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Interview with Lanford Brackett

Lanford Brackett

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

**Interview VHP #092
BRACKETT, Langford**

BRACKETT, Langford

Enlisted: 1940 October 11 - 1945 October 11

Interviewed: October 9, 2009

Interviewer: Anna Douglas

Index by: Michelle Dubert-Bellrichard

Length: 01:06:28

Abstract: In his October 9, 2009 interview with Anna Douglas, Langford Brackett describes his assignment overseas in Samoa. Brackett also shares the story of how he won the Silver Star medal and the recognition he received afterward. Brackett concludes his interview with how he spent his leave time and confronting rations on the home front. This interview was conducted for inclusion into the Louise Pettus Archives and Special Collections Oral History Program.

Keywords: Marine Corps, Pacific, Samoa, Japanese, New Zealand, Invasion of Bougainville, food, home front, rations

Interview Session (October 9, 2009): Digital File

Time	Keywords
00:00:00	<i>Start of Interview</i> /Interviewer's Introduction
00:00:25	<i>Question:</i> Name and branch? <i>Answer:</i> Marine Corps 1940 -1945. Discharged October 11, 1945.
00:01:03	<i>Question:</i> Born? <i>Answer:</i> January 17, 1919.
00:01:15	<i>Question:</i> Drafted/enlisted? <i>Answer:</i> Enlisted.
00:01:34	<i>Question:</i> Living at the time? <i>Answer:</i> On North Carolina line.
00:01:55	<i>Question:</i> Draft? <i>Answer:</i> Started November 26, 1940. Cousin joined the marines with LB. LB athletic. Marines were very particular. Cousin had acne.
00:03:50	[no question] Rules of Marine. Marine Corps did not accept African American soldiers at the time. "Had to be native American."

- 00:06:05 *Question:* First days of service? *Answer:* LB didn't know how to button his shirt and shine his shoes. Marine Corps tough on LB. LB stays in touch with fellow soldiers. LB in the Marine Corps fifteen months before the war started. Pearl Harbor.
- 00:08:34 *Question:* What happened to you the day Pearl Harbor was bombed? *Answer:* Started packing up guns. LB was 21 years old.
- 00:10:05 *Question:* Where were you sent after Pearl Harbor? *Answer:* San Diego. LB had appendicitis. LB went to the hospital. University of Georgia hospital.
- 00:11:35 *Question:* After appendicitis? *Answer:* LB put in Navy unit. LB stayed there for 2-3 weeks. LB put in the 3rd division. LB shows his United States Marine Raiders card.
- 00:15:24 *Question:* Where did you go first overseas? *Answer:* Samoa.
- 00:15:50 *Question:* Job assignment? *Answer:* Machine gunner. Sector sergeant.
- 00:16:20 *Question:* Combat? *Answer:* Yes.
- 00:16:50 *Question:* Memorable moments? *Answer:* Went to New Zealand. Describes the people and islands. "Largest exporters of cheese."
- 00:20:15 *Question:* Why in New Zealand? *Answer:* Sent for rest and recreation. Invasion of Bougainville. Japan intended to invade New Zealand. LB describes seeing suitcases full of money.
- 00:23:10 *Question:* Outcome of defending New Zealand? *Answer:* Stayed 25 days.
- 00:23:25 *Question:* How did you stay in touch? *Answer:* Wrote letters. LB's parents were dead. LB describes how his parents passed away. Describes a farmer during the Great Depression and how LB bought his land.
- 00:27:15 *Question:* Food? *Answer:* "Pretty good." Quantico. LB recalls seeing a pair of women's panties hanging on a tree during training.
- 00:30:08 *Question:* Pranks? *Answer:* LB describes an encounter with JFK.
- 00:35:45 *Question:* Influential people during your service? *Answer:* Someone recommended LB go to officer school. Describes meals – dehydrated onions with corned beef and a piece of hard tack. LB ate cream-styled corn with carnation milk for weeks.
- 00:40:25 *Question:* Natives in Samoa? *Answer:* Good relationship with natives. Organized a platoon of natives and gave them a rank and uniforms. The natives wouldn't wear

shoes. Natives spoke Polynesian.

- 00:41:30 *Question:* Still remember the language? *Answer:* Yes. LB shares some phrases.
- 00:42:10 *Question:* Discharge? *Answer:* Transferred LB to the Navy. At the time, the Navy paid its personnel twice a month.
- 00:45:00 *Question:* Journal/Diary? *Answer:* No. LB shows a picture of him featured in Time Magazine from the 1950s. LB presented Silver Star.
- 00:49:39 [no question] LB talks about his body having adapt to the climate back home after being in the Pacific.
- 00:50:20 [no question] Interviewer reads why LB won Silver Star.
- 00:51:09 *Question:* What was it like going alone to meet the enemy? *Answer:* LB describes that day and how he got a scar on his upper lip.
- 00:54:00 [no question] LB looking at a book that describes his Silver Star battle. Interviewer reads portion.
- 00:56:15 *Question:* Career after the war? *Answer:* Textiles. Insurance.
- 00:56:40 *Question:* Military experience stay with you? *Answer:* Yes. LB talks about Guantanamo Bay. LB describes the heat in the Pacific.
- 00:58:15 *Question:* What is it like for someone so young to be so far away? *Answer:* LB only wrote to his sister. Before the war, soldiers could go home at 4pm. LB got letters from young girls.
- 01:01:15 [no question] Food. LB coming home on leave and eating steak. Confronting rations during the war. LB wanted 8-10lbs of steak. Cashier wanted red stamps. LB didn't know about stamps for food. The owner gave LB the steaks.
- 01:06:28 *End of interview*