



10-20-2003

## Interview with Victor C. Hemphill

Victor C. Hemphill

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**LOUISE PETTUS ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS  
VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT**

**Interview VHP #018  
HEMPHILL, Victor C.**

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*Drafted:* 1943 November 11 – 1946 November 11

*Interviewed:* October 20, 2003

*Interviewer:* Shamona McClary

*Index by:* Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

*Length:* 00:27:17

Abstract: In his October 20, 2003 interview with Shamona McClary, Victor Hemphill shares his experiences in the South Pacific during WWII and his life after service. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Navy, Draft, Boot Camp, New Guinea

**Interview Session (October 20, 2003): Digital File**

**Time      Keywords**

00:00:00    *Start of Interview/Interviewer's Introduction*

00:00:20    *Question:* What war and branch? *Answer:* WWII, US Navy.

00:00:30    *Question:* What was your rank? *Answer:* Seaman First Class.

00:00:35    *Question:* Where did you serve? *Answer:* South Pacific.

00:00:43    *Question:* Life before the service? *Answer:* Single and in high school.

00:01:10    *Question:* Drafted or enlisted? *Answer:* Drafted at the age of 18.

00:01:16    *Question:* Where were you living when drafted? *Answer:* Gaffney.

00:01:26    *Question:* Why did you join? *Answer:* No choice.

00:01:34    *Question:* How did your family feel? *Answer:* They couldn't do anything.

00:01:50    *Question:* Choice of branch? *Answer:* No. It was random.

- 00:02:05 *Question:* First days in the service? *Answer:* It was cold – Illinois. Boot camp.
- 00:02:30 *Question:* Navy segregated? *Answer:* No.
- 00:02:37 *Question:* Do you remember your instructors? *Answer:* Remembers one. VH just remembers the man in responsible for training.
- 00:03:25 *Question:* Boot camp? *Answer:* It was rough. Had to get used to obeying.
- 00:04:05 *Question:* How did you make it through? *Answer:* Somehow.
- 00:04:18 *Question:* Which war and where? *Answer:* WWII. Went to New Guinea.
- 00:04:53 *Question:* What was it like when you first arrived? *Answer:* VH only remembers the islands.
- 00:05:30 *Question:* Civilians? *Answer:* Beautiful people. Hot over there.
- 00:06:04 *Question:* What was your job? *Answer:* In ship service. Issue supplies. Warehouse.
- 00:06:25 *Question:* Combat? *Answer:* VH could see people fighting on ships. VH compares the sound of combat to firecrackers.
- 00:07:35 *Question:* Most memorable experience? *Answer:* Out so long on a ship.
- 00:08:15 *Question:* Medals? *Answer:* Got a medal for serving outside the continental US. Didn't get this for fighting.
- 00:08:45 *Question:* Injured? *Answer:* No.
- 00:08:50 *Question:* How did you stay in touch with your family? *Answer:* Mail. That was the only way.
- 00:09:02 *Question:* Food? *Answer:* Good food in the Navy. Fish, steak, chicken. Ate "spuds" three times a day. Plenty of beer. Drinking was the number one recreation.
- 00:10:20 *Question:* Any entertainers from US come over? *Answer:* Not where VH was staying.
- 00:10:30 *Question:* Anything for good luck? *Answer:* VH used prayer.
- 00:10:50 *Question:* Did you bring anything from home? *Answer:* Made a chest from wood available.

- 00:11:20 *Question:* When did you get to leave? *Answer:* November. VH had to stay in California for some time before going to Charleston to get discharged.
- 00:12:18 *Question:* Any unusual events? *Answer:* No.
- 00:12:55 *Question:* Ever in danger? *Answer:* Never knew who was going to come to the island. VH was always in danger. Not a lot of close calls.
- 00:13:45 *Question:* Close friends? *Answer:* No.
- 00:14:15 *Question:* Pranks? *Answer:* Too scared to. Afraid they might get hurt.
- 00:14:30 *Question:* Mind set? *Answer:* Everyone was serious.
- 00:14:52 *Question:* Did you keep a diary/photos? *Answer:* No.
- 00:15:05 *Question:* Discharged? *Answer:* Charleston.
- 00:15:43 *Question:* How long in the military? *Answer:* 19 months.
- 00:16:20 *Question:* After discharged? *Answer:* Played around, looked for a job. Worked at the lumber company. Started thinking about school. Went to West Virginia State College 1946-1949. Went straight through on the GI Bill. Studied math.
- 00:17:50 *Question:* What did you do with your degree? *Answer:* Given a teaching job. Taught at Bernard High School before school system integrated. Taught at Gaffney High.
- 00:19:20 *Question:* Married? *Answer:* Married December 21, 1960. Met wife at state college.
- 00:20:04 *Question:* Did you join veterans organizations? *Answer:* VFW and American Legion. Still a member but doesn't attend.
- 00:20:35 *Question:* Did you keep in contact with people? *Answer:* Yes. Many still active in the military.
- 00:21:22 *Question:* Reunions? *Answer:* No.
- 00:21:32 *Question:* How did service affect your life? *Answer:* Greatly. VH enjoyed it. Helped him go to college. GI Bill provided housing and allowed VH to meet his wife.
- 00:22:45 *Question:* Anyone else in service? *Answer:* Two brothers went. One died in action. Brother and VH were both overseas when the brother passed away.

*Victor C. Hemphill (VHP #018)*

00:25:30 *Question:* Recreation? *Answer:* Avid bowler. Watches sports.

00:27:17 *End of interview*