

**Roy Clark  
Veteran**  
**Interviewed  
by the Baldwinsville Messenger  
and the Baldwinsville Public Library  
in 1994**

**I:** Today with me is Roy Clark how did you get in to the service and how it came about? You were telling me before that you were young.

**RC:** I was 17 when I went into the marines and we went to Parris Island and had my training there then I went to camp Lejeune North Carolina and went to telephone school.

**I:** What was that all about?

**RC:** That was field telephone how to operate switchboards field switchboard and that was what I was all the way through the war a telephone operator and then we kind of shifted around to different areas and we finally went to camp Pallet California and we started forming a Fort Marine division.

**I:** What time was this now?

**RC:** This was in 43 I went in the service and signed up December 14, of 42, but then in 43 we went to camp Pallet formed the 4<sup>th</sup> division and I was put into the 14<sup>th</sup> marines and also detached from there and went into the special weapons battalion and we were there 3 or 4 months and then went back to the 14<sup>th</sup> marine's artillery and from there I went to another school and the division left the state San Diego went to battle at Roy and aroma island and that was 43 and then I caught up with them in Pearl Harbor and was only a week or so after I caught up with them we went aboard a ship and an island called Maui was are rest base and then caught up with them there and about a week later we headed for sipane and then to Pearl Harbor and I was on LST Coast Guard LST 23 on May 22<sup>nd</sup> we were tied up in Pearl Harbor called a west lock and the LST for some reason they never knew really why but they started blowing up and they were loaded with ammunition and six of them blew up and sank and we were lucky enough to get are out and away from them. There was about 1,500 marines and sailors that were killed in that it was kind of like Pearl Harbor all over again.

**I:** Did you ever find out what happen?

**RC:** They kept it a real secret and no body new and they didn't want the people back in the states to know what had happen it was all pretty much a secret but after we got out of the harbor the nest day Tokyo Rose had it on the radio that she already knew what had happen but from there we went to Saipan and June 15 of '44 we made the landing there and as I was usually in the second wave going in and the tractor I was on ran up on coral riff and flipped over and luckily I got out of that and when finely get to the beach I didn't have a helmet or rifle but there was a lot of dead marines around so I had picked

up what I needed and in the mean time I got some shrapnel in my left arm near the elbow and I bandage it and took care of it as well as I could but it got really infected and about a week later I was in a field hospital and the doctors wanted to take my arm off and send me back off to the hospital ship, but I wouldn't let them and luckily there was a corpsman and told the doctor he would take care of it and he did but I was in the hospital for 9 days.

**I:** Where was this?

**RC:** This was on Saipan and a little town of Garapan.

**I:** what were the facility's like there? Do you remember?

**RC:** It was like a tent facility like mash like you see on T.V it similar like that but after the 9<sup>th</sup> day the wire came down what was left of them and came to see me and said we are leaving that day for Tinian the island of Tinian and I told them I would be down there but the doctors would not let me leave the hospital and I just packed up everything and left and by that time my arm was pretty good anyways I got down to the beach and they all had gone so all there was, was a LCB and they couldn't take me to Tanium, but I kind of argued with him and then finely I guess he was the captain and he said I have to go and see the beach master and so if you happen to be on the ship when I leave there's nothing I can do about so that's the way I got to Tanium and caught up with a butch of the fellas I was with and after that the island was secure we boarded the transport USS Livingston and went back to are rest base in Maui, but that was quite the Sai pane was the worst time for me at that particular time there was a lot of things happening there and then after all that we got through all of that we kind of rested for a short period of time because are division landed on 4 landing on the pacific in 13 months, but they got us back there and the next landed was going to be which I didn't know, but it was going to be in Hema Jima and I was on a second wave going in to Hema Jima but that that again was no place to go not much of a beach for 3 or 4 days and we just couldn't do anything so some of the infantry got a hold of the hill that was there it was all black all volcano dust really and you couldn't dig a fox hole it would just cave in but that ended up with a lot of casualties in are division. We had something like 19,000 in are division and during the 4 campaigns there were like 17,000 some like 17,900 that were killed and wounded out of are division. luckily I didn't have anything happen to me on Hema Jima which I was grateful for and where we landed on a beach yellow tube that happen to be up I'm not sure which way, but it was away from Mount Suirbachi and I happen to be looking up at Mount Suribachi when they put the first flag up, but then they wanted to take some pictures so they did that all over again and I posed for it this time so I happen to see both of those as they done that.

**I:** Now did you carry around the radio here the whole time when you were doing those landings?

**RC:** No the telephone we had the telephone system.

**I:** So was that a lot was extra equipment to haul around?

**RC:** Well we had little carts that we put most of it in and kind of pulled it around run

the wire and in Hema Jima there wasn't much to put away but on Saipan and Tinian there was palm trees and with could get up on palm trees and get it away from the tanks and amphitheater tractor and this sort of thing to keep it from chewing it all up.

**I:** If must have been pretty hard to keep something open.

**RC:** It was.

**I:** In the mist of all that?

**RC:** Are wire team the Japanese had a trade of if they could get to the wire they would take a pen and stick it through the wire and short it out so are wire team had to follow these wires to where ever they were going and had to physical they had to hold it in your hand so you could feel the pin and walk alone and in the mean time you had to have someone watch them because they were there where ever they have done this they were there waiting and that was kind of harry at times but that was it seemed to be are wire team was always called out at night and we roamed around the island at night which you wanted to be sure that you knew the password because the password changed every day, so you wanted to be sure you knew the password (laughs).

**I:** What do you remember about the islands I mean you were a young man you probably never seen stuff like that?

**RC:** It was an interested thing plus during the war you could appreciate what the weather was nice and warm and if it wasn't warm or war you could probably could really enjoy it but are rest base back in Maui that was nice there we were on the side of Mount Holly Waqiah which is an active volcano there, but nothing ever happens while we were there.

**I:** Have you ever been out on the sea before when you joyed the service?

**RC:** Nope, never.

**I:** How did you adapted to that?

**RC:** Well I got sea sick a few times we got in to a storm off Okinawa. That was during that campaign, but the typhoon came up through there and it kind of thought the ships were going to bust in two (laughs) and then the kamikaze planes that kind of scared me to all the time I was board the ship I always had twin 40 millimeters. We shot down few of them, but they were all over the place.

**I:** Where was home for you at that time?

**RC:** Home was when I joyed the services I lived in Fairmont and during the war my folks moved out to Baldwinsville so I didn't know where I lived out here until I came home

**I:** How often did you hear from home?

**RC:** Not too often only back at are rest base we would get are mail back there maybe a month or two or so before we would hear of anything.

**I:** Have a delay?

**RC:** Yeah.

**I:** Then what happen after up to the point we talked about?

**RC:** Up to Iwo Jima we had are gear all a boarded ship and we were supposed to land on the island of Honshu in Japan we were going to be the assault troops for the invasion for japan a part of it anyways and the war ended for us when they dropped the bombs on Honshu and Nagasaki and the war ended and then we got are gear back I got a board a carrier and came back to San Diego and went to camp pallet and we were probably there for two weeks and then they shipped me to barged Maryland and I was discharged on November 21<sup>st</sup> 1945 so in three years' time I went a long ways (laughs).

**I:** So was that points so you could discharge?

**RC:** Well I had enough points they had this thing were they had like 80 points I had enough of that anyway I went to the first sergeant one time and said you know I got enough points to get out. He said well that may work for some people but it not going to work for you you're not going back (laughs) until the war is over. I went overseas and on an aircraft carrier USS Copahee I came back after a while.

**I:** How many months in between?

**RC:** Well I left in 43 I can't remember just the date when I left.

**I:** May 10, May 10 of 44?

**RC:** May 10, yes ok, May 10 of '44 I went to Pearl Harbor. It was on the USS Copahee and came back to the states and USS Shangri La.

**I:** And when you got back home what do you remember about being back?

**RC:** Well of course I didn't know where I lived out here so I had to call my parents and have them come and get me in the city in Syracuse pick me up and bring me back out but they bought a small farm on Perry road and that was kind of nice and I kind of forgot about the service and I wanted to forget it all and then until a recent years when I started talking to some of these older fellas that were in the service all this stuff starts coming back and I kind of block it out of my mind for a long time but when I came back and home I went to work for the town Van Buren and drove snow blow and in the summer time I bought a potatoes sprayer and my father and I kind of did some farming and I had a potatoes sprayer and I sprayed all the farmer potatoes with and after that I decided I might like to work with the telephone company so in 1952 I went to work for the telephone company and I worked there for 33 years and I had some heart trouble and I retired I retired in 85 and that was nice and I enjoyed that.

**I:** And you got to use some of the experience from the services?

**RC:** Yeah, but it was a quit a lot different from climbing the telephone pole sort of thing was all the same but an equipment and all this was a lot different because we didn't use field equipment that was I enjoyed it there and since then I haven't done anything and when I retired I really retired (laughs)

**I:** Good and your about to head out on a trip now.

**RC:** Well we have a camp up by Campton and we are going up there now and we have a place in Florida we spend winter at.

**I:** Good well I won't hold you up from your vacation any longer thanks for talking to us Roy.

**RC:** Thank you.