

## Transcribed Excerpt from Interview of Navy Service Member Augustus Prince, October 20, 2004

*Excerpt Begins at 10:44*

**Judith Kent:** No. So what was the first combat that your ship encountered?

**Augustus Prince:** I think it was \_\_\_+? No, Okinawa. That was the big one. Okinawa. That was really big, in fact, that was the largest Navy encounter in World War II, anyway. I think one of seven naval casualties were at Okinawa. I remember first, before we got to Okinawa, we had to, I guess, take care of a few other places; like I think we went to Saipan and a few other...Guam — and I was at sea three months without seeing land and that's why today I said I don't think I want to go on ocean water —

**JK:** No cruises for you.

**AP:** — no cruises for me. I've seen enough water in my time. But Okinawa was the big one and there we encountered ... kamikazes ... lost a few men ...

**JK:** What would a typical day, if there is such a thing, be in combat for you?

**AP:** Well, a typical day would be, you had a watch and, usually was a four hour watch, four on and four off, and it varied. Usually during the watch, you were either what we called the ship's ... — anyway, we had what you called the CIC, that's combat information center, that's where you set in front of the radar screen and you would watch the radar go around and pick up any incoming enemy planes. Then you had the bridge watch, that's what I would say, so then information that was sent from CIC up to the bridge, we could plot it so we would know exactly — and we had a commanding officer, or whoever's in charge, he could see exactly what was going on as far as whether we should scramble that aircraft to protect ... so that was the main thing at Okinawa, I think, and we also later — well, I guess I'm getting ahead of myself — we stayed at Okinawa until we heard the fact that the ... we were getting ready to go to Japan, that's right —

**JK:** For the invasion.

**AP:** — for the invasion of Japan and they had three units they called Federal One, Federal Two, and Federal Three; I think we were Federal Three which we were going to Northern Japan because they gave us all \_\_\_\_. And en route we heard that a bomb had been dropped; we were only 60 miles from Japan and we thought it was Tokyo Rose kidding, you know, because we used to get her and she would play some nice music like that, but then she said someone said a bomb had been dropped and it was at Hiroshima. We were only 60 miles away. So then we got orders just to circle. And then, I think we... — a week later Nagasaki was hit and that's when the war was declared over, but we still weren't sure. So we stayed in the Sea of Japan maybe two or three weeks, I think, finally \_\_\_ go to Honshu, I think it was, to check, the planes went up to make sure. And we found out later that the Japanese had, I guess, all their planes ready, about four or five hundred suicide kamikazes ready, because they knew we were going to invade, of course the bomb made them change their mind, after that we sailed to Formosa, Taiwan to pick up Australian prisoners of war. And that's what we did most of the time —