

Joseph N. Basile

[Interviewer?]

**January 11, 2002
Christ the King School
Westmere, NY**

Interviewer: Today's January 11, 2002, we're at Christ the King School in Westmere, New York, and I'm interviewing my grandfather, Joseph Basile. What were the circumstances of your enlisting?

JB: I enlisted, when I was in a second year of high school, I was sixteen years old, not much older than some of the kids here, and I went down and signed my own papers to go in. They caught me, and they sent me back, and my parents signed for me, when I was seventeen, to go. So from seventeen to twenty I had three years of service already. I was one of the ones who was afraid the war would be over before I got there.

Interviewer: What branch of service were you in?

JB: I was in the navy, and I was in the Amphibs, which is the amphibious service, and I was on a racket ship. And in case anyone thinks it's a ship that's propelled by rockets, they're wrong: it's a ship that fires rockets. Our flotilla of twelve ships was designed and built for the actual invasion of Japan. We got as far as Guam, towards doing that job, when President Truman elected to drop the first atom bomb, which saved us and probably a lot of our shipmates from being killed in Japan.

So the ship was designed to- Each ship had ten twin rockets and they fired a five-inch shell, which is about the size of second grader. And they fired two five-inch shells every second from each rocket mount. So when the twelve ships lined up together, there'd be 240 five-inch shells every second hitting the beach, which was a lot of devastation that it was designed for.

We found out later, since we had decoded some of Japanese secret codes, that before the atom bomb dropped- excuse me- they had decided to arm all of the citizens that were left in Japan with whatever weapons they had: bamboo canes, spears, whatever was left. And they issued each one of them two hand grenades, one for themselves and one (inaudible).

[End]