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# St. Johns High School

Home of the Redwings!

## Nelson "Brub" Cowan

Interviewed by Derek Crandall

Nelson "Brub" Cowan was a front line paramedic. He helped the people that were shot in the line of battle.

Brub joined the service because he was mad the day that they bombed Pearl Harbor. He also said, "that was the thing to do back in my day." Brub joined the service when he was seventeen; he thought that the war was going to end before he could make a difference. When he go to the war he thought just the opposite. Brub said that the war stills affects him today and that it has made him a better person.

He was ranked " 14 ranks below a general," as he would say. His main objective was to get home alive. He also said that it was a great adventure to travel all over that Pacific being only seventeen. The kind of gun he got to carry was a M1 Carbine. Most of all the fighting he did was in the jungle. He was in three of the more famous battles; Battle of the Bulge, The Flag Raising on Iwo Jima, and Guadal Canal. Brub was wounded in the Battle of Iwo Jima, he was shot in the leg and in the water canteen and as he rolled down a hill he thought that he was bleeding to death but that was really the water from his canteen going all over.

The branch he was in was the Navy but they were joined with the Marine Corps. He was in the war for less than three years from age 17-21. He got his nickname from at home he had 9 kids in his family and one of his sisters called him Brub and it has stuck with him for his whole life. He had a brother in the Air Force mostly over by North Africa. One of his sister's husbands was in the war too. He was stationed in San Diego, California.

Nelson was engaged in hand-to-hand combat quite often. The attacks they did were quick attacks; some attacks were around 3 weeks long. He said, " They had bad monsoons when they were out in the jungles, then the sun would come out and bake you." One of his worst experiences was when he turned over his best friend and half of his face was gone.

Mr. Cowan also had some better times, when he was in Rest and Rehabilitation "R and R" they would play softball or basketball, which wasn't much more than a few baskets around the trees. They also had famous performers come in and put on performances. Brub made many good friends, and he was happy when they dropped the A bombs so they

wouldn't have to go invade Japan; it was a sign of relief. However he said the best experience was when he saw the shore pulling into California.

Brub also played basketball for CMU in college and coached basketball for 6 years. To wrap it up he said the war had many different experiences like harsh living conditions and a lot of diseases. I believe that Mr. Cowan was a very good person and that he did a lot to help out our country during the harsh and violent war.

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