

**Boyd Sigloh
Narrator**

**Tami Wiese
Interviewer**

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TW: 00:00 I'm talking with Mr. Boyd Sigloh in his home in Ortonville. And Mr. Sigloh was involved during World War II with the State Guard, and he was also involved with working out west in the factories. Mr. Sigloh, when and where were you born?

BS: 00:21 When and where was I born?

TW: 00:22 Um-hum.

BS: 00:24 Well, I was born in North Dakota, October 29, 1911.

TW: 00:31 When did you come down to Ortonville?

BS: 00:35 Well, I was about a year old. I was about a year old when we returned to Ortonville.

TW: 00:42 And you went to school here?

BS: 00:43 Yes.

TW: 00:45 What did your parents do for a living?

BS: 00:49 Well, my father was an electrician at one time, and he worked for the City of Ortonville in the power plant, and then he was in business for a period of about 50 years in recreation, sporting goods.

TW: 01:08 Are you German? Or what nationality are you?

BS: 01:11 I am German on my father's side and I guess Welsh on my mother's side.

TW: 01:17 Welsh on your mother's side, huh?

BS: 01:19 Um-hum.

TW: 01:19 Okay. How old were you? Let's see, in 1941, you would've been 30, is that right when Pearl Harbor happened?

BS: 01:30 1941?

TW: 01:31 Yeah.

BS: 01:33 I would've been—well, Harbor was in—yeah, 30 years old.

TW: 01:40 Thirty years old. What was your occupation when Pearl Harbor happened?

BS: 01:43 I was in partnership with my father in the sporting goods and recreation business.

TW: 01:50 Do you remember what you were doing when you heard her about her Pearl Harbor?

BS: 01:55 I think we had been on a trip up to my wife's mother's and returned, and that was the first thing we heard on the radio until we got home.

TW: 02:07 How did that make you feel?

BS: 02:09 Well, it was—I suppose just like it made everybody else feel, it was quite a shock.

TW: 02:20 How did being in the State Guard—how was that affected by Pearl Harbor?

BS: 02:26 Well, the National Guard had been inducted into federal service before this time, and they were down in Camp Claiborne, and the State Guard was organized as a replacement for state security and local security and whatever security was needed for the area. That was primarily—I mean, traditionally, they were carrying on the same duties as the Minnesota State—or National Guard did before they were inducted.

TW: 03:02 What did you have to do? What was your job or your duty in the Guard?

BS: 03:08 When the Guard was first formed, I was commissioned first lieutenant.

TW: 03:14 You were an officer then.

BS: 03:16 I was an officer, and then later on, I was—after the retirement or whatever happened to Captain Shaw, replaced him. And when I left the area and went to the west coast to go in defense work, Marlon Knowl took over the captain seat of the State Guard.

TW: 03:40 Did you have drills?

BS: 03:42 We had weekly drills. Everything was comparable to what the Minnesota National Guard was before.

TW: 03:51 You had told me something about the airports that you had—or your men?

BS: 03:56 Well, immediately after war was declared against Japan, I mean, we were put on security basis, and we had details up in some private airports, basically farm airports, because all civilian aircraft was grounded, and likewise, the airports were grounded.

TW: 04:20 And that's what you did. You said you worked on the west coast, why did you do that?

BS: 04:28 Well, I was on a deferment basis with the draft board at that time, I had a family of two children and my wife and I, and I just thought basically, I had a contribution to make the—not like the boys did. But I had a job offer in Portland as a security guard from my training with the Home Guard or the State Guard and the National Guard in the Kaiser Shipyards in Portland.

TW: 05:11 When did you go out there? What year?

BS: 05:15 It was in 19—I don't know.

TW: 05:19 Okay. February of—

BS: 05:21 February of 1943.

TW: 05:24 Okay. How did you like to work out there in the west or in Portland?

BS: 05:29 Well, that was disappointing. I mean, it just seemed to me that too many people to do the jobs that had to be done. I mean, it was, probably shouldn't say that, but cost plus and more time production just didn't come through to me. So I left there after about two or three months, I got a job with Hendy's and [inaudible 06:02] plant in Sunnyvale, California.

TW: 06:06 How did you get that job or how did you hear about that?

BS: 06:08 Well, it was a friend of mine in defense work down there at the time and he contacted me.

TW: 06:16 How did you like that work?

BS: 06:18 Well, that was fascinating work, and it was a lot more—as far as I'm concerned, it was much better effort doing something for the war effort. We were doing work on fluid drives for 20-millimeter and 40-millimeter anti-aircraft guns. And we also did some work on rocket launchers, emergency work, rush orders. And basically, that was—

TW: 06:56 Was your work inside of a building or did you go on to the ships?

BS: 06:59 Well, we did some work in the shipyards, ships that were in for repair and overhaul.

TW: 07:07 What were your hours?

BS: 07:09 Well, basically, we worked eight, ten hours a day. And then on some emergency stuff, we sometimes put in 16, 18 hours. But they also found out that that wasn't productive.

TW: 07:25 Was that six days a week you worked or five?

BS: 07:28 Six.

TW: 07:29 Six days a week. And where did you live when you lived in California, did you have your own home or—

BS: 07:36 No, we rented a—

TW: 07:40 Rented.

BS: 07:42 —well, a very small home. It wasn't accommodating, but it satisfied the—

TW: 07:50 The need. How far away was this home then from where you worked?

BS: 07:58 Well, probably eight, ten miles.

TW: 08:00 Did you have problems such as with the gas rationing and tire rationing, getting back and forth to work?

BS: 08:06 Well, we—I mean, we used carpooling and that. I mean, there was a lot of people in the same area that worked in the same plant, took turns driving. And, yes, you had problems with gas, you didn't go everywhere you wanted to go, well, you just didn't go, that was all.

TW: 08:27 But you had your own car, right?

BS: 08:28 Had my own car, yes.

TW: 08:29 You had your own car. How was the housing out there? Was there abundance of housing or shortage, or was it hard to get?

BS: 08:38 Well, I never really inquired into. I mean, I couldn't give you a definite answer on that because I wasn't in a position where I was going to buy a home or anything. But basically, we had to take what we could find.

TW: 08:58 What you could find.

BS: 08:59 I mean, the living quarters was a tough time.

TW: 09:02 What was rationing like out there?

BS: 09:06 I was sure it was very similar to where it is anywhere else or was at that time. You had your gas rationing, tire rationing, and meat and sugar and coffee.

TW: 09:21 Was there—do you think there was anything like a black market out there?

BS: 09:24 I'm sure there was black markets all over the United States.

TW: 09:29 You heard that?

BS: 09:29 I didn't get involved in it, but I mean, it wasn't really that important. I didn't have many places I had to go or—

TW: 09:41 Yeah. What did you do for entertainment while you were out there? Did you see movies?

BS: 09:47 Principally, we had two or three from our local area that were out there and we just got together for—

TW: 09:53 Oh, there were others out there—

BS: 09:55 And then we had—I might add that there was a lot of servicemen that were in—got into the area that found out where they lived and come out to visit us, and we took them out or had them in for dinners and so forth. And Officer Petri, which used to be a company commander or company officer when I was in the National Guards was stationed at Pacific Grove and he would come up and visit us, and we were down to visit him.

TW: 10:33 Did you hear about the Japanese internment while you were out there?

BS: 10:41 Well, I heard a lot about it out there, yes. I mean, they basically—I think they were putting the detention camps and that. A lot of their property, whether it was confiscated or not, I don't know, but I know they took over a lot of their property for the duration. And one thing that befuddled me was the fact that the jabs were very—well, they went to Gold Base a lot. So when these places were taken over, they took to Gold Base and they stuck them into the streams out there. And as a result, they took over and the trout disappeared and we had a problem.

TW: 11:32 Yeah, I guess. What was the residents' or the California's people's attitude or reaction to this?

BS: 11:42 Well, you weren't a native son, let's put it that way. I mean, as long as you were there doing something in this particular line, you were accepted, but it was very cliquey.

TW: 11:58 You mean, if you were out there doing your job, then you were accepted?

BS: 12:03 Um-hum.

TW: 12:04 Oh, I see.

BS: 12:06 A lot of foreigners out there.

TW: 12:10 What was their reaction—

BS: 12:11 I made friends. I mean, I made friends with Portuguese and Italians, and well, all nationality.

TW: 12:20 What was their reaction to the Japanese internment?

BS: 12:26 Well, I don't know if the feelings were really expressed to me, I couldn't answer that one for you.

TW: 12:31 They kept that to themselves. Did you notice a—were there a lot of job openings because the Japanese were gone?

BS: 12:43 Well, I am assuming this, now, I don't know because the Japanese, a lot of the laboring-type Japanese were used as gardeners and that, and I'm sure there was a demand for that if they were available, otherwise, maybe some of the upper class didn't get their lawns taken care of.

TW: 13:10 What was the attitude like towards the Germans out there? Do you think it was pretty much the same as it was here?

BS: 13:18 Well, I'm sure it was, yes. I mean, probably a little more better towards the Japs than the Germans, but—no, it was all one great, big problem.

TW: 13:34 You want to talk a little bit more about what you did? You repaired guns, you said?

BS: 13:39 Personally, I worked on—

TW: 13:40 Yeah, personally.

BS: 13:42 —the fluid drives for 20-millimeter and 40-millimeter anti-aircraft guns. I mean, when they got into certain areas, I said, these rocket launchers, they had an emergency order for hundreds and thousands of them. Well, they had to get out. I mean, I suppose they were used for putting a drive on to—

TW: 14:08 Were these damaged guns or were these new ones?

BS: 14:12 Most of them were damaged guns, but there also was new ones that some ORDALTs had to be changed on and some certain things, I mean, that came out—the guns were made, that they found after putting them into use under combat that things had to be changed, and they were brought back or the new ones were sent in for.

TW: 14:35 How long did you stay at this job then, the one in California?

BS: 14:39 Well, as soon as—shortly after the war ended, of course, all this production ceased. I mean, that was—

TW: 14:47 After—

BS: 14:49 After the end of the Japanese.

TW: 14:51 After the end of the Japanese War. And then what happened, what did you decide to do then?

BS: 14:56 Well, we came home. I mean, I still had a business back here, I mean, and I was involved in business.

TW: 15:05 Did you want to come back?

BS: 15:07 Well, I didn't have much choice at the time. I mean, it was either—I was out there and had half interest with the business back here and it was—I mean, either had to come back and get out. And that time, my father, who I was in business with, was getting at the age where he wanted out, so I just took over.

TW: 15:30 So back you came, huh?

BS: 15:32 Maybe I'd have been better up staying. I don't know.

TW: 15:34 Yeah. Is there anything else that you care to add here to your World War II experiences that you—or any comments you care to make?

BS: 15:49 No, I just—no, I'd like to make a comment that with little bit I did, I don't think was a great war effort. I mean, I tried to contribute something, but nothing like the boys had to get over. Do the job and get it done.

TW: 16:07 I know something I would like to ask you. Were there many from Ortonville, many married men like you with kids, or even single people who did go out to the factories in the cities or out in the west coast or east coast?

BS: 16:20 Well, I only know of a couple—

TW: 16:27 To rephrase the question then, were there many that left from this area or are from Ortonville?

BS: 16:33 Well, I mean, I—from our local areas, as far as I know, there was only three or four families.

TW: 16:41 Do they come back, most of them?

BS: 16:48 One didn't I know, and one did, and that's the only two that I can pinpoint right now. I mean—

TW: 17:01 Was there a—to go out and work in these factories, was there an ad in the paper or was there a promotion of some type that got people interested in going out to these jobs?

BS: 17:16 Well, there was a demand, I mean, for—yes, they—

TW: 17:20 But how did you find out about it, or did they advertise?

BS: 17:24 Well, like I said, this friend of mine that was in the San Francisco area contacted me in Portland and set up this job for me.

TW: 17:39 I see. Well, now maybe we'll close. You got anything more to say?

BS: 17:44 No, I think that covers everything basically.

TW: 17:46 Okay. Well, thank you very much.

BS: 17:48 You're welcome.