

## Interview with Warren Musch

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DePue: Mark DePue

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DePue: Good afternoon. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the director of oral history at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today is Tuesday, October 16, 2012, and we're at the Illinois Information Service studio here in Springfield. I've got Warren Musch with me here today. Good afternoon, Warren.

Musch: Good afternoon, Mark.

DePue: I'm delighted to have you here. Always interested in getting good World War II stories, but very, very rarely do I encounter somebody who has as important a story as you have, and also has the ability to tell it as well as you have. That's why we ended up here. We're going to have probably two sessions on this. As I mentioned to you before, what I wanted to concentrate on today was your early years, because not only are you an Iwo Jima veteran, but you're also a survivor of the Depression years.

Musch: That's correct.

DePue: Grew up on a small farm in Central Illinois here. Let's start with a little bit about yourself, and specifically, when and where you were born.

Musch: I was born on a farm four miles south of Virginia, in Cass County, which is where my grandfather purchased the farm in 1891.

DePue: Do you know where your grandfather hailed from?

Musch: He originally was born in Meredosia, Illinois, which is west of where I live. His father, which was my great-grandfather, came from Germany when he was a young man of twenty-one years of age, in about 1827, I think it was.

DePue: So Musch is a good German name?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Do you know what it might mean in German?

Musch: No, I don't.

DePue: I assume that you took some grief growing up, with a name like Musch.

Musch: Yes, I was always called Mushy. No other nickname was given me, except Mushy.

DePue: Did you tell us your birthday?

Musch: October 25, 1921.

DePue: You don't have too long to go before a birthday.

Musch: Eight or nine days; I'll be ninety-one.

DePue: Ninety-one. Warren, you're doing great for somebody who's ninety-one years old.

Musch: I'm very, very fortunate. My assumption is, I guess, the Lord has been very good to me throughout my life.

DePue: Tell me a little bit more about your father. What was his name, first of all?

Musch: Roy was his first name. Middle name was John. He was born on the farm, in the same house where I was born, in 1895. The third child of three. His older sister passed away in the flu epidemic of 1918. His second sister, Martha, was never married, so she was an old maid. Actually, there was a third child born, a daughter, a few years before my dad was born, who died in infancy.

DePue: How would you describe his personality?

Musch: Honest, easygoing, but he didn't like people who took advantage of him or whatnot. He thought right was right and wrong was wrong, and he followed the right track all his life. Very respected in his community. Not real active in community affairs at that time, other than being a member of the Masonic Lodge.

DePue: How about your mother?

Musch: She was of Swedish descent. Her parents came from Sweden. Neither one knew the other when they came to the United States. Both named Anderson. They met after they got in Cass County, Illinois, and then were married.

DePue: How about her personality? What was she like?

Musch: She was, well, a wonderful person as far as I'm concerned. May be a little prejudiced. She was very concerned about helping other people and did a lot. Her younger sister was an invalid all her life, and she came to her parent's rescue, and after they were gone, did a lot of helping, keeping her sister going. I thought she was a very thoughtful and caring person.

DePue: Did she come from a farm background as well?

Musch: Yes. Yeah.

DePue: What was her name?

Musch: Anderson also.

DePue: Her first name?

Musch: Gertrude. Excuse me, I'm sorry.

DePue: Roy and Gertrude.

Musch: Yes, that's it.

DePue: Back in those days, you didn't say one without the other name, right?

Musch: That's right. You're right.

DePue: Did you have any siblings?

Musch: No. The story there, so my folks told me, was that when I was born, my mother had such a terrible time. She was in labor, I think, for forty-eight hours, something like that. Doctor came and even stayed all night at the farmhouse, and delivered me the next day. He told her that if they should happen to have another child, she wouldn't live through the deal, so they somehow saw fit not to have anymore.

DePue: Now, this was 1921 when you were born. Was your father a World War I veteran?

Musch: No. He had very poor eyes, and therefore he was not suitable for military service. Without his glasses, he couldn't see who you were across the table.

DePue: I know you were born on the farm. Did you grow up on that same farm?

Musch: Yes, I lived there all my life until I went to service. After I came home from service, I of course was already married, and that was when I left the farm. I was there until I was—let's see—almost twenty-two years old.

DePue: We've got a lot of territory before we get even to that age. Here's a picture of you. I think that's in the late twenties. Do you know how old you were at that time?

Musch: I would say about ten. Maybe eight to ten. Twenty-one and eight would be [nineteen] twenty-nine. Ten would be [nineteen] thirty.

DePue: I can't help but look at that picture and think your family was relatively prosperous, at least when that picture was taken.

Musch: Yes, they were.

DePue: So that would have been before the hard years of Depression, perhaps?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: I wonder if we can get the map of the Virginia area, because most people aren't going to be aware of where that is. There we go. Virginia is right in the center of that map. I don't know if you can read it very well. Can you tell us where the farm was in relation to that?

Musch: Yes. You see the route going south from Virginia, four miles out to what is now called Musch Road. One eighth of a mile west on that road is where I was born and raised.

DePue: You were born near Musch Road?

Musch: Right along Musch Road. In fact, the road is named after our family.

DePue: Even I figured that one out. Very good. Tell us about the farm.

Musch: It's 220 acres. My grandfather bought the first part of it in 1891, and then added another fifty acres to it, which was east of what he already had. I don't remember when he bought that. A few years later. That was the size of the farm. I still have it.

DePue: You still own it?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: What kind of crops did you have?

Musch: At that time, when I was home, my mother raised lots of chickens, and we had hogs and a few cows. Not many. Dairy cows, primarily. Of course, we raised corn, wheat, oats, clover. Dad was one of the first in the area to start growing soybeans, back in the early thirties. It was a very versatile farm at that time. Always had a big garden, grape arbor, and all the other connected things therewith.

DePue: Starting with the soybeans, was that considered something of a risk at the time?

Musch: Yes. In fact, my father, I think, was probably one of the first ones—maybe not the first one, but one of the first few—to grow soybeans. In the beginning, they were used primarily—they'd cut when they were green, and stacked in little doodles, I call them, or small haystacks I guess would be another way to describe them. Then it was taken in and stacked near the feeding bunks for the dairy cows. Then it was fed as roughage for the dairy cattle, which was very good at that time.

DePue: What was the thought behind that? Because they're high in protein?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: You had mentioned to me before that you had ducks as well.

Musch: Yes. During the Depression years, my parents raised wild mallards, only a domesticated kind, and sold them to the hunters, because at that time, they could hunt over live decoys. It was quite a prosperous, money-making deal for them.

DePue: I'm trying to envision this. Live decoys. How does this work?

Musch: In other words, they'd clip the wings on the ducks so they couldn't fly. Then they'd put them in a pen out in front of their blinds. Then when the wild ducks would fly overhead, they would quack or honk or—well, quack, I guess—and that would tend to bring the live ducks in closer so they could shoot them. Of course, then they outlawed that. At that time, it was really a very additional moneymaker for the folks. One time they raised, I think, between 125 and 130 in one year and sold them for a dollar apiece, which back in the Depression, a dollar was worth a lot of money.

DePue: Do you have any idea why they decided to outlaw this?

Musch: Using the live decoys, they were killing the wild ones too fast. That's the only reason I could figure out. I really don't know. I was a young kid, not paying much attention to what was going on at that time, but I know that much about it.

DePue: I'm glad you mentioned that, because these kinds of things, who would have thought that that was going on at the time? I certainly didn't know about it. What was the main cash crop for your father?

Musch: During the Depression, hogs and dairy were our main things.

DePue: You had chickens. Did you have egg money as well?

Musch: Oh, yes. When I was a child growing up, little guy, they had cows, and of course, had a separator. Made the cream. My mother made butter, and Dad would take that to town on Saturday nights. Sell the butter and then use that money to buy groceries.

DePue: I would almost think that you got more than enough milk to keep yourselves in plenty of milk. What did you do with the excess milk?

Musch: I don't remember right at that time, when I was real small, but later on, when I was in high school, we sold whole milk to a cheese factory that was in Petersburg at that time. Every day, the truck came and picked up the milk. Early on, that wasn't an option, but it became available when I was probably in – latter years of grade school and up through high school.

DePue: Can you describe the farmhouse and some of the outbuildings for us?

Musch: The house was two-story. Actually, it was a one-story when my grandfather bought the farm in 1891. He immediately built on a second story. It was four rooms downstairs and four rooms upstairs. Then they built on what they called a summer kitchen. It was supposed to be used in the summer. Turned out they used it all year around. I guess shortly after they moved there, too, they built on a second room to the south, which my folks used, I remember, as a dining room, and a kitchen next to it, which was supposed to be a summer kitchen, but we used it all year around. It was not insulated or anything else. In the wintertime, shut it off from the rest of the house. Next morning, my tea kettle would be full of ice on the stove. It was that cold in that room.

DePue: What did you use for heat?

Musch: Had a central furnace in the main part of the house.

DePue: Coal?

Musch: Coal. They brought the coal in on railroad, about a mile from where we lived. At that time, railroad went through a place called Little Indian. I remember, as a little kid, riding with Dad on the box wagon with a team of horses going over there, and they lifted the lumps of coal out of the coal car on the railroad, into the wagon. They brought it back to the house and slid it down a chute into the basement.

DePue: That sounds like a dirty job, too.

Musch: It was.

DePue: Did you have the job, occasionally, of going down in the basement and shoveling some coal?

Musch: Not when I was little. I never did. I helped Dad unload the coal, and then, later on, I guess about the time—well, I can't remember when that started, but anyway, eventually they got power later down the road, and then he put in a stoker. No more lumps of coal to handle, break up, and ashes to carry out, and all that kind of stuff.

DePue: Did you have indoor plumbing?

Musch: No. Little square outhouse, back a ways from the house. Not close.

DePue: What did your mom use for water in the kitchen?

Musch: She was better than most. Dad had a cistern by the house, and it would pipe the water into a little hand pump, so she could pump water out of the cistern to a sink in the kitchen.

DePue: Was he a pretty handy guy with those kinds of things?

Musch: Oh, yeah, he could do almost anything.

DePue: Almost anything. What other things do you recall that your dad was good at?

Musch: He did all the pipework and plumbing for putting that pipe in there. When electricity finally came along down the road, he wired all the outbuildings, as well as the house, for electricity. While I was gone in the service, he installed indoor plumbing, bathroom, and all the other necessary things. Well, he did that before electricity in the basement of the area they built on in 1938. They rebuilt the kitchen. Built it in 1938. He installed a hand pump into the cistern. Every night, he'd pump up the water into that pressure tank, and then Mom would have running water in the kitchen. Not hot and cold, but just cold. Had running water in the kitchen in 1938. He did all the plumbing, too.

DePue: Does that mean you had to put water on the stove to get it heated up?

Musch: That's correct.

DePue: You got outdoor plumbing, and then the water you had in the house, you got to work to get it. How often did you guys get a bath?

Musch: Once a week when I was a kid.

DePue: How did that work?

Musch: In the wintertime, it was once, but in the summertime, more often, because we could pump water out of the well and set it out in the sun and take a bath outdoors at that time.

DePue: Once a week. That's hard work you're doing during the week, right?

Musch: Yeah.

DePue: Did your dad have a tractor?

Musch: Yes. He was not particularly an animal lover. He bought his first tractor in 1924.

DePue: Wow. He would have been ahead of the curve on that, wouldn't he?

Musch: Yes. Then he bought another tractor. Originally, the binders they used to cut wheat and make bundles, and then they shocked it, was driven by the bull wheel, they called it, underneath the binder, and pulled with horses, generally.

DePue: I'm trying to envision what a binder is.

Musch: It cuts the grain off. Wheat, oats, whatever. Then we had canvases with slats on them that went across the platform, into a mechanism on the back, where it gathered together and made what they called a bundle. It was so big around, however long it was. Then it came up with a needle and twine in it, tied—what they called a bundle. Then it kicked it out on the ground. Then you had a crew come along behind, pick it up, and put them in what they called shocks. You'd have to stay there and cure it out until it was finally thrashed. Then, in 1927, Dad bought his second tractor, and also a power binder, which was run with a power take-off from the tractor, so that if anything went wrong, you could stop and work on it and make the binder work without pulling ahead. Before, you had to move the binder in order to get the mechanism to work.

DePue: Was the binder something that worked off the power coming from the tractor?

Musch: Yes. That was a new version in 1927.

DePue: So he was kind of on the cutting edge for his time, then. He started soybeans early. He had tractors earlier than most. Did you guys have a car in the family?

Musch: Oh, yes. Had two. A Sunday car, so to speak, and then a worker, a travel car. When I was a kid, we had a Model T and a Velie.

DePue: A Velie?

Musch: Yeah, which was built in the twenties.



DePue: I never heard of that one. What was the Sunday car?

Musch: It was the Sunday car, the Velie. In fact, his car that they had when he got married was a 1915 Maxwell Roadster.

DePue: I've heard of that one.

Musch: Anyway, he was quite innovative with most everything. I guess he got some of that from my grandfather, because I still have a horse-drawn mower that my grandfather had. To cut through heavy grain or grass, weeds, whatever, he cut a foot off the bar and made it a five-foot mower instead of—no, two foot off. Made it a five-foot mower instead of a seven-foot mower, so it would cut through almost anything.

DePue: Wow. You sound like the family was relatively prosperous. You're getting tractors. You've got a couple cars. Obviously, based on that picture, they were able to dress you up pretty nice. You probably didn't like to wear that outfit, I would guess.

Musch: No, no, no.

DePue: Did the family own its own farm? Did your dad own it?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Outright?

Musch: Yes. Well, with his sister.

DePue: The reason I ask that, because I know that the 1920s weren't the best of times for agriculture. But then, of course, 1929 hits, and the Depression hits, and things got seriously worse for just about everybody.

Musch: The summer of 1929, my folks bought a new Model A Ford, just before the crash came. We were really uptown with a new car.

DePue: Were they buying with cash or were they—

Musch: That I don't remember.

DePue: What was the impact on your family, on that farm, once the Depression did take hold?

Musch: Dad didn't owe anything on their land. He and Mom were very frugal. We had a big garden and all the other things, so we had plenty to eat. Bought the staples, like flour, sugar, coffee, whatever. That was all we bought at the grocery store. We butchered our own hogs, our own beef and chickens, and eggs. We had all of that. We ate well during the Depression, and helped my

mother's brother, who got laid off from his job. Without our help, I don't know how they would have had food to eat, I don't think, part of the time.

DePue: Did they live close by?

Musch: They lived in Beardstown, which is about fifteen miles away.

DePue: But they lived in the city?

Musch: Yes. He had worked on the railroad, and of course that went defunct, his job did, during the Depression.

DePue: So he was out of work for most of those years?

Musch: Yeah.

DePue: What kind of chores did you have growing up?

Musch: Soon as I was able to do it, we had a one-cylinder engine on the pump jack to pump water instead of pumping it by hand. That's another innovation that Dad and my grandfather put in. Didn't even remember when it was put in, but anyway, I learned how to crank that engine to pump water. Dad ran pipe underground, up the little grade to the big tank, which was situated so that the cattle and horses could be in three different pastures and drink out of the same tank. Then eventually, Dad ran water underground, down to where the dairy cow barn was, and so we could have water for them without having to pump it. In other words, we'd turn the faucet on and it'd fill the tank down there.

DePue: I've heard a lot of stories about farming during those days. Oftentimes, the most prized thing a farmer could have is a bunch of young boys to help out doing the work, and there was only one of you. I'm surprised you haven't mentioned a lot of other kind of chores that are typical for that age.

Musch: I helped wherever I could. In fact, Dad bought the McCormick-Deering Ten-Twenty in 1927. I started driving that when I had to brace myself and use both feet to push the clutch in.

DePue: How old were you then?

Musch: Probably eight or ten years old.

DePue: You've been driving for eighty years already.

Musch: Yeah. I had to help Mom feed the chickens and clean out the chicken house. We had lots of hogs. Had to help Dad clean out the hog houses. When we had the dairy cows, I had to help milk every morning before I went to school and when I came home, to boot.

- DePue: When did the family finally get electricity?
- Musch: Nineteen forty-one.
- DePue: We'll talk about that a little bit later. Things were rather rugged. What did you use for light, then? Kerosene lamps?
- Musch: Dad had rigged up wind chargers, he called them, on top of the house. He bought three of these big storage batteries. Two volts in each one. He ran wires up in them, so he ran his radio off of that battery. Had a light in the kitchen, so we had electric light run off those batteries. A small bulb, but at least it was better than the old kerosene lamp.
- DePue: Warren, was your dad ahead of the curve on that one as well?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: There is a pattern here in his life.
- Musch: Yes. He was quite innovative with machinery, too. Altering it. For instance, back, I guess, when I was in high school or maybe before, when you disc, especially with horses with the old single disc, when you went first time over, you'd leave a strip in the middle of the disc, about so wide, in your strip of weeds. Of course, then you doubled back over to get it. He figured out a way to put a shovel off the cultivator in there to cut that strip of weeds out. A couple years later, we went to a machinery show someplace, and somebody had gotten a patent on it.
- DePue: He could have even been a little bit wealthier if he had patented it, huh?
- Musch: Yeah.
- DePue: How about a telephone. Did the family have a phone?
- Musch: Yes, always had phone, long as I can remember. Telephone company was not too prosperous, or didn't take care of it too well, I guess. At times, the line sagged, and sometimes you'd go out and splice the wire yourself so you'd keep the phone going.
- DePue: Was it a party line?
- Musch: Oh, yes. Our ring was a short and a long. Everybody, when they heard that ring, they'd run to the phone and start to listen.
- DePue: Was your mom one of those who would listen in on the conversations?
- Musch: Not always, but she and her sister could speak Swedish, the language. So when they'd talk to each other, they'd talk in Swede, and then people got

unhappy because they couldn't understand what they were talking about.  
[both laugh]

DePue: How close were the neighbors?

Musch: We had a neighbor a quarter of a mile to the west, and I guess about a quarter of a mile to the north. Then the next one was probably nearly a mile south.

DePue: Do you remember butchering? Was that a big activity?

Musch: Oh, yes.

DePue: Cattle and hogs?

Musch: No cattle, just hogs.

DePue: Tell us a little bit about what it's like to butcher a hog on a farm back in those days.

Musch: Well I remember as a little kid ,my grandfather was still alive then. He died when I was six years old. He would come out for butchering. I don't know how he got designated to do the job, but he took the twenty-two rifle, which I still have, and shot the hog. Then my dad would stick it and bleed it. Neighbors came in to help. Then we had the kettle, which I still have, where we heated hot water to scald the hog, and also to render the lard.

DePue: How big are these kettles?

Musch: Fifty-five gallon. That big around. About this tall.

DePue: Big enough you can slide that whole hog into?

Musch: Just about, yeah.

DePue: Hogs back then looked different than they do today, don't they?

Musch: Oh, yeah. They're much longer, slimmer, and leaner now than they were then.

DePue: So they were bigger back then?

Musch: Yeah. Although the ones we butchered were not real big, because too big, then they're hard to handle.

DePue: Was that pretty much a full-day job?

Musch: Yeah. They'd come early in the morning and start. They get the hogs killed and bled, and then they scrape the hair off, and then take the insides out and hang them up to cool out. Generally, of course, in the wintertime, when the weather was cool. Not real cold, because you didn't want the carcass to freeze.

Then after it was cooled out, then you came the next day and cut it up and rendered the lard and whatever else. Ground the sausage. It was probably a three-day operation, at least.

DePue: Wow. There's one part of it I don't quite understand, and I'm sure I'm hearing this right. You'd dump the hog into a vat of boiling water, and pull it out, and scrape the hair off the hog?

Musch: They had special little round things, about so big around, kind of a cup shape with a handle on, you used to scrape the hair off.

DePue: Was that one of the things you were helping with?

Musch: No, I didn't do that. I just watched that part of it.

DePue: You were too small at the time?

Musch: Too small. They didn't want me—

DePue: The part I don't understand, my impression is the innards are still in the hog at that time.

Musch: Yes.

DePue: You're cooking the hog with the innards still in it?

Musch: No. You just put it in enough to loosen hair, just like when you dip a chicken in hot water to get the feathers loose. You're in there just long enough to loosen the feathers. You don't want to get the—

DePue: So just a couple minutes?

Musch: Yeah. I don't remember the time, but just enough to loosen the hair. The way they do it, they put it in, and then somebody would check to see if the hair was loose. If not, they'd leave it another minute or two. Then they'd check it again and they'd hoist it out.

DePue: Warren, I don't know why this fascinates me so much, but I guess it's so far removed from what our experiences are today.

Musch: Yes. It sure is.

DePue: What was it like when the farm finally got electricity?

Musch: It was a whole new way of life. The outdoor privy was gone, because we had indoor plumbing. We had electric lights, which were fantastic. Dad wired all the farm buildings, so we had electric drill, electric saw, and all those kind of tools to use, too.

- DePue: Did you still have dairy cattle at the time?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: Was there electric milking?
- Musch: No, we didn't have that many. We never had any more than about eight cows at any one time. When I was in high school, I guess that's when I got fed up with the stuff, because I had to milk four of those cows every morning, and same way every night. Dad was not a good stripper, so to speak, so I had to go around and finish stripping all of his cows that he'd milked, too. If you didn't do that, then they'd dry up quicker and wouldn't produce as much milk.
- DePue: You've got to explain what a stripper was.
- Musch: You go around and milk the final bits of milk out of the udder. He didn't have the right grip or something to get them clean, but I did.
- DePue: Well, he did before you started helping out with this job.
- Musch: I don't know. I guess, in the beginning, we didn't have that many cows. After I got bigger, was able to milk. I started, I suppose, when I was, oh, probably eleven, twelve years old, something like that.
- DePue: Of all the different things you were doing, working with the chickens and cleaning out the hog pen and milking the cows, and all the other chores, which one did you like the least?
- Musch: I guess it was cleaning out the hog pens, hog houses, because they were low, and you were in there either on your hands and knees or bent over. They weren't taller, like they have nowadays. I guess milking the cows was probably the next one that I didn't like. In fact, that was one of the reasons why the folks found out I didn't like farming at that time, and so saw fit for me to go away to college. Of course, while I was gone, Dad still had horses and the cows and hogs. We were in the hog business together for several years. Finally, we were in the Sangamon Valley Farm Bureau Farm Management Service through the co-op with the University of Illinois. Our records showed that we were losing money on our hogs. We had to either get bigger or get out, so we quit the hog business. I did. Dad kept it for another year, and then he quit. That was the end of the hog business. The cattle disappeared while I was in the service.
- DePue: You mentioned a horse, though. I thought you had tractors. Did the farm still have a couple of draft animals?
- Musch: Still had horses until I came home from the service. In fact, when I was a kid, had a hired man who lived in the house that was a half a mile east of us. There

were two mules and two horses there, and at the home place, there were two mules and two horses, so we had eight head of draft animals.

DePue: These were working animals, I would assume?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: When would you use the tractor? When would you use the draft animals?

Musch: Well, depending on what was being done. Eventually, when I came along, got big enough to go, Dad had done away with the full-time hired man and had a team of horses used only to plant corn with. Then when I came home from the service, went into partnership farming with him, I bought a Ford tractor from a dealer in Jacksonville, and that was the end of the horses. We made a hitch on it to put the planter on, so after that, the horses were all gone.

DePue: Sold them or waited until they died off and didn't—

Musch: Sold them. Other people were still looking for horses at that time.

DePue: You mentioned also that the family had a radio as long as you can remember.

Musch: Yes. Dad had an Atwater Kent was the brand name at that time. He'd invite the neighbors to come in and listen to the radio. It had three dials on it. You had to tune all three of those in exact synchronization to make the thing work. And the volume was not very loud.

DePue: That would sound like your dad was ahead of the curve as far as getting a radio, as well. Do you remember any of the shows you listened to that you liked?

Musch: *Amos and Andy*. There was another one. I can't remember now what it was. It came on about suppertime, normally, through the winter. Summertime, no, because you were busy working and didn't get any time to listen to it. But *Amos and Andy* is the main one I remember.

DePue: Were you able to listen to the news as well, keep up on things?

Musch: There was some news. I don't remember exactly how much or what, but I'm sure we listened to it.

DePue: Did the family get newspapers?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Were you one of those who liked to read the newspapers?

Musch: I can't remember at that time whether I did or didn't.

- DePue: Or were the newspapers so you can use it out in the outhouse?
- Musch: Oh, yes. And the Sears Roebuck catalog was also a standard for occupancy out there, too. The ones that were past. No longer used.
- DePue: No longer dreaming of what to buy out of the new Sears and Roebuck catalog.
- Musch: We had the new catalogs. The older went to the outhouse.
- DePue: Was the family religious?
- Musch: Yes. My family was Lutheran. The Anderson family was Methodist, primarily, at that time. In my mother's neighborhood, there was a church called Zion Church, and it was a combination of Methodist and Presbyterian. When my grandfather moved to the Virginia area, to the farm, no Lutheran church in Virginia, so they joined a Presbyterian church in Virginia. Of course, when Mom married Dad, that's where they both went. I was very active in the church as a youngster. They took me to Sunday school quite frequently, when the weather was fit. I became active in church when I was in high school. So that's how the family became Presbyterians.
- DePue: Was going to church on Sunday the thing that was expected of you?
- Musch: Not always. In fact, when I was a kid, I went to Sunday school, but I don't remember much about staying for church, my real early years, when I was six, seven, eight, ten years old there. I don't think we went very regularly, until I was able to drive myself. I started driving when I was fourteen.
- DePue: The family had cars up to that point already?
- Musch: Oh, yeah.
- DePue: Your dad wasn't big on going to church?
- Musch: Not in the beginning. The story there is he didn't join the church until after I had become a member for several years.
- DePue: Was your mom happy that day?
- Musch: I think so. She went with me a lot more than Dad did. Then eventually, when he finally joined, he had his reasons, which I can't—it was his choice, and then he finally decided he needed to change. Since I was going and active, then he decided to go, too.
- DePue: Tell us about what school was like for you, especially those early years. We'll get into high school a little bit later.



- Musch: I went to Zion School. Actually, we were in Bethlehem school district. The road right east of the house was the dividing line. Because my grandparents lived a mile from the school—Mom's parents—Dad had land transferred into the Zion district so I could go to Zion School. If something happened, I only had a mile to go. Otherwise, it would be a little over two miles from where we lived to the country school.
- DePue: Land transfer, is that what you said?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: So he purchased some land—
- Musch: No. He transferred some acreage from where we lived into the Zion district. You could do that. It was just a matter of a paper transfer.
- DePue: So you have to know somebody, at least, to make that happen, I guess?
- Musch: I guess. I don't know. I don't remember. They did that when I was only five years old, because I started school when I was five, I didn't reach six until a while afterwards.
- DePue: Is this your classic one-room schoolhouse?
- Musch: Yes, one-room school. Big cast iron furnace in the back of the room. The teacher came early, built the fire, and warmed the place up, supposedly, before you got there. She was janitor, furnace keeper, everything.
- DePue: Do you remember any of those teachers?
- Musch: Yeah, my first one was Gertrude Wright. I had her for the first two years, first and second grade. She gave me a swat. I can't remember. Was I in first or second grade? I don't remember what I did, but I was mortified. Of course, when I got home, I didn't get another swat, but I got fear put into me. "It better not ever happen again." And it didn't.
- DePue: How did your parents find out about this? Did you tell them?
- Musch: I think I did, because I knew I had to, because Gertrude Wright was a teacher, and she and Mom were good friends. (laughs) There'd been no problem trying to keep it away. It wouldn't work.
- DePue: Do you remember any of the other teachers you had?
- Musch: Yeah. Mrs. Schultz was my fourth through seventh grade teacher. I can't remember her first name. Then Mary Frank was my eighth grade teacher. Back up a little bit there. When I started school, folks bought a Shetland pony for me to ride to school. There wasn't room in the barn, because enough other

kids were riding horses, so Dad built a shed on, so the pony would be inside during the day while I was at school.

DePue: He built a shed at the schoolhouse?

Musch: Yes, onto the barn that was there. They fixed up. So I rode the pony in rain, whatever. When it was real cold, Dad took me. But otherwise, if it was just raining, I had a raincoat and stuff put on, and I had one of those hip-top lunchboxes. Dad made a strap in it so it hung over my shoulder and down my side. So I'd ride in the rain and not get wet.

DePue: As far as the other kids were concerned, is riding your Shetland pony to school a status symbol? Is that the thing to do?

Musch: Not necessarily, because quite a few other people rode ponies or horses to school, too. Anyway, then the pony died, I think, after I'd had him for two or three years, I can't remember which. Then he bought a small horse from the neighbor, and I rode her the rest of the time, except my eighth grade year. The teacher lived in Virginia, and I walked an eighth of a mile up to the corner and rode to school with her.

DePue: In eighth grade?

Musch: Yeah. In a Model T.

DePue: I'm curious, did you saddle these animals?

Musch: Oh, yeah. In the beginning, of course, Dad took care of it in the beginning, but as soon as I was big enough, then I did it.

DePue: How fast would either the pony or the horse go for you?

Musch: Gee, I don't remember. I know a bunch of kids lived about, oh, I guess about a mile or a little less from where we lived—or a family did—and all those kids would walk along beside me as I rode my horse. When I left them, then I had another mile to go by myself. Well, not quite, because other kids lived there, too. So I had about three quarters of a mile to ride by myself.

DePue: Would you get him up to a canter or a gallop?

Musch: I suppose. I don't remember that particularly. I didn't over-ride him, I know that.

DePue: It still sounds so different. It's kind of fun in that respect.

Musch: Yeah. Then after that, I can't remember what happened to the horse I rode. I think she got sick and died or something. Anyway, that's when we still had four horses, using on the farm, and one of those was rideable. When I was in

beginning of high school, at least, I'd saddle up that old plough horse, so to speak, and team up with the neighbor kids. We'd go someplace and play pasture baseball.

DePue: Pasture baseball?

Musch: Yeah.

DePue: You're going to have to tell us what that is.

Musch: You get out in the pasture. You use cow dung for bases.

DePue: While you've tied up the horse someplace?

Musch: Yes. Oh, yeah. We tied up the horse someplace and then we'd play the game. They were dried, of course. No problem there. We'd get in somebody's pasture, and somebody would bring a softball and a bat, or a regular ball and a bat. We'd play ball.

DePue: Did you have any chores when you went to school, at the school itself?

Musch: Oh, yes. I know when I was a kid in grade school, my first thing to do was I'd come in the house, change clothes, put on my work jacket, fill the pocket full of crackers, and go about my work. First thing we'd do is go start the engine, pump water. While that was pumping, why then I'd do other things, too, like help Dad feed the hogs or whatever. As I got older, why then there was other things to do. Then when we put up hay for the dairy cows, I got big enough to where I could use a big fork to put hay up in the mow. The fork was on one side, and then we had a rope that ran clear out on the other side of the barn. We used Dad's old truck to pull the bales of hay up in the barn. They'd load the thing, and then somehow—I don't know how, they gave me the signal to go ahead, and I'd drive the truck out. Then we got up to the top. It'd hit the track, and then the guy inside would jerk the rope and trip the hay wherever he wanted it. Dad had—I can't remember now, but I think an International truck that was built in the twenties someplace. He was one of the first guys to have a truck.

DePue: It sounds to me like the thing you didn't have was spare time.

Musch: That's right. [laughs] That's right.

DePue: Did you consider that the education you got in that one-room schoolhouse was a good education?

Musch: By all means. Because you see, you learned by doing. As you progressed upward in your grades, you helped kids that were lower than you, and you learned by helping them. I think it was a great experience, myself.

DePue: Did you like it when you got to the point where you could help the other kids?

Musch: Oh, yes.

DePue: Were there any subjects that you especially took to?

Musch: Math.

DePue: Let's make the transition to high school. Where did you go to high school, then?

Musch: Virginia High School in Virginia, Illinois. I started there in fall of 1935. At that time, Mom would take me one day, or whatever it was, and a neighbor lady—there was another fellow a year ahead of me. We lived about a mile apart, and his mother and my mother took turns taking us and then come and getting us. Because that was before they had school buses. Then, beginning my sophomore year, he was driving himself and I was, too, by that time. I started school in September of 1936, as a fourteen-year old. I wouldn't be fifteen until October. I drove for September and most of October while I was fourteen years old. At that time, you really weren't supposed to drive until you were fifteen, but at that time, nobody paid much attention to what was going on.

DePue: I imagine almost everybody your age who was growing up on the farm had already been driving for a couple years.

Musch: That's right.

DePue: They didn't think anything of it?

Musch: No. I had been driving a tractor on the farm and so forth, so that was no big deal.

DePue: There was no law that said you had to be a certain age to be driving on the farm?

Musch: I think the law said you're supposed to be fifteen. I don't think they enforced it, because I drove for two months when I was fourteen.

DePue: But even on the farm, there wasn't any law about that?

Musch: No, no.

DePue: You said you started high school in the fall of 1935. Want you to tell us about 1936, because that was a tough year, as I understand.

Musch: Yes. It was a real bad year as far as farm was concerned, because in that year, we had ten days in a row of over a hundred-degree temperatures in July. I

remember it distinctly, as my mother's brother lived in Missouri as an engineer on the Texas Empire Pipeline Company. Sheldon, Missouri, I believe it was. My mother and her sister and I went down to see him. When we left, everything was pretty and green. We came back and everything was burned up to almost nothing.

DePue: To include the crops, obviously.

Musch: Yeah. Corn and soybeans were just done for.

DePue: Yeah, it is on record as, at least for the state of Illinois and much of the Midwest, as the hottest summer in a century, and also the driest summer in a century.

Musch: Although I think this year has become a little more drier as the year has passed. What I read the other day, temperature-wise, I think this is going to break the record, too. So I heard. I don't know for sure. It's very close.

DePue: Different times, though.

Musch: Yes. We didn't have the hybrid varieties of crops then as we do now, and that made a big difference.

DePue: Did your father get any kind of a crop out of the fields that year?

Musch: Very little. He shucked, with a team and wagon, ear corn. He'd go out in the morning, shuck until noon, come in, have lunch, go back out in the afternoon, and just have a little pile in the middle of the wagon. That was the year that hogs kept us going, because they apparently had a good oat crop, and he used oats and whatever else he could get in the supplement to feed the hogs. That's what kept us going, was the hogs.

DePue: Were there some farmers around the area that went bankrupt that year, went out of business?

Musch: Yes. They lost everything they had. When the banks closed in '29 or '30, whenever it was—

DePue: That would have been '32 when the banks closed.

Musch: Dad had ten dollars in the bank. That's all.

DePue: Was there a bank that closed around your area?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: His bank did?

Musch: Yes, his bank closed. There were three banks in Virginia at that time. Two of them closed. One never did. I don't remember quite the deal on that one.

DePue: Does that mean your dad lost that ten dollars?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Did it take him a long time to start trusting in banks again?

Musch: Not really.

DePue: How about you?

Musch: I don't know. I understood how serious it was. I'm not sure that he really lost that ten, but for a long time, it wasn't available until they reopened again. The bank he dealt with didn't go under. One of the others did. Never did open up again.

DePue: That only illustrates how important it was that your father started the Depression years owning that farm outright.

Musch: That's right. He didn't owe anybody anything at that time, and that's how he survived.

DePue: He wasn't buying any equipment or any of the other things?

Musch: Bought only what we absolutely had to have, and made do with what equipment he had. Didn't buy anything.

DePue: As a child of the Depression, then, what's your thought about how we rely on debt so much today?

Musch: I think they rely on debt too much myself. When I was farming after Dad passed away, farming on my own, I never did borrow any money to buy things that weren't useful on the farm.

DePue: You'd wait until you had the cash in hand.

Musch: Yeah. For instance, I think one car we bought—of course, I didn't finance with the dealer. I went to the bank and got the money for a lot less rate than the dealer was wanting, and I financed it. But all the others, we saved money ahead to where we could go pay cash for it.

DePue: Boy, that would be a totally foreign concept to us today as well.

Musch: I guess it is. I bought the vehicle we came over here in in January. The fellow I bought it from knew my situation. When we got the deal done, I wrote him out a check for the whole thing. Bing.

DePue: He took it right to the bank, no doubt.

Musch: I'm sure.

DePue: This is a change in direction a little bit, but I wonder if you can tell us about your traditions during the holidays, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Musch: Generally speaking, Thanksgiving, it was primarily my dad's side of the family. I don't remember what we did. My grandmother Musch died when I was five. My grandpa died when I was not quite six. So I don't have very much memory of them. My wife had vivid memories of those years, but I don't. After that, we celebrated Thanksgiving with Dad's sister, by the fact that she never did recover from her sister dying on the day before Christmas, 1918, from flu epidemic. It didn't affect Dad, but it did her, so we went along with that. At Christmastime, we went to my mother's family. She had three brothers and a sister and their kids. We had a big gathering at that time, when I was a little kid.

DePue: What was on the dinner table?

Musch: I really can't remember specifically, particularly when I was smaller. But eventually, when we raised ducks, duck was the primary thing—especially in the Depression era, when money was short, use what you had at home. So we had roast duck, which was quite a delicacy to a lot of people. My mom was very good at making them delicious, and my wife followed in the same tracks. They were just out of this world the way they fixed them.

DePue: The ones that you raised on the farm or the wild ducks?

Musch: No, the ones we raised on the farm. My wife also learned how to fix the wild ones, which is unusual. You'd boil them in sage water, which takes away the strong wild flavor, and then they're all right, too.

DePue: Let's go back to the high school years. Did you still favor the math as your favorite subject?

Musch: Yes. I took algebra and geometry. Straight A in both of them, without any problem. Then I wanted to take trigonometry, but it conflicted with my taking ag[riculture], so I took ag instead. Then I didn't have any more math until I got in college. I had a terrible time with English. I managed to struggle through, and finally, my senior year, I got my first and only A in English.

DePue: You must not have been a terrible student. What, pulling B's in English? What was it about English that you were struggling with?

Musch: I don't know. I just couldn't get sentence structure or that kind of stuff. It just didn't work well for me. But the teacher that I had as a senior, we spent six weeks on grammar, and that's where I really learned what was going on.

- DePue: So it was the grammar. It wasn't literature, it was the grammar that you struggled with early—
- Musch: At that time, and literature eventually.
- DePue: Did you have any extracurricular activities you got involved in?
- Musch: Yeah, I played in the band the whole time I was in high school.
- DePue: What instrument?
- Musch: Trombone. I should say I tried. I was never very good. I don't have much musical ability.
- DePue: Well, didn't have much time to practice at home, I would think.
- Musch: Let's back up a little farther. Mom wanted me to play the piano. She bought a piano with her egg money and I started taking lessons, and really took off real good for the first year. After that, no more progress. Finally she gave up on me, because the teacher told Mom that I was never going to make it as a pianist, and I don't think ever would.
- DePue: I wonder if there's any link with milking cows every day and then trying to play the piano.
- Musch: I don't think there would be any connection, but anyway, I failed on that deal. With the band, I played trombone. I had an excellent instructor. Was Paul Alwater, which was a history teacher, and he eventually became superintendent. He played first chair in Sousa's band. That's how good he was. Trombone. He could play any instrument in the whole band. An excellent teacher, but it didn't take with me.
- DePue: Does that mean you played a lot of Sousa marches in the band?
- Musch: Yes. Yes. It was very rewarding for me. Another thing in high school, I wanted to play basketball, and the folks saw fit for me to try. Well, I was too slow, and after about halfway through the season, the coach said, "Warren, you just as well call it quits and go home, because you're never going to make it." So that was the end of the athletic ability. I was too small and too little to play football. As a junior, I only weighed 130 pounds, and I wasn't going to go out there with those 180-pound guys and get beat up. So I didn't play football.
- DePue: Go home and wrestle with the hogs instead.
- Musch: Yeah, yeah. Had they had baseball, I would have jumped at that chance.
- DePue: How big a school was the school?



Musch: There were forty in my graduating class. Classes after me got bigger, so by the time I graduated, there was 250 in the high school, I guess.

DePue: That would have been 1939?

Musch: Nine.

DePue: But that's still pretty small to be fielding a football team.

Musch: Yeah. They did quite well at that time. Basketball, they even went to state one time. They had a bunch of good players. I just couldn't move fast enough to play basketball.

DePue: Did you have any work outside of the farm?

Musch: Occasionally I would go help a neighbor with something or other. Especially if they needed somebody to help with odds and ends when I was in high school. I don't remember what I did—

DePue: Does that mean you were pretty short on pocket money most of the time?

Musch: No. I was very frugal with my money. When I'd go to town on Saturday night, Dad would give me a quarter, and I thought, gee, I was on top of the world. [laughs] Which sounds crazy, but that's the way it was then.

DePue: What did you use that quarter for?

Musch: I'd buy some popcorn or candy or something with it, and probably go home with ten or fifteen cents left.

DePue: I was waiting for you to tell me you went to the movies with it.

Musch: No, I didn't go to the movies when I was a kid. There was a movie house in Virginia, but I seldom went. Whatever reason, I don't know.

DePue: Were you dating at all in high school?

Musch: Yes. I started going with a girl when I was, let's see, I guess senior in high school. Before that, I hadn't dated hardly any at all. Nothing happened of that. When I went away to college, I dated her another year, and then I can't remember quite what the deal was. Anyway, I found out she was going with another guy, so that was the end of that.

DePue: You probably didn't take it quite so nonchalantly at that time, I suspect. What did you plan to do with your life when you were getting towards the end of the high school years?

Musch: At that time, I didn't think I wanted to be a farmer, because I hated milking those cows. By that time, that was the most obnoxious part of the deal. Then

the folks saw fit for me to register at Illinois College, at Jacksonville, Illinois. I started there in the fall of '39.

DePue: Was your dad okay with the notion that you weren't all that excited about farming?

Musch: Apparently so. He didn't object. It was a mutual agreement between both of them that I should do something else if I didn't want to farm.

DePue: How far away was Illinois College from Virginia? From where you lived.

Musch: From where I lived to the college was about—let me see. About twelve miles.

DePue: Does that mean that you could stay at home while you were going to school?

Musch: First three years, I drove back and forth every day, and then was home on weekends, vacations, so forth. During the summer, of course, I helped Dad on the farm. Then the war broke out. Then I stayed over in Jacksonville then, because there wasn't enough gasoline to drive back and forth every day.

DePue: I hadn't thought about that even. Things would have changed because of that. How did you afford going to school?

Musch: Folks saw fit to, I guess, pay my way, and the fact that tuition was very nominal then. In fact, when I started Illinois College, tuition was only eighty dollars a semester.

DePue: Tell us a little bit more about the college, then. Was that a religious-affiliated school?

Musch: It's affiliated with the Presbyterian Church somewhat. Primarily, I think. It's a coed school. At that time, there was about 200, 225 members there, and the boys outnumbered the girls about two-to-one. Of course, MacMurray is an all-girls school at that time. It was on the other side of town. So there was no shortage of girls for dates and whatnot. It was a liberal arts school, so you had to take a certain required—like religion, foreign language, and some other things according to what you were doing. Regardless of what your major was, you had to take all those requirements. Psychology as well. Started out okay, I guess, for the first two years or so. Anyway, then the war came along and my attitude changed. It had been a handicap to me, but I didn't do well in college. I barely had enough credits to graduate.

DePue: Were you not paying attention, or you just—

Musch: I was too busy having a good time. In fact, during my junior year—even, I guess, sophomore year—I saved up my money and bought my own tux, so when they called up from MacMurray and needed somebody to go to a dance, to accompany some girl to a dance, I was always available. In fact, at one

time, my junior year, I went to five formal dances in four weeks. [laughs] Terrible way to do things, but it didn't hurt me. I had the wrong attitude, but I guess at that time, that's what happened. Here today, maybe gone tomorrow. Going to have fun while I'm still here.

DePue: What was your major in college?

Musch: I had a major in chemistry and a minor in math and physics.

DePue: Did you stay with that for the entire time?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: You've alluded to it a couple times, about the beginning of the war, but before I ask you that, I want to ask you if you were one of those kids who was paying attention to what was going on in the world in 1936 through 1940, '41?

Musch: Limited. In fact, in the beginning—like you said, in '36—I think when the war started, like when Germany invaded Poland in '39, I believe is right—

DePue: September of '39, yes.

Musch: Yeah. Then I began to be very alert as to what was going on.

DePue: That would have been right at the time you started college, right?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Were you thinking at that time, Gosh, if this thing gets out of hand, they might come looking for me?

Musch: Not right then, but soon after, I did. I think probably by the end of my sophomore year, I began to think—because some people were already volunteering at that time.

DePue: I think the draft started in the United States in September of 1940.

Musch: Yes.

DePue: I know that right before Pearl Harbor, by a very close vote, the Congress reinstated the draft for another year or two by one vote.

Musch: I was paying attention, and people were volunteering to go serve our country. I'd made acquaintance with a good friend at Illinois College who had gone two summers to what they called platoon class training in the Marines, and already had his commission as second lieutenant. Then I began to be concerned. Am I going to get to finish college before I go on active duty?

DePue: Let me ask you one question before we get there.

- Musch: I'm getting a little ahead of myself, maybe.
- DePue: You graduated in '43. December 7, 1941. Tell me how you heard the news about Pearl Harbor.
- Musch: Okay. I was on the way from Jacksonville, going over to the folks' house with my girlfriend at that time, Margaret Seymour, to introduce her to my parents. We heard it on the radio as we were on our way over there. Of course, that was devastating to both of us. Soon afterwards, I started to realize that they were going to come looking for me, probably.
- DePue: That was your initial thought?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: Did you know anybody who would have already been on active duty, perhaps even out in the Pacific someplace?
- Musch: No, I didn't.
- DePue: What was the reaction of your parents when they heard the news?
- Musch: I can't really remember. I'm sure they were shocked, too, and probably realized, although they never did say so, but realized that I'd be involved in it. I'm sure they did.
- DePue: I know your father was a couple generations away from, a hundred years away, from immigrating, but being of German stock, did he have any thoughts about that?
- Musch: No. In fact, alluding to that, my mother wanted to teach me the Swedish language, and Dad said, "No, we're Americans. You will not do that." I wish she had, because it'd have been nice to know that. Then I took German in college, and there is some similarity between Swedish and German languages.
- DePue: Was your decision to get into the V-12 program something that happened after Pearl Harbor, then?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: V-12. Tell us a little bit more about what that means.
- Musch: V-12 was a Navy program in which you could enlist. If you had one year or so left of college, they'd let you finish college. Then you would go through regular training, and if you made that, then you'd go to OCS [Officer Candidate School] and get a commission.
- DePue: Commission in the Navy?

- Musch: Navy. I had joined in the Marine Corps version of that same program. What some people don't realize is the Navy and the Marine Corps are parts of the naval service.
- DePue: Why the Marine Corps?
- Musch: Because, I guess, I met this fellow who had already been to summer training—he was a year ahead of me at Illinois College—for two summers, and had a commission as a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. Knowing him, I think, is part of the reason why I chose the Marine Corps. The idea that they were, at that time, the “elite force,” quote-unquote. I thought I wanted to be with the best. The idea being that if I'm going to get in trouble, I want the best with me to help me.
- DePue: So you're going to go into harm's way, though?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: What was your mom's reaction to that news?
- Musch: That's still a miracle to me. I never did ask them how they let me volunteer for the Marine Corps without saying one word for or against.
- DePue: Do you think they were proud?
- Musch: I'm certain that they were.
- DePue: And they never expressed an opinion about it?
- Musch: They didn't say, “Why don't you do something else?” or whatever. Or maybe, “Join the Navy instead of the Marine Corps.” Well, no.
- DePue: During the time you were still in college, during summer periods, were you going off to do some kind of training?
- Musch: It was available, but I was not available, so to speak, because I was helping Dad on the farm. Of course, he needed all the help he could get. But then, while I was in the service, he managed somehow to get it all done by himself. Miracle to me how he was able to do it.
- DePue: If you had decided not to enlist, not to join the V-12 program, do you think you could have gotten a deferment to work on the farm?
- Musch: No.
- DePue: They would have come looking for you eventually?
- Musch: Yes. I would have been gone sooner, and not finish college.

DePue: You talked about that time period before you actually enlisted, late '41 through 1943. Rationing. Can you tell us a little bit about what was going on in the country because of the shortages and because we're gearing up to fight?

Musch: I can't remember when they started issuing the coupon book for rationing, but anyway, you had to have coupons to buy sugar, flour, shoes, and things like that, and also coupons for gasoline. Every family was allotted so much as a basic thing. But Dad, being a farmer, had what they called R-stamps, which was for buying gasoline for the farm equipment. That was based on your acreage and so forth that you had. He never did run out. In fact, he always had plenty supply to do the farm work.

DePue: But not enough so that you could be driving back and forth to college every day?

Musch: No.

DePue: Or was that just a convenient excuse not to have to do that?

Musch: No, no. Several years before, I had bought an old Model T out of a junk pile someplace for six dollars, and Dad fixed it up. That's what I drove back and forth on weekends to college.

DePue: Boy, he remained a handy guy all the way through his life.

Musch: Oh, yeah. It's unbelievable. When I was at school—I don't know why or what we were doing, but myself and a good friend, I guess just the two of us, we had five MacMurray girls in that Model T Coupe. There were seven of us in that Model T Coupe. While we were going past MacMurray College, one of the axles broke. So he goes and gets his car. We drag it someplace. My dad comes and gets it, takes it over to the farm and puts in a new axle, and brings it back to me.

DePue: There are worse things than being stuck with five MacMurray girls for a while, huh?

Musch: [laughs] Yeah. That sounds crazy. Kind of tight, but we were all in there. I still don't know how we did it.

DePue: I assume that meat rationing was not a problem for the family.

Musch: Not for the farmer, no.

DePue: Were they insisting that you sell a certain amount, or you weren't paying attention to that?

Musch: No, I don't think there was any requirement on what you could and couldn't do with your own produce. Not that I remember. Of course, we had a big

garden. Mom canned a lot of fruits, vegetables, and stuff. We had our own meat, of course. Eggs, butter, milk. Pretty well self-sufficient.

DePue: So only some of the things, like sugar, coffee, salt—

Musch: Flour. Basic stuff.

DePue: Did you cure your own bacon as well, then?

Musch: I don't remember particularly about the bacon, but Dad cured our own hams and that kind of stuff. We had wooden barrels that they put salt brine in. It was out in what we called the smokehouse. I don't remember what they did, but they had a liquid smoke they put in it that gave the meat a smoke flavor. You cured it in that brine for a certain length of time, and then you hung it up on railings out on the top of that old shed. Then when you needed some, you went and got one, took it inside. If it was too salty, you boiled the salt out of it, and you ate it.

DePue: I'm almost getting hungry listening to this. I know I'm supposed to ask you about John Newbery. Was he your buddy who helped you get in the program?

Musch: Yes. Yeah, he lived out northeast of Jacksonville. This is the one who already had his commission. In fact, I guess I met him, I think, toward the end of my freshman year. After he went to school that summer—that would have been his second summer, I guess, when he was going into his junior year. He got his commission, but then they let him finish his last two years of school. Then, I think, just a week or two after he graduated, he was called to active duty.

DePue: You graduate in the spring of 1943, then?

Musch: In May of '43.

DePue: From what you've told me, you'd had no military experience at that time at all?

Musch: None.

DePue: Had you even taken any correspondence courses?

Musch: I did, after I enlisted in the Marine Corps in May of '42. Then I took a correspondence course from the Marine Corps correspondence school. It was mainly map reading and things connected therewith. I guess it helped me, because I did very well on all the stuff that was done. Because I applied myself like I should, when I did that, which I hadn't in my college courses. But anyway, then when I got to OCS [Officer Candidate School], you had to make three choices. One had to be infantry, and then you have two other choices. I put in ground crew for the air wing and combat intelligence. I guess I got my second choice because I did well on that correspondence course.

DePue: What was your first choice?

Musch: First choice had to be infantry. Your first choice had to be infantry for everybody.

DePue: So this is the Marine Corps' version of a choice? You will take infantry as your first choice. Welcome to the Marine Corps, huh?

Musch: Yeah, yeah. The worst is when I went to boot camp, but we'll get into that later.

DePue: I think we're about at the point. So you did not get a commission when you graduated?

Musch: No, no.

DePue: When you enlisted, was that the same thing as signing up for the V-12 program?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: So one and the same.

Musch: Yes. The idea being that they would let you finish your last year or last two years of school, and then go on active duty.

DePue: But you'd get to start as an enlisted man?

Musch: Yes, as a private.

DePue: There are always legends about Marine Corps boot camp. Tell us about that.

Musch: That was quite an experience. One I'll never forget.

DePue: Where did you go?

Musch: Went to Parris Island, South Carolina. Forty-three was the year of floods in Central Illinois. We came to Springfield, along with another fellow that was in my class at IC [Illinois College], Bob Spink. Our parents brought us to Springfield. Caught a bus, went to Decatur. I don't know why. We were to catch the train there. I don't know why there instead of Springfield, but that's what it was. Anyway, the floods had washed out a railroad bridge someplace, and so we had to spend the night in Decatur. Then we took off for Parris Island, South Carolina. We both got to boot camp one day late. We were already assigned a platoon. The DI [Drill Instructor] never let us forget that. Especially me. He said, "You got here late." My fault. Even though I had nothing to do with it.



My indoctrination to boot camp. I lined up the first day to get my gear, my clothes. After I had shed all my civvy clothes, got my sheared haircut. Cut off bare, nothing left. Almost like I am now. Anyway, we're standing there, all lined up, getting our stuff. I had on what we called a pith helmet, which is a sun helmet with the Marine Corps emblem on the front. I have a larger head than average, so the emblem sat right against my head. The DI threw the blanket, hit me in the head hard enough that it made blood run down the front, and it dripped off the end of my nose. That was my first indoctrination to boot camp. I thought, Gee, what in the world have I got into now? And I can't turn back. I'm here. I've got to do it. [laughs]

DePue: Any other stories you remember about that DI or some others?

Musch: I had a PFC and a corporal as drill instructors. It was, "Yes sir, no sir." He'd say, "Warren Musch, request permission to speak with Private So-and-So" or "Corporal So-and-So." You had to stand at attention while he did that, and they'd either accept or deny your request.

DePue: This would have been the summer of 1943, right?

Musch: I was there from the eighteenth of May, '43, to the middle of July. I can't remember what day we left in July. We were there for eight weeks.

DePue: Now, just in case they didn't have your total attention, had you been reading or hearing about what the Marines were doing in Guadalcanal and Bougainville?

Musch: To some extent I had, yes.

DePue: Did that get your attention?

Musch: I don't know. It really didn't sink in, I guess. I don't know. Anyway, I wasn't really concerned about that. I guess I wasn't thinking very far ahead. I don't know.

DePue: Were you just that average kid who figured he was indestructible at the time?

Musch: I suppose. I don't know. You see, there were two platoons of us that arrived at Parris Island at the same time, comprising of all college graduates from the East Coast through the Midwest. The Big Ten, the Big Eight and the West Coast. People from all over the United States, and I was in with all of those guys.

DePue: Sounds like your entire platoon, your entire class, were destined to become officers, then.

Musch: Yes. Both platoons were destined to go to OCS.

- DePue: Did they treat you differently because of that?
- Musch: Yes. First of all, you volunteered. You screamed until you couldn't hardly talk sometimes. "Yes, sir, I volunteered." "Can't hear you." Go through it again, three, four times. Of course, we were given the brunt of everything, because they knew we were college graduates and going to OCS. We really had it.
- DePue: From what you just said, they didn't treat you nicer; they treated you rougher.
- Musch: Oh, yeah. Yeah. We were given more go because we were volunteers, first. Second, because we were headed for OCS. Both things were not in our favor as far as being treated.
- DePue: Were these all veterans from combat in the Pacific?
- Musch: That I don't know. That I don't know. I can't answer that.
- DePue: Anything in particular that you remember about that training? Any stories from those days?
- Musch: There's one time I remember very specifically. We went and got our shots. We walked through the doorway, and as you walked through the doorway, a corpsman hit you in both arms with a needle. Some guy would take two or three steps and collapse on the floor—or on the deck, as we soon learned to say. With me, it didn't bother me, but then they took us out on the drill field. This was in June, and hot. Asphalt drill field. Started drilling. Three guys passed out. They dragged them over in the shade. I was the fourth one. They said, "Rear march," and I didn't turn around. I almost clobbered the guy behind me with my M1[rifle]. So they dragged me over in the shade, gave me an APC [aspirin, phenacetin and caffeine] pill. They called the drill off then, after the fourth one passed out. Then that night, we had guard duty. My bunkmate—we were in double-deck beds, or bunks—came in to wake me to go on guard duty at one o'clock in the morning. I had perspired to where my whole sack, so to speak, was damp. Went on guard duty. I didn't know how I was ever going to make it. Well, unfortunately, and fortunately, both. I couldn't walk anymore, so I decided I'd sit down for just a jiffy. Luckily, I heard the corporal, the guard, coming, so I jumped up and stood at attention when he came. If he'd caught me sitting down, that'd been it for me. I'd have been out, gone.
- DePue: Kicked out of the Marine Corps. You're convinced of that?
- Musch: Not necessarily kicked out, but I'd have been kicked out of officer training. I'd have gone immediately to a line company in combat.
- DePue: In other words, they had you guys sweating it out for the whole time you were there. That was the hammer over your head, so to speak?

- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: What kept you going through? Did it help that you had had all these years growing up on the farm and used to hard labor?
- Musch: So to speak. After I had that one bout in boot camp. After that, I recovered in just very short order. After that, nothing bothered me at all physically. I could do it. Except the push-ups. I couldn't do hardly any. But anything else, I could stay with the best of them.
- DePue: Being a little bit smaller than some of your fellow Marines wasn't a problem?
- Musch: No, because there were other guys there smaller than me. Of course, there's some bigger, too. In fact, one interesting fact, when we qualified on the rifle range on qualification day, the fellow that followed me on the same target I was on, with the possibility of 230 points, and he had 228. He missed two bull's-eyes in all the firing he did.
- DePue: I think we've got a picture that maybe we can find. There's a picture of Lieutenant Musch. Now, this would have been a little bit after the timeframe, but that emblem that you're wearing there, what does that signify?
- Musch: That's a sharpshooter badge. That was what I was just getting ready to tell you about. Somehow or another, on qualification day, I don't know how I did it, but I fired on the neighbor's target. I got a four for him. When he fired back on me, he got a two. I lacked one point of getting expert. I had 209. I needed 210 for expert. With those two points, I'd had 211.
- DePue: So you were a sharpshooter instead?
- Musch: Instead of an expert.
- DePue: I think we also had a picture from—not a picture necessarily of you, but those are those pith helmets you were talking about, and the Marines out in the rifle range. Did the Marines take rifle training seriously?
- Musch: Oh, yes. First of all, in the Marine Corps, you're a rifleman, regardless of what you do, where you go, or what your company. You're a rifleman first.
- DePue: Doesn't matter if you're going to become a supply sergeant down the road?
- Musch: That's right. Everybody qualifies as a rifleman first.
- DePue: And you were expected to know how to actually hit the target, not just pull the trigger?
- Musch: That's true. I did very well until they got on the 500-yard line, and I don't know why I goofed up there, but I did.

- DePue: I've been on a rifle range enough to know 500 yards is a long way out there. The targets get to be pretty small by that time. M1 is what you were practicing on?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: Is that what you had for the rest of the war, then?
- Musch: No. When I became an officer, I would shoot a carbine, which is thirty caliber, but much smaller than an M1. Not as dependable. Not as much knock-down power as the M1. Not quite as dependable as the M1.
- DePue: But you weren't in a position where you were expected to be firing as much at that time?
- Musch: No, but when I got in combat, after the initial day of landing, I picked up an M1 and threw my carbine away.
- DePue: I think that will be the next session when we get to there. What happens after the boot camp?
- Musch: I leave boot camp about the middle of July of '43. Take an old, dirty, smoky train to Quantico, to Officer's Candidate School, or OCS. When I got transferred there, I became a PFC [Private First Class], or at least I received PFC pay while I was at OCS, and was there for eight weeks, from the middle of July to the middle of September. Then I got a temporary commission in the Marine Corps Reserve.
- DePue: How was the training at Quantico different from what you got in boot camp, then?
- Musch: I guess, in some respects, it was more intensive, and things that have to do with leading up to you becoming an officer, I think. Leadership is stressed, and being able to take orders and carry them out, and give orders, too, because you formed groups, squads, and operated squads there, which is a little different than boot camp. Boot camp was more or less individual training and preparing you. More of a group training and learning to do that thing. And more spit and polish, too. In other words, when we came in off of the training, we had to clean up, put on our khakis, to go eat evening meal.
- DePue: So now you're going to have to start looking like an officer, huh?
- Musch: That's right. I learned to starch, press, and iron my own shirts. You put on your khakis for morning inspection on Saturday morning. After you put them on, you didn't sit down. You stood until you were inspected, because you didn't want a crease or a wrinkle anyplace in your uniform.

- DePue: What point in the training did you get your healthy dose of Marine Corps history and traditions?
- Musch: That was all part of it, too, in that. Then, of course, we got more of it when we got to Reserve Officer's Class. It was a temporary commission after eight weeks. Then if you went to ROC, or Reserve Officer's Class, and then when you got out of that, you got a permanent commission in the United States Marine Corps Reserve.
- DePue: Why did they have this temporary thing? In case you had to wash out?
- Musch: Yeah. A guy or two did. I don't know what happened. They were there, and all of a sudden disappeared. You didn't know why or when or where. They just disappeared. No reasons given. No explanation. In fact, in OCS, my bunkmate all the sudden just disappeared.
- DePue: Any idea what he might have done wrong?
- Musch: He wasn't kicked out of the Marine Corps. He was—to a permanently enlisted man and sent to combat someplace.
- DePue: Do you have any idea why?
- Musch: They didn't meet the requirements somewhere along the line, I guess.
- DePue: But you didn't know exactly what that was?
- Musch: No explanation given. If you failed, they told you why you failed, but nobody else knew why.
- DePue: Do you think the drill sergeants, the instructors, deliberately didn't tell you, just to kind of keep you on your toes and to have that tension there?
- Musch: I have no idea. I wondered why my bunkmate was gone, and they said, "He washed out." That was it. No other thing given.
- DePue: Were you not supposed to be asking questions?
- Musch: In ROC, I guess you weren't. They didn't tell me not to ask, but there were more than one of us wondered what happened to the fellow. I don't know that I even asked, but somebody did.
- DePue: What happens after this second eight-week block instruction, then?
- Musch: Reserve Officer Class. We trained as units. We fired mortars, machineguns, and all that kind of stuff to get weapon familiarization, and worked as squads in problems that we had out in the boondocks and so forth.
- DePue: Were you actually assigned to a combat unit, or these are school units?

- Musch: This was units made up within the class. Somebody was squad leader, and we followed as a member of the squad and so forth. And took turns. We moved from one position to another, so we had training in all positions.
- DePue: During this whole course of training, but especially as you progressed along into the more advanced levels, were your instructors talking about what was happening to the Marines in the Pacific?
- Musch: No. Not deliberately, but as I look back and think now, they were preparing us probably for the worst.
- DePue: How good do you think all of this training was?
- Musch: It was very good. In other words, you were taught to look out for your fellow man, and he was taught to look out for you. The idea being that you worked together as a team, and not as individuals. If one guy falls, somebody is right there to take his place. The fellow that falls will be taken care of by somebody else.
- DePue: I've talked to quite a few Marines of a later generation, shall we say, and what was drummed into them is, You never leave a Marine behind.
- Musch: That's right.
- DePue: You got that, too?
- Musch: Absolutely.
- DePue: Looks to me like you take that to heart.
- Musch: Yeah. Yeah. [emotional] As they say, you can't buy it, you can't get it; you earn it, to be a U.S. Marine.
- DePue: Looks like they trained you well on that respect.
- Musch: [laughs] I guess so. Can't explain it until you've been there.
- DePue: When you got to this reserve officer training course, you said you started to train at squad and platoon level. Was it still infantry-oriented?
- Musch: Oh, yes. Yeah.
- DePue: At that time, did you think you were going to be an infantry platoon leader?
- Musch: I didn't really know. I assumed probably I would, because at that time, you didn't know whether you got your request or not. It wasn't until I was out of ROC that I got my orders to the Fifth Marine Division in California at Camp Pendleton, that I had orders to go to the Combat Intelligence Training Center of the Army at Camp Ritchie, Maryland. Then I knew I got my second choice.

DePue: When did you actually fill out those preferences in the first place? Was that in boot camp?

Musch: No, in the Reserve Officer's Class.

DePue: At the beginning of that, then.

Musch: I don't know if it was the beginning, but someplace during that time. Fairly early on, I think.

DePue: What were you hoping you were going to get as an assignment?

Musch: I was hoping I'd get—as a ground crew for the Marine air wing. I thought that was a big shot in the dark, but I thought, well ask; you might get it. But I got my second choice, and I liked what I did. I lucked out in getting at Third Battalion, Twenty-Eighth Marines, Fifth Marine Division. Colonel Shephard was the lieutenant colonel. Right after there, I got out to Pendleton. The grapevine said, "Oh, you'll have a heck of a time with that man. He's terrible." Well, the opposite was true. We got along just like that. I had great admiration for him. He was very concerned about his men, and I got along with him. I could go in and talk to him almost like we're talking.

DePue: When did you get to Pendleton?

Musch: February 11, 1944.

DePue: When did you get done with your reserve officer training, then?

Musch: Let me see. I'll have to back up. July. Middle of September. Then from middle of September to—yeah, middle of November when I got out of ROC, and that's when I got my orders to go to Camp Ritchie, Maryland. We didn't know what that was, but we later found out that it was—we saw other Marines in the area, but they wouldn't tell us what they were doing. They were guards at Camp David, the president's retreat. We were ninety miles up in the hills from Baltimore, is where Camp Ritchie, Maryland is located.

DePue: What were you doing while you were there?

Musch: I can't remember, but I think there were probably twelve or fourteen out of my ROC class that were assigned there, along with probably twice that many enlisted men, and then a captain, who was in charge of all the Marines there. We were mixed in with Army people, divided up into squads, or groups—squads, I guess—for training purposes. There was an Army captain in charge of my unit. Of course, there we had familiarization with weapons again, and also how to do proper intelligence procedures. Map reading and all that kind of stuff. One problem we had was they had stations throughout the timber there, forest, and we went on these, I guess—what's the word I want? Patrols. We had to go from where our base was and find these checkpoints at night,

using only a compass to get from one place to another. The Army captain in charge of the group I was in said, "Musch, you're the point man of this patrol." I said, "Okay. Yes, Captain, I'll do that." The first two, by some manner or reason, I had the knowledge or whatever it took to follow compass readings. I hit the checkpoint. It's completely dark. No lights showing. I hit the first two right on the button, and I said, "Well, Captain, you need to let some of your Army fellows get some experience of doing this." "Okay." So he turned it over to one of the Army fellows. We got lost and wandered around out in the woods for a while. We finally got there. The captain says, "Look, Musch, you're going to lead us the rest of the way through this program, and we're not going to get lost again."

DePue: It almost sounds like you're learning the skills in reconnaissance.

Musch: That's what it was.

DePue: It's a parallel skill with being in the intelligence branch. This was part of the intelligence training, you think?

Musch: I think it was.

DePue: But that's not how they described it to you at the time?

Musch: I didn't know what combat intelligence was. The Marines had not used it much at all up until that time.

DePue: One of the reasons I'm asking about this timeframe is I think it was November of '43 when [the battle of ] Tarawa was going on. I wonder if you guys didn't hear about Tarawa and that didn't capture your attention.

Musch: It did.

DePue: Can you tell us about how you heard it and what your reaction was?

Musch: I don't remember too much about that, I guess, because I was so involved in my training. It occupied our time to where we had almost no time left to do anything else. I don't remember it vividly. I remember when it was going on, but as to the results and so forth, it didn't really impress me, I guess, like it should, because—I don't know. I can't explain why.

DePue: When you were going through this training, how motivated were you and the rest of the Marines and the soldiers you were with to learn well and to do your job right?

Musch: Of course, I didn't have any contact with the Army fellows, other than when we were on problems. Otherwise, the Marines all lived to themselves. Idea being, getting as much training as we could to be as well prepared as we possibly could be.



DePue: The reason I'm asking, because if you hear about Tarawa, you say, "Boy, this is serious business."

Musch: Yes. I'm sure we were very impressed with that. My explanation would be you don't worry about the situation, particularly, until you really get there, or almost there.

DePue: You got to Pendleton, you say, about February or March timeframe?

Musch: February the eleventh.

DePue: Of '44?

Musch: Four.

DePue: Did you have a leave anywhere in this process?

Musch: Yes. I had ten days travel, and I guess R and R, between the time I left Camp Ritchie, Maryland and I had to report in to Pendleton. So I came home. Dad helped me buy a car, with the idea of driving it out to the West Coast and sell it when I went overseas. Several fellows were getting married, so I called up my sweetheart, Haroldine, and said, "Why don't you come out?" I was home in February and she wanted to get married then. I said, "No, I'm not going to go and leave a wife behind when I go overseas." Well, I changed my mind, like I've done several times in my life. Anyway, she came out and three days later we were married, on the twenty-third of June, 1944.

DePue: Okay. You're going to have to take a couple steps back and tell us how the two of you met in the first place, and tell us more about Haroldine. Her name and things like that.

Musch: We both went to the same church. Her dad and my dad worked together to form a cooperative locker plant<sup>1</sup> in Virginia, back in the early forties, I guess. Yeah, they had it formed, I guess, before the war. Anyway, he was my 4-H leader when I was in 4-H as a kid. She was a freshman when I was a senior in high school, and we didn't date until she had graduated from high school and we went to the alumni banquet. We both went to the same church, and we'd been there that morning, and after



<sup>1</sup> *Locker plant* refers to a commercial operation specializing in butchering and freezing meats, before home freezers or refrigerator units with freezers came on the home scene well after WWII ended. [Editor]

church I stopped by the house. She came to the door and she said, “You want to see my dad?” I said, “No, I came to see you.” Speechless, which is not Haroldine’s nature. She’s very outgoing, very flamboyant. Never at a loss for words for anybody or anything. And that was our first date, to the alumni banquet. All the seniors went. Now a couple of them show up and say thank you, and they’re gone. That summer, we went together. A whole bunch of us went. I had a car and a lot of the people didn’t. We always wound up together. Then that fall, she went to Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri, and of course I was at Illinois College. Two times I took the bus down to Columbia, Missouri to see her. Then when I went on active duty, she transferred to University of Illinois. So she was home, of course, in February, when I was home, or came home because I was going to be there, I guess. I can’t remember that part of it. But anyway, I gave her a ring then. She was ready to get married.. I think it was in May I called her up, and she came out the twentieth of June. Three days later, we were married.

DePue: When did you first ask her to marry you, roughly?

Musch: I guess it was when I was home in February.

DePue: Of ’43?

Musch: Forty-four. Yeah, ’44. February ’44.

DePue: You said that she wasn’t ready to get married at that time?

Musch: She was, but I wasn’t.

DePue: So you wanted to be engaged, but not married? Why?

Musch: My theory then was I didn’t want to leave a wife behind in case something happened to me. Then I changed my mind, see.

DePue: Was she expressing any opinion about you being in the Marines?

Musch: No, not that I can recall.

DePue: When you made that decision—and this is a couple years before, when you first joined the V-12 program—did you know her well at that time?

Musch: I knew her well, but we weren’t going together at that time.

DePue: Were you still busy with the MacMurray girls at the time?

Musch: You got it. (laughs)

DePue: It’s interesting. You said that your parents never really gave you feedback one way or another, but apparently they were supportive.

- Musch: Apparently so, because nothing was ever said against what I had done. Of course, I conferred with them before I did it. No doubt about that.
- DePue: They didn't say one thing or another?
- Musch: They didn't say, "No, don't do that." I can't remember what their reaction was, other than fact everybody else was either volunteering or being drafted or whatever. I guess they assumed that if I made the choice, it was up to me.
- DePue: How about Haroldine's attitude towards you being in the Marines?
- Musch: I don't know. I can't remember, other than the fact that I guess when I left for active duty, then she was concerned, but not overly concerned at that time.
- DePue: Warren, you need to tell us about her name. What was her maiden name?
- Musch: Husted, H-u-s-t-e-d, which is not a common name, particularly. The reason she was named Haroldine, she was a second child, was supposed to have been a boy. Her father's name was Guy Harold. Since she wasn't a boy, they put i-n-e on it and made it for a girl. Very unusual. Anyplace she went, if she said, "This is Haroldine," everybody knew who it was.
- DePue: You told us a little bit about her personality. Why don't you tell us some more?
- Musch: She's very outgoing. She never knew a stranger. She could talk to anybody, almost anywhere, anytime. We traveled a lot, especially after we both retired. She'd strike up a conversation in the checkout lane in the grocery store, or just anyplace.
- DePue: Is that what attracted you to her?
- Musch: Gee, I don't know how it happened. I just can't explain it particularly, other than the fact that we seemed to hit it off from the very beginning. Another strange thing, even after we were engaged and I was in the West Coast, I dated other gals out there, and she went to U of I and dated other fellows out there.
- DePue: And you both knew that was going on?
- Musch: Yes. That's unusual, I'm sure.
- DePue: You'd both agreed on that?
- Musch: Yes. We told our granddaughter that, and she had a fit. Which is not a usual thing, I don't think.

DePue: Even when you're out on the West Coast and dating girls out on the West Coast, did you have it in your mind that Haroldine was the girl for you?

Musch: Oh yes, no doubt. Not a fleeting moment otherwise.

DePue: Tell us a little bit more, then, about wedding day. I think we've got a picture of you with some other folks there.



Musch: That's John and Doris Newbery. That's John Newbery, the fellow I told you about. Became my best friend.

DePue: Oh, very good. Who's the little girl on the left there?

Musch: That's his wife. Doris Mengden. He met her at Illinois College.

DePue: But the smaller picture on the left.

Musch: That's Haroldine as a little girl. I'm pretty sure it is. Yes.

DePue: You gave us that picture and the picture of you when you were a little tyke, as well. Great pictures, the two of you together.



Musch: In the beginning, we didn't have them, but then we finally found them and thought it was quite unusual to have two pictures like that, about the same age.

DePue: Anyway, I interrupted you about the wedding.

Musch: Anyway, Haroldine came out to—she rode the train to Chicago. Some lady from Virginia was going to Chicago, so she went with her and helped her change trains in Chicago. Then she rode the train out to California by herself, changed in Los Angeles, and I met her at the station at Oceanside. Then we applied, got our license. Had to wait three days, of course. They gave me two extra days off because I got married.

DePue: How many people at the wedding?

Musch: Just the four of us.

DePue: That was it?

Musch: Yeah. Another couple that lived out there—he was also a Marine—joined us for our wedding supper. For the marriage, it was just the four of us. We were married at the Santa Margarita Ranch House Chapel on Camp Pendleton.

DePue: Pretty place?

Musch: Yes. Very rustic and typical of a ranch house. Chapel. (unintelligible) It's still there.

DePue: Was it somewhat disappointing that you couldn't have your family or her family there?

Musch: No, it wasn't to us. We'd like to have had it that way, but there wasn't a choice, so we didn't really think there was anything—because we knew family couldn't travel at that time. None of them could be with us.

DePue: That probably wasn't all that unusual in those years.

Musch: No.

DePue: What did your parents think of Haroldine.

Musch: They liked her. It's sort of strange there. I can't remember, but I think it was Haroldine's mother and my dad thought it was great. Haroldine's dad and my mother weren't too enthused with it. My dad and her mother were for it, and the other two were not too sure, so there was two and two on that, one on each side of the family.

DePue: Did you know about it at the time?

Musch: Yes. Yeah, we knew about it ahead of time. But Haroldine's dad arranged for this lady to go on the train with her to Chicago and help her change trains.

DePue: What were their reservations? Did it have anything to do with you heading off to combat soon?

Musch: I don't know about that. However, by the fact that when I found out I was going to be shipped overseas for combat, we were able to apply and get gas ration stamps enough for her to drive the car home. She drove the car from California back to Virginia. She had two other gals with her as far as Oklahoma City. From Oklahoma City on, she was by herself.

DePue: You're at Camp Pendleton. Some of that time, she's there with you. Tell us about what kind of training is going on while you're there.

Musch: I had combat intelligence section, which comprised of myself, platoon sergeant, a section chief, and then I had seventeen other men, ranging from buck sergeants to privates, all assigned to different duties as far as clerks and keeping records and maps and so forth. Our duty, primarily in training, was to train—for me—was to train the boys in my section. Then our duty became, as soon as we got organized, to train the rest of the battalion in map reading and whatever else intelligence factors were involved.

DePue: Was it there that you were assigned to a unit?

Musch: Pardon?

DePue: Were you assigned to a unit there?

Musch: Yes. In fact, I was already assigned when I left Quantico. I was assigned to Headquarters Company, Third Battalion, Twenty-Eighth Marines when I left Quantico.

DePue: So you got Third Battalion, Twenty-Eighth Marines, Fifth Marine Division. This was a division that was formed after the war started, then?

Musch: Yes, it was formed up in February of '44. In the Twenty-Eighth Marines, I was the fifth officer to join the regiment. There weren't very many people there when I got there.

DePue: How many regiments did the division have?

Musch: Three. Well, actually, four, because they had three infantry regiments and an artillery regiment.

DePue: How many battalions in the regiment?

Musch: Three.



- DePue: What, three line companies in each battalion, plus a weapons—
- Musch: Yes. Then they had a special weapons company, in which parts of it could be attached to any one of the other companies or whatever, too.
- DePue: When you're at Pendleton, you talked about the responsibility of training other people about map reading and some of these other basic intelligence skills, but were you doing company and battalion-level exercises, as well?
- Musch: At times we were. At times we went out on our own, just a section, and trained. Just our own group, by ourselves. Then, of course, we were involved in platoon and company exercises, as well. Finally, the whole regiment was involved in some of the training exercises. Not necessarily, I don't think, until we got over to Hawaii did we get the regimental training.
- DePue: How good a training did you think you got at those higher levels?
- Musch: It was more of a cooperation, communication, between units to make sure that we could still keep communication lines open in battle.
- DePue: Did you have a lot of experienced staff officers, people who were coming back from combat units to fill some of these higher ranks on the enlisted or the officer ranks?
- Musch: Yes. They disbanded the raiders and also the paratrooper battalions. They became the nucleus for the Fifth Marine Division. In fact, in my case, my section chief, Bob Turner, had been in combat on New Caledonia, and I had two fellows, corporals, that had been in—and a sergeant, I guess—had been in the raider battalion, and several of the guys had been in the parachute battalions. Then, of course, I had probably five or six that were privates who had not had any more training than I'd had. But somehow or another, I had the common sense, I guess you'd put it, to say, "Here am I, a ninety-day wonder. I'm not about to tell these boys what to do. They've been in combat. They're going to teach me what the ropes are." I operated with that idea in mind, and it couldn't have worked out better.
- DePue: How important was it to have those veterans around, then?
- Musch: Oh, wonderful. It was a matter of, you might say, life or death, almost.
- DePue: Warren, this is about where I wanted to get today. That means that next time, we get to have you ship overseas, spend some time in Hawaii and, eventually, make your way to Iwo Jima. And then there's plenty to talk about after the Iwo Jima experience, as well. Thank you very much.—

(end of interview #1)

## Interview with Warren Musch

# VR2-V-L-2012-040.02

Interview # 2: October 18, 2012

DePue: Mark DePue

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DePue: Good morning. My name is Mark DePue. I'm the director of oral history with the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library. Today is Thursday, October 18, 2012. I'm here for my second session with Warren Musch. How are you, Warren?

Musch: I'm doing great today, thank you. How about you?

DePue: You look great.

Musch: Thank you.

DePue: How many people can still wear the uniform that they wore back in World War II?

Musch: Not very many. I'm one of the fortunate few.

DePue: Have you always had the metabolism to be able to do that?

Musch: Yes. In fact, I weigh twenty-five pounds less now than when I got home from the service in 1946.

DePue: Wow. That's something else. It's amazing to see you in this uniform. The number here that you've got, four-eight-three-one.

Musch: The history of this uniform is, I put it on new the day I was getting ready to land on Iwo Jima. Wore it for thirty-six days, the whole time I was there.





Came off. As soon as I got back to camp, I washed it, laundered it, and put it in my foot locker. It didn't see the light of day until '06, when I wore it to give a talk about my experience in World War II. The forty-eight thirty-five signifies what my rank was, what unit I belonged to, and so forth. No rank insignia was worn on Iwo at all. You couldn't tell one from another unless you knew the code for the number. The four meant I was a lieutenant, either first or second lieutenant. The eight meant I belonged to the Twenty-Eighth Marines, which was Twenty-Eighth Regiment in Army terms. The three meant I was in the Third Battalion, and the first, I mean number one, meant I was in Headquarters Company. If you knew the code, you knew what unit the person belonged to. Of course, over here, my name is stenciled by my pocket.

DePue: Yeah, you can barely read that now.

Musch: It's almost washed out.

DePue: We wanted to start with a couple pictures and things that you talked about last time. If we can go to the picture. Here you are in Quantico, going through the Officer Candidate School. Did I get the name of the school correct?

Musch: Yes, you have.

DePue: Looking pretty proud there in this one. Tell us about what this one is representing.

Musch: That was after I had gotten my commission as a temporary second lieutenant, and then training in Reserve Officer's Class. We did combat exercises and live-fire training at times in the last phases of our training there. This shows me picking up a mortar shell, getting ready to put it in the tube to fire the mortar.

DePue: This looks like a picture that the publicity department, or the—

Musch: Yeah. It was taken by the Quantico—

DePue: Public affairs?

Musch: —Marine unit there to publicize the training and so forth.

DePue: Did you get your picture in the paper?

Musch: I don't know that I did, but they said I might.

DePue: We left off your story last time, and I decided



OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH—Marine Corps Photographic Section  
Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Va.

to start today with you shipping out, from California was it?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Where did you ship from?

Musch: San Diego. We loaded up. I can't remember. First of all, the Battle of Guam was ongoing at this particular time, or Invasion of Guam. The Twenty-Sixth Marines packed up and shipped out about three weeks before we did, because they thought they might need them as reinforcements for the Invasion of Guam. It turned out they didn't need them, so they went to our base camp in Hawaii, at Waimea, sic Hawaii, which is up between the two big mountains, about sixty miles up the coast from Hilo, and got the camp ready for us to come in. Then we moved out. I left on the twenty-third of September, 1944.

Musch: What did Haroldine do at that time?

Musch: I bought a car, as I think maybe I said before, and was going to sell it. Well, Dad said, "Have Haroldine drive it home, because I can't get anything like it here now." By the fact that she was driving home, they gave her enough ration stamps to buy gas to drive the car home. She had two Marine wives with her as far as Oklahoma City, and then the rest of the way, she drove by herself.

DePue: Was this the first time you had been on the ocean?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Well, how did it go?

Musch: Went aboard. Not the best. Boarded ship in San Diego, on an Army troop transport. You had two meals a day. On the groundswells outside of San Diego, I got up that morning and went to breakfast. The second bite of breakfast met the first one coming up. I was seasick, so I went up topside and out in the fresh air, and recovered. Also, I found out after we got to Hilo, that the Japs had sunk a ship somewhere between the mainland and Hilo a few days before we'd come through that area. We missed getting hit by a torpedo, apparently.

DePue: Those are the kind of things that start to get your attention, I would think.

Musch: Yes. We were kind of shaken when we heard the news. They didn't tell us in the beginning, of course.

DePue: What were the things that kept you busy when you were on ship?

Musch: We had muster, so to speak, every day, to report everybody aboard and what condition you were in, whether you were sick or otherwise. Not much else to

do except go topside and stay in the fresh air to keep from getting seasick again. That was the main thing that helped, in my case.

DePue: Read? Play cards?

Musch: I don't remember I did much of anything. I guess I did read, and we had things to go over to get ready for our duties when we were going to de-embark when we got to Hilo. Work parties and so forth were assigned, and the stations were appointed on the ship, where you were to be. And [they] outlined the duties you were to have when we got there, to unload all our equipment and supplies, when we got to Hilo.

DePue: Hilo. Is that on the main island?

Musch: That's on the big island of Hawaii.

DePue: You had mentioned before the name of the camp, though. It was different from what you've mentioned so far.

Musch: Camp Tarawa. It was named because the Second Marine Division built the camp after they came back from their operation on Tarawa.

DePue: You say Tarawa.

Musch: Tarawa, I guess, is maybe the way—

DePue: That's the word I've always used, but you ought to know.

Musch: I don't necessarily maybe pronounce it correctly, but Tarawa, I think, is the common pronunciation.

DePue: Tell us about the camp. I think we've got a picture of it as well.

Musch: As I said, we rode what they called the sugarcane trains up to camp. Loaded our supplies on the trains, a narrow gauge railroad, up to camp. Unload our supplies. The tents were already erected, or at least a lot of them were, so we didn't have to put those up. Square tents. Six men to a tent. Of course, they had a permanent galley set up for the food preparation and so forth. The tents were arranged in platoon areas, and then company areas, and then battalion areas. All units were bivouacked together.

DePue: This was an extinct volcanic island, right?

Musch: Yes. I can't remember the elevation, but it's one of the few places where it rained, the sun shined, the wind blew, and the dust flew all at the same time. Some people hated it, but I liked it.

- DePue: Did you know at that time where the unit was headed, what the mission was going to be?
- Musch: No, did not. Eventually, we got training out in the area, and there was a small volcanic, I guess, cone, maybe. In other words, be a miniature shape of Mount Suribachi, and we started training with that. Then about that time, I think everybody, all the officers and people that needed to know, knew what our object was going to be. It was going to be Iwo Jima.
- DePue: Did that include you at the time?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: Eventually?
- Musch: Yes. Since I was combat intelligence officer, I was one of the first ones in the battalion to get the information, as well as the battalion commander and the operation officers for the battalion.
- DePue: What does a combat intelligence officer do in a battalion? What's your job?
- Musch: Our job was to teach map reading and intelligence-gathering skills to other members of the battalion, so they could read maps and report their coordinates and positions and so forth properly to headquarters. And keep a record of what we had done.
- DePue: Intelligence gathering. You're telling people what to be looking for and how to make the reports and to be as precise as possible?
- Musch: Yes, you're right.
- DePue: Were you the one who was expected to be the expert on the enemy?
- Musch: Not necessarily, but we were supposed to—as much information as we had. Information came from division headquarters on down, and distributed to the lower units, and what they got [was] from the main intelligence services of the Marine Corps as a whole.
- DePue: How many months were you in Hawaii?
- Musch: We arrived there in September of '44. We shipped out in January of '45. Then we went for Iwo, and returned in April to Camp Tarawa again.
- DePue: I wanted to ask you, then, you spent quite a bit of time there; did you get some leave?
- Musch: Only after I came back from combat.
- DePue: So you didn't get a chance to check out anything before that time?

Musch: Other than the fact that we had a day off—of course, Sunday was off. At times, another fellow, a friend of mine, and I would get a driver and a Jeep and go touring around on the island somewhat. We found out, along the road, papayas grew wild. You could pick them up, off the tree, and get a tree-ripened fruit, which was quite good and interesting. Get a break from training that way. It was a real nice break that you'd go and see—didn't travel far from camp, but at least we got to see some of the island.

DePue: Sounds like you were there, though, for both Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Was it tough being away from the family?

Musch: At that time, I guess I had gotten used to it somewhat, and I knew there was no other choice. I guess maybe I forgot to tell you, maybe backing up just a bit, in December of '43, Christmastime, I went to see the movie *A White Christmas*, with Bing Crosby, on Christmas eve. I came out. There had been two inches, or three, of new-fallen snow, and a full moon. I was definitely very homesick. My first and only time.

DePue: That was the only time you got homesick?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Were you able to keep in touch with Haroldine pretty well while you were in Hawaii?

Musch: Yes. We wrote letters almost daily back and forth, and sometimes you'd get four or five at once. But they kept coming. She got three, four, five at once, too, from me.

DePue: Were they shipped over or were they flown over to Hawaii?

Musch: I don't really know. I suppose, with the lapse in time, some of them went by ship, because it was a week or more involved in getting them back and forth.

DePue: Were you a faithful letter writer at that time?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: And she was writing every day?

Musch: Oh, yes.

DePue: How important was mail call to you?

Musch: Very important. Very much so.

- DePue: Did they have any entertainers? Anybody that came out to the camp?
- Musch: Yeah, USO had a place not too far from where we were. They had shows, occasionally, for us to go sit and watch, and of course we had the outdoor movie, which was available almost every evening, if we weren't on some kind of a training problem. There was always activities when you had any spare time.
- DePue: What were the movies that the Marines seemed to like the best?
- Musch: I can't remember what I saw. I'm not a great movie person, but I did go and enjoy sitting there in the outdoor theater and watching them.
- DePue: It just occurred to me, you told us when you were growing up, you hardly ever got a chance to see the movies.
- Musch: Through my whole life, I guess, I've never been a great movie fan.
- DePue: You said you stayed there until January of '45. What did you know about the Japanese and the nature of the combat that you would be going into when you actually shipped out?
- Musch: Not near enough. They told us all they knew and could find out. By that time, they knew how ruthless they were to their prisoners, so we were supposed to be very careful. Taught what to do and not to do to try to survive if we happened to be captured. Of course, that wasn't a problem on Iwo, but it was in other places.
- DePue: What was your attitude about being captured?
- Musch: I really didn't give much thought to it. I don't know why, but I just didn't.
- DePue: Had you heard the stories about the Japanese refusing to surrender?
- Musch: Oh, yeah. Also, an interesting article. You talked about who was informed and who wasn't, and when we were informed about what our objective was going to be. One day—we had a little hut, we called it, for our office. Had a shelf for our maps and supplies and so forth. We all gathered in there every morning to start our training. That particular day, three or four of the guys came in with a *Honolulu Advertiser*, and the picture on the front showed the Air Force bombing Iwo Jima. They said, "Lieutenant, isn't this where we're going?" At that time, the enlisted men weren't supposed to know, but I couldn't lie to them, so I told them yes and swore them to secrecy. To my knowledge, they didn't divulge to anybody else.
- DePue: There weren't that many places to be going to anyway, I would think.
- Musch: No. The rank and file were not supposed to know.

DePue: Let's see if we can get the map of the Pacific Ocean at the time. I wanted to talk through this just a little bit. The very top of the map, you can see on there, you've got Japan. Then there's a lot of nothing south and east of there. Let's look where Saipan is. There is Saipan, and that would be one of the places—this is June of 1944—where the Marines occupied the tiny island of Saipan, which was an important base for the Air Force at that time.

Musch: Saipan and Tinian, the small island neighbor to Saipan.

DePue: Why was that so important to the Air Force?

Musch: It was a staging place for the B-29s to bomb Tokyo and the rest of Japan. They built a terrific airfield, on Tinian primarily, for the B-29s, specially built for them. That's where they operated from for all their bombing raids to Japan.

DePue: Let's go back to the map again. There's Iwo Jima. It makes sense now why Iwo Jima is important.

Musch: It's on the main line of travel between Saipan and Tinian and Japan, the homeland. Iwo was pretty close to halfway between the two. The Japanese had two airfields on Iwo, and constructing a third. They had their fighters there, and as the B-29s came over, the fighters went up and caused them lots of problems. Shot several of them down and interfered with their travel. I guess that's why they decided they need to take Iwo. In fact, after we took Iwo, we didn't lose a single B-29 to enemy aircraft.

DePue: That's an amazing accomplishment. After you left Hawaii, then, did you ship straight to Iwo Jima?

Musch: No. We rendezvoused off of Saipan and were to have training exercises, landing exercise, on Saipan. But the seas were so rough that we started, and in the meantime, one fellow got crushed between the ship and the landing craft, so they called the exercise off. But being in the command situation that I was, I still had to climb down the cargo net, get in an LCVP, and go over to the command ship for the final briefing.

DePue: LCVP?

Musch: That's a Landing Craft Vehicular Personnel. Carried a coxswain, who was a Navy man, and usually thirty-six Marines.

DePue: That's the one that probably everybody thinks of when they think of a landing craft, isn't it?

Musch: That's right.

DePue: The one that the ramp comes down when it hits the beach?

- Musch: That's correct. Yes. Anyway, it was after that. Then, of course, we were there—I don't remember how many days. Two or three, I suppose, because the LSTs were much slower-moving than an APA [attack transport], which was where the troops were located. LSTs are landing ship tanks. They're the ones that carry the tanks. They had a huge ramp in front that went down when they got to the beach, so the tank could drive right off onto the beach. They were flat-bottomed, so they were very rough riders, too, in the rough sea.
- DePue: This is a landing craft tank? I know there's—
- Musch: LST, landing ship tank.
- DePue: I've interviewed a couple of people, so I know a little bit about this. That's much larger, and I think it holds something like twenty tanks or something.
- Musch: I don't remember how many tanks it held, but it's quite a large thing. But it's flat-bottomed, so.
- DePue: And not the greatest thing to be in the ocean in, I know that.
- Musch: That's right. When the sea is rough, you get tossed around rather vigorously.
- DePue: My LST officer told me that they would load another landing craft tank on top of that thing, that they'd have to slide off into the water, and that's a delicate operation. But anyway, I think that held just one or two tanks in it. That would be the one that, from what he said, would run into the beach.
- Musch: Yeah. Eventually, the LSTs would come into the beach after it was secure. They didn't run into it right away.
- DePue: We're a little bit ahead of our story. How much, when you were in Saipan and on route, did you actually know about what you were going to encounter when you got to Iwo Jima?
- Musch: They gave us everything they could. Said the island was very well fortified. We expected the worst, and that's what happened. They originally thought the operation would last five or six days. Well, we barely got started in five or six days because of the encountering of all the pillboxes and stuff that the Japanese had built.
- DePue: I know that in many of the battles up to this point, the Japanese would oftentimes try to attack and really repulse the Americans when they got to the beach, and oftentimes there would be these massive attacks as well. Is that what you were expecting from the Japanese?
- Musch: I thought we were expecting it, but of course it didn't happen. General Kobayashi, who was the commander on Iwo, had wised up, due to the



devastating effect of that kind of operation. And he said, "Wait until they get on shore, and then we'll let them have it." And they sure did.

DePue: We're going to go into that in some detail. Did you know any Japanese yourself?

Musch: No.

DePue: Was that something that the command was concerned about? Having the intelligence officers do that?

Musch: I suppose, but in my case, I had no contact, and coming from a small, agricultural area, no Japanese or any connection therewith.

DePue: It didn't come in handy growing up, did it?

Musch: No.

DePue: Tell us about, then, shipping out from the Saipan area to Iwo Jima itself.

Musch: By that time, all the ships, all the small sporting ships, all the battleships, destroyers and all, had rendezvoused off of Saipan and got together and got in their proper places, and then we took off. I can't remember now for sure, but I think it was the morning of the eighteenth. No, morning of the sixteenth, I guess. I can't remember. It took us, I think, probably three days to get there. We got to Iwo. We were hoping for good weather. It dawned bright and clear, and all we could see was a cloud of smoke and dust because of the bombardment of Iwo Jima by the Navy ships and bombs from the Air Force.

DePue: I had read something. There was some controversy, now, about the extent of the bombardment.

Musch: Yes. Yes. General Howlin' Mad Smith, was overall command of all the Marines, wanted ten days bombardment. I think it was Admiral Turner who said, "No, we can only give you three. We've got to save for the invasion of Okinawa." So then we got three. Actually, they were so well-entrenched to the bombing. They all went down in the underground tunnels, so the bombing really didn't bother them very much, other than keep them from coming out topside, so to speak. Bombing more would have unnerved them a little bit more, so they might not have been quite so aggressive, maybe, if we'd had ten days of it.

DePue: You think it would have made a difference?

Musch: It might have, but the way they were entrenched and what I saw, a sixteen-inch shell from a battleship could hit one of those—whatever you call—

DePue: Bunkers?

Musch: Bunkers, yes. That's the word I want. And not even faze it. Which seemed unreal, but they had them concrete reinforced with steel. Direct hits didn't bother them.

DePue: The scale of this thing boggles my mind. Was that impressive to see yourself part of this huge fleet and see the bombardment?

Musch: Ships as far as you could see in all directions.

DePue: Did the Americans have control of the sea at that time?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: So you weren't concerned about the Japanese Navy?

Musch: No.

DePue: How about the Japanese Air Force?

Musch: They were pretty well contained, too. We had one supposed scare, I think the first or second night we were there. Japanese planes were approaching, and our antiaircraft people went after them. And of course our fighters off the carriers that were there, too, took them down. But, anyway, the hot shrapnel was raining down on us who were on land. We never saw an enemy plane.

DePue: I wanted to ask you some questions about the frame of mind of all the Marines on these ships before you actually head off to the beaches.

Musch: For those of us who had never been in combat, it was really not knowing what to think. I don't know. I never asked the fellows who had been in combat what their thoughts were about the landing. I guess it never occurred to me, or we never discussed it. I really don't know why. It's hard to explain. In my case, you can go through all these combat indoctrination courses, but it's nothing like the real thing.

DePue: Did you have thoughts about, Gosh, how am I going to perform once I get under fire?

Musch: No, that thought never entered my mind. We were well trained. You were taught to do your job, and you didn't even think about anything else.

DePue: I've talked to a couple Okinawa vets, and they would tell me stories that it seemed like the Marines and the soldiers were doing one of two things while they were waiting. They were either gambling or they went to see the chaplain and did some praying.

Musch: I watched a lot of that happen, and I didn't go—

DePue: Which one?

Musch: I saw a lot of them gambling, playing poker and whatever. I didn't get involved in either one, I guess. I don't know. I just don't remember anything specifically about my thoughts at that particular time.

DePue: Were you concerned about the possibility of not surviving?

Musch: Yes, definitely. In fact, when I saw all that taking place, when we were getting ready to land, it was, Well, here we go. Will I make it or won't I? Then after we landed, I don't know, I never thought about getting hit or killed, or wounded or killed, either one. For some reason, it just didn't bother me. I just did my thing, and that was it.

DePue: Tell us a little bit more about the section that you were in charge of.

Musch: That was eighteen men, and we had a platoon sergeant who was a section chief, and we had two corporals who were assistants. The interesting thing there was, Sergeant Turner got pneumonia and couldn't go for the operation, so I had to put one of my sergeants in charge. Unfortunately, during the battle, they couldn't get along, so I had to lay the law down to them and tell them what was what to straighten them out, so we could keep on operating. Which sounds crazy in combat, but it happened.

DePue: Lay the law down, threaten them with punishment?

Musch: Not punishment, because there wasn't such, but to tell them what was what, and that they were to do this, and the other was to do that, and they were to get along.

DePue: In the performance of your section's duties, were they going to be exposed to a lot of combat? Would they be right up front with the rest of the Marines?

Musch: No, they were in Battalion Headquarters. But, as I need to say, that being in Battalion Headquarters, Regimental Headquarters or whatever, didn't mean you were safe, because people even in Division Headquarters got killed because of artillery and mortar shells and so forth.

DePue: Let's see if we can find the map of Iwo Jima itself and take a quick look at that. Tell us about the plan of attack here. I think you can make out where the beaches are and where your regiment would be.

Musch: The one right at the southern end of the island, near Suribachi (*sic*), was where the Twenty-Eighth Marines landed. Red Beach, I think it was. Our mission was to land on that beach, turn to the left, and secure Mount Suribachi, because that was the highest point on the island. From there, the Japanese could command view of the whole island. Therefore, they could direct artillery anyplace they wanted from their observation points up there.

- DePue: Sounds to me like the Twenty-Eighth Regiment got the toughest mission.
- Musch: In the beginning, maybe it was, but in the end, I don't think there was any place on the island that was any worse than any of the other, really.
- DePue: There's Mount Suribachi there. That's a pretty dramatic view. Does that look familiar to you?
- Musch: Yes. The southern end, of course. We were right around the corner on the right from that. The first beach that's shown there was where we landed.
- DePue: From what I know, that's about two miles long?
- Musch: It's five miles long and two and a half miles wide at the widest point.
- DePue: The beach, though, would be just about two miles?
- Musch: Yes, at the very most.
- DePue: Why that particular point on the island to land?
- Musch: That was the most landable beach, due to weather conditions, surf conditions, and tide and so forth. That's why they decided to land there. There's a landing beach available on the other side, on the west side of the island, but not as good. Due to the tide and weather conditions, the east side was much preferable.
- DePue: Does that mean the Japanese knew where you'd be coming as well?
- Musch: I'm pretty sure they did. Because they had that beach zeroed in completely with all their armament.
- DePue: We're now at the point where I'm sure a lot of people have been anxious to have us get to. Talk about actually going in.
- Musch: We were in APA *USS Lubbock*. First troops on a brand new APA, so we got royal treatment. That morning for breakfast, we had steak, eggs, and anything and everything you could want. At the proper time, we climbed down the cargo nets into our LCVPs, and then rendezvoused out around the mother ship. Then at a certain designated time, we took off for the departure line, which was where we all lined up to head for the landing beaches. The first waves that landed hit the beach in an hour and a half to two hours.. Were clear across the neck of the island, with hardly any resistance of any kind. H-hour [the hour a military operation is scheduled to begin] was at nine o'clock. I landed in the thirteenth wave, at one o'clock, and missed it by a minute or two of being right on schedule. At that time—I guess the best way to describe it was, "all hell broke loose," because the Japanese had all their mortars, artillery, machineguns, and everything zeroed in on the beaches, and were

giving us all they had. Hit the beach. The ramp went down and we all ran out and hit the deck, so to speak. My first impression when I hit the beach on the island, I could reach out and touch a dead Marine with my left hand, another with my right hand. They had camouflage paint on their faces. That's when the shock really hit me. I was there in the midst of the real thing.

I started to raise up, and as I started to raise up, Japanese machinegun knocked that volcanic sand in my face, about six inches above my head. I ducked down, looked around to my right, and another LCV was coming in, right just beyond down the beach where I had come in. As the ramp went down, a mortar shell hit right in the midst of the men as they were running off. I quickly decided the beach was no place to be. Took off running, from shell hole to shell hole. To me, it's still a mystery how myself and my eighteen men all arrived at the right place at the right time. Designated spot. Without anybody getting hit.

DePue: So you knew exactly where the command post was supposed to be?

Musch: Yes, yes.

DePue: How far inland was that?

Musch: About halfway across the island.

DePue: You've talked about some of the sights and the sounds. I would think the sounds were deafening at that time.

Musch: They were. It's constant bombardment. Just before the landing, the ships, with their guns, had—I forget what the correct terminology is, but where they keep advancing the explosions as the troops advance right across the island. That, I guess, helped to get the first troops on land without much opposition. Then Kobayashi's plan was to let everybody get ashore, and then kill as many of them as he could.

DePue: How prevalent was Mount Suribachi from where you were at?

Musch: Probably 100 yards, 150 yards to my left.

DePue: Couldn't miss it, I would assume.

Musch: Oh, no. You were looking right up at it.

DePue: And figuring that they're looking right down at you.

Musch: That's true. They were.

DePue: Could you see little lights and firing going on from the mountain itself?

- Musch: If you looked up, you could see the flashes from the machinegun out of those ports in their bunkers. They had slits about so wide, so the machinegun could move back and forth and up and down.
- DePue: We talked again about the sights, and the sounds. Was there a smell to the place?
- Musch: Not yet. Other than gunpowder and explosions from the shells. That was in the air, but that was all.
- DePue: We've got some sand here. The sands of Iwo Jima. You actually brought some in. I'm going to go ahead and show the camera here. Tell us about the sand and what that meant as a Marine on the shore.
- Musch: On the landing beach, there was three terraces. You came in from the water's edge and you went up one, you went up another, and then you were up on the level. Each one was several feet up, elevation between each one. That volcanic sand is very loose and hard to walk in. It's still a mystery to me—I guess because we were in excellent physical shape—but each step you took, you'd sink in halfway to your knees. How people would carry their full pack, and maybe the base plate from a sixty-millimeter mortar, which weighed sixty to seventy pounds, plus their pack, plus their rifle, and all that, and how they could climb that terrace in that loose sand and make it, it was sort of unbelievable to me.
- DePue: Once you got farther inland, did the ground get a little firmer for you?
- Musch: Yes. After we finally got up on level, then it was much more firmer.
- DePue: I think there's a couple other pictures I wanted to take a look at. One would probably be when the troops first got to the beach here. That one right there. Does that look familiar?
- Musch: Yes, very much so. Terraces aren't very distinguishable there, but if you look closely, you can probably see them. Up toward the top, you can see the second terrace, where the line of Marines are laying, and then the ones that are on the horizon are just up and over, beyond that. They're up on the flat there.
- DePue: Was it a pretty crowded beach when you first got there?
- Musch: Not too bad when I landed, but it got much worse afterwards. The day we landed was the calmest day as far as the surf was concerned. After that, the beach was littered with wrecked landing craft. In fact, for two days, the main mode of transportation was our Amtraks, which were a track vehicle that went in the water. It got to the land, and then right on up. They're the ones that brought supplies in, took the wounded out, for almost two days. Everything else that came in the beach, turned sideways and turned over on the beach.

- DePue: Wow. I think we have another picture here where you can see the troops and Mount Suribachi in the background. There it is.
- Musch: That shows the landing beaches, quite a little ways from Mount Suribachi. See, right at the base, you can barely see the figures there. That's about where I came in.
- DePue: Probably a couple hundred yards down the beach.
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: The other thing this shows very well, I think, is that sand. It's very obvious how it's—
- Musch: You can see the holes where people had walked in. You sunk in. Anything that came along. In fact, no vehicle could make it up the beach until they put those mats down. Even four-wheel-drive Jeeps couldn't make it up those terraces. They brought in, I don't know, steel mats like they use for temporary airfields, they used on Guadalcanal. They brought those in, and then everything could get up.
- DePue: How about the Amtraks?
- Musch: Amtraks could make it. They had wide enough tracks that they could get up over it. I guess the tanks could, too. I'm not really sure. I don't remember about that.
- DePue: Once you got there, what was your job? What was your section's job?
- Musch: To be exact, I really can't tell you, other than the fact that we started keeping a log of our operations, as to what took place and where we were to go. Of course, we got our orders each day from regimental headquarters as to what our objective was going to be, what time H-hour was going to be, and hopefully accomplish a certain mission that day. In our case, we kept a log of all the stuff going. My men were used for other things than what—sometimes as runners to take messages from one place to another in Battalion Headquarters, and things like that. You did whatever you needed to do to make the thing go. Not necessarily your exact designation. A Marine is first a rifleman, and after that, you do anything else that comes along that you have to do.
- DePue: I think you told us in the first session that you went onto the beach with a carbine?
- Musch: Yes. A carbine was issued for all officers. Prior to that, some places, they'd had forty-five colt pistols. In our case, all officers had the carbine. After the first day, I dropped my carbine and picked up an M1, because I was more

trusty with it. It would operate under more adverse conditions. I really never had to use it, but I always carried an M1 just in case I did.

DePue: Do you remember your regimental commander? Can you tell us about him?

Musch: Colonel Liversedge. He was a large man. I'd say six-three, six-four. Heavily built. Really a great leader. He was very concerned with his men. So was Colonel Williams. They were really a good example of a great leader.

DePue: Was he a combat veteran by that time?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: World War I veteran?

Musch: That I don't remember. I don't think so, but I'm not sure.

DePue: But he'd seen some action before he got to the regiment?

Musch: Oh, yes. Oh, yes.

DePue: How about your battalion commander?

Musch: Yes, he was in the paratroopers. They, I think, were at New Caledonia. He had seen combat also.

DePue: What was his name?

Musch: Shepherd.

DePue: Lieutenant Colonel Shepherd?

Musch: Lieutenant Colonel Shepherd, yes.

DePue: It sounds like you were pretty satisfied with your chain of command, that these were good leaders.

Musch: Yes, I was. Before, some people said when was I assigned to Third Battalion in Colonel Shepherd's command, "Oh, you'll have a terrible time with that man." But I liked him. I could go in and sit down and talk to him almost like I'm talking to you.

DePue: Who did you answer to?

Musch: Colonel Shephard. The company commander in some respects, but generally my response was to Colonel Shephard.

DePue: I know that the Twenty-Eighth Regiment's mission was to take Mount Suribachi. Can you walk us through that process?



Musch: Of course, they went across the island in about two hours or so, and then we consolidated and dug in for the night, and made plans for the assault on Mount Suribachi the next day. The Air Force, or Navy planes, came in and bombarded the place, and the ships gave a shelling of—I think destroyers were all that were left at that time. They shelled the place, and this was on D [day of the invasion] plus one. All the same thing happened on D plus two, D plus three. D plus four, after initial bombardment and so forth, then I watched Lieutenant Schrier take a forty-man patrol up the side of Mount Suribachi. Zigzag up the side of the mountain. Then, about ten o'clock that morning, they found a piece of water pipe up there on top of Suribachi and tied a small flag. Less than three by five, I think. It was about two by three or something like that. Small flag to start with, and raised it up about ten o'clock. Ships blew their whistles. Everybody was hilarious. It was a great morale-booster.

That afternoon, then, Lieutenant Colonel Johnson, whose patrol was from the Second Battalion—he was that commander—he said, “We need a bigger flag up there.” So he sent one of his officers to the shoreline and aboard an LST. They had a new flag they hadn't used. A much larger flag. I think it was forty-eight by ninety-six or something like that. I can't remember the exact dimensions. He sent a five-man patrol up to Suribachi to Lieutenant Schrier. Said, “Tell him to put this flag up.” So, in the meantime, I think it was Sergeant McCormick, Marine combat photographer, had been up there. Anyway, he dropped his camera or something happened. He broke it and was on the way down. He met Joe Rosenthal about halfway up. Joe was about ready to turn around and go back. He said, “No, Joe, you better go on up. Great pictures from up there.”

DePue: He's not a Marine, is he?

Musch: Joe is an AP [Associated Press] photographer with the Marines. So he decides to go on up. He gets up there, and fixing a place to mount his camera, and he sees something take place out of the corner of his eye. He turns around, snaps a picture, which is the famous flag raising picture. The most famous picture.

DePue: I think we've got a shot of that.

Musch: Most famous picture of World War II.

DePue: There it is.

Musch: There it is, yes.

DePue: The inspiration for a memorial, as well.

Musch: Yes. Everybody for a long time thought it was posed, but it was not. It was taken just like I said.

- DePue: You were talking about watching this lieutenant take this forty-man platoon up.
- Musch: I saw the first flag go up, but we were back in operations. I didn't see the famous one.
- DePue: But does that mean that most people could sit there and watch the progress of these guys moving up that mountain?
- Musch: I think so. Things were fairly quiet. Not a lot of activity on the south end of the island, because we had Mount Suribachi pretty well secured. Activity was going to the north of us, yes. No doubt about that.
- DePue: By the time he got to the top and placed the flag there, the first flag, was combat on Mount Suribachi done?
- Musch: It was considered secured at that time.
- DePue: It was considered secure?
- Musch: A few Japs came out after that, but not any significant number.
- DePue: So the combat up to that point, it must have been brutal combat.
- Musch: It was. In fact, it continued until the very end. Brutal.
- DePue: Did you go up Mount Suribachi yourself?
- Musch: No, I didn't have the opportunity to do that.
- DePue: Any of your troops go up?
- Musch: None of my men went up either, no. The Second Battalion is the one that had the troops that went up there, and quite a number of them were there because they were ordered to do so. We were Third Battalion. We were off to the right a little bit. Second Battalion was right in the middle. They're the ones that put the patrol up.
- DePue: How many casualties did those two battalions have by that time?
- Musch: I don't have the exact numbers. I have them in the stuff I have at home, but not here. I have the complete battle report for Third Battalion, as well as the Twenty-Eighth Marines. A mimeographed copy that was originally printed at the close of the operation. A friend of mine took them and took each page out and put them in a plastic folder, so that each page is in a protective plastic folder in two big loose-leaf folders. They're about so thick. I didn't bring those.
- DePue: Regrets about that now, I suspect.

- Musch: I suppose, yes. I could have had them just to show them, I suppose. It would have been nice to have them, maybe.
- DePue: We've got a battle map here as well. Is this the one that you used when you were—
- Musch: That's the one I used to keep the front line positions of the Third Battalion, Twenty-Eighth Marines the whole time I was on Iwo.
- DePue: We can fold it out here. I don't know how well we're going to be able to see this. I wanted to get that bottom one here, because—right there.
- Musch: I landed right here. There was Red Beach. Of course, took about two hours to go across here. Then we turned to the left and secured Mount Suribachi, as I said, on the end of the third and fourth day.
- DePue: D plus four. So that's the fifth day of combat?
- Musch: Yes. Then after that was over, then we turned and went up the west side of the island.
- DePue: You must realize that most people think that the battle was over. Americans today, they think, The battle was over once we got to Mount Suribachi.
- Musch: That was just the beginning. That was five days, and we were there a total of thirty-six before we got up here.
- DePue: So there's a lot more to talk about here. During this—
- Musch: That's the map I used with a grease pencil to keep track of the front lines and where we moved each day. Of course, the record was written, and of course it was all erased. I thought I'd lost that, but I found it again.
- DePue: How much sleep were you able to get at night?
- Musch: First night, none. I don't think anybody slept. At least I didn't.
- DePue: Is this because you were too keyed-up?
- Musch: I think. I don't remember even eating anything until the next day.
- DePue: When you did get rations, what were you eating?
- Musch: K-rations.
- DePue: Tell us about a K-ration.
- Musch: It came in a little cardboard box, about so wide, about so thick, and about so long. It had food of some sort in it. Not very palatable, but it was food. In that

case, you didn't worry about if it was palatable or not. You ate it. Of course, at that time, with all the tension and everything, you really wasn't worried about food. At least as I remember. I don't think it was until the second day that I ate anything.

DePue: What was the weather like?

Musch: The first couple of days were pretty nice. Then kind of a drizzly rain came and made kind of a mess of things. That didn't last but just one day. After that, the weather was never very bad, as far as rainfall and so forth. We had practically none the rest of the time we were there.

DePue: What happened to that sand when you'd get rain?

Musch: It got kind of mucky and sticky and made things pretty messy. It didn't help it any. It stuck to your shoes and got in everything. Worse than when it was dry. The black sand I showed there was on the beach. It was much finer up on the island itself. More of a fine sand or dirt-type combination.

DePue: Was it hot?

Musch: There was some shrubbery growing there at one time until they blasted it all away.

DePue: Was it hot weather at the time?

Musch: Not really. It got very cool at night. "Iwo" means sulfur. There were sulfur—I guess what you call vents, where the vapor would come out and the heat from inside the island. So in a foxhole you dig, the heat from the ground would help keep you warm in the foxhole at night.

DePue: You mentioned the smells on the beach were different from the smells later on.

Musch: Later on, you had that sulfur smell. Then, of course, eventually, due to the warmth during the daytime, you had the stench of rotting human flesh. To me, there's nothing any worse.

DePue: And there's nowhere you can go to get away from it, I would think.

Musch: Not there. You lived with it for thirty-six days. It's unreal, but I could sit here and eat, and have a couple blown-up, dead Japs laying over here two or three feet away from me.

DePue: I know one of the things an intelligence section, intelligence officer, would do would be dealing with prisoners of war.

Musch: I didn't have much of anything to do with that. We had two Japanese interpreters in regimental headquarters. If Japanese were captured—very few were captured—they were either shell-shocked or wounded, and then they were interrogated by the Japanese interpreters. I wasn't privileged to be in on any of that.

DePue: Can you describe for us, once you got done with Mount Suribachi and you took the left flank of the Marines as they were moving north in the island, tell us about what a typical action would be like with the Japanese.

Musch: I guess the best way to describe it was all of the company commanders would meet with the battalion commander, the battalion commander, having been briefed and so forth by the regiment, and then the division, and coordinated with the corps headquarters. It all coordinated from the whole thing. A certain objective was picked out and thought we would make that day. Then a coordinated attack would happen. Their Navy Air Force would come in and strafe ahead of our front lines. And then we'd say, "Jump off at H-hour," whatever the time would be, eight o'clock, nine o'clock, or whatever, and try to move forward as much as they can with supporting rockets, mortars, or whatever. Artillery. Artillery barrage, moving barrage ahead of us. They'd try to move ahead and get another objective. There was a hill there in that. I don't think it was in our sector. It was in the sector on our right. Hill 382. It became quite an obstacle to capture. We weren't directly involved with it, but our neighboring unit was. Of course, that was higher ground the Japs were on, so they could observe where we were. They were shooting down at us, and you're going up toward them, which makes it tougher.

DePue: What made it such a brutal, casualty-rich environment for you?

Musch: Because the Japanese were so well dug-in. They had a complete tunnel system over the whole island. Complete command post, hospital, everything, underground. They had entries into this underground tunnel from various places on the island. They could go down in those tunnels in the daytime, and then at night they'd come out and try to infiltrate our lines. That was another thing. To keep that from happening, the Navy ships shot star shells, they called them, to keep the island illuminated all night long.

DePue: Most of the campaign?

Musch: Oh, yeah, the whole campaign. The island was lit up all night long. Otherwise, the Japs would come in and infiltrate our lines. Catch our guys in their foxholes and whatnot.

DePue: Already, the terrain, it's so different from anywhere else. It's got to be eerie, especially at night, then.

- Musch: Yes, it is. It's eerie landscape, because you see those shells. One just about out; here comes another one. Just keep coming. Illuminate the whole thing. Not as bright as daylight, but almost.
- DePue: To be able to do something like that for two to three days is, I would think, totally exhausting.
- Musch: We were in the front lines—I can't remember for sure, but I think about three days, and we were pulled out for one day to resupply and rest a bit, and then we're back in it again. We were in combat 75 percent of the time.
- DePue: Was it as much a fight over exhaustion as it was against the enemy, then?
- Musch: At that time, they didn't have this—what they call it now—the stress syndrome. Battle fatigue is what we called it then. I didn't realize that entered into it until it was all over and I got to reading reports. Quite a number of people were taken off the island because of stress-related problems. Battle fatigue they called it then.
- DePue: From everything that we've talked about here, the perception was the battle was going to go one way, and it didn't necessarily go that way.
- Musch: They thought they'd have it over in six days, but it lasted thirty-six.
- DePue: What happened?
- Musch: Because the Japanese were so much better defended, and Kobayashi's instruction to his troops were, "Kill ten Marines to one of you."
- DePue: Some of the things I've read is that he did not believe in these mass banzai attacks.
- Musch: No. There were none of those on Iwo.
- DePue: Did you have respect for the Japanese enemy?
- Musch: Of course, at the time, I hated them. But afterwards, I got to thinking that they were pumped up to fight for their country, just like we were for the United States. In that case, we were equal.
- DePue: Did you have any close calls with death yourself?
- Musch: Yes. Some I didn't know about, some I do. I was in the front lines almost every day. Not like a platoon leader, was there all the time, but I was there every day, going from command post to command post to get information to take back to the colonel that he wouldn't otherwise have. This one particular time, I was in a CP [command post], looking around, and I could see the Japs across the little valley, dart in and out. Even fired at them a time or two with a

sniper rifle. Not that I hit anybody, but that's what's the name of the game. Anyway, I stepped down and the platoon leader took my place. We'd gone on liberty together several times before I got married. Anyway, in less time than I'm telling you about it, he took my place. I turned to talk to somebody else. Sniper got him right between the eyes. He brushed me as he fell down. And he never moved. Just, bing, he was gone in ten or fifteen seconds. It could have been me instead of him.

DePue: What's flashing through your mind at that time?

Musch: I really don't know. It hit me afterwards, but not right at the time.

DePue: You still had a job to do at the time?

Musch: Yes. I guess that's it. Talk about scared. Yes. If you're not scared, you're not human. But to be concerned about today or tomorrow would be my last day? I don't know why, it didn't enter my mind.

DePue: You were confident you were going to survive, then?

Musch: No.

DePue: You just didn't think about it?

Musch: Just didn't think about it. I was concentrating on doing what I was supposed to do. Trained to do. Those other thoughts, that I can remember, never crossed my mind.

DePue: What was the worst part of being there for those thirty-some days?

Musch: I think probably the worst was getting used to the horrific smell of decaying human flesh. I didn't see it, I wasn't there, but the flag-raisers, three of them got off the island, and three were killed. Two of the sergeants—gee, now I've lost their names. Just a minute. I'll get them picked up here. Sergeant Mike Strank was the old man of the group that raised the flag.

DePue: Is this the second flag raising?

Musch: This is the second flag raising. The one that made the famous picture by Joe Rosenthal. Sergeant Mike Strank was the old man of the bunch. He was twenty-three years old. All the rest were younger. Harlon Block was corporal. He was next senior. The rest are PFCs or privates. Of course, John Bradley was FMF, Fleet Marine Force corpsman, which was a Navy personnel with the Marines. All the medics were Navy personnel. Then two other privates were involved in it. Anyway, I didn't see it happen, but they said Mike Strank and Harlon Block were killed by the same mortar shell. For the instant before they actually died, I think Mike Strank was able to pick up his intestines and hold them in his hands. And then, boom, he was gone.

DePue: That was quite a few days after they—

Musch: This was halfway through the operation. We were in to March. I can't remember the date, but early days of March when that happened.

DePue: I know that there was a Lieutenant Murphy that I wanted to ask you about as well.

Musch: I guess maybe this time it's all right to tell the details. When I came by the aid station, they had just brought him in. He had a gasping chest wound, a big ball of red froth coming out of that wound on his chest. Our battalion surgeon was Kasick. He operated, worked on Iwo, with a stub of cigar in his cheek. He sewed the guy up. I came back. I don't know why, but I was back there again three, four hours later. Murphy was conscious and I talked to him.

DePue: Do you remember what you talked about?

Musch: No. I have no idea what we said, but I did talk to him. He said, "Well, I'm going to be okay." I guess he would have, but when they took him out to put him aboard the ship an accident happened, and he didn't make it.

DePue: Did you have chaplains when you were with him?

Musch: Yes. Had a Protestant and a Catholic both. The Catholic chaplain was Father Bradley, and the Protestant chaplain was Bowman, I believe was his—yeah, Bowman was his name. Both very fine fellows. In fact, Bradley was outstanding. Saw him at several of the reunions that we've had with the Fifth Marine Division. He was quite good and was well known by all the survivors.

DePue: How important were the chaplains to the troops being able to perform their mission?

Musch: I really don't know. As far as actual services while we were on Iwo, I don't remember ever—maybe they were in the back area places, but up on the front lines, there were none.

DePue: I know you also had an experience—I don't know if you had directly—but there was one Japanese prisoner that was taken, that was fairly high-ranking.

Musch: Yes. That was when we were almost to the north end of the island. Not quite, but during the final few days. I can't remember the Japanese fellow's name. That's unimportant, I guess. He was educated in the United States. He was a master sergeant in the Japanese Army. He decided that he wasn't going to commit Hari-kari and die for the emperor. He decided he wanted to live. When we were fairly close to the north end—I don't remember, two or three days away, I guess—he came out and surrendered to my company commander, Lieutenant Lapardo, and gave Lapardo a picture of his family. Lieutenant Lapardo took him back to regimental headquarters. They didn't do



anything but take him to division immediately. Division back to corps headquarters. Then they flew him to Guam, and then to Honolulu, and then to Washington, D.C., and he gave them lots of information that helped in the invasion and occupation of Japan. Not Japan, of Okinawa. Excuse me. He was that much of an important person.

He eventually returned to Japan, and since has passed away. Lapardo retired and then passed away. His son became a attorney. Found the pictures and knew the story behind them, the fellow that had given them to him. Then he proceeded to go through the State Department and through all the places that he could to find out if there were any descendants of this master sergeant alive in Japan. He found out there was a granddaughter in Japan. I can't remember. I think in February of '10, he took the pictures back to Japan and presented them to the family. The story was in our *Spearhead*, which is our newsletter that we get for the Fifth Marine Division three times a year.

DePue: I wonder if, once he got back to Japan, the master sergeant got back to Japan, if he got some resentment from the Japanese people.

Musch: Not that this says. He was apparently a well-respected person.

DePue: Of course, by that time, the occupation was going on.

Musch: Yes. I don't know whether he got back during the occupation or after it was over. I don't know that part.

DePue: Warren, do you remember any other stories that you'd like to share with us about your experiences on Iwo Jima?

Musch: One other thing was a good part, I guess. When we pulled back, as I said, to get replacements and replenish our supplies, we got what they call ten-in-one rations. It was a can so big. It had rations for ten men in one can, and it was quite good food. By the time we got those, we were halfway or better up the island, so we could pull back into area that wasn't quite as much subject to bombardment as it had been, and we could heat this stuff in these vapor holes coming up out of the island. So we could have warm food, which was really a nice change. Of course, the other time, we had C-rations and K-rations. If we were in the front lines, there, it was K-rations. You ate there whatever it was.

DePue: What was the difference between a C-ration and a K-ration?

Musch: K-rations were mostly dried stuff in a small box, and C-rations, you had a can that had stew, baked beans, and I think there was a third one—I can't remember what it was—in little tin cans, and you opened that. Then you had crackers to go with it and some other things to go with it, and they all had a package of three or four cigarettes in each box, too.

DePue: Did you smoke at the time?

Musch: No. Never did.

DePue: That's good trading material then.

Musch: Yes, it became. If time permits, I'll get into that later on.

DePue: Go ahead. Go ahead.

Musch: Of course, everybody was delighted when we were back in—well, rear area, I'd say, but not out of harm completely, but less so than in the front lines, because we pulled back quite a little ways before we encamped for replacements and replenishment of supplies. My battalion had 70 percent casualties. The other two battalions, one had 74, the other had 75 percent casualties. In my case, three out of ten survived without being killed or wounded, and I was one of those three. So I'm in the vast minority.

DePue: How about the people in your section?

Musch: I had a couple get slightly wounded, but none killed. In other words, nobody in our Battalion Headquarters was killed. Second Battalion, Colonel Johnson was killed in the Battalion Headquarters, along with his runner and a couple other people.

DePue: How far behind the actual fighting, behind the front lines, would the headquarters set up?

Musch: I can't remember. Maybe a hundred yards.

DePue: That's not very far.

Musch: They were in the midst of it, too.

DePue: How long did the operation last overall?

Musch: Thirty-six days. In fact, the third man out of Joe Rosenthal's picture, that flag raising, the third man was killed with one day left. He was out walking out by himself, out in the open, on the north end of the island. Had no business being there. The sniper got him.

DePue: Do you remember the moment when you left the island?

Musch: Yes. Quite a thing happened there. We were up at Kitano Point, which was the north end of the island. We pulled back to the west of airfield number one, bivouacked for the night. That night, about 300 Japanese came out of their caves, came down the west coast, came inland, right just beyond us, through the Pioneer Battalion and the Army unit who had just come to take over from the Marines to occupy the island. For some reason or other—I don't know who gave the order—but somebody gave the order that the Pioneer guys turn

in all their ammunition. So they had empty rifles, and the Army didn't have any ammunition either, apparently. So they came through. The day before, a whole squadron of B-51 pilots had come in. Those Japanese came through and killed, I think, six or seven of those pilots in their tents, right on the edge of the airfield. Our battalion commander who got the order to turn in our ammunition said, "Hell no. We'll turn it in when we go aboard the ship." But they didn't come through us. They went beyond us. Those guys were fighting with rifles with no ammunition. One of those pilots was wounded, and yet he took his forty-five and killed I don't know how many Japanese that were coming. They had knives. They sliced open the side of the tent and come through.

DePue: Was this the last gap of the Japanese, then?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Obviously they didn't think there was anything left.

Musch: Apparently not, but more kept coming out as years passed. Some I imagine two or three years later. Some came struggling out.

DePue: When you're in the midst of this and things are getting really ugly as far as the number of casualties concerned, and just the nature of combat, did you start to wonder if this is worth it?

Musch: Yes, I did. In fact, for quite a long while, I doubted if all the bloodshed and the casualties—I think 6,800 Marines were killed outright.

DePue: That sounds about right.

Musch: And then Navy people, so a total of over 8,000 actually killed, plus all the wounded, which was, I think, close to 20,000 wounded. I hardly thought it was worthwhile. Then, in 1988, Haroldine and I went to Biloxi, Mississippi to the Iwo reunion that's held in the southern part of the United States for eons, and the fellow there who was our principal speaker was an Army Air Force captain who was in charge of ground crew on Iwo after we left. He said, "The fact that the Marines took Iwo, we saved 27,102 airmen's lives, because they were able to land and save their lives instead of ditching at sea." There's some controversy that they could have ditched at sea and the submarine would have picked them up, but it's much safer to land on land than it is to ditch in the ocean. No question there.

DePue: I think if I'm on the air crew, I'd know what I would prefer.

Musch: In fact, another interesting fact. I think it was the fourth or fifth day. Rather early in the combat. I think fifth or sixth day, something like that. The first airfield was secured, and a B-29 was crippled and was not going to make it back to Saipan or Tinian. The engineers were building the airfield to make it

passable, and he flew over and circled the island. He says, “Get out of the way. I’m coming in.” They said, “We’re not ready.” He said, “Get out of the way. I’m coming in. I can’t stay up any longer.” He belly-landed the thing, and I saw the guys get off and kiss the ground.

DePue: Those are the things that stay with you, you don’t mind. And I’m sure there’s things that you wish you could forget.

Musch: Yeah. I—fortunate in the respect that I did not meet a Japanese face-to-face and it was either him or me. I didn’t come into that situation. Maybe that’s why I don’t have nightmares like some people had. I’ve been very fortunate. I never had any nightmares. The only thing close to it was, when I first got home, I saw the movie *Sands of Iwo* with John Wayne. When the movie was over, my shirt was soaking wet with sweat. Didn’t know it.

DePue: Did you hear afterwards, when you were able to write letters or talk to Haroldine about this experience—did she know where you were and the risks that you were under?

Musch: She did, yes. Shortly thereafter, she knew I was there. One thing there that I could relate, too. I think it was March the twelfth they considered the island secure. She breathed a sigh of relief. Uh-uh. We had thirteen more days of it. The snipers were getting more accurate. We were having more deaths than we were wounded at that time.

DePue: Obviously, you’re not writing letters or receiving letters, I would think.

Musch: V-mail I guess we called it. I was able to send one of those a few times. They did pick them up after. We were about halfway through the operation. I got, I think, a V-mail or two from Haroldine there, too.

DePue: That’s got to be a wonderful feeling, to get a touch of home in the middle of all of this.

Musch: Really a morale-booster. She breathed a sigh of relief. Fortunately, I did not come in the sights of one of the Japanese snipers, so I survived.

DePue: How would you describe the morale of the Marines you were with?

Musch: Generally speaking, we were all okay. None of my men had combat—well, indirectly, I guess one did. Early on, a colonel said, “Musch, you’ve got too many men in your unit.” He let me pick anybody and everybody I wanted from the whole battalion for my section, which was quite unusual, I thought. I said, “Colonel, why don’t we put one of my trained men with each one of your company commanders? They know how to operate a radio. They know how to send messages. They give you coordinates and so forth with a map, and tell where people are and what’s going on. In case the company commander can’t answer, they can.” “Okay.” It worked beautifully on Iwo.

DePue: Did it make a difference?

Musch: It did.

DePue: Did you receive any medals?

Musch: Nothing. Only what I normally earned. Nothing for heroic activity. I didn't do anything heroic. I did my job, and that was it.

DePue: Was there just a standard service medal for being in the Pacific, or was there something specific for Iwo?

Musch: There was a specific Pacific combat ribbon, and then you got a star for Iwo Jima, and also a star when you were on the occupation of Japan.

DePue: What after that, then?

Musch: And a presidential unit citation, which our unit got, for the operation of Iwo.

DePue: The Twenty-Eighth or the entire division?

Musch: The entire division.

DePue: What happens to the unit after Iwo Jima?

Musch: I didn't know until you gave me that book that my son had, which I kept a diary from the day we got onboard ship in January of '45, which I think was January the tenth. Then when we came off of Iwo, I started writing in it again, and I didn't realize that we went to division cemetery for memorial services. The chaplain that gave the service, I was privileged to hear him give the same talk in the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. in 1999. I can't remember—Biddle, Biddlecomb, or something like that was his name. We went there for the memorial service. Then we went aboard ship that afternoon, late. I think about five o'clock, something like that. I didn't realize until I checked those notes this morning that we didn't sail until the next day. Then we got back to our base camp. We arrived in Hilo and went back to our base camp, Camp Tarawa, in—I can't remember the date. We were at sea something like ten or twelve days, something like that.

DePue: I would guess you're into April of '45 by this time.

Musch: Oh yeah, we're into April, yes. About the tenth of April, I would say. Somewhere close to that area.

DePue: Did you get reassigned?

Musch: No, I was still in the same place, as combat intelligence officer for Third Battalion Twenty-Eighth. We started getting replacements and filling in and

getting organized for the next operation, whatever it might be. At that time, we didn't know. Anyway, in the meantime, I somehow got in an argument with—I should say I got displeased with the battalion commander. DePue:  
You can't win that argument.

Musch: Anyway, Colonel Shephard is relieved because of battle fatigue, and Major Smoke, the exec, took over DM two. Things were going along, I thought, okay. Then Major Smoke came down one day and he says, "Musch, you're not doing so-and-so." I don't remember the details, but he didn't like what I was doing. I said, "Okay," and went on about my usual rate. At that time, I'd been in combat, and I wasn't interested in taking guff off of anybody, I didn't think. It could have killed me, but it didn't. Scuttlebutt came, which rampant in the Marine Corps, various times for various things. Said, "Hey, Musch, I hear you're going to be a machinegun platoon leader." That's the heavy water-cooled thirties, which was the worst job you could have, so they told me. Then the scuttlebutt says, "No, I hear you're going to Division Headquarters. Colonel Role wants you up there in G2." The next orders I got was to go to Regimental Headquarters, under Colonel Liversedge and Williams, and run the conference room. At that time, it became quite readily known that our next objective was going to be invasion of Japan. So I started working on that, and quickly decided that I survived Iwo, but I would not survive that operation. What was strange, I didn't have enough rank to go to Division Headquarters and get the information. Captain Newbert was the R2. Got the information, turned it over to me. I plotted it all on the maps and charts and everything. Then when Colonel Liversedge would get the battalion commanders in, I was up there telling him what was going on.

DePue: When you were on the island itself, you said you never really thought about whether or not you were going to survive. I guess you were confident you were going to survive.

Musch: I don't know.

DePue: What changed?

Musch: I guess magnitude of this operation, as I saw it coming in, beginning to unfold.

DePue: I want to talk about that, about the magnitude and the concerns and about what the plan for invasion of Japan was, but I want to touch base on a couple other things first. April 12, 1945, FDR dies. Do you remember that news?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: What was your reaction on that?

- Musch: Not outstanding at that particular point. I don't know why or what. I guess we were all concerned what was going to happen, but not that it's a memorable occasion for me.
- DePue: This is a peculiar question for you, Warren, but were your parents voting for FDR?
- Musch: I don't think so.
- DePue: Not that that should enter into the equation.
- Musch: I'm pretty sure they weren't.
- DePue: Then the invasion, occupation, of Okinawa was going on in April as well. Were you following that fairly closely?
- Musch: Yes. I followed it enough to know that there was an area where the Army had gone and couldn't make it. The Marines came in. Different tactics. Had, I recall, an encirclement invasion behind the Japanese lines, and that broke through the area where they were having trouble. The Army said, "You can't do that," but the Marines did it.
- DePue: I'm not surprised you take that attitude. (laughs) May eighth had to be an important day. That was V-E Day. Do you remember that?
- Musch: Oh, yes, definitely. We got the word that Japan had surrendered.
- DePue: That Germany had surrendered.
- Musch: Oh, Germany had surrendered. Yeah. That was important, yes. I'm too far ahead of you. Yeah, we were enthused about that, but still, we knew what we were headed with the invasion of Japan. I don't think there was any particular celebration or anything with V-E Day.
- DePue: Let's talk about the invasion plan. I think we've got a map of the plan as well. At least this is a pretty rough estimation. Does that look familiar to you?
- Musch: Yes.
- DePue: Where would the six Marines be in?
- Musch: See the blue arrow on the left side? That's where we'd land.
- DePue: Is that Kyushu Island?
- Musch: Yes. Kyushu.
- DePue: What was the date they were projecting for that invasion?

Musch: November, but I can't think of the day. November of '45.

DePue: That's still quite a few months away. What did you think about the battle plan, and especially about the estimation of casualties that we were looking at, at the time?

Musch: I had privy to the information almost immediately because of my position. After I got into it for a while, I suddenly thought that, gee, with as many people involved and as bad as it was to fight the Japanese on Iwo Jima, this would be still closer to their homeland. It would be a more difficult situation forever, because they fought to the last man on Iwo; they would do so on Kyushu. The other thing I found out, too, that the artillery used Cub planes for spotters. In the plan, those planes were to take off from the aircraft carrier, and we were to secure a place for them to land. Otherwise, they'd just ditch at sea or crash.

DePue: Did you see any estimates of the casualties they were expecting?

Musch: Yes. The invasion on Kyushu was to be in November. Following March, was to be an invasion of the homeland on Tokyo Plain. Fourteen divisions on Kyushu. Three Marine and eleven Army. On Tokyo Plain, twenty-eight divisions involved. Three Marine and twenty-five Army. Three million men involved in the operation, minimum, and at least a million casualties.

DePue: Typically, how would that equate to the number of deaths?

Musch: I never got into the part of that. On Iwo, your wounded were about—three wounded, one killed.

DePue: In other words, an awful lot of mothers and sweethearts would be getting letters.

Musch: That's true. The more I knew about it, the more I felt that I would not survive if it came about. That's why I say the atomic bomb saved my life.

DePue: The atomic bomb. That's what I was getting to. Did you know anything about the development of the bomb?

Musch: No.

DePue: The bomb on Hiroshima was dropped on August sixth. Do you remember hearing that news?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: What was your reaction?

Musch: I thought, Gee, if they don't surrender now, they sure ought to.



DePue: Did you start to get a little bit hopeful?

Musch: Yes. Then on the—what?

DePue: The ninth?

Musch: Ninth, when they dropped the one on Nagasaki, then I thought, Gee, they've got to quit now. Fourteenth, I think, is when they actually surrendered. That's when we ran out in the streets and celebrated. Everybody whooping, hollering, carrying on. And my job ended. Then, after that, I commandeered a driver and six-by-six and took anybody that wasn't working to the beach on the west side of Hawaii, where now the Mauna Kea Hotel is built. Beautiful white sand beach, like you've never seen any place in your life. I went swimming there almost every day of the week.

DePue: After the war was over?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Did you ever get to Oahu?

Musch: Yes. When I came back from Iwo, I got three days of R and R. They flew me over. I was there for three days, and then they flew me back. But I didn't know much to get around. Unfortunately, the fellow that I met when I got back, who came in as a replacement, had some family member there, and he said, "If I'd only known, I could have sent you to them, and they'd really showed you around the place," but I missed that.

DePue: Did you see much of Honolulu?

Musch: Some. Quite a bit. I stayed at the officer's club, so then I operated out from there. I was on my own. I wasn't really great adventurous in a strange place.

DePue: What was your impression of wartime Hawaii?

Musch: Really quite good, I thought. Of course, they had all the restrictions and everything, but it was still operating quite well. I neglected to say that our ship tied up at the Aloha Tower in downtown Honolulu for R and R before we left to go to Iwo. We were there for three or four days, I think.

DePue: So you were there both before and after your experience in Iwo Jima.

Musch: In fact, we got to go on shore leave, so to speak, when we were waiting to go to Iwo.

DePue: What were you thinking when you saw an awful lot of Japanese?

- Musch: I don't think it really bothered me. I know some people, it did, but I don't think it bothered me. I didn't feel animosity toward them like some people did. I don't know why. I figured, well, they were there, and probably U.S. citizens. Right or wrong. At least that's the attitude I had.
- DePue: The signature, I think, the famous signing ceremony on *USS Missouri*, I think is on September second. Did you know what was going to happen to you at that time? Were you hoping you'd be released and sent home?
- Musch: At that particular time, we already knew we were going to go to occupation duty in Japan.
- DePue: What did you think about that?
- Musch: Didn't know what to expect. Sort of apprehensive. We didn't know. Thought it was maybe kind of a touchy situation. I don't remember when we would board the ship. It might be in that little notebook we found. But anyway, we arrived, as I remember, on September the twenty-first or twenty-second, in Sasebo, Kyushu. Big naval base there and everything.
- DePue: This is the same island you were supposed to be invading?
- Musch: Yes. We were all pretty apprehensive, what we might find or expect, but everything was very peaceful. Nothing happened.
- DePue: What were your initial reactions when you first got off and were on Japanese mainland?
- Musch: After we found out that there was no opposition and the Japanese were cooperative, then we had no particular apprehension at all.
- DePue: Did you see a lot of war damage?
- Musch: Yes, especially around the naval base. Some of it was intact, and of course other things were very intact. They had artillery pieces built into caves in the side of the hills, or whatever you want to call it, and thick steel doors. They'd open the doors, roll the cannon out on tracks, fire it, and then they could put it back in. In other words, bombing and so forth would not affect it.
- DePue: So you saw what you would have been facing had you had to invade?
- Musch: And, of course, going around, my men and my job was to go to various Japanese CPs [command posts] and collect information, whatever we could find. We found their maps showing where the landing was going to take place. I can't remember the beach, but they had, I think, Red Beach or whatever it was. Showed right where the Fifth Division was going to land, on their maps. Had it labeled, "Fifth Division landing here."

DePue: Any idea how they would have gotten that information?

Musch: I don't know. But that really shook me up some more, which made me more convinced, had it taken place, I wouldn't have survived. Then I saw the beach where we were going to land. The beach was here, and then the land went like this. Almost a forty-five degree angle up from the beach. They were up here, shooting down at us.

DePue: That's not the Marine's idea of the ideal beach, is it?

Musch: No. According to what I learned, we had the most hazardous landing place to land, compared to all the rest. The three Marine divisions were landing in the toughest places.

DePue: What was your job now? Were you still working at the regimental level?

Musch: I changed then from being the planning person. At this time, the R2, which was Captain Newbert, went home, because of points. He was in before the war. Then I became the regimental assistant, too—in other words, regimental assistant combat officer. The first lieutenant in charge was in my ROC class, OCS class, only he had probably fifteen or twenty numbers on me. He was that senior. You go by numbers. We got along very well together. I learned early on, it's not always that you can work and play with the same person, but in this case, we could.

DePue: Work and play together?

Musch: Yes. By the fact that the Japanese interpreters were with us, they were out in the countryside and around. Through their efforts, Bill O'Donnell, who was the other fellow, Bill and I, along with the two Japanese interpreters, were invited to Japanese homes out in the countryside for meals. An experience that very few other people had.

DePue: What were the living conditions for the Japanese?

Musch: Where we went, they were nice. They weren't tumble-down stuff. It was still flimsy, I guess, compared to our standards, but the people were well-dressed and seemed to be highly respected people in their areas and so forth.

DePue: Did they have enough food? Did they have enough fuel?

Musch: Apparently they did. I don't know that everybody did. They had these vehicles that had—I don't know what you call them, but they had some kind of a thing on the outside that they had to put charcoal or whatever in, and build a fire and made gas to feed into the engine to run the vehicle. Their rolling stock was in pretty sad shape. Trains, no. They were perfect. They were beautiful. But the other stuff was junk, so to speak.

DePue: How did the Japanese people feel and react to the Americans?

Musch: Very well. We had very few problems. In case we did come to any problem, why, all we had to do is, "We'll report you to MacArthur's headquarters," and that took care of it. He did a masterful job of the occupation. Although Marines hated him, we give him credit. He did a masterful job in the occupation of Japan.

DePue: There's a couple questions there. I'll start with this one. Why did the Marines hate MacArthur?

Musch: He was too much of a publicity man. Just like his return to the Philippines. That was rehearsed a time or two before it actually took place. I don't know if people know that or not, but that's what I was told. That may not be right, but that's what I was told.

DePue: Didn't the Marines get enough publicity?

Musch: I don't know about that. (laughs) I think we did, probably. We give him credit. He did a great job on the occupation of Japan.

DePue: Tell me a little bit more of, then, your duties. I have a good feel for what you did in combat, but I would think you're doing something quite different now that you're on occupation duty.

Musch: I can't remember specifically what we did. We had certain designated duties and reports that we had to file every day to Division Headquarters from regiment. We had clerks and typists and so forth to help us do what we had to do. In fact, it wasn't a very, what I'd say, commanding job. It didn't take an awful lot of time, but you had to be on duty. A lot of it was talking to the subordinate units that were on occupation duty outside. Spend a lot of time on the phone talking to people.

DePue: Did you have quite a bit more free time now?

Musch: Yes.

DePue: What did you do with your free time?

Musch: After I got to Second Division, I met up with a fellow who was an air observer for the artillery. He was in the Cub flights. He went on the mail run occasionally to keep up his flight pay. We started playing bridge together, and we teamed up. We took on everybody and anybody that came along to play bridge. He really got me where I could play bridge quite well at that time.

DePue: This is the time period when a lot of the Japanese soldiers, in all of these places that Japan had occupied, in some cases, for decades, were coming back home. Did you see any of that?

- Musch: Not very much, but I saw some of it. I don't remember exact details, but I think a ship docked there at Sasebo and a lot of those people came off, but we didn't have any contact with them.
- DePue: I'm just curious about your impressions of the defeated soldiers, the defeated Army coming back.
- Musch: I didn't have any contact with them. I'm sure that both interpreters that were with us probably had contact with them, but we didn't.
- DePue: This is another holiday season, too, that you're going to be away from home.
- Musch: Another Christmas.
- DePue: Another Thanksgiving, another Christmas. Any memories from your experiences there?
- Musch: Not really. I don't remember anything unusual happening or doing anything out of the ordinary, other than that they had a nice meal for us both times.
- DePue: A traditional meal?
- Musch: Pretty much so. As I remember.
- DePue: That would be quite a logistical feat just to get all the—
- Musch: I don't remember for sure. Maybe not for Thanksgiving, but for Christmas, I think, by that time, things had calmed down quite a bit, and probably did have. Thanksgiving, I'm not sure.
- DePue: Were you interested in when you might be able to get shipped home?
- Musch: Yes. I failed to go home with the division, because I lacked one point. By points at that time.
- DePue: What's a point?
- Musch: You got points for serving a certain length of time, whatever time it was. You got points for any awards you got, and you got points for being married. It all added up. I had forty-nine points, and I needed fifty to go home with the division. I didn't have a Purple Heart, so I didn't have that one point. That's why I was transferred to the Second Marine Division in December and stayed with them for almost three months before I was shipped home.
- DePue: Paying attention to when you might get shipping orders?
- Musch: I thought it would be down the road farther than it was. I had been transferred to the Second Marine Division, working for Randy Craft, who was a first lieutenant much senior to me. Then he was sent home on points, and I became

the R2, or combat intelligence officer, for the Sixth Marines, Second Marine Division. Transferred to Fukuoka, took over from 132nd Army Division. It was all set. They sent in a new second lieutenant to be my assistant. There wasn't a whole lot to do at that particular time for our group, so I was sent to do a little more sightseeing. In fact, I had made arrangements to go to Nagasaki. Before that happened, which was going to take place the following week, the Army CIA guys had a big party for us taking over for them. I got to the party late, and walked in and they said, "Hey, Musch, you're here just in time. Here's the duozo bowl," which means "please" in Japanese. Poured a can of beer in the duozo bowl, and then you consumed it without stopping. Then you rolled a dice, and if you lost, you had to do that again. In the course of the evening, I lost or whatever. Anyway, I don't know when—it might have been the early hours of morning, I don't know—I stumbled down the hall, fell into an open cot someplace. The next morning sometime, somebody came in and shook me and said, "Hey, Musch, your name is on the list to go home." I said, "Get out of here. Leave me alone." Pretty soon, I awakened again and suddenly realized what had happened, so I go tearing down the hall, and sure enough, my name was on the list to go home. So I forgot all about sightseeing then. (laughs) Worst hangover and only one I've ever had in my life, I guess. (laughs) Which is not a bad way to do, I guess. I don't know.

DePue: Was that a memorable occasion for you?

Musch: Yes, memorable occasion. Very much so.

DePue: How'd you ship back home?

Musch: On an APA, which there was no gun crew anymore. They took all the high-pointers out of the Sixth Marine Regiment and made one battalion, and we went home with that. Colonel—I can't remember his name—was in charge of troops. I was building officer to start with, and I had, I think, four or five NCOs with me. He'd send a guy down the hold. Come out. "Lieutenant, there's no place for me." I said, "Yes, there is. There's so many bunks down there. You get one." The guy would go down there, put his sea bag in one, then he'd get in the other, so the guy thought that was occupied. You couldn't do that. Anyway, got everybody aboard, then I found out, as a first lieutenant, I was second in command of the troops aboard the ship. So then—

DePue: This is probably a duty you weren't relishing at the time.

Musch: When it first hit me, I thought, Oh my. Then it turned out all I had to do was go with the ship's officer to make inspection each day. The rest of the day, I had nothing to do, except watch the other people play cards or whatever. Then my quarters were up on the deck where the ship's gun crew officers were, so I had nice quarters on the way back, too.

DePue: By this time, did you have your sea legs?

Musch: Yes. Oh, yeah. I was seasick once. In fact, in my total time of eighteen months overseas, I spent ninety-three days aboard ship. So I had to have my sea legs. In fact, interesting story. I don't know if I should back up or not. It's in the training exercise we had before we loaded to go overseas. We had a landing exercise off the island of Maui. Being in division reserve, I was in LCVP, around and around and around out in the ocean. The groundswells were big. Sometimes there's a wall of water around you, and then again you'd be down, you could see every place. We were out there for several hours. Never did land. One fellow got so seasick that when we got back to the ship, they had to put a stretcher over the side and hoist him aboard. He completely passed out. It didn't bother me.

DePue: It's one of those things you don't have any control over, is it?

Musch: I know. I was seasick once. Never again. I went through the worst you could find, and never phased me.

DePue: Where did you land in the United States?

Musch: San Diego. Same place I left.

DePue: Did you stop by Hawaii on route?

Musch: We didn't stop there. We came direct from Sasebo to San Diego. I can't remember. Something like almost two weeks aboard ship. One interesting fact, during that time, we ran into a storm. I didn't know at the time, but I was up in the ward room watching the guys play bridge, or whatever they were playing—poker, whatever—and all the sudden, we hit the storm. The foghorn was blowing. Pretty soon, everything was loose. Went from one bulkhead to the other side, and then back again. Eventually, when we got back on land, I found out that we took a twenty-seven degree roll, and the ship would only stand a twenty-eight degree roll without capsizing. I didn't have any sense to be scared at the time, but had I known, I would have been.

DePue: Another roll of the dice.

Musch: That's true.

DePue: You've got to feel like a survivor by the time you get back to the United States.

Musch: Yes.

DePue: Once you got to San Diego, I'm curious when you were able to get together with Haroldine.

Musch: Went to Camp Pendleton. I can't remember the correct name of the group, whatever they called it. That's not the right word. I was there. Another thing I

remember about that is I had a wisdom tooth that was causing me trouble, so I went to the dentist there and they pulled it out. No complications. I was there for, I guess, about ten days. Then I got orders to Great Lakes, Chicago area. Then I took the train to Chicago. John Newbery and his wife, who was in the wedding picture you showed when I was here before, along with Haroldine, met me at the train station. Haroldine says, "I don't think I could have come here by myself if it hadn't been for John and Doris." She was afraid I wouldn't like her anymore. That thought never entered my mind at all. But anyway, we stayed then at the Morrison Hotel after I reported in at Great Lakes. Then I reported out there, and then I went home. I had thirty days of leave left, accumulated, or more. Then I went back in June. I was actually released to active duty on June 14, 1946. By that time, of course, I had been home. I was starting to help Dad on the farm and decided I was going to go in partnership. He offered partnership in farming with me while I was overseas, I guess. I thought about it a little bit, decided, yes, I think I'd like to do that. So that's what I did.

DePue: When you went away to college, you were thinking, I don't want to be a farmer.

Musch: That's right. My mind changed while I was in the service. Dad wrote and asked me if I'd like to be partner in farming with him. I didn't think very long and decided I would, because, having majored in chemistry, I didn't think I wanted to be cooped up in a lab eight hours a day doing research work or stuff like that. I was a farmer all my life and liked what I did. Anyway, came home. We stayed with Haroldine's parents for a little while, and then the folks helped us buy a house in Virginia, and we lived there for five years. Then we moved to the country to her grandparent's farm, where we lived for fifty-two years.

DePue: Excellent. Got a few questions, then, to wrap up. Let's start with this. I think you've already alluded to this a couple times, but were you one of those people who joined the local VFW or AMVETS, who kept in touch with some of your buddies in the war?

Musch: Mainly through the Fifth Marine Division Association. I joined the legion, of course, as soon as I got home, and it was active at that time. I associated with those fellows, from all the other services. Then, having come back to the same address from which I left to go into service, I got the first information about the Fifth Marine Division reunions, which started in 1948. I kept up with that. Didn't go to our first one until 1961, and then didn't go again for twelve years, and then for the next thirty-one years, we made thirty of them, all over the United States.

DePue: You got to see a lot of the United States that way, then?



- Musch: Yes. Met three other fellows who became very close friends. They'd come to the farm in spring, and we'd go to Chicago and all meet there in the fall for the Marine Corps Birthday Ball, put on by the reserve unit in Chicago. Went to McCormick Place for the 200th anniversary of the Marine Corps, 1975. So a lot of great memories. A lot of people I still keep in contact with. Out of the four of us that were so close, I'm the only one left.
- DePue: Once again, the survivor.
- Musch: Yes, absolutely.
- DePue: You saw an awful lot of the tough side of combat during World War II, obviously, especially, at Iwo Jima. Do you think the sacrifices that you made and that your buddies made was worth it?
- Musch: At that time, yes, because the United States came out to be leadership of the world after World War II. In that stage, everybody was behind the war effort to make it who it was. Everybody was for it. There's none of the dissenters or anything going around. I think the whole country pulled together, and we had the right leadership to take us back to prosperity after the war.
- DePue: Do you think your war experience changed you?
- Musch: Oh, yes. No doubt. In fact, I think going into the Marines made me a much better person and have a much fuller life than I would have ever had otherwise.
- DePue: Better in what way?
- Musch: Being able to meet people, talk to them, and take part in community affairs and support community activities.
- DePue: Did Haroldine think that you were the same guy that she married?
- Musch: She was afraid I wouldn't be, I guess. She was afraid I wouldn't like her when I came back. That thought never occurred to me.
- DePue: Do you know why she thought that?
- Musch: She never explained why. She thought I'd be changed. Something would have happened to me that I wouldn't be the same.
- DePue: Did you have some difficulties coming back, adjusting to being a civilian?
- Musch: No, not that I know of. Came home in April, first time. Went to church, where I was baptized as a baby. Haroldine and I went. It happened to be annual meeting time. Before I left the meeting, I was elected to the session of the church.

DePue: So they weren't going to give you any time to adjust anyway, were they?

Musch: No. (laughs) Home a few days, and that happened.

DePue: I know you've been interviewed before. I think this one might be a little bit longer. Why did you agree to be interviewed again?

Musch: I'm willing to tell my story to anybody and everybody. I hope it gives some people, especially younger people, an idea of what we went through to save our nation, to make it great, at that particular time. I admire all the present servicemen who volunteer and serve, because I think they have the same feeling, same ideas in mind.

DePue: Do you have any advice for them?

Musch: Other than to train and do as best you can, and with that in mind, hopefully you will survive and be able to come back and take an active part in your civilian life.



DePue: How about anybody who happens to be watching this somewhere down the road?

Musch: I hope they can learn some things that might help them through their life, and also make them more committed to their family and to their community.

DePue: Any final words for us, then, Warren?

Musch: It's been a great pleasure for me to give you my story, and I hope people that watch it will enjoy it. I'm very fortunate, I think, that I, so far, have not been any place but what I've been well-received when they hear my story. I think I'm blessed that I can tell my story, because some people don't like to, won't, for whatever reason. They have too many bad memories or whatever. In other words, they just aren't able to talk or give their story.

DePue: You've done a marvelous job in that respect, Warren, so I really appreciate having the opportunity to do this with you.

Musch: Thank you very much. Pleasure to meet you. I'm hopefully looking forward to seeing this on the website.

DePue: Great. Thank you very much. I certainly would encourage you to check out not just Warren's, but many other interviews that we have posted there.

Musch: Be sure and watch other people's stories. I'm sure they all have something different to tell, as interesting, and some maybe more interesting. In my case, I was lucky I was only in one combat operation, Iwo Jima. I had one fellow in my section who had been in three other operations, starting out with Carlson's Raiders on Guadalcanal. He had four operations. I only had one.



DePue: Thank you, Warren. It's been great.

Musch: You're welcome.

DePue: Thank you.

(end of interview #2)