

This is a transcription of the memories of Richard Haw, a corpsman of the USS Hanford during the invasion of Iwo Jima during the Second World War and who was the medic that treated Leo Kepka on the beach of that island.

RICHARD HAW *At a 2003 USS Hanford Reunion in Kansas City he imparted, to the children and wife of Leo Kepka, his memories of that event. The narrative of how he came to save their dad and husband as well as the events during the few days on Iwo Jima is printed below. Here is the story as told by Dr. Haw.*

"Well, I am Dr. Richard Haw, dentist. I am not a MD, but I deal in pharmaceuticals.

"I enlisted in the navy when I was seventeen, probably just like Leo did. I gave my mother the story that if I went in as a Navy corpsman I would be safe. I would be aboard a hospital ship otherwise on a base hospital far away from any action. They would be bringing patients all into you.

"I didn't know that the Navy had to furnish medical corpsmen for the Marine Corps. So I got my introduction into the Fleet Marine Corps when I was assigned to the amphibious division of the fifth division Marine Corps and assigned aboard the USS Hansford. We were the beach party, as was Leo.

"Leo was a radioman. We had, I think, three radiomen. Now this is where I need Ben Cranefield to back me up because he has more of these figures. Basically I think we had three radiomen and three signalmen.

"We had seven or eight corpsmen and those of us that went in on what we call the Advanced Element or the Reconnaissance group for the beach party. Leo Kepka was part of this too, as a radioman. We were transferred off the USS Hansford.

"We thought we had a nice comfortable bunk on a nice ship, which it was. But then when it got near the action, when we got to Saipan, they transferred those of us who were going to be in the Reconnaissance

or the Advanced Element, who went in early to set up communications. That was Leo's job, to set up communications.

"The LCBPs were unloaded off the ship, maybe five miles out. Then they would come in and form circle. This was a line of departure.

"His job was to radio out to the line of departure as to how things were going on. We went in from the LSTs instead of the Hansford. We had trained coming down the nets and bouncing into the boats, but we got aboard the LSTs.

"We went ashore on what we call the CATS. They were like small tanks; they were treaded and

they would go up onto the shore. They were a little heavier armed than the LCBPs, which were the Higgins boat, more or less that most of the troops were carried in. (interrupted by a phone lost track of where he was talking). We were coming in the Amtracks amphibious tracks. They came up on the beach and then we got off of them. They are a little better protected.

"The Advanced Part went in two tanks, caterpillar tank. They sent us in two groups because they wanted one group to get in there and have radio communications with the starter line to send in

Wave Two, Three, Four, Five, and so on.

"Leo was not in my tank. He was with Ben Cranefield, who was assigned to that group.

"We were divided, there were ten or twelve of us that went in on the Advanced Element and we were to meet.

"I think you probably have read from some of his letters that he was lost, too, and couldn't find, well, we were all lost really because we didn't have any landmarks to go in by. That was part of our hydrographic sections that went in with us.

"They would just set up these big banners. We had Red Beach 1 and Red Beach 2. Red Beach 1 was the first one next to Mt. Suribachi. We were to come in on Red Beach 2, so they would have had 500 yards and then we were in the second 500 yards.

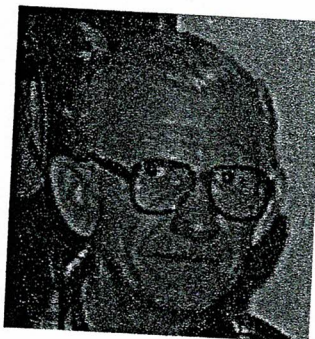
"So in we went and the coxswain or those driv-

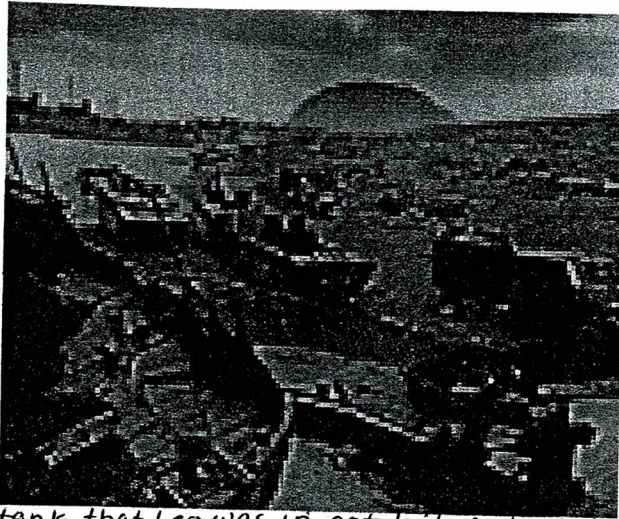


USS HANFORD AT SEA



LEO KEPKA





tank that Leo was in got hit and went down

ing the tanks had nothing to go on. They tried to dodge, see if they were getting a lot of shelling coming at them. They kind of swerved around to try to find the safest route and get us in.

"I was told when I got in the [redacted], so I didn't expect to see him. But later Leo did show up and he was in the foxhole.

"I was out in the casualties. You can't describe it. There is no way that I can try to tell you the devastation of human bodies that were thrown around and lying around, floating around because so many of them didn't even make it to the beach. We felt lucky we were where we were. We made it that far.

"I had picked up a walkie-talkie and was in communications with Commander Ottley and Lieutenant Dunn. Lieutenant Dunn was one that went in with me on my tank. He was probably the first officer killed on the beach.

"So I was in communication with a walkie-talkie. I was in communication with him until the explosion that got him. It really tore him apart. It was a gory mess. As I was telling Abby today, if she saw 'Private Ryan,' she saw Lieutenant Dunn laying there.

"So at that time I was going up to their dugout. They had kind of taken the shell hole and taken sand bags around of the top of it. I was going in to tell them that Lieutenant Dunn was killed and to radio that out to command so they could send in another to give directions to the radiomen when to send in the Waves.

"We had to hold off the Waves because so many of the LCBPs landing craft had beached. The waves were twelve foot waves when we came in about that time. Entirely different than what we had ever imagined it would be — far worse. We had no idea we would run into a surf like that. So we were unprepared.

"The tanks that took us there were able to get up onto the beach, but the beach was a very loose black sand. The boats would hit that, drop their ramps, immediately a wave would come washing in behind them and swing them around so that they weren't lined up straight with the beach. Sometimes they would get off before, or even sometimes a ramp would be dropped while they were being shelled and so we just had the beach cluttered with landing crafts and bodies.

"We needed supervision. They came up on the beach and then we got off of them and they were little better protected.

"I was out to the help from Command and this was is what I was going to do. To try to get the message through to Leo, Hanson, and Anderson, to get radio message out to the ship.

"I think it was Lieutenant O'Halley who was on the control boat, but I could be wrong on that, but he was from the Hansford. We worked with him through many practices and rehearsals for this thing.

"So I was just going into the foxhole. I just started to roll over the top and the whole thing blew. I was blown probably, I don't remember exactly because it was just a shock to me and I kind of realized we had been hit.

"I was no where near the radio pit. I could hear what I presume now was Leo calling for me and yelling for Haw. Someone else was yelling, corpsman.

"So anyway, when I got up to walk, I knew I couldn't walk too well, so I crawled. I was in pain. I knew my back was hurt somewhat, but I was able to get in.

"Leo was there and of course Anderson and Hanson were there also. I took one look at them and Leo said, Check them over first. They looked bad, I would hate to have to describe them to either of

their families.

"Leo had part of his helmet blown away. The shell fragments had gone through. I think it was his right side, wasn't it? I remember him laying there. I worked on his right side I think, and of course assured him that he was going to be okay. He was bleeding profusely.



RADIO SHACK GROUP (L-R) Anderson, Hanson, Kepka, Howell and Kasmaker.

"I put pressure on what I presumed was his carotid artery from the area of the wound. Part of his ear was gone, wasn't it? Yeah, I felt part of that was gone. Pressure couldn't control the bleeding, so I took a clamp and I put a clamp on the carotid artery. That slowed things down.

"There was still a lot of bleeding from just the laceration in that area. Now having taught head and neck anatomy, I realize there is a lot of very vascular area behind the back of the jaw here right under the ear. Very vascular and that is where we were getting all of the bleeding. I clamped off the carotid because I thought from the pulse that you could see that was the problem.

"Then I knew I could not get him out of there. It was much rush then. As far as they knew they had jumped in on the radio waves, its what they had done. The enemy were able to take out all of our radios that way because they could zoom in on our radio waves, somehow.

"The Radiomen knew that from former invasions, and had been warned in our training that if you didn't have use for your radio, don't leave it on because they would zoom in on it.

"So anyway, I crawled out and got help. I got stretchers and we got Leo down to the beach. I turned him over to somebody else so I didn't know what his condition was when he went aboard the LCBP which would take him back to a hospital ship or evacuation ship.

"I was afraid that he wouldn't make it. In fact, I didn't think he made it. He was reported missing in

action at first."

Dr. Haw must have looked at Leo's wife, Betty, questioning if dad was ever report missing in action.

Mom said that she wasn't married to him at the time.

Mr. Haw asked Bettu, if Leo ever gave any indication whether he was ever reported missing in action?

She was never aware of this kind of report.

"Well that was my report when I reported back to ship. I said he was missing-in-action because I didn't know whether he made it. They said they evacuated him, yes, but I didn't know in what condition. So I just reported, as far as I knew, I had to call him missing in action," continued Haw.

"He was alive when I saw him but I was concerned. I don't know whether his parents were notified that he was missing in action or whether wounded in action"

Linda, Leo's oldest daughter, said, "In dad's photo/scrap book, it has a telegram. It said, if it would had been another day or so it would have said missing in action, so somebody telegraphed his parents."

Dr. Haw thought, "They probably located him within a day or so on a ship; trying to locate him, trying to locate all of our men. That was the correct interpretation that I had too. I didn't know Leo came back aboard ship. I never went up to the radio shack. I never ran across him. Until we started maneuvers again for going into Okinawa and we picked up some army troops. We had to get down to Espirito Santos, down in the Aberdeen following that."

Agnes Kepka, a daughter-in-law of Leo and Terry Kepka's wife, asked, "Where was the beach that they were on?"

Terry Kepka, Leo's youngest son, said, "It was Iwo Jima, wasn't it?"

Dr. Haw said, "This action that I was all talking about here was Iwo Jima and that was February 19, 1945. We landed on April 9 on Okinawa and we had of course quite a few replacements and we weren't as close a knit bunch as we had been before. It was just, when you lose people like this in action. their replacements, yes, they do a good job, but you don't feel that closeness that you felt prior to that."

The oldest son, Doug, asked, "Is this by choice?"

Dr. Haw replied, "No, not by choice, just I suppose you have memories of those that we lost like Hanson and Anderson, Prosowsky was (chuckle)

well you could call him an oaf, hillbilly type, that was killed. We all liked the guy so much. He could pull some pretty dumb boners. But yet you remembered him and you liked him.

"When his replacement came in why we just didn't have Old Prosowsky around either, you know. Our coxswain, was ah, oh, he was a cocky little fellow probably my size now. I use to be 2-3 inches taller before this back started giving away.

"Coxswain was a little short fellow, blond, stocky, but I wouldn't want to fight with him. He could pick you up and bench press you right over his head. I mean he would pick you up off the floor like this and up and he would do that when someone would get sassy with him why he..."

Linda asked, "Is your back problems from when you were hurt in the war that day?"

Haw replied, "Yes, I refused treatment while I was in the service. They wanted to operate then and I said, no, I will take my discharge and have it done, I had to sign a waiver because I wanted to stay in the reserves because I knew I could get a commission sooner or later.

"I stayed in the Reserves, but I had to sign a waiver. Later, I had the spinal surgery. I had that done in 1948. I waited almost a year and a half after I got out to have it done because I kept thinking I could handle it. I can do it, you know.

"I was in college and it got pretty hard to walk to classes. I finally had to have it done. The paresthesia never did leave the right leg. When I was 47 years old why I started paresthesia in the other leg. I had quite a fight with the government.

"They said, well, that wasn't caused by your back injury. I couldn't find my health records for many years. They said they had burned up in the Pittsburgh fire. Finally a fellow who works in the Navy records found out where my health records were. Once they found that when I was discharged I did have paresthesia in one leg, then they said 'okay you are 10% disabled.'

"I was using canes then in the first year and then I eventually went to crutches and finally ended up I can't walk a quarter of a block. Then I resorted to this." (He gets around on a motorized vehicle for handicap).

"So they have had, Veterans Administration have very recently decided that well I am 40% disabled now because I am still working."

Agnes asked, "You have talked about training to go in. Where did you do the training?"

Haw replied, "I did the training at Camp Pendleton. This is where we trained with the Marines. We had our barracks on the Ocean Side of the high-

way of Camp Pendleton."

Agnes asked, "Where is Camp Pendleton?"

Haw replied, "In California, north of San Diego about half way between Los Angelo and San Diego.

"I am on 40% disability because I am still working a five day work week, however I had an MRI a week ago Wednesday so they may be reevaluating me. But the Veterans Administration has been very difficult to get along with."

Terry and Doug asked, "When we were in Oklahoma, didn't you talk about possible citation for this."

Dr. Haw replied, "A citation was given to the group that went in that replaced us. The citation read for the things we did when we went in and established a beach head.

"We went in an established a beach head. Well, we established the beach head; they came in after, four days later.

"Ben Cranefield is writing now to the Navy Bureau of Navy Affairs to see whether he can't get that corrected. Ben is a statistician, I think in the first class. He keeps statistics on everything and has gone back and has researched out, like I was telling one of you, what each LCBP carried and what number one LCBP carried onto the beach and who was the coxswain who was handling the boats.

"He has all of that down and from each ship, the dual, what did the dual carry? How many men? How many tanks did they have? How many pieces of artillery did they bring in on the dual and from the Hansford. Billy Barnett there was a coxswain on the LCM.

"That is larger than a LCBP and he has how many trips Billy made back and forth to the beach and what he carried each trip he made. That was all logged in the Navy.

"Actually the whole invasion of Iwo Jima was criticized severely by some of the top brass with the way we handled things. I think it was a very unjust accusation because none of them were there and none of them saw and felt what fire we were getting. It was just indescribable.

"We were getting it from both ends. Once we got Mt. Suribachi quieted down after the fourth day, of course, we were off beach then. After they put the flag up we were on it. When the flag went up we were on our way back to the ship. I was taken first aboard a hospital ship and then transferred back to my own ship. They looked at me aboard the hospital ship; the orthopedic doctor gave me a rectal examination.

He said, "Well where do you hurt? What's the problem?"

"I said, 'I feel kind of numb in my legs and it hurts in the lower part of my back.' So he put rubber gloves on (chuckle) and gave me a rectal exam and you got coccygodenia. Well, if you look up coccygodenia; it says you got a pain in the ass (everyone chuckled). Kind of crudely put, but I mean that is basically the attitude he took. Go back to duty, and treat it passively, take hot spits baths twice a day and go on light duty.

"Well while I was aboard ship I was an operating room technician and worked in surgery so that is light duty.

"For the four days after Leo was hurt and we lost so many boys I didn't lift any stretchers, I couldn't, but I was good at hitting veins. I was a good at acupuncture and so they kept me busy just pumping plasma into these fellows. They brought them in. I was the main plasma pumper until they relieved us from duty."

Terry said, "As I recall you didn't have a whole lot of protection, it was just one big mound of rock.

Dr. Haw said, "Yeah, there is no vegetation on the island. If there has been, it had been blown off by the 23 days of pre-invasion fire that they had done on the island to soften it up."

(Looking at Abby, Terry's daughter) "I was expecting a lot of questions out of you," expressed Haw.

Abby asked, "What was my grandpa like?"

Dr. Haw said, "When not at work he was kind of jolly joker fellow, but 17 and 18 year olds, they don't know very much. We took everything awfully lightly. I remember we were on maneuvers practicing with the fifth division, where we were, Guam, Saipan, or where we were practicing these landings. I forget now, but there was Captain Anderson, he was a big heavy set man, but he was actually the chief officer of all of the head masters, Lieutenant Commander Ottely and our assistant beach master Lieutenant Dunn who was killed."

"He came along one time when we were on maneuvers and of course we set up an Aide station, we put out some stretchers and things like that to make it look like we would be ready for things.

"He came in and said, 'Boys, where is your fox-hole?'"

"And I answered, 'I said I haven't dug one, Sir.'"

"Anderson then said, 'Do you want to see your Mommy again?'"

"He was a southerner," Richard replied.

Then Haw continued, "I said, Yes, Sir."

"He replied, 'You had better started digging. And in five minutes, you better have one dug so deep that I can't see your head.' He came back, too,

and I had the foxhole dug.

Haw went on, "But I mean that was our attitude. We didn't think. I think we thought we were invincible. Even in the thick of the fire. Even after we got hit. I saw some of my best friends laying there. I thought well they got it but I won't.

"I remember coming onto a foxhole one time. I was on hands and knees then, too. I looked down there and this Lieutenant had his group down there all collared down in the group. The guys up on the line were getting shot the hell out of. I said, 'Lieutenant get your men out of there.' He said, 'Well they are under fire.' I said, 'The whole island was under fire, get your "****" out of there and get those men up on the line.'

"I was a simple little corpsman. When we went in we wore no insignia because we were on this advanced element and if we were captured they did not want any insignia on us. So he didn't know he was talking to simple corpsman. I had walkie-talkie in my hand and that looked important (chuckle).

"So he said, 'Okay boys, the man says to move out.' And they moved out.

"As far as your grandfather is concerned, when he was on the radio he was very serious. The radio-men did not joke around much when they were working. They had one of them sitting there cranking this thing and one trying to get it tuned in and the other trying. (chuckle)

"They were horrible radios. How we got anything communicated... and that was part of the trouble. We were criticized I think for that quite severely, too, that we did not communicate with the ships very well. They didn't know what positions we were in. We were so busy trying to tell them to you know, get boats in here and get people off of the island and we needed water, we needed gasoline for the flame throwers, they need flame throwing material and so those guys were serious all of the time. ven in training I would say that Leo was kind of serious, down to earth; he didn't act like a crazy teenager like this Benny Cranefield that is now one of my best friends.

"He was the worst, like pulling the boner that he did jumping into my foxhole with black jacket on for example, things like that in the midst of one of the worst battles of the war. That was Benny, he was always pulling things like that. He was always in trouble."

Doug asked, "I have a question. You said the Hansford was docked close to the surrender?"

Dr. Haw said, "Yes, we laid off probably a thousand yards from the bowel of the USS Missouri and the reason we were able to do that was because

we were the flight ship for Admiral Hall at the time. Admiral Hall, of course, would be one of the Admirals standing in the back behind the big wheels.

"There is a picture in the Navy archives of the ship looking just like the USS Hansford, same class of ship lying off the bow right where we thought we were, but the Navy archives claims that is a communication ship. Now, whether they classify our ship as a communication ship because we were a flag ship for Admiral Hall or not and whether that is our ship, I can't be sure. But I know that the guys argue back and forth when we take a look at that picture. (That is the USS Hansford right where we were, yes, but the Navy says it is something else, so we don't know)."

Abby asked, "After he was wounded did you come back to duty and then what was like when you saw him for the first time?"

Dr. Haw said, "It has been so long ago, oh I'm sure you know, I don't know if I kissed him or not but I am sure I hugged him."

Agnes said, "I don't think he ever saw him again."

Cindy, Leo's youngest daughter, said, "We thought you thought he had passed away and didn't know he raised a family."

Dr. Haw said, "But yet he did land in Okinawa with us and..."

Agnes said, "Maybe you didn't recognize him."

Terry said, "He got the impression that he lost a lot of weight from the injuries."

Dr. Haw said, "It is just hard for me to recall after fifty years which was what it was but I had always thought until I caught up with the family until we started this reunion business, now whether he, he may not have gone back with the beach party, he may have stayed on board, I don't know. Is there any indications in any of his letters?"

Doug said, "The only thing I have ever heard about was Iwo Jima. I never heard of any other battles."

Leo's wife, Betty Kepka, said, "He did go to Japan."

Dr. Haw said, "At the time we were in Japan the beach party had pretty much, their job of making beach heads was over and we were just assigned to a divisions, like Leo was in division, Navigation division and I was in H division. I was down two decks under, he was up three decks high up on the super structure."

Mom said, "I didn't know Leo until after he was discharged so whatever he did before that you know...."

Linda said, "He didn't talk about it."

Betty said, "No, he never talked about it. He did tell me how his two good friends were killed but that was it. The only reason he told me that was because the Hansons stopped to see us at home one time and he was so afraid she was going to ask him how her son died and he didn't want to tell her."

Dr. Haw said, "I'm afraid I would have told a little white lie, too, if I had to tell her."

Betty said, "Yes, he didn't want to tell her anything like that or you know."

Linda asked, "Did she ask anything?"

Betty said, "She did not ask how he died."

Linda said, "They came to visit and they were really nice people. We never met Anderson's mother, right?"

Betty said, "They were going someplace and they stopped by to see us overnight."

Linda said, "You sent Christmas cards didn't you."

Betty continued, "Yes, I did until they were both gone."

Doug said, "At least the story goes with me is that you got there after it happened. Somehow I got the idea that dad was working on the crank with one of his buddies and they were having trouble working the radio and so Dad went up to fiddle with it and they were down on the other end cranking-and that was the reason he wasn't in the direct line of fire."

Terry said, "If he wouldn't have switched, he wouldn't have made it. It would have been one of the others."

Dr. Haw said, "That is true because Hanson and Anderson, they were lying over the TBX radio and Leo, I of course I don't know, I was blown twenty feet or so and I couldn't tell what he had been doing. But I knew that Anderson and Hanson were directly on the radio."

Abby asked, "When you weren't fighting what was it like on the ship?"

Dr. Haw said, "We were all assigned duties. Your granddad would have been with the radio shack. There they didn't have to crank the TBX but would listen to the crackling. They were horrible radios and trying to hear what was going on. I know that he had scores of baseball games."

"They would try to radio that stuff out to the fleet. When we weren't on radio silence, they would try to pick up things like that."

"I was a surgical technician so most of the time I was down in the operating room. About all I would be doing was getting ready for an invasion, sterilizing up ahead of time the dressings. If you have been ever in an operating room, you know how

they pack everything in, then wrap, and then sterilize it and you have a pack for abdominal surgery; you have a pack for cranial surgery.

"There are different sheets with holes here and there and elsewhere for where ever you are working and the type of dressings you need for that. So we would be making up those things ahead of time sterilizing them. Then we would have sick call. We generally had troops aboard. They were down there with everything from sunburns to . . . we did an awful lot of circumcisions."

Agnes asked, "Are you serious?"

Dr. Haw said, "The government . . . the Navy required them to be circumcised and I don't know if this was just to give the surgeons practice (chuckle) or whether they called it a sanitation, more sanitary. When you are in an area where you can't take a shower and clean all of the time why they thought they should be circumcised, so we did a lot of circumcisions."

Someone asked, "How many days of recovery time did they get?"

Dr. Haw said, "They would get three days off.."

"Was that enough?"

Dr. Haw said, "Well, not the way we would do them sometimes."

Terry said, "I can't imagine being circumcised at eighteen."

Linda said, "I wish you could read this because it tells the day-to-day before you "

Dr. Haw said, "I didn't read through all of that..... "

Dr. Haw said, "He would be on for four hours, then off for four hours, on for four hours and then off for eight hours. However, sometimes you would sleep during the day and when we were in general quarters. Let's see, we had a sub alert, our men had picked up a sortie or bogies (unidentified contact) as we called them.

"A bogey coming in, why we would call general quarters and everybody would man their station. A lot of the seaman were gunners, too. They had two five inch guns, 40 mm guns, and 20 mms. I was in charge of the after battle, which was down under the fantail five inch gun, and so when they would shoot that thing off why it would rattle my ears but good. My bunk was in the same place so that I didn't have to.

"Sometimes, like when we would be on Okinawa, we would be a general quarters for twelve hours at a time and so I just laid in my bunk with my earphones on so that they could communicate with me if anything happened on deck in the after

part of the ship. Why they would come down to our set up operating room down there and if anything happened on the forward part of the ship they would go to the general dispensary operating room.

Abby asked, "Did you ever get overwhelmed with more people than beds in the operating room or did you ever have too many people wounded?"

Dr. Haw said, "Yes, like when I came back aboard ship after Iwo, we operated probably 48 hours straight in a row. I wasn't there all 48 hours, I mean, we had relief and got to rest for a while. You didn't sleep.

"Ben was the only one, he and fellow called Willie Wilson (chuckle) were the only two guys that I was in a foxhole with that could sleep. The rest of them when we were in a foxhole in Iwo or even Okinawa, we had so many air raids in Okinawa that you didn't feel like sleeping. Ben could go to sleep and Willie Wilson could sleep. I would doze."

Abby asked, "What did you do for R & R? "

Dr. Haw replied, "In the South Pacific, they would put you on small island and you got two cans of beer and a baseball bat. I didn't drink anything in those days. I wasn't old enough to go into a bar to drink so I hadn't learned to enjoy beer and so they would give me my two cans and I could sell my can of beer for five bucks."

Linda then remarked, "Five bucks back then was a lot of money."

Abby asked again, "What did you do for R & R when you were in Japan?"

Dr. Haw answered by saying, "Japan? We tried to go sight seeing. There was nothing to do but wander around in the wreckage, of course, yes, there were those houses of ill repute that you could indulge in but I had an assignment from the medical department when I was in Tokyo.

"We were tied up at Okinawa then with Lieutenant Miller and we would find out from the fellows where they had been and then we would take out for that house and being good with a needle, I would draw blood on these girls and Lieutenant Miller would have the proper papers that gave us permission to do it, either they would agree to do this or we would put an 'off limits' sign on their house and so they generally submitted.

"Then we would go back to the ship and do a Wassermann Test on it and if they proved positive then we would put an 'off limits' on. But we really didn't find much in Tokyo or Okinawa or some of the other towns listed in there where we were. I only did that in Tokyo and Okinawa and not the other ports we were in.

Abby: "How were you received by the people that were there?"

Dr. Haw: "The Japanese bowed, very complacent, treated us with respect, and some of them kind of cowerd with you, pulled away, but the majority of them treated us with respect. And if spoke to them they would bow to us.

"Some of them spoke English and if we would generally were asking for something, we were looking for souvenirs and we would try to dicker with them. We would hold out a bill. If they wanted to take that why you could tell they would smile and reach or sometimes they wouldn't sell it for that.

"We opened the first bar in Yokahoma on the dock, a ship loaded with beer, named the Yokahoma Harbor, and tied up. Admiral Hall, our Commander, was by then port director, allowed us to open up the first bar and so it was known as the Eager Beaver Bar.

"The Eager Beaver name has followed us all through our time and because I didn't drink I was the cashier at the Eager Beaver Bar.

"However one night I had smuggled some beer back aboard the ship to make a little money (chuckles). And at midnight there weren't too many officers up and around down at sick bay and I was doling out my beer to the guys in the emergency and the Chaplain walked in. Now I had been good friends with Chaplain. I sang in the ship's choir, and I attended church every Sunday and so I was in good with him, until then.

"In fact, he had talked to me about when we got back to San Francisco. He says my wife and my daughter are going to meet me and he would like you to meet his daughter. He says maybe you can take her to a movie or something when we get there.

"We all know what the pastor needed was a little lone time with his wife. He didn't want his daughter there. (chuckle). After he caught me down there doling out beer to the boys, he never said another word to me about meeting his daughter. So I was out of his graces. (Lots of laughter) It was never brought up again. So there is always a little humor."

Terry asked, "We appreciate you relating this to us."

Dr. Haw said, "Well if you have any questions about any of the Iwo Jima events, I would be glad to answer as I can."

Terry said, "You sure caught me off guard down in Oklahoma City. It was a very emotional time for me."

Dr. Haw stated. "Well it was for me, too, because it was the first time I talked about it. It is an

emotional time for right now."

Terry replied, "In all of our growing up, dad never, never said a word."

Agnes asked, "When did you guys know of the scrap/photo book?"

Terry said, "We would sneak it out and look at it."

Doug said, "I could remember dad, and it makes sense now, how he hated fireworks."

Dr. Haw remarked, "I do, too."

Doug remembered, "In retrospect, by what I know now I can see why."

Dr. Haw said, "The story behind the fireworks, what ship would it be, the Nevada laid out directly parallel to the beach and the first, and Leo was on the beach, but just the noise and the flares, but what happened and I guess where I had my little quirk of not liking fireworks, when we got that word that the Japanese were going to counter attack us, the beach command radioed out to the Nevada. I know the officer who was in charge there, Swadney, was the fire officer. He said what can we do for you. He said, 'Can you send up some star shells?' Ed Swainey said, 'I will have that beach lit up like a football field all night long.'

"So we would hear that BOOM and then a whistle, and then pretty soon we would see a parachute coming down with a flare and then that would go all night long. We never knew at first when the BOOM and the whistle was going to get you, or they say you don't hear the ones that are going to get you, but I don't believe that. So I always relate when I see these things up there and they start flowing down, I can just see that beach and any loud BOOM just makes you remember too much."

Terry: Flashbacks. "We better get out of here and let you get to bed."



LEFT TO RIGHT— Standing: Linda "Kepka" Kohls, Betty Kepka, and Cindy "Kepka, Jackson. Sitting: Terry Kepka, Dr. Richard Haw, and Douglas J. Kepka. The insert: Abby Kepka.