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:58] Yes.

Joshua Bell: And what was your dad's last name?

Clint Goodwin: [00:01:02] Goodwin. My stepfather's name was Martin Stewart.

Joshua Bell: Oh, okay. Do you have any siblings?

Clint Goodwin: [00:01:13] No.

Joshua Bell: An only child, okay. What did your parents do for work?

Clint Goodwin: [00:01:20] That's a hard one to answer, Josh, because my dad was in prison.

Joshua Bell: Oh, dear.

Clint Goodwin: [00:01:26] And my mom just did the best she could. And as a result, I have a half-sister, a half-brother and then on the Goodwin side, I have two half-sisters and a half-brother...my stepfather raised me.

Joshua Bell: How old were you when you got your stepfather?

Clint Goodwin: [00:02:01] I was probably two, three...about three years old I think.

Joshua Bell: Okay, you were young. You can say no to this question if you don't feel like talking about it, but why was your dad in prison?

Clint Goodwin: [00:02:23] He robbed a gas station. He was 19 years old and he did it with a gun, he and my uncle together. And being stupid, they used a weapon. They both got prison sentences and they served their time at San Quentin.

Joshua Bell: Oh, wow. Yikes. And did your mother leave him?

Clint Goodwin: [00:02:53] Yes.

Joshua Bell: Okay. So, what was it like growing up?

Clint Goodwin: [00:03:03] Oh, man, that's a hard one to answer, Josh. My stepfather was from Scotland. His nickname was Scotty and he was a tough little guy. He played professional rugby and he was working in oil fields in California. And he was very strict and very firm and did a good job of bringing me up...excellent job. I thank him – I just wish I could have thanked him in person.

Joshua Bell: Were the other kids around in the house too?

Clint Goodwin: [00:04:00] One sister and one brother, both halves, were in the household together. We were all together, the three of us. Three kids. I never met my real dad until I got my draft notice and I thought maybe I better see what he looks like because I didn't know if I was gonna come home or not.

So, I found out where he was at and went to see him. I stayed overnight and then I never saw him again until I got out of the service. And then it was very infrequent. I always had a hard time, Josh, with him because I couldn't accept him as my real dad. He just seemed like somebody that I met. [00:05:00] I never spent any of my life with him. So, it's kind of the way it ended up. He came out of prison as a minister, you know.

Joshua Bell: He did?

Clint Goodwin: [00:05:22] Yes. And he was the director of the Rescue Mission in Los Angeles for about 30 years. He was on the television program *This Is Your Life*.

Joshua Bell: Really?

Clint Goodwin: [00:05:38] Yeah. In fact, I was supposed to be on with him and I refused to do it because I told the secretary that called me from the production office that I didn't feel like I was part of the family, so I didn't feel it was something that I should do. And I didn't think that my stepfather or my mother would feel that great about it either. So, I just refused to go on it...but I saw the replay a couple of times. It was kind of interesting.

Joshua Bell: What a strange way to learn about your dad. So, what was it like as a kid growing up in the 20's and 30's?

Clint Goodwin: [00:06:46] It was hard, Josh, but we didn't know any better. We had very little, but fortunately, my stepfather was really a hard worker and we never, ever had to go on welfare or ask for help. He kept us going. We never had any problems with that.

Joshua Bell: That's very lucky.

Clint Goodwin: [00:07:20] And my mom was an excellent cook. Oh, man, she was a good cook. Oh, man. Besides being used to good food all my life, it was hard because like I said, we didn't have much and my stepfather was kind of strict. He always laid out work for me to do, you know, certain things he'd tell me when he left for work. He's say, "I want you to do so-and-so", and he expected it to be done. And that turned out to be a good thing that I learned later in life...because I kind of did what he did. I just got out there and worked, hustled.

Joshua Bell: Yeah. And you're still hustling. Where did you go to school?

Clint Goodwin: [00:08:30] I went to school in Long Beach, California and then in Ojai, California, and Santa Barbara, California, and Huntington Beach, California, because my stepfather worked in the oil fields and we had to move around some. So, that was just part of life. It was kind of hard on us kids because we constantly had to make new friends and leave old friends. You know how it is when you're going to school.

And one thing I got to admit, Josh, I didn't do well in school. Didn't do well at all. In fact, in the summertime, my stepfather bought a blackboard. [I think I learned more from him than I did from school. Oh, man.

Joshua Bell: What was the highest grade you completed?

Clint Goodwin: Ten.

Joshua Bell: Tenth grade?

Clint Goodwin: Yeah. I got kicked out.

Joshua Bell: How'd that happen?

Clint Goodwin: [00:09:56] Myself and my girlfriend – who I later married – we both got kicked out.

Joshua Bell: Oh, dear.

Clint Goodwin: [00:10:08] Yeah. Laying on the lawn at noontime...inappropriate. And in those days, that wasn't put up with and the advisor kicked us both out. And he was well within his rights to do that. And that was in 1938 and in 1991, that same girl and I got married.

Joshua Bell: You said 1991?

Clint Goodwin: [00:10:46] Uh-huh.

Joshua Bell: Okay. So, you wanted to be sure?

Clint Goodwin: [00:10:55] Well, my first wife had died.

Joshua Bell: Oh, I'm sorry to hear that.

Clint Goodwin: [00:11:02] Yeah, she died of leukemia.

Joshua Bell: Oh, dear. . . . So, you're out of high school in '39. What do you remember hearing about Europe and the war going on in Europe and Hitler?

Clint Goodwin: [00:11:30] You know what, Josh? I don't think I paid a whole lot of attention to it. I was busy. I was working in the oil fields myself, rough-necking on the drilling rigs and there was plenty of work. And I had a car. Lucky, my second wife that I married in '91, we were dating and going together steady. And you know what? I don't think I paid much attention to it.

Joshua Bell: I don't think that's an uncommon thing. I think that's a common thing.

Clint Goodwin: [00:12:26] Yeah, working, making some money, making a living. I was still living at home, but I never asked them for money. I was always able to make my own and having a car and a girlfriend, you know, that was pretty much it at 19.

Joshua Bell: Right. So, where were you where you heard about Pearl Harbor?

Clint Goodwin: [00:13:04] My second wife and I, Lucky, we were in a movie in Santa Ana, California. And the screen went dark and then it lit up again white and in big black letters across: "The Japanese have bombed Pearl Harbor". And Lucky turned to me and said, "Where's Pearl Harbor?" And I said, "Beats me". Well, I found out later.

Joshua Bell: What do you remember thinking about that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:13:47] I remember thinking that my time was short because I'd already registered for the draft and I'd already got a delay because I was going to technical school. I was learning mechanical drafting, so I got a delay on account of that. I was doing that in between work in the oil fields. And I knew that I wasn't gonna get any more delays, that that was it. And sure enough, in January...January 2, I was drafted.

Joshua Bell: Low number.

Clint Goodwin: [00:14:41] 42.

Joshua Bell: And how did you feel about getting drafted?

Clint Goodwin: [00:14:54] I didn't want the thing, Josh. I was leaving everything I was familiar with. I was leaving my girlfriend. We were planning on getting married. I had to tell her I was leaving. I had to say goodbye to my mom, my stepfather. I didn't know what was ahead of me. I had no idea what life was gonna be like.

And it was...well, how do you put it? It was...I don't know how to describe it. My future was unknown. I wasn't looking forward to it. I didn't feel patriotic or combat-ready or whatever you want to call it. It was a very uncertain time. Thrown in with a bunch of

guys I didn't even know and having guys shouting and hollering at us all day and all night practically, "Fall out! Fall out!", whistles blowing. It wasn't something that I fondly remember.

Joshua Bell: Right. Which brand of the service were you drafted into?

Clint Goodwin: [00:16:44] Well, when I got out of the car at the draft place where they were gonna pick us up, my stepfather said, "Son, ask for the engineers". That's what he was in in the First World War. And, of course, I was qualified for that anyway because I worked in the oil fields. I knew how to do a lot of heavy construction-type work.

So, that's what I did. When they interviewed me, I asked for the engineers and the guy asked me a few questions. He said, "Okay". A couple days later, they loaded us on a train and – I think there were only three of four of us – went across [to] St. Louis, got off, [00:17:44] changed trains, took the train to Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. That was the engineering post where they trained engineers.

Joshua Bell: What was the train ride like across country?

Clint Goodwin: [00:18:04] It was just bare bones. Food wasn't very good. You'd just basically [sat] – there was nowhere to go, nothing to do. We'd just sit there and wonder about what's gonna happen, where I was going. I had never been out of California and when they backed that train into Fort Leonard Wood, I look out and here's all this coal smoke coming out of these barracks. And there's icicles hanging off the side of the buildings about two-foot long, three-foot long. And I thought, "Holy smokes". And when I got off the train, it was a Sergeant there and they loaded us on some trucks and [un]loaded us into our barracks. And they lost my barracks bag [00:19:04] and all I had on was my OD's, pants and shirt. That was it. Didn't have an overcoat, didn't have a hat. Nothing.

Joshua Bell: You must have been a cold fella.

Clint Goodwin: [00:19:19] Oh, my. In fact, I was so cold that the Sergeant finally looked at me and said, "Hey, you, get in the barracks".

Joshua Bell: Yes, sir.

Clint Goodwin: [00:19:31] I didn't even know enough to say, "Yes, sir". And you know what? They threw me in the barracks with a bunch of guys from Chicago...Polacks, Lithuanians, Italians. And I thought, "This has got to be the craziest bunch of guys I've ever met in my life! They're nuts". I never will forget that.

Joshua Bell: Why do you say that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:20:07] Just because I'd never met people like that. And they hadn't finished the fort. It was still just mud all around the barracks and you were constantly wading through mud. There was mud everywhere. When we fired on the rifle range for our marksmanship, I had to lay in mud. There was nothing but mud. You had to wash your boots off before you could get in the barracks. They had a big pan of water on the steps and you had to step in that and wash your boots off. There was just mud everywhere. We never did get to go into town. There was no town to go into anyway.

[00:21:07] And our basic training was cut short because of the condition the country was in with Pearl Harbor and the Japanese making all these advances, invading all these different countries in the Pacific. So, they cut our basic training short. I think we only did eight weeks if I remember right. It might not have even been that much. All we learned to do was a short order drill, how to fire a gun – and that was the 03's from World War I – and we went down on our river and we built some floating bridges so the troops and trucks could move across the river. That was about it, Josh. They bundled us all up, put us on another train and away we went.

They unloaded us in Seattle. I can't remember the name of the fort. It's not there anymore. We were there a couple or three months I think – maybe not that much – and we did guard duty in Seattle on the bridges and different things like that. And one morning, “Fall out, fall out. Get your barrack bags ready, your backpack ready.” And they load us on trucks and took us down to dock. [00:23:07] And they loaded us on an old German liner. It was so old. It was from the World War I era. It wasn't build in the World War I, but it was a passenger liner. And they loaded us on that and away we went to the Aleutian Islands. And the rumors were going loud and clear.

Joshua Bell: What'd you have for rumors?

Clint Goodwin: [00:23:43] They put us in bunks, or hammocks, and my roommate was Lawrence Graham and he was above me. Lawrence Graham came from Burlington, Colorado. He was a farm boy, had never been off the farm. And he just died a month ago at age 95. I kept in touch with him all these years. And the thing I remember about that ship was the big black rats running across the upper part of the [liner], above the bunks. And, of course, it was an old, old ship. A lot of the railings had rusted and fallen off. You had to be real careful on the deck.

[00:24:43] And, of course, we got off in I think it was Juneau. They took us off the ship there and let us walk around. We hadn't been on land for a few days. And then we got back on again and our next stop was Dutch Harbor, just right after the Japanese bombed it.

Joshua Bell: What were your impressions of Dutch Harbor when you got there?

Clint Goodwin: [00:25:21] Primitive, very primitive. Not too well established. I don't know what it was originally. It was just a native village. There were some Navy

installations there. But when we got off the ship there – I'm not sure what happened to everybody that got off that ship – but those of us that were put aside, they loaded us on a barge and told us we were gonna tug across the passageway there to an island called Umnak. Umnak Island. And that's where we got off.

We got off these big barges and went ashore and there was already a company there. This company that was there were regular Army and they were the 807th engineers. They had laid a concrete runway in Yakutat before Pearl Harbor and then they moved them down to Umnak Island we came ashore to Umnak Island. They had tents on the beach for us to put up. They had loaded those off the barge too and cots to sleep on, sleeping bags. But the real stuff hit the fan, Josh.

[00:27:11] We weren't properly equipped. We didn't have the right equipment. None of us had a weapon. And we just went ashore and just went to work, putting tents up, fixing up the cots, fixing a place to sleep. And they had a Sibley stove, what they call a Sibley stove. It was a little round stove. It was about three-foot around and about three-foot high and it had a smokestack that went up through the tent. We were in those five-man tents. And they shipped us coal in potato sacks, hundred-pound potato bags, big chunks of coal. And they sent it to us from a coalmine on the mainland of Alaska. And that's what we used for heat.

And, of course, here's the thing, Josh, about the American soldier. He was a grown guy. He was a mature guy. [00:28:21] He'd already been working. He's used to a hard life. And they just started going to work, they started fixing the floor in the tent, they started fixing stuff around the make it like a home. We stole stuff is what we did. Anything we could get our hands on that we thought we could use, we stole it and used it in the tent to make life more comfortable.

Joshua Bell: Like what?

Clint Goodwin: [00:28:54] Like coffee cans. Our coffee came in a great big five-gallon can I think it was. Maybe it wasn't that big. Every time we got a chance to get one of those out of the mess hall, we'd steal it after it was empty. Lumber, plywood, two-by-fours, nails, hammers, saws, wire, rope, anything we could get our hands on that we would make it comfortable inside the tent. Because if you didn't, you'd put that cot down and all you were doing was putting it down in the mud and the – what do you call that stuff? I can't think of the name of it – your cot would just sink down in it. And you'd just be getting up and putting on your boots and they'd be sitting in the mud. So, we had to build floors to make it livable.

And our mess hall was usually a couple of big tents with fuel ranges in them. And, Josh, our food was pretty bad. It was pretty bad. I can remember going through the mess line and getting – we did bake our own bread; that was one thing we did – and getting two big slices of bread over my cup for the coffee and just keep going. And at the other end of the

mess hall when you got through eating was two fifty-gallon drums full of water sitting on the fire with the water boiling. [00:30:49] And you dipped your mess kit in that to rinse it out and, of course, it was the same water you used a couple of days before that. So, it kind of looked like soup. And sometimes it'd be so cold and snowing or raining or blowing that the fire was out. So, you just dip your mess kit in cold soup and get on your way. Our schedule was seven days a week, 12-14 hours a day or even more.

Joshua Bell: And how long did that go on?

Clint Goodwin: [00:31:26] It went on for two and a half years.

Joshua Bell: Yikes.

Clint Goodwin: [00:31:33] You had to be young, strong and bite the bullet. And if you were 34 or 35, you couldn't make it. They'd send you back. They were too old.

Joshua Bell: I wanted to ask. What unit were you in?

Clint Goodwin: [00:31:57] 807th Engineers, Company B.

Joshua Bell: Company B. And so, you've gone up to Alaska and it's been raided by the Japanese. What are you thinking about the fighting situation? Because you hadn't encountered any fighting at this point.

Clint Goodwin: [00:32:22] No, we hadn't, but we'd seen the results of the bombing at Dutch Harbor, which didn't do a lot of damage. But when we got to Umnak Island and got ourselves set up, then we got the D8 Cats going and we cleaned off a strip and put down sand and patted that down. Then we made the steel planks on top of it, so we made a runway.

And then the P-40's were coming in and landing on that and we got to see some of the dogfights in the air between the P-40's and Zeros. And that was pretty exciting because Zeros would outmaneuver the P-40's because they were lighter and faster. But what we would do, we set up 50-caliber machine guns [00:33:21] on the beach. And the P-40 pilot would come down right over the water and the Zero would follow and we'd open up on the Zero as soon as the P-40 got past our sights.

What we also did at Umnak was we built a wooden tank to hold diesel fuel and the submarines would come in and refuel there. You know, that's one of the absolute most lonely sights I ever saw in my life. To see one of those submarines going out to sea and, you know, all you see is the top part of the ship and you're standing there looking at that, the weather is stormy, drizzly, dim, dismal [00:34:21] and cold. And here's this ship moving out to sea and you think, "Holy smokes, wow...that's scary".

Joshua Bell: Yeah. Those guys had quite the assignment.

Clint Goodwin: [00:34:41] Yeah. And then after we'd been at Umnak for a while, they split us up and they sent – I forget how they did that – but B Company and another company, they loaded us on an old wooden schooner and put all the field ranges on the deck. And they took us around Dutch Harbor and up the Bering Sea side to Port Heiden and they unloaded us there.

Joshua Bell: I'm sorry. Where did they take you, Clint?

Clint Goodwin: [00:35:28] Port Heiden. It's right in the crook on the Bering Sea side where the Aleutian Islands joins the mainland. In fact, you can see over in the distance that big volcano wasn't too far from us. And what we did there was the same thing. We built a road into where our base camp was gonna be, put up our tents. And then we didn't put in steel planks this time; we put in kind of like a gravel runway. I don't know why they did that; maybe it was because we had the foundation there to do it.

[00:36:25] We put in hangars and what we had coming in there was Russian pilots flying fighter planes. They would land there and refuel and then go on. And we got some of our supplies there from bush pilots. They would fly over and dump it off the side. But the other two companies went on down to Adak. And then after we'd been at Port Heiden – I forget how long – then they flew us in the old DC-3's, they flew us to Adak.

Joshua Bell: Was that your first plane ride?

Clint Goodwin: [00:37:23] Yeah.

Joshua Bell: What'd you think?

Clint Goodwin: [00:37:25] It was a scary one too. It was so cold that the water in my canteen froze. There were no seats in them. We just laid on our barracks bags all day long. We made one stop on the way to refuel and I think we got to eat in a mess kitchen at some other outfit. Then we went on down to Adak. When we got there, the two companies that went ahead of us had already got a strip laid.

Then when we made the invasion of Attu and Kiska, there was...I think they sent one company down there with D8 Cats and I'm a little hazy there, Josh. Just can't remember...all I can remember is that Company B stayed at Adak. I don't remember who went to Kiska and Attu. We got in on the combat though.

Joshua Bell: Did you go?

Clint Goodwin: [00:38:58] No, I didn't. I was in Company B. We stayed at Adak. And then a short time after that, after that was all secured, then they loaded us on a ship and

took us back to Seattle and went by train to Spokane, Washington to Geiger Field. We all got a delay en route. We didn't get a furlough; we just got a delay en route.

[00:39:49] So, I got on the train and went home and I was home for two weeks and I had to come back. And we were there in Geiger Field. We retrained, so to speak. Marksmanship, bayonet training, I was qualified on the mortar. I was qualified as a Mortarman. And then one night they backed the train in and loaded us all up, put us on our troop ship in Seattle and it happened to be a fairly new ship. In fact, it was so new that we had been to sea more than the crew. And we hit one of the worst storms in the Pacific.

Joshua Bell: When was this?

Clint Goodwin: [00:40:36] That was '44. I think it was '44. And we got off at Pearl Harbor.

Joshua Bell: What'd you think of Pearl?

Clint Goodwin: [00:40:52] In Hawaii? And they pulled in a whole bunch of LST's. We loaded all of our D8 Cats, carryalls, graders, draglines in the hold of those LST's and we set sail. It took us over a month. We stopped at Eniwetok – of course, that was all secured – stopped at Guam – of course, that was secured too – and then our next stop was Okinawa. And we hit the worst typhoon in history I guess. I don't know how we lived through that. I do not know how we made it through that. But we had a landing craft [00:41:52] chained down on the deck of our LST and it was gone the next morning.

Joshua Bell: Wow.

Clint Goodwin: [00:42:02] And when we got into Okinawa, I want to tell you, Josh, that was something to see. Here's all these ships out there in the harbor, battleships, troop ships, tankers, and aircraft guns are going "pow, pow, pow!" And the Zeros are flying overhead. Our fighter planes are flying overhead. And they moved our LST's onto the shore. They dropped the lids and, of course, they dropped the lid and there was still about three-foot of water we had to drop off in. But when I saw what was happening, I waited until they got a Cat started and he pulled a carryall with him and I jumped on the back of the carryall and drove off on that. But the Marines and the Infantry had already gone in, so we were following along behind them.

[00:42:58] We established a camp and right away we started building a runway. And the Marine Corps already had a fighter strip up above us, what they called...I can't think of the name, but we worked on that thing 24 hours a day getting that strip in for fighter planes. And pretty soon they were landing bombers on it, B-29's and I'm not sure how long that went on.

All this time this is going on, the combat is going on also with the Marines and the Infantry. And finally, we got the island secured and the bombers, the Japanese bombers, at night quit coming. And what they did one night, the Japanese, is they pulled gliders from Japan all the way to Okinawa and released them. And those suckers knew exactly where our runway was. [00:44:02] And they landed on it and jumped out and started throwing hand grenades in the fighter planes and the Marines opened up on them. There were bodies strung all over the place.

Joshua Bell: What do you remember thinking when this is going on? Because it must have woken you up if you were asleep.

Clint Goodwin: [00:44:29] Well, we were working anyway. You know, it was a surprise to us because we were on the runway working on the runway getting it ready for finishing it, is what we were doing. And to have these guys glide in like that and land and then all of a sudden all this rifle fire going on, we weren't aware that this was happening. We couldn't figure out what the heck was going on. It was dark. It was at night. But the next morning all the Japanese bodies lying all over our runway was not a pretty sight. And that humid weather, the smell was already starting.

So, I don't know how long after that, we were out on the runway working one day [00:45:29] and a guy came by on a Jeep and he hollered at us and said, "Hey, they dropped the atomic bomb on Japan". And, you know, like a bunch of guys and the GI's will do, they're all just standing around smoking and kidding around. And I remember one guy saying, "What the hell is an atomic bomb?" We didn't know what the hell an atomic bomb was. But a short time after that, the war ended.

They loaded us all in another troop ship and we headed for home and guess what? We were off the Aleutian Islands and we got mechanical trouble and we drifted for about a week before the United States. [00:46:29] I'll tell you... we landed at Tacoma. We were so excited that we all went over to the one side of the ship and the Captain couldn't dock because the ship was tilted because of the weight of all of us guys. He came on the loud speaker and said, "You guys are gonna have to get away from the railing because I can't dock as long as you're doing that". Nobody paid any attention to him.

[00:47:19] Red Cross gals were there with coffee and donuts and, Josh, I want to tell you something. You know what I remember most? Not looking at the women; just smelling the perfume, the women's perfume. That was a thing I noticed most.

[00:47:33] But that kind of ended it for all of us because going off the ship, they put us in a – I forget the name of that fort there – but they just shoved us around wherever and we lost contact with each other. I never did see any of them after that until we started doing the reunions. It was '60. And, you know, we did our reunions every year and we started out, we had almost 100 guys. Then it goes down to 70, 60, 40, 30. And now, outside of myself, Herman Kingsley and Bev Lane, I think that's all I know of. That's it.

Joshua Bell: Are those two gentlemen also...were they with you from the beginning?

Clint Goodwin: [00:48:37] Yeah. Herman Kingsley, the reunion...you remember when we met in Moline, Illinois?

Joshua Bell: Yep.

Clint Goodwin: [00:48:37] Well, the reunion before that in Kansas City – that was I think in May...what month was it we were in Moline?

Joshua Bell: September.

Clint Goodwin: [00:48:59] September. Well, the one we had in May in the same year, we had in Kansas City and I bummed a ride down to Fairfield Bay, Arkansas and visited with Herman and he's gone blind. He's lived in assisted living, but we knew each other. We had a nice visit and I went back to Kansas City and got on a train come home. I haven't seen Bev Lane for about a year now. I hope he's okay. And like I said, Lawrence Graham died a couple of months ago. So, that's about it, Josh.

Joshua Bell: And you said, is that fellow's name Ben?

Clint Goodwin: [00:49:52] He's called Bev Lane, L-A-N-E.

Joshua Bell: And where does he live?

Clint Goodwin: [00:50:03] He lives with his son in Atascadero, California, but he has daughters and sons around the country. Sometimes he'll go to Tucson and stay with his daughter or he'll go back to Minnesota where he grew up and he's got a lot of friends back there. He'll go back there and stay for a while.

Joshua Bell: Well, good.

Clint Goodwin: [00:50:29] Herman ran a construction company in Denver for many years and wound up very wealthy. Lived in Palm Springs for a long, long time. And his wife died and his eyesight started failing him, so he is kind of limited to what he can do. But I've stopped to see Herman over the years just whenever I can, at least once a year. He's 96. Lawrence Graham, who just died, is 95. I'm 94. And Bev Lane is 93. Sure had a nice reunion, boy.

Joshua Bell: I'll bet you did.

Clint Goodwin: [00:51:26] We really did. They were very enjoyable.

Joshua Bell: Well, I want to thank you so much for sharing these memories with me. And I think that we probably will have a second interview based on the information that you've given me.

Clint Goodwin: [00:51:42] That'd be great, Josh. That'd be great.

Joshua Bell: I enjoy listening to you, Clint. I really do.

Clint Goodwin: [00:51:47] Thank you.

Joshua Bell: And the National Historic Area appreciates you taking part in our oral history project because this is something that isn't just for us, but it's for everybody. This is part of everybody's history and we appreciate that you're making a contribution to that, continuing to contribute beyond your service in the Second World War. So, we thank you very much.

Clint Goodwin: [00:52:16] I'm glad I'm able to.

[End of recorded material at 00:52:22]

December 14, 2014
Sparks, NV

Interviewed by Joshua Bell, Volunteer Oral Historian and Researcher,
National Park Service

This interview is part of the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area Oral History Project. The interview with Donald Brydon was recorded with his permission on a digital recorder. Copies of the audio file are preserved in mp3, wav and wma formats and are on file at the offices of the National Park Service in Anchorage, Alaska.

The transcript has been lightly edited.

Joshua Bell: Today is December 15, 2014. My name is Joshua Bell, volunteer oral historian and researcher with the Aleutian World War II National Historic Area. I'm joined again by Clint Goodwin. Thanks for being with us again, Clint.

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:20] It's an honor, it's an honor, Josh.

Joshua Bell: Honor's all mine here. It's great to talk with you again. I've looked over your last interview, and I came up with a couple of questions. These are going to be kind of random. But I'll try to put them in context as best I can as we go.

When you were stationed in Seattle, before you went up to the Aleutians, did you get to see any of Seattle?

Clint Goodwin: [00:00:59] Yeah, we got to go into town pretty regularly. In fact I had one of my buddies, a big Mexican guy. He boxed in the semi-wind-up on the boxing card in downtown Seattle.

Joshua Bell: Really.

Clint Goodwin: [00:01:23] Yeah, I can't think of his name now, big Mexican kid, tough, really tough.

Joshua Bell: I want to get this, you boxed him?

Clint Goodwin: [00:01:34] No. We had a nice gym at this particular fort we were stationed at. And we had a heavy bag in there and I used to work with him on the heavy

bag. Getting him through his punches off it's tough. And then in the mornings sometimes if he would come by and wake me up in the barracks, I would get up and run with him. He was in better shape than me and I couldn't keep up with him. Wish I could remember his name but I can't.

Joshua Bell: Oh goodness. All right what else did you do in Seattle?

Clint Goodwin: [00:02:21] That was basically it. Just go into town and the bars and that was about it. Walk around down town, look at the girls, hope something would happen. That was about it though.

Joshua Bell: That sounds pretty typical of a young GI out on the town.

Clint Goodwin: [00:02:54] We had a hole in the fence around that particular fort we was in. There was a hole in the fence in the back. And the guys that were married would slip through the hole and get a cab, and go to wherever their wife was, hotels, I don't know about motels. But maybe evening staying with relatives, or friends, or something.

We had some of them got back just in time and [slip] through the hole in the fence to get on the trucks to take us down to the docks, to take us down to the ship that took us to the Aleutians. That was something.

Joshua Bell: Here's another question that we came with. When did you find out that Japan had bombed Dutch Harbor?

Clint Goodwin: [00:04:01] When we were on the ship. When we were on the ship going to Dutch Harbor. I don't remember where our position was in the Gulf of Alaska. Somewhere along in here we got word. There were rumors on the ships and a group of guys, a group of GIs the rumors would go on all the time. but this one was the real McCoy.

Joshua Bell: What was the reaction to that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:04:36] Well, it just kind of like, well we know what we're up against now. we know what we're facing. It's finally happening. We did all this basic training. We went across country in the train. We were at this fort in Seattle for a while, we did guard duty downtown for a while, and then we got on an old beat up ship and headed for the Aleutian Islands. We didn't really know where we was going, but we did when they told us that they'd bombed Dutch Harbor. The rumors you know, we're going to the Aleutians, we're going here, we're going there. It just goes on and on.

Joshua Bell: What was your first impression of the area? What do you remember thinking?

Clint Goodwin: [00:05:35] Desolate. Really bad weather, rain, fog, wind constantly. And these places where we were landing were just wind swept places with no trees. Nothing but muskeg [00:06:04] that was it. No nothing in the way of a tree or anything. And nothing was level, it was all hilly and I was just kind of desolate Joshua Bell. It wasn't anything to get excited about.

Joshua Bell: You had said that at some point when you were at Dutch Harbor you set up a machine emplacement is that right.

Clint Goodwin: [00:06:42] No I think there was one already set up. Because they loaded us on barges and took us across to Umnak Island and that's where we really started our first runway. So we didn't really stay at Dutch Harbor very long, but I think the navy had already set up some anti-aircraft guns.

Joshua Bell: Did you ever work one of those, or machine gun emplacement when they were -

Clint Goodwin: [00:07:18] No. I never did, never did. We were all so busy working we didn't have time to do any of that kind of stuff. We were working all the time, seven days a week. We was working even if it wasn't safe, we would even work with lights on. But we didn't do that too much because we didn't want to give away our positions.

So we were just basically work, work, work, get that runway laid out and get those site, what do you call them where they park the planes? Where the fighter planes would come in and pull you around they'd back them into these little [placements], I can't think of the name of them.

Joshua Bell: Oh, I know what you're talking about and the name... what you call them escapes me too.

Clint Goodwin: [00:08:19] Then later on, then the light bombers were coming in, like two engine bomber, I can't think of the name of it. The very [unintelligible 00:08:30], and the PBYS... The PBYS was really our main plane for reconnaissance and keeping an eye on what's going on around us. I think if a PBY went over right now I'd know what it was without looking out there. Can't think of anything to add to that Josh.

Joshua Bell: Did you ever work under fire?

Clint Goodwin: [00:09:14] Not really, we worked under the threat of it. It could happen, all the time it could happen, it could happen. Usually we would stack our M1 rifles. You know how they do that in the military, M1. We finally got M1s by then. We started out with the 03 in the First World War. I hate to shoot that thing. Oh that thing had a kick to it, something terrible. It was sure an accurate weapon I shot expertly with that. I never shot a rifle in my life.

Joshua Bell: They made it easy for you.

Clint Goodwin: [00:10:05] Why I shot expert because I paid attention to what the Sergeant was saying. A lot of those farm boys who'd been shooting all their lives, they thought, "Shoot I can do that." And I shot expert and a lot of them didn't.

Joshua Bell: So you got to listen to the sergeant, that's the secret.

Clint Goodwin: [00:10:24] Yeah, because he knew what he was talking about.

Joshua Bell: How did you and your friends pass the time?

Clint Goodwin: [00:10:38] We didn't really have a lot of time, it was work all the time, work, work, work. If we did have any time we had a still we always managed to do that.

Joshua Bell: What was that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:11:01] We always built a still. There was always somehow, some way, somebody would get all the stuff together and we'd make a still. And you could always count of four or five guys all sitting around with their cup out of their mess kit catching the dribbles out of that still.

Joshua Bell: What do you guys call that stuff?

Clint Goodwin: [00:11:35] What the heck did we call it? Oh, god, I can't remember Josh.

Joshua Bell: I've heard it called a couple of things, but the one that might be sticking out is raisin jack.

Clint Goodwin: [00:11:51] No, no. No we made it out of other stuff ... I can't think what we called it.

Joshua Bell: Maybe it will come to you.

Clint Goodwin: [00:12:05] Yeah. I know one thing for us it rolled out of the little spigot, it wasn't filtered; it wasn't anything. It was just raw whiskey. Man, in our outfit we had a bunch of regular army guys, and Josh, I hate to say this but they were nothing but a bunch of drunks. They were a worthless bunch if I ever met. God, they were a sorry bunch.

There was one of them that chewed tobacco constantly; he even had a cud in his mouth when he went to sleep. He was one of them that I know that he didn't change his clothes. It was months went by that he didn't change his clothes. Stump was his name, Stump. We

had one his name was Riles, Jack Riles, big, big guy. He finally made sergeant, but it didn't do anything to his conduct. And that was their main skill, wherever we landed, wherever we got established was making a still.

Joshua Bell: Priority one.

Clint Goodwin: [00:13:45] Yeah.

Joshua Bell: I was wondering if you could tell me about some of your friends. What their names were where they were from, what they did?

Clint Goodwin: [00:14:03] Herman Kingsley, he was from Arkansas originally. You know Josh - here's the thing - most of the guys that I went in with they were drafted. When we went in and we all met in those barracks back there in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, we was young guys that was already working, we were brought up, we were used to having cars. And Herman Kingsley was working in Oklahoma and he rode the bus in to the induction center. He was a young tough guy, and he turned out to be about the best bulldozer I ever seen. He was something else on a D-8. He was just a natural thing.

In fact when he got out the service he worked for several construction companies. One was in Venezuela, and he went down there on a road-building job. I guess he was down there about a year. He was on a big construction job in Denver, on the dozer. He didn't stay on it, he went into the ... I'm trying to think of, air conditioning.

There was Bev Lane, Bev Lane was from Minnesota. Good solid guy. Let's see who else, you know when I have to name off names I get kind of stalled on it. Lawrence Gram he was a farm boy from Burlington, Colorado. He was born, and raised, and died in the same house that he started out in. he never got married. His whole life was farming, farming and cattle. I used to stop and see him once in a while.

[00:16:24] You know so many of these guys are gone now. Don Johnson was a salesman selling signs. You know in the farmers' fields you'd see these signs in the fields about certain things, billboards. And that was his business. Oh man, Ed Worth really these guys pretty much were in the trades, carpentry, and plumbing, and electrician, and welding, and heavy equipment. So I'm trying to think of some other guys, Howie Olm, Howie Olm was dragline operator -

Joshua Bell: - That's O-L-M?

Clint Goodwin: [00:17:21] And we did a reunion in his place in Fort Washington, Wisconsin one time. And he had worked himself up to. When he got out he was a dispatcher for Pabst Blue Ribbon beer in Milwaukee.

Joshua Bell: What was his last name, Clint?

Clint Goodwin: [00:17:39] Ohm, OHM. Oh man, our Sergeant Rogers, you know what he had it in for me, he'd be a lot of trouble. I did a lot of extra duty on account of him, but we wound up being the best of friends. One of the last reunions of the 807th Engineers did was in Des Moines, Iowa. And it was only like six of us showed up. And on the last day everybody took off and it just left me and Roger in the front desk room. And I rented a car and drove up from Omaha, flew into Omaha and rented a car. And we were sitting there together and he turned to me and says, "Goodwin, I want you to get in that car and get on home." And I said, "What about you Sgt. what are you going to do?" He said, "Don't you worry about I'll take care of myself. You get on home." That's the last time I saw him. He died about three months later of cancer at the VA in Florida.

Joshua Bell: What kind of extra duty did he have you do?

Clint Goodwin: [00:19:10] Full field pack at night. I was digging a hole, working in the kitchen. Let's see, what else did he get me doing? I ought to remember all of them. One kind of cold day I was on extra duty and he said, "There's a pick and a shovel I want you to dig that hole out there between the barracks and the kitchen. The ground was froze Joshua Bell, when I hit it with a pick it splintered, the dirt. You couldn't even pick it, you couldn't even swing a pick on it, it was froze. I messed around out there for a while. He finally sent word out, "Get back in your barracks."

[00:20:19] You know Josh, I don't think I was really a very good soldier.

Joshua Bell: Why do you say that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:20:28] Well it seemed like I was always in trouble about something. You know when I got out I was only a corporal, everybody else had gone on to what's that first, between the corporal and a Sargent, I guess it's changed now. But I think giving me the corporal stripes was just a gift just to make me feel good.

Joshua Bell: Well don't feel too bad, my -

Clint Goodwin: [00:21:11] I don't.

Joshua Bell: I say that because among my grandfather's stuff we found some sergeant stripes, but we noticed on his discharge papers that he was out as a private first class.

Clint Goodwin: [00:21:29] Well that's basically what I was a private first class.

Joshua Bell: So something happened somewhere.

Clint Goodwin: [00:21:37] Yeah. But on our way back they put this notice on the bulletin board on the ship of the guys that were now corporals or T5s, and I happen to be

one. And I thought, "My golly, am I going to go home as a T5?" I thought I was going to go home as private first class.

You know after we get to talking I'll probably think of a lot of guys that I can't think of right now.

Joshua Bell: You know what, that's fine. If you wouldn't mind writing those down - just the names, and if you want to write a couple of notes next to them that would be just fine.

Clint Goodwin: [00:22:28] I'll try to do that. I remember one guy before we get off here. I remember one guy he was ... There's always a guy in the bunch that's always cracking jokes and everybody laughs. When we went ashore in Okinawa our company commander was sick and we carried him to shore on a cot, army cot. And here we are wading ashore and these guys are carrying their company commander, Bud Wells that was his name Bud Wells. He died just a short time ago, about a year ago. His daughter sent me a note and told me he died. And he hollered out and said, "Get these troops out of this hot sun." It was really hot and humid, and there was no way we was going to get out of the hot sun. And it was so fitting here we were in a mess and he hollers out. And out company commander as sick as he was said, "I knew it. There's always somebody got to say something like that."

[00:23:50] You know our company commander he was a pretty decent guy, his name was Nozick, and I always wanted to see him after we got out and we had our reunions, but he never came to any of them. But he was really a decent guy. You know when we were in Geiger Fields when we come back from the Aleutians they put us at Geiger Fields in Spokane, Washington. And we were retraining and getting equipment and stuff. And I was in a mortar crew. I was taking mortar crew training. And we had a guy in our outfit he went AWOL and he was gone, I don't know about a week. So this place where we were taking mortar training we had to get on the trucks and they would truck us to wherever this place was in Washington, just kind of like desert. And we would fire our mortars and put up buck fence and we'd sleep right there. And that's where our field ranges were, and they set us there just right out like we're in combat.

Well, we all went into town one night, in this little town in Washington, and Nozick, our company commander, he was with us and in comes this guy that was AWOL. And he saw him and he called him over and he said, "You're AWOL." He said, "I know, sir." He said, "I tell you what, you get yourself back to fort and I want to see you in the barracks when I get back. And you keep your word with me and when we come back we'll forget about this whole thing." And sure enough he was, he was there waiting.

Joshua Bell: How about that.

Clint Goodwin: [00:26:03] So, you know it wasn't really military wasn't following the rules but it worked anyway.

Joshua Bell: It sounded like it's what was needed.

Clint Goodwin: [00:26:17] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Captain Nozick.

Joshua Bell: What's the last name on that Clint?

Clint Goodwin: [00:26:26] Nozick, NOZICK I think. I think that was the way he spelt his name. I never did know whether he was regular army or not. He was in before Pearl Harbor. See Josh, I don't know if I said this the first time we started on this, but the 807th was formed in Yacutat and it was formed of these regular army guys. And they made these concrete runways and they did it practically by hand. And he was there then, so he might have been regular army.

Joshua Bell: That's a lot of work.

Clint Goodwin: [00:27:29] Yeah. I've been told by private pilots that fly in the last [inaudible 00:27:35] that they still use that runway.

Joshua Bell: How about that. I wanted to ask you some more about being in the islands. You said that you were stationed at Adak before the invasion of Attu, is that right?

Clint Goodwin: [00:28:00] Yeah.

Joshua Bell: Okay, did you go to Attu?

Clint Goodwin: [00:28:06] No, they broke us up. I never could figure that out. I never thought much about it really. But they only sent I think two companies to Adak and Attu, and the rest of us didn't go. I never could figure that out.

Joshua Bell: How did you feel about that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:28:30] Well, to tell you the truth I didn't give it a whole lot of thought because I didn't really know where those guys were going. And then when I found out where they were at, I thought to myself I was on fortunate guy. We didn't have any casualties. It was pretty scary, pretty scary. It was a type of combat that you weren't really trained for. If you get pinned down, you get pinned down in frozen muskeg. And if you're not dressed for it, and even if you are dressed for it, how long you going to last.

Joshua Bell: Yeah, exactly. I wanted to know did you know about, where you involved in the invasion of Kiska at all, or the planned invasion of Kiska?

Clint Goodwin: [00:29:33] No. I don't know anything about that. For some reason I don't seem to remember anything about that.

Joshua Bell: Okay, all right. Let's see... What was the follow up here ... Oh, I wanted to ask how did you feel about leaving the Aleutians?

Clint Goodwin: [00:29:58] I was glad to leave them, but I didn't know what was ahead of us. And when we got to Geiger Field in Spokane; we were training me for mortars, 60-millimeter mortar, and you know, there was something kind of strange happening then. There was guys in our outfit that disappeared all of a sudden, we never saw them again, and Bev Lane was one of them. I still see Bev Lane now, sometimes I go over and visit with him first a year. And he got a discharge, but it wasn't honorable. He don't like to talk about it, but as close as I can get to it was that he kind of lost it because he was one of the guys that went to Attu and Kiska. And he did say one time to me when I was visiting him over there that dragging those dead bodies around and burying them he said, "I didn't want no more of that. I didn't want any more of any of it, none of it." He still draws a pension from the VA for that.

Joshua Bell: As he should.

Clint Goodwin: [00:31:40] He never told me what it was, but I guess it's still with him.

Joshua Bell: Yeah, yeah, that will be with him which is good. It's one of the very least with the very least -- it's something that we can do at the very least. Boy that's tough.

Clint Goodwin: [00:32:05] They gave us a day in leave, it wasn't a... What'd you call it Josh? I can't think of the name, a furlough. It wasn't a furlough it was a delay of leave 30 days. So when we got off the ship and they took us to Geiger Field they gave us all of us this delay in leave and we all took off, we all headed home. And I was home I think for two weeks and then I had to come back. And we knew that we were in for something, we just knew it. Because the combat in Europe had changed, we were gaining in the Pacific and the South Pacific and the South Pacific. We were beginning to come out of a lot of bad situations, and I think it was round about then wasn't it that MacArthur was able to walk ashore in the Philippines.

Joshua Bell: What month and year was that Clint, that you left?

Clint Goodwin: [00:33:20] You know what I can't remember. I just can't pin it down. But anyway the notice on the bulletin board was have you barracks bag packed and be prepared to leave. And they backed a train in and loaded up on that train, took us to Seattle and put us on a brand new troop ship. And we left Seattle in one of the worst Pacific storms on record, and we fought a Pacific storm for six days getting to Hawaii. And we had guys that were so sick that they hadn't eaten for days, it was terrible, it was terrible. Some of them had diarrhea and there was no air conditioning, oh man. When we got off that ship in Hawaii we were a sorry looking bunch. We were filthy; we hadn't bathed, we hadn't shaved, we hadn't changed clothes, we hadn't eaten hardly anything, we couldn't eat, we were so sick. It was terrible. We had more time at sea than

most of the crewmembers on that ship. We had more time at sea than they did, ah what a storm that was. That storm was so bad, Josh, that we would go, the ship would go into these great big enormous waves and the whole front of the ship would disappear. And then it would just slowly rise out of it again. And there was minesweepers, our escort. All we ever saw of them was their smoke stack. I don't know how those guys made it on those things. But when we left Seattle we were on LSTs and all of our bulldozers, draglines, trucks, everything was in those LSTs and we knew we were in for trouble and the rumors started.

Joshua Bell: What were some of the rumors?

Clint Goodwin: [00:36:01] Oh, we were going here, we were going there, we were going to Okinawa, and we did go to Okinawa, but that was after it was all secured, Guam it was secured. It took us a month, it took us a month to make it to Okinawa, you know and LSTs I don't know what their knot speed was but it wasn't very much. We slept on the deck and when we hit that typhoon we were about two days from Okinawa we hit that big typhoon. Holy smoke I don't know how we ever got through that, I really don't. The landing craft that was chained down on our deck was gone the next morning.

Joshua Bell: What was chained down on the deck?

Clint Goodwin: [00:37:02] The landing craft.

Joshua Bell: A landing craft.

Clint Goodwin: [00:37:08] It was changed on the top of the deck and we were sleeping underneath it. When we hit that typhoon they made us all go below and we had to stay, we just laid in the hallways on this LST. Oh man it was scary. Because those LSTs were not built for heavy seas, they're flat bottom and rough riding anyway, boy.

Joshua Bell: So you must have been kind of happy to see Okinawa?

Clint Goodwin: [00:37:51] Well no, because when we got to Okinawa what did we see but battle ships, destroyers, fighter planes up above us and anti-aircraft going off, and the fighter planes fighting up above us Japs and us, bang, bang, bang, and it just uproar all over. There was smoke all over the place and good god, I wasn't happy to see that. And the Marines had already gone ashore. And our LST went right up on the shore and dropped our lid down and right away we get those things cranked up, get them out, get them on there and start building a runway. And we made a runway out of crushed coral. It's almost like concrete when you pack it down. We had bombers landing on that thing.

Joshua Bell: What kind of bombers?

Clint Goodwin: [00:39:07] These, what the heck you call that four engine not the 29s but the -

Joshua Bell: - You had the Liberators?

Clint Goodwin: [00:39:18] Yeah Liberators.

Joshua Bell: And B-17s but I don't know if they were any B-29s down there.

Clint Goodwin: [00:39:24] I don't remember seeing one. I really don't. But every night the Japs come over and drop bombs on us, every night.

Joshua Bell: How did -

Clint Goodwin: [00:39:44] I'm getting away from the Aleutian Islands.

Joshua Bell: What's that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:39:47] I said I'm getting away from the Aleutian Islands, Josh.

Joshua Bell: Oh that's okay, that's okay, we're in for the whole story here.

Clint Goodwin: [00:39:57] In the previous interview did I tell you about the Japanese landing on the marine runway above us with glider planes?

Joshua Bell: You had mentioned it briefly.

Clint Goodwin: [00:40:13] Yeah, yeah it was at night and this bomber, Japanese bomber towed those gliders all the way from Japan, and when they got in the right position he just cut them loose and they glided right smack in on that marine corps runway. Of course none of them survived it. Man that must have been an awful trip knowing you're never going to come back, for sure you aren't going to come back. There was dead bodies lying all over that runway next morning. Oh my God.

Joshua Bell: What do you remember thinking about that, how did it make you feel?

Clint Goodwin: [00:41:02] How senseless the whole thing was. Guys losing their lives like that. They were our enemy that's true, but good God, Josh. You know I thought to myself how can anybody get themselves cranked up to do this kind of stuff and believe it in. Those Japanese guys they didn't want to be taken prisoner, it was a dishonor to them. It was unbelievable.

But you know what Josh? It all goes back to the same thing the American soldier then was a smart kid. He knew how to work, he knew how to figure things out, he knew how to fix

something so it was better, or if what he was issued didn't work right he would figure out some way of making work better. And I still think that's how we beat them, we were smarter than them, we knew how to do things.

Your company commander could tell you, "I want you guys to do so and so." "Yes sir." But then we'd say, "Hey you know what I know a better way of doing that, and that's the way we'd do it. American soldier then, I don't know about now, but then he was a good solid guy. He knew how to do things. I don't think you could compare that with now anyway because what they're doing now is totally different, and they're doing it under different circumstances. It's got a lot of hi-tech stuff connected to it. With us it was basically pretty simple, you had your M1, you had your flask on your belt with drinking water, and your barracks bag full of your stuff. And that was about it. But we were always doing stuff, we were always making something. I think that was it we were always making something. We all made a chest to put our stuff in. We'd pick up whatever we could pick up that we could make a chest out of with a lid on it. Keep our stuff clean and dry. I think everybody in the company had a chest.

They'd give us those five man tents, we'd put floors in them, we'd put frames in them, we'd put doors on them, steps on them. We had regular housekeeping routine took turns keeping everything clean. I don't know if guys do that now or not.

Joshua Bell: What kind of things did you do for our housekeeping routine?

Clint Goodwin: [00:45:06] Just make sure the fire kept going and kind of sweep up. We didn't have a broom but we just kind of pick up. I don't think we had any brooms, I don't remember any of them. Just keep things neat.

Joshua Bell: Did you do that on the Aleutians and on Okinawa?

Clint Goodwin: [00:45:31] Yeah.

Joshua Bell: Both places.

Clint Goodwin: [00:45:34] Yeah. And another thing we did in Okinawa it was kind of funny, you know the Japs left all their equipment behind when we secured the island and they had a lot of the little one and a half [ton] flatbed trucks. It was just the exact image of a Chevy and some of the guys would get them running again so if we're going to have a movie somewhere that night, they'd come through the company, "Hey we're going to the movies, you guys want to go?" And everybody would run out and jump on this flatbed truck. And we'd go steal the gas naturally. Oh man. I never will forget that.

Joshua Bell: Oh goodness. I wanted to ask before and I forgot to, did you ever see any B-29s?

Clint Goodwin: [00:46:43] Yeah.

Joshua Bell: How did the Marston mats respond to the B-29s?

Clint Goodwin: [00:46:49] How did what?

Joshua Bell: The mats the Marston mats, the runways?

Clint Goodwin: [00:46:57] Oh, well the runway that we built at Okinawa Josh, when you pulverize the coral, and lay it out and then roll it, and then when it rains on it it's just like concrete.

Joshua Bell: There you go.

Clint Goodwin: [00:47:14] And yeah it could handle probably anything. We didn't have to lay down planks. That coral oh man that stuff was rock hard just like concrete.

Joshua Bell: I wanted to ask also what were the names of the airfields you helped build or worked on later?

Clint Goodwin: [00:47:42] Well, we developed all of them. There was Umnak, Fort Heiden, Adak, and then Okinawa. But Adak we did a lot of construction there, lots of construction. That was really I thought it was a masterpiece the way they did it because they didn't have a length for the runway so they built out into the ocean. And then we laid the planks on top of that. And then on top of that we tunneled into that big hill that was over on the other side, we tunneled into that and set off our charge and broke off a lot of it so we had the rock to build out on that runway. I'm telling you some of those guys on them gag lines and Cats, and carry alls. They got really good at it.

We were using equipment that was beat up. I mean it had to be patched all the time. You know we're talking way back when the D-8 had a cable operated dozer blade and you had to have a little bulky engine that started your diesel engine. First thing you did was start your little engine and then you clicked in the diesel engine and got it going. I mean a [inaudible 00:49:34] then it was a work of art because you had to reach back with your right hand or left hand, which ever worked best for you, and you had to work that lever for the dozer blade. And the other time you're pulling on the lever you're either going forward, or sideways, or whatever you were doing. It wasn't hydraulic like it is now.

Man we had guys in our outfit, Josh, that were just master mechanics they were something else. They kept that pile of junk going. You know I think I told you we took a 50-gallon drum and cut it in half and filled it with water. And we put some, I forget what we put in there so that it would keep it half-full, and we'd take the rollers off those Cats because the sand would just ground them up just right and left. And I would sit there with a welding torch hard facing those rollers day after day in a tent, with this 50-gallon drum

half-full of water. And you put the rollers in the water and keep rolling them you see so it wouldn't get too hot. And then you're hard facing the surfaces, and they'd put them back on the Cats again and away they'd go. It just went on and on and on, never let up. Boy.

Joshua Bell: Wow determination, determination right there.

Clint Goodwin: [00:51:30] Yeah and another word for it is guts. Nobody complained. Oh, we did we complained all the time. But we went out and did it. Yeah, man.

Joshua Bell: Being around airfields so much you must have had a good chance to look at some of the birds they had landing there.

Clint Goodwin: [00:51:56] What was that Josh?

Joshua Bell: You must have had a good view of some of the airplanes that came in on your fields?

Clint Goodwin: [00:52:02] Oh yeah. Yeah P-40, P-51, P-38. There was one Martin bomber, that Martin bomber was a two engine, man that thing was fast. And that Liberator, and then there was another two engine bomber, what was it called a B-25 is that it?

Joshua Bell: The Mitchell?

Clint Goodwin: [00:52:26] Mitchell yeah, golly. Then we had that one pursuit plane, that fighter plane called the Air Cobra, had a .50 millimeter cannon in the propeller shaft, with a tricycle landing gear. It didn't work out too well in the Aleutians because it didn't have a smooth surface to land on, and that tricycle landing gear couldn't stand the banging around landing like the P-40, and P-51. P-38 was my favorite. That twin engine.

Joshua Bell: Yeah, twin engine, twin the fantail yeah.

Clint Goodwin: [00:53:16] That was my favorite.

Joshua Bell: Yeah that's my favorite too.

Clint Goodwin: [00:53:21] In Okinawa my favorite was that Marine Corps' Corsair, that gull wing fighter plane they had. Holy smokes that was something else, man that was some plane. But I think the P-38 was my favorite.

Joshua Bell: I like that one too.

Clint Goodwin: [00:53:47] But Josh, we would have them come back off of a run and they would be full of holes and beat up, and how those aircraft mechanics got all that stuff fixed and got them back in the air again. You know I really used to feel, really feel

for those pilots. You talk about a tough assignment. If they had to crash in the ocean their time was about five minutes, that's it. If you couldn't get to them they were gone. And if they crashed on land hitting that muskeg change of living you might have a little bit of chance, that's about it. Boy.

Joshua Bell: Another thing I wanted to ask about was if you could go back again would you change the direction you went in the service? If you'd been given the choice would you change the direction you went, and which branch of the service you were in and all that?

Clint Goodwin: [00:55:22] No I don't think I would have, Josh. I didn't really know what to expect. But the day that I was inducted my dad, my stepfather he was from Scotland. And he'd been through the First World War. And I got out the car and, we shook hands and he said, "Son if you get a chance, ask for the engineers." And I did not knowing really why. But it really turned out to be the best thing that could have happened to me. And then on top of that I had experience working in the oil fields so I was doing things I was familiar with. I knew how to handle rope, cable, and heavy equipment, pipe, heavy pipe. I knew how to move stuff around that was heavy, draglines. So it kind of fit in for me.

No I don't think I would have changed it Josh.

Joshua Bell: I think the last question I have for you Clint; I like to ask this question?

Clint Goodwin: [00:56:49] What was that Josh?

Joshua Bell: I like to ask this question of all the people I interview. What, during your service, are you most proud of?

Clint Goodwin: [00:57:06] I think I was proud of the guys I was with, because they did what they were asked to do and they did it better than they were asked to do it. I think that was my main thing.

Joshua Bell: Well I know that the world would be a very different place if there weren't folks like you out there who stood up and did their part. Did their part in the war effort and we really owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to you and your comrades both on the home front and on the frontlines at that time. And we want to especially thank you for sharing your stories with us. It means a lot.

Clint Goodwin: [00:58:10] Thank you Josh, thank you.

[End of recorded material at 00:58:28]