

**Video Recording Log  
Veteran Steve Johnson**

**1. Name and address of collector of interviewer.**

Name of Donor/Interviewer: Nancy Rotzoll  
Address: 300 N. Goodwin Ave.  
City: Urbana  
State: IL  
Zip: 61801  
Telephone: 217-333-7300  
Email: rotzoll@illinois.edu  
Partner organization affiliation (if any): WILL AM-FM-TV

**2. Name and birth date of the veteran or civilian being interviewed at is appears on the Biographical Data Form:**

Name of Veteran/Civilian: Steve Johnson  
Birth Date: 05/06/1925

**3. Recording format**

VIDEO type: Mini DVD

**4. Estimated length of recording (in minutes):** 58 minutes    **Date of recording:** 01/22/2008

**5. Location of recording:** WILL AM-FM-TV, 300 N. Goodwin Ave, Urbana, IL 61801

**6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence.**

00:00 Introduction

00:30 Pearl Harbor—living on South Side of Chicago—16 years old in 1941

01:30 Born in Amal, Sweden, 1925

02:18 Moved to U.S. in 1928 to Chicago, IL

03:08 Brother enlisted after Pearl Harbor, he was 19 years old—moved to Camp Pendleton, CA—casual platoon because enlisted and not confirmed U.S. Citizen—4<sup>th</sup> Marine Division—Sipan, Tinian, Eniwetok, Iwo Jima

04:05 [Shows window hangings parents had up while he and brother were in service]

04:40 Public schools in Chicago, South Side—Wilson College

05:20 May 6, 1943—turned 18—June 5<sup>th</sup> declared 1A—June 30 inducted to Army

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- 05:40 [Looks for picture at induction center, does not find it]
- 06:20 Reported active duty July 14, 1943—Camp Grant, IL for 12 days, then train to Fort Ord, CA
- 06:50 Private status, first time away from home
- 07:10 Fort Ord, CA—basic training over 12 weeks because troop transport intended for his division was sunk by Germans—left January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1944—calisthenics, munitions, bivouacs
- 08:19 5<sup>th</sup> January—Dutch Liner, Nieu Amsterdam—took 10,000 troops, usually held 2,000 cruise ship customers—bunks stacked 7-high—2 meals a day
- 09:50 Went to Auckland, New Zealand—took 19 days to get there, under blackout orders
- 10:55 Went to Sydney, Australia—3 weeks R & R before went up islands—Australia, girls, carnival
- 11:50 Boarded U.S.S. Etamin—went to South tip of New Guinea, Milne Bay
- 12:00 Told at Camp Grant that they had been selected with high testing for boat training—promotions—1<sup>st</sup> stripe, then later Technician 4<sup>th</sup> Grade
- 13:45 Landing Craft—50 feet long—ramp loading—crafts assembled at Milne Bay—putting out up to 150 boats per month—crafts had coxman, engineman, two seamen
- 16:10 New Guinea in jungle—used packing crates to build tents, camp, etc.
- 17:20 Transporting supplies and troops to cities in upper New Guinea—vehicles, troops, supplies—going from one side of island to the other and back again
- 19:08 Went to New Britain island—other islands and cities
- 19:50 Contracted Malaria—Atabrine—pill to take for Malaria—did not work, was in hospital at Oro Bay for 7-8 weeks
- 21:00 1944—Schouten Islands—Dutch East Indies—boarded 2<sup>nd</sup> LCM—this one 56 feet long—1<sup>st</sup> was called Lucky Lady—this one called Lucky Lady 2—Lucky Lady 1 saw 280 days of use
- 22:00 Log book—hours run each day—fuel tanks—diesel engines
- 22:45 Sent to safe places—not under attack

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- 23:08 February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1945—boat loaded on U.S.S. Biddle—personal attack carrier—Leyte Island, Philippines—scene of huge Naval battle
- 23:50 Went from Leyte to Mindoro—hired help
- 24:30 Sherman medium tank—5-man crew—LSD ship—14 other LCMs on LSD to Zamboanga
- 25:00 1<sup>st</sup> combat—J-Day—southernmost tip of Philippines—Mindanao—song about Zamboanga [sings]
- 25:55 March 10, 1945—ocean full of boats and crafts, destroyers, light cruisers—Air Force came in—shoreline full of smoke and flames—Naval bombardment—smaller ships—rockets
- 27:30 Hit beach at 9:15 a.m.—told later that 2,900 Japanese died, 130 Americans died
- 28:30 On 14<sup>th</sup>, all men called off boats because had heard there would be a counter-attack—moved to support ground troops—ended up in shell hole from bombardment—attack did not occur
- 30:25 New Guinea—caught in hurricane up coast—could not get into bay or harbor—waiting it out in a convoy with 14 other landing crafts—storm abated mid-morning next day
- 33:30 Lived on boats—had to build cabin—describes living on landing craft
- 35:08 Cooking, C-Rations, K-Rations, 10-in-1 Rations—eating on shore sometimes
- 36:15 March, 1945—letter from brother, safe after Iwo Jima
- 36:25 Received news of FDR's death
- 36:55 Received news that Germany surrendered
- 37:00 Receiving news throughout War—stopping at towns, hearing the news—later, got a radio
- 37:40 June 15, 1945—went in airplane—C-47—to Maluku Islands—worked with Australian 9<sup>th</sup> Division to prepare for invasion of Japan—Borneo airport bombed by Japanese Zeros
- 38:35 Zamboanga—Japanese airplane flew over—flying low, could see pilot
- 39:35 Brigade was in 60 combat landings total, his craft only in 3 landings—others by 4 other engineer special brigades

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- 40:05 August 10, 1945—received news that Japan surrendered
- 40:15 Announced Japan’s surrender—collected guns, passed out beer
- 42:15 Picture of boats in harbor—fireworks display, horns honking
- 42:45 [Reads part of letter written to parents about Japan’s surrender]
- 44:50 Correspondence
- 46:35 20 years old when discharged—could not drink at bars
- 47:00 Leyte—preparing for invasion of Japan—would have delivered troops and supplies—  
“greatest battle that was never fought”—Atomic Bomb
- 48:20 T-5 rank
- 48:28 Went to Japan—September 18, 1945—Convoy to Leyte—U.S.S. Hampton—7 days later  
arrived at Honshu--Aomori, Japan
- 49:25 Hit cold weather for first time
- 49:50 Lucky Lady II—final resting place
- 50:25 November 1, 1945—promoted to Tech. 4<sup>th</sup> Class
- 50:41 Japan story: assigned corporeal guard to drive jeep—had never driven before—did not  
tell anyone—taught himself how to drive
- 51:40 December, 1945—left Aomori by train for separation center in Yokohama—points  
system—left early December—arrived in Seattle, WA, December 19<sup>th</sup>
- 53:05 Left Seattle for Camp Grant, IL—discharged January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1946
- 53:20 Brother came to get him in Dodge Coupe—bought a train ticket but did not use it
- 54:17 After discharged used G.I. Bill—2<sup>nd</sup> year of community college, then at University of  
Chicago for MBA degree
- 54:45 Worked as Junior Cost Accountant on South Side Chicago—stayed at company 39  
years—worked up to Corporate Treasurer
- 55:35 Married, 3 children—first wife died of breast cancer in 1989—married second wife in  
1992

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55:58 [Wrap-up]—foreign born—U.S. the greatest country—mother would say “we came to America and had it good”—family—War was worth it

57:22 [Wrap-up]

57:28 [Video of medals, stripes, badges]