

**Robyn Luther Dare
Veteran**

**Michael Russert
Wayne Clarke
Interviewers**

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RLD: My name is Robyn L. Dare.

MR: Where were you born?

RLD: 4/17/15 in Chicago, Illinois.

MR: So, you're 92 years old? Were you enlisted or drafted?

RLD: I started in the aviation cadet program. I learned to fly two planes. I got my license, but I washed out. They washed out 75% of our class in Arkansas and then I became a GI, and so I ended up in Arkansas.

MR: When did you enlist?

RLD: I went in in '42. I was stuck in Arkansas when I got washed out and my first assignment—I was a lawyer before I had gone in, so they gave me a teaching job and I taught the CGA glider pilots for a few months. Then I got a job. The army gave me three jobs and I got five of my own. I got in the control tower operations, and five months after I went in as a dogface, I was a sergeant. [unclear] after I was a sergeant, as a control tower officer. I mean, not officer, I was the enlisted man in charge of it until I—one day I got banned because my control tower officer, who was my boss, I couldn't take it from a guy... I was a lawyer and everything. I couldn't take it from a nincompoop like... So, I volunteered to become an officer, but I forgot about that and I went on for a while. Stuttgart is right in the swamplands of Arkansas and... I wish I could make more sense out of what I'm going to tell you, but anyway, I was a sergeant in charge of the control tower in Stuttgart, Arkansas until... I volunteered to go to Greenland, the air base in Greenland, to take over the tower and become a master sergeant, but one day I was over standing in line to get my physical to take that assignment, and my [unclear] came running out and said, "What are you doing here, Dare, you're confined to base. You qualified for officer's training." And I had forgotten all about the fact that I had applied for OCS, but the [unclear] before they picked from our base twelve guys for OCS in the period, there were only three taken and I was one of them. The reason I got it, when we had—in the qualifying you have to meet a board. and like this, and tell them all about

yourself, and I had been warned about a Captain Goldberg who was a dentist or something, but he was mean interrogator, and I was forewarned about him, so when he sat there for a long time and didn't say anything, and finally he said to me "Who was the scourge of God?" I said to him, "Before, it was Genghis Kahn, before the present. Now it would be Adolph Hitler." So, I went to OCS in Miami, got first into the [unclear] and I was sent to California to teach because I was a lawyer—to teach court martial procedure and military law. So, I was in what ended up—that was the site of the base in [unclear] California, and I went out there, and one day... All the soldiers knew I was a lawyer in private life, so when they got in trouble, they asked me to defend them. So, I defended several guys for different things—desertion and everything like this. But one day I was in a barber shop and got to talking to the guy in the next seat. When we got done, he said, "I want to talk to you." "He said, "You shouldn't be wasting your... When I get back to San Francisco, I'm going to try to get you to join the CIC." I said, "What's that?" He said, "The Counter Intelligence Corps." So, he did that and a long tale... I got assigned to—oh, the fun part was that one day, I had a first assignment and I wanted to get it changed, so I went into the, not the commanding officer, but the [unclear] and I saluted this lieutenant colonel, and I said I wanted to volunteer to do legal work, and the Colonel said, "Young man, you don't tell the army what you want to do, the army tells you." So then when I got notice for this assignment in CIC, when the announcement came over, I walked into his office and he handed me the assignment, and he said, "I could be wrong." [Laughs] So, I was sent to counterintelligence training in Chicago, my hometown. I was there for Counter Intelligence Training School. From there, we went to what now—it was Camp Ritchie in my day in Maryland, the President's in the hills of Maryland—Camp David, it was Camp Richie in my day, and they had different... It was intelligence training camp and we spent the time not very unpleasantly. It was November, and we had to go out and do overnight hikes and get lost, go marching through different swamps and everything, it was terrible. The stoves in our camp, tent, would backfire and belch out so it was no fun there, but that was the first place I ever had Baked Alaska. It was called, the newspapers called it the senator's and representatives' sons' assignment. Then, I finally, as I told you, got the assignment for... Anyway, I finally got an assignment as a second lieutenant counterintelligence officer and I was sent to Honolulu, and I could have spent the rest of the war in Honolulu, but I didn't want that. I was a new young lawyer and I didn't want to face these guys who went through the battles and everything. Later when I was a lawyer, I didn't want them to say, "Well, you didn't know how rough it was to be in..." I didn't want them to tell me that, so I wanted to volunteer and to get into combat. An opportunity came up to join this outfit [points to insignia on cap—7th Infantry Division Association], to go into the Battle of Okinawa. My colonel [unclear]—he always had a heck of a job finding volunteers to go into combat, and if they had a guy volunteer, it saved him a lot of trouble. So, I had to carry a 32-pound box of ammunition for Smith and Wesson 35 pistols which pilots and naval pilots, were

the only ones that used 35s. The rest of them were the caliber 50, so I had the kid take this ammunition out, it weighed 72 pounds, and transferred from a landing craft in [unclear] I had a ladder at the bottom and I was going up and down, up and down, with this 32 pounds, and I could see myself go down and get squashed, but finally I got it down the ladder and got it on board. So that was my introduction to it. We were getting ready to go to Okinawa for April 1, 1945, and I went aboard a ship and one day I was walking out on the deck and I saw a guy sitting out on one of the parts of the deck—he was sitting there. I went over there, he was just like this [puts hands in front of his face] and I kicked his arm out from there and he said, “Robyn, what are you doing here?” It was my first cousin. I didn’t even know it was Deak Brown. Deak had been in the—the 7th Division went through more battles than any, and landings. They went to Alaska and then from Alaska, there was... After Alaska there was another island, I just can’t think of it, then there was... It had five beachhead landings, anyway, more than other military unit except the 1st Division of the Marines. So, we boarded a ship that was to take us to... and a guy reporter took me around [unclear] and I saw the interesting—the Filipinos were living in those days, but we went back out and April 1st, we had been sailing towards Okinawa, and early in the morning we got blasted out of bed and everything, a horrendous amount of firing, naval gunfire, area bombardment, and all this stuff. But we were very glad, whereas the kamikazes were coming and diving on the ship next to the one I was on. It got a direct hit and we lost a whole regiment when it was sunk. But we waited and finally disembarked and got down into a LCVP, a landing craft.

MR: Was it a military vehicle?

RLD: Yes. We’d seen the pictures of the beach head landings in D-day in Europe, and that’s what we expected. Instead when I was going in, I spent my time walking off the beach looking at beautiful blue fish all around. I put my gear, I had a lot of it, especially a big parachute bag with five bottles of whiskey in it, and they were set down on the shore to be picked up. They had their names on it and so on, but we didn’t have to carry it in there, and so those clothes of mine stayed on the beach for three days before I could get back to it. After we hit the beach, we immediately started digging foxholes. My sergeant, a boy from California, was [unclear] and I were digging, we dug a hole together. When night came, he said, “You’re the important guy,” or something like that, “So you stay awake and watch the...” I sat there all night long with my pistol pointed up over those heads [unclear] get shot up. This way of order—he had these foxholes around, there was no stirring around at night. Anything that moved got shot at by our own people. The next day, my first assignment was to go up to the [unclear] airport on top of a cliff just off the sea. The [unclear], the FBI of the Japanese, was supposed to have records of everybody in the area, and I was supposed to get a hold of those records, but when I got out there, it was all blown up, there wasn’t anything, just shards of paper. But I heard some guys talking about Americans, and I looked over—there was a drop down there, I looked over

the cliff and I said, “Who are you guys?” They said, “We’re the Marines.” “Who are you? What are you doing up there?” They said, “What are you doing back here?” Our division was already across to Butler Bay. But a lot of funny things happened. So, what we learned quickly—that the whole island of Okinawa is penetrated by limestone caves, and the Japanese had been subjected to two weeks of preparation bombing before we got there in preparation for us, so they had all gone underground. So, at night [unclear] we had first dug holes, checked out all those caves, which would have been on our troops, and the Japanese would come out at night, but they never came out during the day because we could see them. So, we quickly learned to try to, in fact we had orders from our commanding general to, before destroying, we had to either—if there was a cave there, we either had to get the people out safely, or we would have to close it up and kill everybody in there, roll dynamite, and then, finally, our commanding general demanded to save civilian lives. He started saying, ‘All lives,’ don’t kill anybody unless they had to. So [unclear] quickly learned—they had done some of it in Saipan before—to talk people out of these caves, with a real pep talk, soldiers—trying to appeal to their ego— and they got very expert at it. So, we spent the whole war saving people’s lives instead of shooting up. I carried a tommy gun all through the war and a pistol, and knives, and never had to shoot at anyone, but many people shot at me.

MR: Did you have Japanese-Americans in your unit?

RLD: Our intelligence unit was out of headquarters; they were both a language team and a CIC team, and we worked together, and the CIC team backed up the language team when we invaded these caves to find the information the Japanese had left behind with the people that had been killed. We did that for eighty-two days—we were out unintentionally killing anybody. There’s a lot more if I could remember it. One day I wanted to go to get some information with a unit out of the 7th Infantry, it was Custer’s old unit, the 7th Cavalry, they covered our left flank and the captain was a school teacher. I went up there one day to get information from him, and the man was literally crying. I said, “What’s the matter?” He said, “I just had to order my men to kill seventy-five Japanese in cold blood, and I can’t do it because it’s against my nature, but I had to do it, we couldn’t cover them, we couldn’t turn them loose, we had to kill them.” And that was the terrible decisions you’d have to make and more. One night I almost got court martialed, where I could have been [unclear] I had a unit up there helping empty these caves. Night time came. We got behind a wall to protect us through the night, and we got a phone call from a commanding officer, and that night I was the executive officer. I had a captain over me, and Bill, my captain, ordered us to get out of our... This is after dark—get out and go over to a certain place and try to clear the caves. I said, “Bill, you don’t know what it’s like up here; we don’t put out our heads, get them shot right off. There are dead cows, dead horses, and all that stuff in the mornings, because they got shot. Because anything that moved after dark got shot. He said, “I don’t care. That’s my orders and you’ve

got to do it.” I said, “Now, wait a minute, you don’t understand the conditions up here. Will you please call Colonel [unclear]?” our immediate boss, his immediate boss, “and tell him what the situation is before I disobey you and face a court martial?” He said, “Okay, I will.” So, he talked to [unclear] and Colonel said we didn’t have to go out. I could have been hugged for that. There was a time Headquarters in Washington sent a group of ten experts in their field to study the Japanese armament stuff on the battlefield, so I had the assignment of taking... I’ve got to get this straight. While these guys were gathering the stuff, I went over to sign where our [unclear] would be, the 37th Battalion was there under a very nice colonel, and I went over there and I looked over the [unclear] a lot of dead cows, horses, Japanese soldiers, bodies out there. There were a whole bunch of trenches with machine guns and everything, all torpedoes set up there, all the ammunition and everything. There wasn’t an American soldier around. I went back to get these guys to support me and be able to take that information back to my headquarters, and so I did, and when we got back I reported to major, one of our... I reported this to our boss’ boss, a major in the intelligence section, and I told him about this place. There’s no soldiers, no American soldiers at all, our whole flank was open. He said, “I can’t tell the general all that.” He said, “It shows right here on my map, the 97th Division is over there.” I said, “There isn’t a 96th Division or anybody else. That flank is wide open. There’s no protection over there.” During the night the Japanese moved the whole battalion. In the morning, which was May Day in Europe, I think, happened to be... There was moved a whole battalion and, in the morning, they were shooting at us from the rear, and nobody knows how many got killed or hurt because we didn’t have... The major I was telling about, he didn’t believe me when I told him the flank was open. And my roommate, tentmate, was the division historian, he was in that morning—he was with Major Hartley, he and Major Hartley, the 37th Commander, were in a cave. I mean they were in the trenches, they were, and they all crouched down because these guys were shooting at them from the rear, and Russell told Major Hartley about the fact that it was May Day in Europe and he got up, the Major got up, on the lip of the trench. He said, “Russell, if you’re going to get that sniper there, and that sniper there, and that sniper there, it’d be a nice [unclear]. Oh, not until it was over. Eighty-two days the battle lasted—that is very interesting, too. We had two faults ended the war—one when they bombed Hiroshima and one, finally Nagasaki; one day [unclear] came on the radio and ordered all us commanding officers to lay down our arms and that was the end of the Battle of Okinawa. In January ’46. Indiana. I was a military high school graduate so I was a soldier all my life. I graduated from Morgan Park Military Academy, which is no longer in existence, so I was pretty wise about military things before I got mixed up in it. I hope you could understand enough.

MR: Well, thank you very much.