

Marshall University

## Marshall Digital Scholar

---

0064: Marshall University Oral History  
Collection

Digitized Manuscript Collections

---

2005

### Oral History Interview: George W. Rice

George W. Rice

Follow this and additional works at: [https://mds.marshall.edu/oral\\_history](https://mds.marshall.edu/oral_history)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Marshall University Special Collections, OH64-698, Huntington, WV.

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Digitized Manuscript Collections at Marshall Digital Scholar. It has been accepted for inclusion in 0064: Marshall University Oral History Collection by an authorized administrator of Marshall Digital Scholar. For more information, please contact [zhangj@marshall.edu](mailto:zhangj@marshall.edu).

690

# Veteran's Release Form

## TO BE COMPLETED BY VETERAN OR CIVILIAN

(In cases of deceased veterans, to be completed by the donor of the material.)

I, George W. Rice, am a participant in the Veterans History Project (hereinafter "VHP"). I understand that the purpose of the VHP is to collect audio- and video-taped oral histories of America's war veterans and of those who served in support of them as well as selected related documentary materials (such as photographs and manuscripts) that may be deposited in the permanent collections of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress. The deposited documentary materials will serve as a record of American veterans' wartime experiences; and may be used for scholarly and educational purposes. I understand that the American Folklife Center plans to retain the product of my participation as part of its permanent collection and that the materials may be used for exhibition, publication, presentation on the World Wide Web and successor technologies, and for promotion of the Library of Congress and its activities in any medium.

I hereby grant to the Library of Congress ownership of the physical property delivered to the Library and the right to use the property that is the product of my participation (for example, my interview, performance, photographs, and written materials) as stated above. By giving permission, I understand that I do not give up any copyright or performance rights that I may hold.

I also grant to the Library of Congress my absolute and irrevocable consent for any photograph(s) provided by me or taken of me in the course of my participation in the VHP to be used, published, and copied by the Library of Congress and its assignees in any medium.

I agree that the Library may use my name, video or photographic image or likeness, statements, performance, and voice reproduction, or other sound effects without further approval on my part.

I release the Library of Congress, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of such recordings, documents, and artifacts, including but not limited to, any claims for defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

## ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature George W. Rice Date 4/10/05  
Printed Name George W. Rice month/day/year  
Address RR 2 Box 79  
City Le Sage State WV ZIP 25537 - 9713  
Telephone (304) - 736-7897

Veteran's Release Form

**George W. Rice**  
**February 24, 2005**

1

**Interview with George W. Rice**

**February 24, 2005**

MORGAN: This is the oral history of World War II veteran George W. Rice. He was born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1925, and became a private first class in the United States Marine Corps, Second Battalion, Third Marine Division, in July 1943. Between the years of July 1943 and February 1946, he served in San Diego, California, and the Pacific Islands. This interview is being recorded by his granddaughter, Malory Morgan, at his home in Lesage, West Virginia and will be donated to the Library of Congress's Veterans Project and Marshall University. OK, can you tell me what you were doing before you joined the service?

RICE: I worked on the river--on a steamboat--till I was drafted.

MORGAN: And where were you living?

RICE: Point Pleasant, West Virginia.

MORGAN: Was that where you worked on the boat?

RICE: That's where I left to go on the river, yeah.

MORGAN: And did you have any experience with the war stuff at all before that?

RICE: No, just what I heard on the radio and paper.

MORGAN: OK. Why did you choose the branch of service that you chose?

RICE: I really don't know, I just thought I'd like to try it.

MORGAN: Which one did you choose?

RICE: Marine Corps.

MORGAN: Marine Corps, OK, can you tell me, can you tell me where you were on December 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941, the day that they attacked Pearl Harbor? Do you remember that?

RICE: I remember when it happened but I don't remember where I was at.

MORGAN: OK, and what about your first days when you first got drafted? What happened then?

RICE: You mean when I went to...induction center?

MORGAN: Right, like—

RICE: Well, they'd examine you and make sure you're physically fit...then they send you home and tell you y'll call you later—which they do.

MORGAN: Uh huh. Is that when you pick which, which branch you wanted to be in?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: OK. What about—so where'd you go from there? What'd you do?

RICE: After they called me back went from my home to San Diego, California, for boot camp training—basic training.

MORGAN: Uh huh, what was that like?

RICE: Well it was...unusual. [both laugh]

MORGAN: What, what all'd you do there?

RICE: Well, you do a lot of training—calisthenics, and all kind of different training stuff to get ready to go to war.

MORGAN: So they teach you how to use guns and...

RICE: Oh yeah--

MORGAN: What else do they do?--

RICE: Throw grenades and all that stuff.

MORGAN: Oh. And, a, did you, like, meet a lot of friends and--

RICE: Oh, I had several friends, yeah.

MORGAN: Anybody from your area?

RICE: No...actually I didn't know anybody from my home state while I was in there.

MORGAN: Oh, wow. Lots of different people—so was there anything special you remember about the basic training—like what'd you do in a regular day?

RICE: No, really I can't remember too much about it...just...about a 12-hour day training—different types of training.

MORGAN: Uh huh. OK, so was it really hard?

[Tape turned off to check and make sure it was taping well.]

MORGAN: This is a continuation of the oral history of World War II veteran George W. Rice.

He was born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1925, and became a private first class in, in the United

States Marine Corps, Second Battalion, Third Marine Division, in July 1943.

Between the years of July 1943 and February 1946, he served in San Diego,

California, and the Pacific Islands. This interview is being recorded by his

granddaughter, Malory Morgan, at his home in Lesage, West Virginia and will be

donated to the Library of Congress's Veterans Project and Marshall University. So

can you tell me, what did your mom think about you leaving and going in the--

RICE: Well, I don't guess she liked to see me leave but everybody was leaving then—all that was eligible.

MORGAN: So she just kind of expected it, then.

RICE: Oh yeah.

MORGAN: Yeah. Did you ever think about trying to get out of it?

RICE: No, I didn't want to get out of it.

MORGAN: Really, OK. Also, once you got to California—that was where basic training was--

**George W. Rice**  
**February 24, 2005**

4

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: And you were there how long?

RICE: I was probably there a little (ph) about three or four months.

MORGAN: Three or four months.

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: OK, and then what'd you do?

RICE: Left California, got on board a ship and went to Guadalcanal...that was the main staging area for different, for us anyway, where they decided where ya was goin' and what \_\_\_\_\_, what type of work you was going to be into. Then I ended up being on anti-aircraft outfit.

MORGAN: You said anti-aircraft?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: So what'd you do?

RICE: Well, you shot at planes...had big cannons, shoot at planes—enemy planes.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: Yeah, let's see--

MORGAN: So you specialized, then, in using cannons to shoot at planes?

RICE: Right--

MORGAN: From the ground--

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: That's what anti-aircraft outfit is—destroy enemy aircrafts.

MORGAN: OK. Then what?

RICE: Well, from Guadalcanal, I ended up on Guam with this anti-aircraft outfit—was there one year...and ten days, I believe, something like that anyway. Then I had a different job there, I was assigned to a CB one time for six months--drove a truck on that island delivering supplies and things like that and, let's see.

MORGAN: So, had you driven trucks before? Why--

RICE: Very little...hardly knew how to shift the gears in one, but I took the job anyway.

MORGAN: Really. How'd you figure--

RICE: But after, after two or three weeks I could do pretty good.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Yeah. \_\_\_\_\_ those big 'ole trucks, they had a double clutch and go through a lot of gears to get going good. But it was, it was interesting. Yeah.

MORGAN: Did you have, like, a partner when you did those different jobs?

RICE: No, you, you was by yourself.

MORGAN: How far away did you have to drive by yourself?

RICE: Well, that island wasn't too big, Guam's not that big, it maybe, you go 25, 30 miles and be about to the end of it.

MORGAN: Oh, OK. So when you were in Guadalcanal you just was given your assignment--

RICE: Right--

MORGAN: And that's where they trained you specially to do that certain job? Is that--

RICE: Well...actually you trained after you got in the, what you was assigned to do. So we, we trained on them guns, anti-aircraft guns, as we set them up there at Guam.

MORGAN: So you hadn't really learned about 'em yet--

RICE: Not a whole lot, right...but like any other gun, what we always do is aim and shoot.

MORGAN: But they were big cannons--

RICE: Yeah...and you used radar and all that--

MORGAN: Were they the kind where you have to actually stick the ball in and use the gun powder?

RICE: No, you have a big shell.

MORGAN: Oh, a big shell--

RICE: Stuck that in there, pulled the trigger and it went "kaboom." And they had exploding heads on them. When they, they set them put the timer on them, you set each shell before you put it in there to start it so they explode at a certain time depends on how far the plane was away and all that stuff. It was a complicated mess.

MORGAN: So then, that was just if there were, was fighting going on, right?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: So a lot of times you didn't have to do that.

RICE: Oh, no, no, that wasn't everyday job.

MORGAN: OK. So what did you do, like, did you have other jobs for everyday?

RICE: Yeah, they, they generally found something for you to do to keep you occupied.

MORGAN: And was that why you volunteered to do the driving?

RICE: Yeah that's right.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So were there Japanese people on these islands?

RICE: Well, most of them I seen was dead. They had natives there, the regular people that lived on that island all along until the Japanese come in there. Yeah.

MORGAN: Did you associate with them much?



RICE: Not a whole lot. I'd pick some of them up along the road sometime and give them a lift but other than that I didn't—they talked English though, the natives did.

MORGAN: So, OK, so you did the driving and what--how would you—what other jobs did you do? You said there were several you had to do.

RICE: Well...in, on your regular assignment there like in that gun outfit, you had certain duties to perform all the time. Yeah. And sometimes little extra duties if you got in any trouble and I generally did.

MORGAN: Oh really. [Both laugh] What'd you do?

RICE: Well, you didn't have to do much to get messed up. You'd have to serve extra KP—that, KP means Kitchen Police. You'd clean up after people and things like that.

MORGAN: Oh, OK. So did you have any buddies that you tended to get in trouble with?

RICE: Yeah, I generally did it on my own, I didn't need any buddies.

MORGAN: OK, what'd you do?

RICE: Oh, just about anything. I was rebellious.

MORGAN: Oh. Still pretty young then--

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK, so what was the weather like?

RICE: Oh, it was warm. Warm all the time—night and day.

MORGAN: What kind of clothes did you wear?

RICE: The least you could get by with.

MORGAN: And was, was the weather pretty good though?

RICE: Oh yeah, after you got used to it. It takes a while cause it—for me I stayed sleepy a lot when I first got there to where that place is.

MORGAN: Did, did you go home at all during the war? I mean, once you got--

RICE: Not till after the war was over.

MORGAN: So you were gone for quite a while--

RICE: When I left, I left till it ended. Right.

MORGAN: So were you able to write home or how--

RICE: Oh yeah, you write several times a day if you felt like it, but I didn't write much—maybe  
once a month or something.

MORGAN: Who'd you write?

RICE: I'd write to my mother.

MORGAN: Could you get letters back from her?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: And you weren't allowed to say where you were.

RICE: No, they checked them out—censored anything you could put in there that wasn't  
supposed to.

MORGAN: Did she have any idea—I mean, could she guess somehow if you were--

RICE: No, I don't think she had any idea. Except on the address I think you had to put the  
address was South Pacific.

MORGAN: Oh, so she would have known that.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK. So did you see combat?

RICE: Well at Guam, yeah, I seen some there. I seen it on the other islands but I wasn't, didn't,  
wasn't involved in it. I just seen it.

MORGAN: Right, so in Guadalcanal where you started—did you see anything there?

RICE: No, not, no, it was already secured when we got there.

MORGAN: OK, so there weren't any planes flying over or anything.

RICE: No, not except Americans.

MORGAN: OK, and then, so, so did you go straight to Guam from Guadalcanal?

RICE: No, went, I don't know, from Guadalcanal to Guam must have been three, at least three months on board the ship. It was a liberty ship made out of concrete, just, you could about walk as fast as they travel. So.

MORGAN: Did it just take that long to get there or did you go other places?

RICE: No, we went, we went different islands but we never got off the ship. I could see the fighting going on. The planes was flying and shells a flying. So, that's the way it happened.

MORGAN: Why did you not get off anywhere?

RICE: I don't know, that was the high officials' job to tell you when to get off.

MORGAN: Do you have any idea why they had you sailing around?

RICE: No, they just didn't need us there, I guess.

MORGAN: So, do you think they knew yet they were going to send you to Guam or did they just--

RICE: I don't know what they really thought...

MORGAN: OK, but they'd already assigned you your duty for when you did get wherever you were going.

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: Right. OK, so you said once you got to Guam there was some fighting there.

RICE: Yeah. A lot of bodies.

MORGAN: Yeah. That was one of the questions I was going to ask --were there a lot of casualties in your unit?

RICE: Well, not in my unit cause we didn't go in till it was almost secured but I've seen, seen a lot of dead bodies...and, wasn't no way to bury them. That place was just solid rock and coral. And they...they tried to burn them and everything else to get rid of them, cause the flies was, you couldn't eat cause the flies just swarm on you...I really don't know how we got rid of them...cause there was a lot of bodies there.

MORGAN: And you couldn't dig in the dirt?

RICE: Oh, there wasn't no dirt, it was all rock—just coral, it's like, harder than concrete. It dig, it'd take two or three months to dig a latrine—you'd have to blast it out with dynamite.

MORGAN: What's a latrine?

RICE: Toilet.

MORGAN: Oh, OK. Well, was there sand on the beach?

RICE: Well, not a whole lot, not on them places. Not where I was at anyway.

MORGAN: Um, OK. So were there any—what'd you do about food? What kind of food did you have?

RICE: Generally it wasn't too bad, it wasn't the greatest, but it was substantial.

MORGAN: Like what?

RICE: Well, rations for—a lot of times it was rations. And we had a regular cook—cook tent and all that stuff. They fixed stuff—but it wasn't fancy but we eat it 'cause we had to eat it to survive.

MORGAN: So, were, were rations like regular food?

RICE: Hmmm?

MORGAN: Were rations like regular food?

RICE: Yeah, well, we had a lot of Vienna sausage. They'd fix that every way. Boil it, ketchup, all them ways trying to change it but it all was Vienna sausage—only it was big, big, about that big around and about that long [made hand gestures to show size]. Yeah.

MORGAN: Did you help cook at all?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: They didn't ask for volunteers for that?

RICE: No, they had regular cooks and bakers.

MORGAN: Well, OK. So, what'd you do for fun while you were there on the island?

RICE: Well, whatever we could get into...we played a lot of cards and things like that. I don't think—there wasn't no—we didn't have no ball team cause there wasn't no place to play ball where we was at on them islands. You go swimming if you wanted to, but you had to wear shoes or something—that coral would cut you.

MORGAN: So you didn't really do any sports?

RICE: Hmmm?

MORGAN: So you didn't really do any sports?

RICE: Well you did them calisthenics—you get up and you know how they go through that stuff—get down, press up and down.

MORGAN: Oh, did you have to do those every day?

RICE: Just about every day, yeah, you go through that and I remember we did have a speed punching bag, you know you punch that thing and get your arms exercise.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Things like that. Well, there's always something to do--

MORGAN: Yeah, they try to keep you in shape?

RICE: Try, yeah.

MORGAN: So can you tell me like—just describe a typical day when you were there—like what time'd you get up, where--

RICE: Got up, I'd say six o'clock...and probably go to...I'd say you went to bed by eight in the evening. Eight or nine, something like that. Start another day.

MORGAN: What'd you do in that day?

RICE: It was pretty long days, I'll tell you that.

MORGAN: So when you got up in the morning, was that when you did your exercises?

RICE: Do a little exercise, then you go eat breakfast. Whatever you was assigned to do, which sometimes you wasn't assigned much, but you'd find something to do.

MORGAN: And then you'd come back for lunch?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: And then just go do your stuff again?

RICE: Yeah, yeah, a lot of times we worked on them guns a good bit of the time--just about every day. Trained on them, polished them, and all that stuff.

MORGAN: Did they stay sitting out?

RICE: Oh yeah.

MORGAN: OK. What about holidays? You had several holidays on the--

RICE: Well, it was just another day—holiday was. Went through the same procedure. Yeah.

MORGAN: Did you, like, did, did people send people presents or?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: No.

RICE: One thing about it, you got a lot of shots. Every kind of shot you could think of, you got.

For disease, you know?

MORGAN: Oh, OK. Alright. So, what skills did you learn? You learned how to work with the  
guns--

RICE: Yeah. Learned how to drive a truck.

MORGAN: Right, right.

RICE: And uh, probably several, but I can't think what they was.

MORGAN: OK. Now, was there a storm while you were on the island?

RICE: Oh yeah, that was at Okinawa when I was in the storm.

MORGAN: Oh, OK, was that after you were in Guam?

RICE: Yeah, went from Guam to Okinawa.

MORGAN: So you were in Guam for about a year and 10 days.

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: And then why did they send you on?

RICE: They didn't tell me, they just said, "we're leavin'."

MORGAN: Did you know way ahead or was it just--

RICE: Oh about two or three days they tell you you're gonna move on out, to get your stuff  
together, board ship, and leave.

MORGAN: So your whole unit would go?

RICE: Huh?

MORGAN: Your whole unit would go?

RICE: Well, I don't think they tell you where you're going till you get there.

MORGAN: So, were there several groups on the island.

RICE: Oh yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: About how many people—do you have any idea.

RICE: I don't have any clue but I figure there was several thousand on there when I was there.

MORGAN: Was it pretty crowded or was there enough room--

RICE: No, it wasn't crowded at all.

MORGAN: You slept in tents, did you?

RICE: Right, just about all the time.

MORGAN: On all the different islands you were on?

RICE: Yeah. Tents is what...

MORGAN: Just sleeping bags?

RICE: No, you just had a cot with a mosquito net over it cause there was a lot of mosquitoes in  
them places.

MORGAN: How many people shared a tent?

RICE: Well, generally about eight, I think it was.

MORGAN: Oh, big tents.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Did you have trouble sleeping or were you always so tired by the evening it didn't...

RICE: No, I didn't have any trouble sleeping at all.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: Day or night, for that matter.

MORGAN: Yeah, you said you got tired during the day.

RICE: Yeah, I got sleepy—I could go to sleep just about any time. But I think it was the climate.

It took a good while to get adapted to it.



MORGAN: So tell me about the storm that you had.

RICE: Well it was a—they claim it was a typhoon and it—we was in a, what you'd call a tent city. I don't know how many tents was up but them big tents--Anyway, I lost everything I had but what I had on. [Emphasized "everything"] The tents and everything was gone! It was just a few days they supplied you with new stuff—and new tents, new clothes, except your personal items you lost—they was gone.

MORGAN: Did you lose anything valuable?

RICE: Far as I know, I never had anything valuable. Most of it belonged to the government.

MORGAN: You never had anything valuable? OK. So where did you go when all this storm was happening? You said that--

RICE: Everybody was on their own. I got behind a, a house that had been bombed out, the house was gone but they had about that much—about two foot of concrete rock foundation left there and I got behind it. Just stayed there till the thing went by.

MORGAN: You just sat there, or laid--

RICE: I laid down cause the wind would blow you over if you tried to raise up--

MORGAN: Oh, wow--

RICE: It was—I never seen wind like it.

MORGAN: How long did it last?

RICE: I don't really know how many hours, but it lasted a while. Long enough to wipe everything off there where I was at...Takes pretty good wind to even blow a 10-pound rifle away.

MORGAN: So you were without things for a couple of days, you said?

RICE: Without what? Supplies?

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Well, I don't know. We probably got emergency rations right off...but, was a day or two before we got our regular clothes and things back. Shoes and all that, they just give you new outfits completely.

MORGAN: I meant to ask you, back when you had the training, did you go through where the longer you were in it, the more privileges you had?

RICE: You didn't have very—when I was in there—you didn't have any privileges at all!

MORGAN: So, was there ever a time when you got to go out on the weekends?

RICE: Well, when you finished bas-basic, you could go a weekend pass. And we went—I went to Mexico. Forget the name of that town...anyway, it was right out of California there, probably wasn't 30 miles from the camp.

MORGAN: So that was after you were done with basic training?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: And then after that weekend, was that when you were shipped off? Or did you spend some time there?

RICE: Well, I went—I think I went to Mexico there two or three different times before we got shipped out to, to Guadalcanal. I don't know why—I didn't have that much fun in Mexico, just something different.

MORGAN: What'd you do there?

RICE: Drank and stuff like that—carried on.

MORGAN: Like in the movies...

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: [Laughed] So then you were there several weeks after you were done with basic training?

RICE: Probably, yeah.

MORGAN: OK, and when you were in basic training, did you ever get sick?

RICE: I think that's when my...no, after I finished basic training I was, we was sent to another camp but I can't—I think it was Camp Pendleton but I'm not sure. That's where I got ill—got...I can't think of the name of the...hepatitis, yeah. It seemed to me like it took them two or three weeks to figure out what it was.

MORGAN: Really? What—how'd you feel sick?

RICE: Oh, I turned yella! My eyes turned yella, my skin yella [yellow]...and, sick all over!

Anyway I got—went to the hospital there in California. Was there a month.

MORGAN: In the hospital? A month?

RICE: A month. They fed me through arm, give me liver extract shots. And, but I finally come out of it. Left there and went to—but when I left that, got sick and went in the hospital, I lost all the buddies I went through basic training with. They'd already gone—shipped out someplace. So I lost all them so I had to get new friends then, I went to, but it don't take long cause there's a lot of different people.

MORGAN: So did other people get sick? Or were you the only one?

RICE: I don't really know but they claim it was from drinking bad water or something like that was what caused it.

MORGAN: In California?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Oh.

RICE: We was on them bivouacs—we'd go on 20 mile marches and all that stuff and you drank your water out of creeks and lakes. So.

MORGAN: What were the 20 mile marches? That was in basic training?

RICE: That was the extended training after I got out of basic.

MORGAN: And you did that in California, too?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: Well what was the extended training about?

RICE: Well, it was just infantry training and you take them marches and you go through all that bivouacs stuff, do your own clear outside cookin' and about live off the land there. But anyway, I got through it.

MORGAN: How long did that last?

RICE: I can't remember. Maybe...it couldn't have lasted too long cause by the—I'd say by January I was on the ship leavin' California.

MORGAN: Right, you started all this in July--

RICE: Yeah--

MORGAN: And, and then had six or eight weeks of basic training and then some more of the other.

RICE: Yeah. And I was in the hospital a month and all that, then I was on the ship going to Guadalcanal in January I'd say—that's just an estimate. Cause I don't remember for sure.

MORGAN: So do—so were you done with the extended training when you got sick or were you still doing it then?

RICE: That's where I got sick at that—on the extended training. But I didn't do any more of it after I got out of the hospital. I just got on a ship and went to, ended up in Guadalcanal.

MORGAN: So what time of the year was it when you were in the hospital?

RICE: Yeah, it must have been December—yeah it was December cause I was there at Christmas Day of '43. Somebody in that ward I was in give each patient in there a 10 dollar bill.

MORGAN: Oh wow.

RICE: See at that time, 10 dollars was a good bit. I—I don't really remember what the service paid, but it wasn't much...maybe, maybe 40 or 50 dollars a month.

MORGAN: So who was it that gave you all money?

RICE: Never did say, it was a donor.

MORGAN: Well that's nice! Were you ever really very fearful when you were on any of these islands or...

RICE: Any what?

MORGAN: Were you ever very fearful when you were on the islands?

RICE: I never was afraid of any of it. No.

MORGAN: So none of your, your friends that were in your unit really got hurt or killed? It was mostly...

RICE: I can't remember any. Probably a lot of them that left before I did, did. But that's the way things turn out, I guess.

MORGAN: Right. So, back to Guam. You said after Guam, you went to...

RICE: Guadalcanal, I mean—Guam, I went Guam to Okinawa.

MORGAN: And what were you doing there?

RICE: Well, we was—it was, I guess getting ready to go to Japan. But, cause it was near Japan.

But, I had been there—I don't know, maybe two or three months, when the war ended.

That was when they said...we was gonna get shipped back to the states.

MORGAN: Was there any big celebration?

RICE: Oh yeah, yeah...I had a job there on the island—on Okinawa runnin' the movie projector.

MORGAN: Oh, you got to watch movies...

RICE: Yeah, I got to show them! Get, get a jeep and go grab—get the film then bring it back and rewind it and when it got dark at night, turn that thing on let it—generally it break two or three times—the film would, and you'd have to stop and patch it.

MORGAN: What else did you do there?

RICE: Played a lot of cards. Yeah.

MORGAN: So you kind of have the same schedule you'd had on the other islands?

RICE: No, it was—after the war ended—it, they kind of reduced some of that...schedule stuff and we just—lot of times you did just about what you want to do—I always did anyway! That's the reason I got in trouble with the--

MORGAN: You have to tell me more about this [both laugh]. So when you first went to Okinawa, though, they were still in the war and so—were you still training and everything, then?

RICE: I guess, you was, you was getting prepared for the final assault—I'd say—on Japan at that time. Then they dropped the bombs and shortly after they dropped them bombs the Japanese surrendered. That took care of that.

MORGAN: So were you still specializing in the same thing—the anti-aircraft?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: So you pretty much stuck with that the whole time.

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: Did you pick up anything else along the way besides the driving the trucks?

RICE: Well, not really that I know of. Well, you learn a good bit of different tactics, but I can't pinpoint any of them.

MORGAN: OK...OK so was it after they had declared the war was over—was that when you watched movies or ran the projector?

RICE: Yeah, I guess. Yeah, probably. Might have been before we ended, but I don't remember for sure.

---

MORGAN: Did you have anything like that over in Guam?

RICE: I don't remember ever watching a movie on Guam. No.

MORGAN: Was the land different? Like the different islands--

RICE: Yeah, on Guam we was right on a rock. And on Okinawa we was on a flat—cause that's the reason it wiped out all our tent city when that typhoon come in there.

MORGAN: Oh, because it was flat? OK.

RICE: Yeah, just blew everything away.

MORGAN: So, did you see any natives there? About the same?

RICE: Well, there was natives there but I didn't mess with them cause they was more Japanese-type people. I thought. They looked like \_\_\_\_\_.

MORGAN: Um hum. So did any of them ever worry you like, did you all think they might be soldiers pretending not to be or any--

RICE: No, not really.

MORGAN: No.

RICE: I think Okinawa's where so many of them civilians committed suicide. They, they had heard rumors about how bad the Americans was on the Japanese and what all they'd do and hundreds of them jumped off them cliffs into the surf below.

MORGAN: Just because--

RICE: I mean hundreds of feet, too.

MORGAN: Just because they knew Americans were coming onto the islands?

RICE: Yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: Wow, that's horrible. So--

RICE: That's what propaganda does on wars—telling all them lies.

---

MORGAN: So, you said there were like burned houses?

RICE: Huh?

MORGAN: You said houses had been burned on the island? Is that right?

RICE: Bombed.

MORGAN: Bombed. Bombed.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Who bombed the islands?

RICE: Probably the Americans.

MORGAN: Because Japanese people lived there?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK. Alright. OK, so once you were done with all this, do you remember specifically where you were—what you were doing—when you found out that it was all over?



RICE: I was on Okinawa. I think, it seems like I was in a tent. Somebody hollered the war was over. I know it wasn't very long till everybody was celebrating. Figured out how many points they had so, see who would be first to get home. They went, some kind of way they went by points—how many months you had served overseas. Each month was a point, or something like that.

MORGAN: So whoever'd been there longest got to—

RICE: Yeah, whoever had the most points, left first.

MORGAN: Oh. So were you excited that it was over and you were going to get to go home?

RICE: I guess in a way. I wasn't...

MORGAN: But you hadn't really been too worried about it.

RICE: Not really.

MORGAN: OK. So, do you recall the day that you left the service? Like when you actually got to leave?

RICE: Well, let's see. When they...came back to California...

MORGAN: And you said that was a couple months after...

RICE: No, after I left Okinawa and got back to California I got a 30 day furlough. Went from...California to Norfolk, Virginia—Navy yard there. And that...I can't remember for sure where I got the furlough from there or from California. But anyway, I think I g-- must of got the furlough from California and was to report at Newfo—Norfolk in 30 days. So that way I would have just had about 22 days at home or something—I don't remember for sure. But anyway, it worked out. But I was a couple of days late getting back to Norfolk—but they didn't do anything about it.

MORGAN: This is a continuation of the oral history of World War II veteran George W. Rice.

He was born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1925, and became a private first class in the United States Marine Corps, Second Battalion, Third Marine Division, in July 1943. Between the years of July 1943 and February 1946, he served in San Diego, California, and the Pacific Islands. This interview is being recorded by his granddaughter, Malory Morgan, at his home in Lesage, West Virginia and will be donated to the Library of Congress's Veterans Project and Marshall University. So you were saying that you were a couple of days late getting home, or getting back--

RICE: Getting back to the—Norfolk. But a--

MORGAN: So you'd gone home during that time, is that right?

RICE: I'd been home, then I went to—back to Norfolk. And I was over there, I don't, maybe a month after I went back from furlough then I did guard duty there at the gates in one of them shipyards.

MORGAN: What'd you have to do?

RICE: Stand at the gate and salute everybody that had a uniform on.

MORGAN: Just welcoming them back, pretty much?

RICE: Right. And, but anyway, after I was there so long, they had the—a final pay before we got discharged and I was the last in line and I—mine come out and I got a bunch of two dollar bills and silver dollars. I don't know, eight or 10 silver dollars, and some two dollar bills. But anyway, I got rid of it, I don't have it now.

MORGAN: Did you spend it?

RICE: I guess, or give it away. But, and from there—when I got discharged—I come from...Norfolk, back here on a train to...Kenova, where the trains—and I got a bus from

there to Huntington. Then from Huntington to Point Pleasant. That ended my military career.

MORGAN: OK. Did they have any ceremony when you got out or--

RICE: Not that I know of.

MORGAN: No, OK.

RICE: Just says, "Good luck."

MORGAN: Uh huh. Did you—you got some sort of awards, didn't you?

RICE: Well, I had battle stars and some kind of—two or three medals from basic training for shootin' and different things. But, I don't know what happened to them.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So, so you went home for 30 days and then you came back and you were back for about a month, and then you were released.

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: Right. So, was your mom excited to see you?

RICE: I guess.

MORGAN: You guess [laugh].

RICE: Went...ah, let's see, I went...was home two or three weeks I think, fellow called me and wanted to know if I would go on the river. On a boat.

MORGAN: Who called you?

RICE: A fellow does that kind of stuff was—a landing up there at Point Pleasant, anyway, he tried to supply people that was short on the railroads. Men to work. So I went.

MORGAN: Short on railroad? What?

RICE: Huh?

MORGAN: What'd you say? Short on what?

**George W. Rice**  
**February 24, 2005**

**26**

RICE: Men to work on the river. See somebody get off and wouldn't have nobody to take their  
place, they try to find somebody. So he called me and I agreed.

[END OF SIDE ONE]

[BEGIN SIDE TWO]

MORGAN: Today is March 3<sup>rd</sup>—or March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 and this is a continuation of the oral history of World War II veteran George W. Rice. He was born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1925, and became a private first class in the United States Marine Corps, Second Battalion, Third Marine Division, in July of 1943. Between the years of July 1943 and February 1946, he served in San Diego, California, and the Pacific Islands. This interview is being recorded by his granddaughter, Malory Morgan, at his home in Lesage, West Virginia and will be donated to the Library of Congress's Veterans Project and Marshall University. So when the tape ended on the other side there you were talking about going back on the river after you got out.

RICE: Yeah, I went back and just stayed one week.

MORGAN: Was that just right after you got out?

RICE: Hadn't been home very long—maybe two or three weeks. This fellow that did that kind of stuff called men to fill in for somebody take—took off the boat where they needed a crew member. So I went, I went to—got on at Point Pleasant and went to Pittsburgh then come back down the river I got about \_\_\_\_\_ cause it was paying less pay for being on there than it was I was drawing unemployment so I didn't see any point in it. So I got off and stayed around there for—I don't know—two or three months, around Point Pleasant, then I got a job at a plant in Ohio—Troy, Ohio. Hobert Trans—Hobert Manufacturing Company. Worked there for probably a year and a half, maybe two, I'm not sure. That's when Eileen and I got married—when I was working there.

MORGAN: Uh huh. OK, what'd you do after that? Like, what would you really consider your career?

RICE: Well, I got laid off there...and went back to Point Pleasant and bought a car and run it as a taxi there for—and went to mechanics school. That was, had that thing going if you go for six months and they'd pay you so much to go for each month.

MORGAN: Was it like the G.I. Bill?

RICE: Well, something to help veterans out that—you know, that wasn't ed...that hadn't got a job or anything so that's—I went through that for, I think, six months and I had that car, drove it as a cab and--

MORGAN: And you were taking training on, what was it?

RICE: Auto mechanics. Well anyway, after that, that cab business didn't turn out too good—wasn't making too much so I got out of that and—well actually I got a job on the railroad. And I stayed with it till I retired.

MORGAN: Uh huh. What'd you do? On the railroad?

RICE: I was an engineer.

MORGAN: Did you start out like that or did you--

RICE: No, I started out in signaling department in 1951. Stayed there for four years then I went into the engineering department as a foreman. Worked that for five or six, seven years till I got promoted to engineer then I spent the rest of the time as an engineer till I retired in '86.

MORGAN: So what, what were your job duties? What'd you do?

RICE: Run an engine.

MORGAN: Just—OK.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Do you think that your career in the war helped in any way to get this job.

RICE: I—probably cause they always prefer...veterans got preference in most jobs. If you was capable of doing them, anyway.

MORGAN: Well, that's good. OK. How did your experiences in the war contribute to how you think about war now?

RICE: Well, it's not a good thing, I'll put it that way.

MORGAN: Do you think—how do you feel about people who have enlisted and joined now?

RICE: What do I think about them?

MORGAN: Yeah.

RICE: Well, I think it's alright if that's what they want to do.

MORGAN: OK. So, looking back, are you glad that you had this experience.

RICE: Oh, yeah, yeah, it's real worth it.

MORGAN: What'd it do for you?

RICE: Well, I don't really know that, but I, I kind of enjoyed it really after you think back on it.

MORGAN: Uh huh. Like the traveling...

RICE: Yeah, lot of traveling. See a lot of different things.

MORGAN: Yeah. You said that you kinda felt like you were invincible before all that happened...

RICE: Well, when you're right in the midst of it, you think, "well, they ain't gonna get me." I don't know why you do, but you do. I did, anyway. Yeah.

MORGAN: Yeah, because you said you were never really too scared.

RICE: I never was scared.

MORGAN: Did other people seem to be?

RICE: I'd say, some of them was, yeah...you could tell they was, by looking at them—the way they acted. But this, this, it seemed to be scary. If you think you're gonna disappear instantly.

MORGAN: Yeah. But you never worried about that--

RICE: Never did!

MORGAN: That's interesting. So, did a lot of people have families that you were around? Like married, kids, anything like that?

RICE: I don't think in the outfit I was in they had too many. There was some of them married, but the majority of them was young...and stupid.

MORGAN: Like they, they didn't really worry about anything or--

RICE: I guess lot of them didn't, didn't care about nothing.

MORGAN: Do you think you learned much from them? The people you were around?

RICE: Well, it's...I'll put it this way, it was a interesting experience to be in something like this.

MORGAN: Do you feel like, how did they influence you? Like the people you were around?

RICE: Well...that's hard to put into words...yeah, I had several real good friends, I guess they influenced me one way or the other but I don't know what they was.

MORGAN: Uh huh. Who were your friends? Like tell me about your best friends.

RICE: Well, one was a fellow lived in Texas. Name was Henderson. And what we talked about was huntin' cause he said he could kill a deer off of his back porch and I was always interested in that huntin' situation. And we was good friends for a long time till we parted one, somewhere—I don't remember where. And another one was \_\_\_\_\_ from Colorado. His name was Hoover. He wrote to me after, year or so after we got out, but I never did return the letter—never wrote back. Then, when we was getting



discharged there at Norfolk, getting ready to leave, a fella—I hardly knew him—but called him Red, and he asked me to borrow 10 dollars. So I let him have it. I didn't figure I'd ever see—he said, "Just give me your address, I'll send it to you." So I give it to him. And then after I got home about a week or two, it come in the mail.

MORGAN: Really!

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Oh, wow.

RICE: But back then 10 dollars was like, probably about like 200 now.

MORGAN: Yeah, you told me that and you said you really didn't get paid that much in the service.

RICE: Oh no, I think pay was probably 50 dollars a month.

MORGAN: Um hmm. So, did you do any, like, did you just spend more time with those closer friends?

RICE: Oh yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: Did—so where did you meet them? Like on the train or when you got--

RICE: Well, I don't—I think I met them at, where I remember it was, was at Guam.

MORGAN: Oh, OK. So they weren't in your basic training unit or anything like that.

RICE: No, no, nope. When I went in the hospital I lost all them friends I'd had in—cause they went on and I hung back cause I was stuck there in California for about four or five weeks before I left. So when I left—as far as I know I never did see one of them again after that.

MORGAN: So the, the people that you left with and went to Guadalcanal with, they were the same people that you went on to Guam with? Is that right?

RICE: Well, probably, I'd say some of them was, yeah, but the ones that I was on Guadalcanal with...see they separated them all to go different ways, different outfits--

MORGAN: In Guadalcanal, that's where they separated you?

RICE: Yeah, yeah, so...I knowed a lot of people there but I didn't—I—just for a few months, whatever, however I was there—long I was there. And after that, they was gone.

So...but...at Guam was where we, I had the friends cause I was there the longest, see.

MORGAN: Right. So, how, the people that you went on extended training with after your basic training--

RICE: Yeah, out there in California at Camp Pendleton, I believe it was--

MORGAN: You had not picked your specialty yet, had you?

RICE: No, everybody took infantry—

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: Even whatever you was going into, you took that basic infantry training.

MORGAN: Is that what you did during the extended training?

RICE: Yeah, that's where I was on the bivouacs and all that stuff where we go out, stay out for two or three days at a time.

MORGAN: What's a bivouac?

RICE: Well, it's just a—go out in a bunch and set up, maybe have a tent or something. We had them pup tent—one men tents, set them up and you stay in them of the night, and of the day you're out doing whatever they tell you to do.

MORGAN: So everybody had their own tent?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK. So what was the main point of all that? Just learning to live--

RICE: I guess just learning to survive—that's where I got the hepatitis drinking bad water they claimed, I don't...

MORGAN: Yeah, OK. Well, OK, let's, let's go back and talk about that train ride. We didn't talk very much about that.

RICE: Oh the--

MORGAN: Can you, can you tell me more about it?

RICE: Well...one thing I remember about it, we laid over in Chicago when we left here...they's so many hours, but anyway, it was a troop train—nothing on it but troops.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: But, if they had, they had to take siding a good bit to let something more important go by, see, lot of times you was sitting siding for hours at a time. Then when some train go by that had material or something they need real bad, then they--we'd go on. But anyway--

MORGAN: Oh, so they, like, they'd take the train off the track, or what?

RICE: No, it was a siding, it just go on a track to the side of the main track for that purpose—to hold you till they went by, then you go on out towards—but I, I don't remember for sure how long it took to get there—five or six days, I'd say.

MORGAN: So you just, you slept on the train?

RICE: Yeah, you slept, eat, and everything on the train.

MORGAN: Did you have beds?

RICE: Yeah, they had beds, just like a, don't guess you ever seen a Pullman car, but they had pull-down beds on them. But you had a cooking car where they did all the cooking and everything and you go in there and eat three meals a day.

MORGAN: Uh huh. What'd they feed you?

RICE: Average stuff, I guess...well, it was pretty good stuff to eat.

MORGAN: Was it very crowded...on the train?

RICE: Well, it was, it was, they keep them full, you know.

MORGAN: Did they just pick people up along the way?

RICE: I think by the time we got to Cincinnati it was full as it was gonna be.

MORGAN: Where'd you get on?

RICE: I got on, probably at, here at Kenova.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: That was the—and from there went to Cincinnati then I don't know what line you go on  
but, anyway, we ended up in California.

---

MORGAN: Uh hum. OK. So were there—were they people that were gonna be in the Marines  
and the Army and the Navy?

RICE: No, just Marines.

MORGAN: Just Marines. OK. OK.

[Turned off tape to check recording]

MORGAN: This is a continuation on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2005 of the oral history of World War II  
veteran George W. Rice. He was born June 12<sup>th</sup>, 1925, and became a private first  
class in the United States Marine Corps, Second Battalion, Third Marine Division,  
in July of 1943. Between the years of July 1943 and February 1946, he served in  
San Diego, California, and the Pacific Islands. This interview is being recorded by  
his granddaughter, Malory Morgan, at his home in Lesage, West Virginia and will  
be donated to the Library of Congress's Veterans Project and Marshall University.

So we were talking about the train ride, and what did you do all that time to pass the time on the train?

RICE: Well, we played cards...mostly.

MORGAN: Yeah. What, what kind of card games?

RICE: Poker mostly.

MORGAN: Poker? Did you win any money?

RICE: I generally did pretty good.

MORGAN: Well that's good.

RICE: I didn't stay broke, let's put it that way.

MORGAN: Well good [laughed]. OK, now, when you got to boot camp, did they, did the train take you straight into the facility that was used?

RICE: I think you get off there at Los Angeles at the main—then you get trucked into your camp.

MORGAN: And did—was it real shocking as soon as you got there? Did the sergeant get in your face immediately?

RICE: Well, they let you know that you're, you're gonna...make something out of you, or try to [laughed]. Yeah, they, they get on you right quick.

MORGAN: Really?

RICE: About the first thing they do is shave your head.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: And a--

MORGAN: Did you have much hair?

RICE: Oh, oodles of it!

MORGAN: Was it long?

RICE: Well fairly, it wasn't short by no means but it was, it was short when I got out of that chair.

MORGAN: Um hum. So, so did they just take you immediately there or did they take you to your room first?

RICE: Well...I forget just how that worked, but, you probably got your clothes and things before you got your hair cut then you was assigned a place in your, where your bed was and all that and it—as far as I remember, we was in kind of hut-like things. For each squad—probably 12 men in this hut. And you had your bed and your locker and that was about it. And they assigned you your bed clothes and all your uniform stuff at one time. You walked by somebody, looked at you and tell you, tell you what size you was. They generally hit it, too.

MORGAN: Guess they had a lot of practice.

RICE: Oh, yeah.

MORGAN: So--

RICE: Just go up and take an armload up at a time, carry them out and put them on, in there where you was gonna stay of a night.

MORGAN: Did they give you several outfits?

RICE: Oh yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: Did they let you keep everything you brought with you...or did you not bring much?

RICE: Oh yeah, if you want to keep it, I guess. They, they didn't take anything away from you.

MORGAN: OK, OK. And you said that you stayed in a hut with about 11 or 12 other people.

RICE: I'd say it, I'd say they was 12. A squad would be 12 and each hut held a squad, see.

MORGAN: Did the squad eventually become part of your unit that you were supposed to stay with?

RICE: Yeah, a squad, four squads would be a platoon, is the way I got it figured.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: And that's, yeah.

MORGAN: So you, from the very beginning you'd been put in a group--

RICE: Right--

MORGAN: And that's who you stayed with.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: So was the hut like, just a big room or was it several rooms?

RICE: What's that?

MORGAN: The hut.

RICE: Just one room big enough for them 12 beds—they ain't beds, cots, what you'd call cots and a locker.

MORGAN: Did you all share one bathroom? Was it right close?

RICE: Oh it had several, we called them "heads" that they was big it's probably 1000 that used them, but they had several of them.

MORGAN: So it wasn't directly connected to your rooms?

RICE: Oh no, you had to go probably a block away. But you'd go there every, every evening to shower.

MORGAN: Did you have to wait a long time or was there plenty of room?

RICE: Oh no, no, it was, just go right on in.

MORGAN: OK--

RICE: There might be 50 in there taking a shower, but you join right in.

MORGAN: So it was just big.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK, what, what's a head? Is that a bathroom?

RICE: A head, yeah, it's a toilet.

MORGAN: A toilet, OK.

RICE: Go to the head.

MORGAN: OK, then. OK, so were you shocked at all when, I mean when you got there and did  
the sergeants scare you or intimidate you at all?

RICE: No, no.

MORGAN: No, didn't bother you? Why do you think that is?

RICE: I don't have any idea.

MORGAN: Cause you hear about a lot of people just get terrorized by these people.

RICE: Yeah, well, didn't, didn't faze me.

MORGAN: Did they, did they pretty much leave you alone or did they pick on you?

RICE: They didn't bother me. Some of them they'd get onto, you know, if you was... get out of  
line, they'd get on you. So I tried to stay in line pretty much, yeah.

MORGAN: So did they—they always had to have a reason before they'd pick on you?

RICE: Oh yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: They didn't just do it to be mean?

RICE: Oh no, but one example. We'd--after I'd been there in boot camp for, oh, I don't know,  
so long, anyway, maybe eight or nine weeks, whatever it was. There was something they  
did with a rifles, they'd check them out and they'd sack them up and I was assigned—a



few of us was assigned to call them off. And the men would come up and get them. And I, I, when I'd count to zero, I'd say "O" and that [laughed] lieutenant, he'd never heard anybody call a zero "O." He said something about the way I called numbers, but I didn't pay attention to him either! A lot of people says "O" when they says "One O Four" or--

MORGAN: Uh huh--

RICE: Instead of "One Zero Four"—it's easier.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So did you, did he do anything to you or just--

RICE: Oh, no, he just made a comment about it. I kinda laughed at him.

MORGAN: [Laugh] You kept doing it the same way?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Yeah. Did, did, were they pretty nice to you? The sergeants and, or lieutenants?

RICE: Oh, yeah, they was...for one thing, if you're going into actual combat, they know they better be good to you cause, especially the officers non-comp.

MORGAN: What's that?

RICE: Non-comp is a non-commissioned officer.

MORGAN: What's that mean?

RICE: Means that he's a sergeant or something like that. Now a officer is a commissioned officer.

MORGAN: What's the difference?

RICE: Well, I don't know that...just junior grade I guess you'd call the non-commissioned.

MORGAN: So a sergeant was lower than an officer?

RICE: A sergeant is lower than any commissioned officer. A lieutenant is the lowest—in that branch of service. A lieutenant—in the Navy it's a ensign (ph). Then--

MORGAN: A what?

RICE: Ensign.

MORGAN: Ensign?

RICE: That's Navy. But in the Marines, the second lieutenant is the lowest commissioned officer.

MORGAN: OK so non-commissioned is lower than commissioned...is that what you're--

RICE: Oh, yeah, yeah--

MORGAN: Can you just tell me how they go? Like start at the bottom and go up?

RICE: Well, I don't even know for sure like, like you start from PFC, you go to corporal, then you go to sergeant then they separate ranks of sergeants.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Then you go to warrant officer—that, I don't even understand what that means but it's—instead of being commissioned, you have a warrant.

MORGAN: OK, so, would you call them second sergeant or first sergeant--

RICE: No, just all of them was "sarge."

MORGAN: You just said "sarge." And then if, if it was an officer speaking to you, what'd you say?

RICE: Sir.

MORGAN: Sir. OK. Did you have to call your sergeants, "Sir"?

RICE: When you're in boot camp you call anybody that's in charge, "Sir." But...after that, you just call officers—commissioned officers—you don't call sergeants "Sir."

MORGAN: So were you involved with—like who was in charge of you there? Were there a couple of sergeants in charge of you or--

**George W. Rice**  
**March 2, 2005**

41

RICE: At boot camp?

MORGAN: Yeah.

RICE: Sergeants, yeah.

MORGAN: Were there a couple of them--

RICE: Drill instructor was and he had two—I think a PFC and a corporal as assistants. Cause they keep—well in boot camp—they keep you moving and you, you don't quit till you go to bed.

MORGAN: So they, they even had a Private First Class that was in charge of you all?

RICE: Um hum.

MORGAN: OK. And he and the corporal just did whatever the sergeant told him to do?

---

RICE: Right, yeah, mostly training, you know--

MORGAN: OK--

RICE: Marching and commands and all that stuff.

MORGAN: And they were in charge of how many groups?

RICE: Well a platoon would have been four squads.

MORGAN: OK, so they were like assigned to that platoon and just worked with them the whole time?

RICE: Yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: Did they sleep with you?

---

RICE: No, they had another—they had another cabin they stayed in.

MORGAN: Did--

RICE: The drill instructor.

MORGAN: OK, did they monitor you at night very much?

**George W. Rice**  
**March 2, 2005**

42

RICE: Huh?

MORGAN: Did they monitor you at night?

RICE: They checked you to see if the lights was out and all that maybe—I don't know what time it was but, I'd say 9 o'clock. Everybody was probably asleep cause they'd wear you out.

Yeah.

MORGAN: OK, so, you were telling me something about a boy who dropped his rifle kinda got in trouble.

RICE: Um hum.

MORGAN: Can you tell me about that?

RICE: Well, he'd been a squad right near where I was at cause I'd--they'd—for discipline, they'd put him on a shelf over top of the bed in there and he'd was holding his arms out like that [motions arms straight out from body]. I think he was squatted down like that and hold that rifle out and see how long he could hold it. But I don't know how long he could hold it—if it'd been me, it wouldn't have been very long.

MORGAN: What had he done to get in trouble?

RICE: Dropped his rifle when they was going through the...procedure, anyway—I can't think of the word for that. It's part of the training.

MORGAN: So he got punished like that just cause he dropped his rifle.

RICE: Yeah--

MORGAN: Because that's like a really bad thing to do, isn't it?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Yeah, OK. Did they ever, like, have physical violence? I mean, would, would sergeants hit you or anything?

**George W. Rice**  
**March 2, 2005**

43

RICE: Oh, no, no.

MORGAN: No?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: OK--

RICE: Now I don't know, they never did hit me, but I don't mean they didn't hit somebody.

MORGAN: But you never really noticed?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: OK, did anybody in your, in your squad seem like it really bothered them—being  
here, going through all this?

RICE: Oh yeah, but, they got over it, I guess.

MORGAN: Yeah, do you--

RICE: There was some rough fellas [fellows] in there—they'd wrestle and tear up the dirt and  
everything else.

MORGAN: Yeah. Were they—were you all changed people did you feel like when you left  
there?

RICE: In a way I'd say, yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: How so?

RICE: I don't know—they, they want to threat—express discipline and authority—and I never  
did care much for either one of them but you learned to accept it [laugh in his voice].

That's one—the main thing I guess I learned.

MORGAN: Um hum. So do—they didn't—you don't really think then that they brainwashed  
people?

RICE: They didn't me, no.

MORGAN: They just taught you to do what they told you to do--

RICE: Right--

MORGAN: Pretty much? Yeah. Was that hard for you to...

RICE: Accept?

MORGAN: Um hum.

RICE: I guess some of it was, yeah. But they'd...now they wanted you to get things down to where you could do it about blindfolded. You know, like taking care of your rifle and stuff like that. Yeah, they'd go through it thousand times trying to make sure you got it the way they wanted you to understand it.

MORGAN: Uh huh. You practiced things over and over?

RICE: Oh yeah, yeah.

MORGAN: Was it hard learning how to march in time and all that?

RICE: Yeah it, it's pretty interesting to do that but I...I didn't mind it, really.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So were any of the exercises challenging? What all'd you do besides—I guess you had to run...

RICE: Run...especially in that advanced when you crawl through mud and machine guns shooting over top of you and all that stuff, yeah.

MORGAN: You had to crawl through mud?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: That was in the advanced training?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK.

RICE: Advanced infantry.

MORGAN: OK...did—were you already in shape or did you kind--

RICE: I guess I was fairly well, cause I'd worked on the river, worked as a coal pass and hauled—shoved that coal up that gang plank and dump it in the fire box. And I was pretty well built up—I was skinny, but I was tough.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So you didn't really lose any weight there then?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: No. Did you have any trouble running?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: No. How far—do you know—like how, how far they'd make you run at a time?

RICE: I really don't know. The worst...thing I guess was—happened to me was when I got that...hepatitis and I was sick and I was on one of them marches and I couldn't make it. I got back partway and I just couldn't go any further and I just sit down beside of the road till a truck come by and picked me up and I ended up in the hospital for that.

MORGAN: So that was actually when they put you in the hospital?

RICE: Yeah, right after that.

MORGAN: When you couldn't run. OK. Did you have to climb walls or do obstacle courses--

RICE: Yeah, you had to do the water training and climb them ropes and jump in water and that kind of stuff.

MORGAN: Uh huh. What kind of water training did they do?

RICE: Well, I don't, for one thing, you jumped off of a 20-foot platform into water to make sure you could swim and then they trained us—the way we got unloaded from them ships is walk down, climb down big 'ole nets made out of rope. They was about, spaced about a foot apart. And you put all that stuff on and you probably had 80 pounds of weight on

you then you climb down there and get into a boat was going up and down like that.

And that was kind of tricky.

MORGAN: So they kind of taught you how to do that so you could--

RICE: Yeah, you went through that training just to, to do it.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK. Were the officers mean to people if they didn't learn something real fast?

RICE: Well, not that I know of. They may have been some places but...

MORGAN: OK, but you might have gotten lucky and gotten some nice people, [laughs] it sounds like.

RICE: Yeah, that's possible.

MORGAN: Right. OK, so are there different terms? Like can you tell me some of the Marine language?

RICE: Well most of it was blankety-blank [Both laughed], but a "head"—"head" was a bathroom or toilet. "Chow" was something you eat. You go to the "Chow Hall" to eat your...let's see. There was a lot of them, but I can't remember most of them.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Oh, I was gonna tell you, any native on them islands was a gooks. Everybody called them—Americans called them gooks—whatever island you was on.

MORGAN: Really? Did you, did you ahead of time have, like, bad feelings towards the Japanese or anything?



RICE: Well, I guess in a way. They put out all that propaganda about how bad they was and just like they'd eat you alive and all that stuff, but, I don't think I hated them like some of them did.

MORGAN: Um hum, OK. So you were saying that the Navy and the Marines are a lot more similar--

RICE: Well, yeah, they're pretty close-knit see cause any place the Marines go, the Navy takes them on ships and things.

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Let's see. What did you—OK, so on the islands, can you tell me, like, what a typical—what your typical breakfast or lunch or dinner would have been?

RICE: Hmm. Well...well, it was—they had a lot of canned stuff. That's all they did have—cans. And they had synthetic eggs and all that...eat a lot of spam. They tried to fix it different ways so that--

MORGAN: You said Vienna sausage, too--

RICE: Well, I mean, that's, yeah, that was it—the Vienna—the big ones. About that long and looked [motioned with hands], but they'd cut them up and put them in stew and all that kind of thing.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So then, OK, on the, on the islands, you said that you didn't see much combat, is that right?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: Right. But you said you saw all, a lot of bodies, like the--

RICE: Oh yeah, lots of them.

MORGAN: Um hum. Were you ever shooting at people?

RICE: Well...just with the...big guns, we shot at them.

MORGAN: And you were telling me, before we were on tape, about one time when you were,  
when you all shot all night. Is that right?

RICE: Yeah, yeah. Shot at a barracks—well, it was a mile and a half from us, I think, about that  
distance.

MORGAN: What island were you on?

RICE: That was on Guam. We'd just got in there. Hadn't been there—we'd just set up the guns  
and got orders to fire on that place. The next day...several of us went over there to see  
how much damage we had done and that's where there was—there was bodies every-  
where there. And, but I don't know if we did all of it, but they was there.

MORGAN: Um hum.

RICE: On them islands, it doesn't take very long for them to start rotting.

MORGAN: Um, cause it was so hot?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Yeah. So did it, did it smell?

RICE: Oh terrible yeah—flies, maggots, a mess.

MORGAN: You were telling me—weren't you—that there was one man who was wounded you  
walked by...

RICE: Yeah, I just went on by. I was more or less looking for souvenirs, but anyway, he was  
still alive and breathing—I could see he was but he had his one arm off—oh, about there  
I guess [motioned to his arm].

MORGAN: Around his wrist--

**George W. Rice**  
**March 2, 2005**

49

RICE: Yeah. And...I remember it wasn't maybe 15 or 20 minutes, I heard somebody shoot several times. And this fellow come up and said, "I got one of them dirty...blankety-blanks." But anyway, when I went back I seen he had shot this fellow that I'd walked by.

MORGAN: Was he a Japanese person or a native?

RICE: He was Japanese—we didn't shoot natives.

MORGAN: Right. So, at the point you got on Guam, then, there were still Japanese people--

RICE: Oh yeah, they was there. Yeah. Cause we was on patrol and, and somebody'd see four or five Japanese close to where we was at right on that little rock we was on so we'd, oh six or eight of us went out to find them. And...one of the fellows was carrying a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle), he said there was a little shooting going on and a bullet ricocheted off of a piece of coral or something and the coral flew up and hit him in the ear. And he got a purple heart out of it!

MORGAN: [Laughed] Now who, who shot and it ricocheted--

RICE: Well, it, it was the Japanese that shot at him, I guess, but they hit the rock cause there's them things everywhere, but...

MORGAN: Was it in a cave?

RICE: They—the Japanese might have been. I don't know where they were—I didn't see them, I looked for them but I couldn't find them. Anyway, we, I think we finally got them cause they never did bother us anymore. But I didn't get them.

MORGAN: So you all went out looking for them after the night of shooting, is that right?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK, and did you all take prisoners?

RICE: No, no prisoners.

MORGAN: So people just would kill them if they saw them?

RICE: Right.

MORGAN: OK. So when you were on the island, you said that you saw mostly Japanese dead bodies. Did you see any Americans?

RICE: Not a one.

MORGAN: Not any.

RICE: Not a one.

MORGAN: Why do you think that was?

RICE: I think they did something with them to keep morale up or something. I don't know what they done with them.

---

MORGAN: Uh huh.

RICE: A lot of them killed—Americans.

MORGAN: Um hum.

RICE: They clean them up quick.

MORGAN: Do you think it was just the people in charge there?

RICE: Oh yeah, they, they probably had special...gangs to go out and revive—you know, get them—did something with them. I don't know what they did with them where it was hot like.

MORGAN: Uh huh. So, do you think that, that helped morale there?

RICE: Oh yeah, morale—if you go out there and see a bunch of Americans all swelled up and bustin', well your morale would go down.

MORGAN: Right. But did you all realize that's what they were doing though?

RICE: I never—I didn't till later. I knowed something had to happen to them cause they was getting killed but I, I didn't know what they was doing. I still don't know what they did with them.

MORGAN: Do you think if, you know, looking back now, if you had seen Americans, that that would have made it affect you more?

RICE: Probably. Yeah. I knowed they was getting killed, but I just didn't see them. I have seen planes exploding. I knowed they was probably getting killed in that because there wasn't nothing left of it but a bunch of smoke.

MORGAN: Did you see that often? Did you see planes flying over?

RICE: Oh, yeah, all kinds of fly power in the sky, and they was shooting anything up there. It didn't make any difference if it was Japanese or American. They was wanting to shoot Japanese but if there was an American one flying—they couldn't tell the difference, just shoot.

MORGAN: Who did that?

RICE: Well, we did.

MORGAN: Because that was your job, wasn't it, to shoot at planes.

RICE: Yeah. But not on board ship we didn't, because ours was ground arms, whatever you want to call it.

MORGAN: OK, well, were you on the islands with Army and Navy people?

RICE: Yeah, the Army was there. The Navy generally stays on the ship, but the Army was on some of them islands I was on.

MORGAN: Not Guadalcanal, was it?

RICE: If they was, I didn't see them.

**George W. Rice**  
**March 2, 2005**

52

MORGAN: OK, but on Okinawa and Guam there were.

RICE: Yeah, I seen English, different nationalities.

MORGAN: But Army people then.

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: OK. Did you all, did you associate with the Army?

RICE: No.

MORGAN: Why?

RICE: I don't know, we just stayed together most of the time, whatever band of service we were  
in.

MORGAN: But did, because you said there were several platoons on the island, right?

RICE: Oh, there was probably battalions and divisions on there, part of a division, anyway, on  
them islands.

MORGAN: And did they associate with each other?

RICE: Yeah, some, yeah.

MORGAN: But pretty much the Marines stayed together, the Army stayed together?

RICE: Yeah.

MORGAN: Did you all, had you been taught not to like the Army?

RICE: Oh, huh uh. I didn't dislike them or anything. I just didn't associate with them.

MORGAN: OK. Now when you had that typhoon, I'm just wondering did it come up real  
suddenly?

RICE: As far as I know. It probably started a little easy and then it just got worse and worse.

MORGAN: So you really weren't prepared for it?

RICE: No, I don't think anybody was.

MORGAN: Right, OK. How many people were in a unit? Is that called a battalion?

RICE: A battalion? I read how many's in a squad, platoon, and battalion, but I don't remember.

MORGAN: When you were, let's see, when you were on the island, did you wash your clothes?

RICE: Oh, yeah, I was trying to think about that the other day. I remember you wash probably about every, maybe every day. You just had to scrub, you know, by hand, hang them out and let them dry.

MORGAN: Did you have several outfits on the island, too?

RICE: Yeah. But you know I don't remember much about that, you washed your towels and stuff, too, and hanged them out; but I don't remember too much about it.

MORGAN: And you said you wrote to your mom about once a month, is that right?

RICE: Probably.

MORGAN: Did you tell her anything really?

RICE: Not really, there wasn't much to tell her, how I was doing all right, slept all right, eating good, and all that was about the only thing you could say because you couldn't say where you was at or what you was doing.

MORGAN: Let's see, now, did you say that they tried to burn bodies?

RICE: Yeah, cause they couldn't bury them, and we tried to and they was rotting and they stunk. We tried to burn them with diesel fuel but, man that was a mess.

MORGAN: Thank you for sharing your story.