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Interview with

ELMO CHAMPION

May 15, 1982

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Interviewer: R. E. Marcello

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Approved: *Elmo Champion*
(Signature)

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Oral History Collection

Elmo Champion

Interviewer: Dr. Ronald E. Marcello

Place of Interview: Austin, Texas

Date: May 15, 1982

Dr. Marcello: This is Ron Marcello interviewing Elmo Champion for the North Texas State University Oral History Collection. The interview is taking place on May 15, 1982, in Austin, Texas. I am interviewing Mr. Champion in order to get his reminiscences and experiences and impressions while he was a member of the 9th Field Artillery, 25th Infantry Division, which was stationed at Schofield Barracks during the Japanese attack there on December 7, 1941,

Mr. Champion, to begin this interview, just very briefly give me a biographical sketch of yourself. In other words, tell me when you were born, where you were born, your education--things of that nature. Just be very brief and general.

Mr. Champion: Well, I was born on October 3, 1917, in Mineola, Texas, which is in northeast Texas. I was raised on a farm. I left the farm in 1936. I moved to El Paso and worked there. I joined the Army, and I went to Hawaii in January, 1940.

Dr. Marcello: Why did you decide to join the Army in 1940?

Mr. Champion: Well, I don't know. I always wanted to go to Hawaii. I got

a chance to go, and then they just started talking about... couldn't figure out when you was to be drafted and everything. I decided that if I would go to Hawaii, I could take...I joined for three years, but if I could do two years over there, then when I came back, I could get my discharge or do my other year in the States.

Marcello: Why did you select the Army as opposed to one of the other branches of the service?

Champion: Well, the main thing...I had a uncle of mine that was retired from... he was a field artilleryman, and that's all he ever talked about. I stayed with him quite a bit when I was a child, and I guess I just always thought that if I was going to get in anything, I would like to get in the field artillery, He was my idol, I guess. I don't know,

Marcello: So you joined the Army in El Paso?

Champion: Well, when I was back in Mineola, I joined and I went to Dallas. I was sworn in there in Dallas, Texas,

Marcello: Did you go from Dallas to Schofield Barracks?

Champion: Well, from Dallas they sent us to California to stay there at Fort McDowell out on Angel Island for, I think...I can't remember just the day, but I wasn't there over two or three weeks. And then I was sent to Hawaii, Schofield Barracks,

Marcello: Do you recall what happened once you got off the ship there at Honolulu? Do you remember how they assigned you to go to this place and that place?

Champion: Well, yes, Well, at first, we had to, like it always was, I guess, it was "hurry-up-and-wait," We carried that barracks bag, and we sat out in the hot sun for quite awhile before they took us, But I was all ready in the field artillery, and it was the old 11th Field Artillery, before they made the two divisions, Hawaiian square divisions. After sitting there, it seemed like, for about two hours, a bus come and carried us out to Schofield.

Marcello: Up until that time, you had had no basic training, isn't that correct?

Champion: Yes, that's right,

Marcello: Describe what Schofield Barraks looked like from a physical standpoint. More specifically, describe what the quadrangles were like.

Champion: Well, when we got to the old barracks, the quadrangle had a three-story building all around it, and the 11th Field Artillery was right about in the middle of the quadrangle. It had the PX on one end, and the beer garden or pub was with it. We had the drill field right out in the middle of the quadrangle, and that's where we took our calisthenics and done all that. That's about as close, I guess, as I could come to it.

Marcello: What did your barracks look like on the inside, that is, where you slept and where you had all your clothing and so on?

Champion: Well, inside it was just a long barracks with two rows of bunks-- double-bed bunks. Of course, I happened to get the top one (chuckle). And then down at the end we had the entrances to the restrooms and the showers,

Marcello: Where did you keep your gear?

Champion: Well, we had a footlocker at the end of the bunk, and then we had a wall locker at the wall.

Marcello: Talk a little about the barracks inspections that you would have.

Champion: Well, they would just inspect you. Everything was lined up, and then it had to be spic and span. We would have, I guess, a general inspection once a month. But we had a battery commander--in the field artillery, you have batteries and companies--and he come around to inspect everything every day. Everything had to be shipshape.

Marcello: How often would those footlockers be inspected?

Champion: Well, once a week, for sure, they would have an inspection, but the company commander was liable to inspect it every day or twice a day. If he opened it, everything had to be in place.

Marcello: Everything had to be in a certain place, and everything had to be folded in a certain way, did it not?

Champion: Folded a certain way. On top of your footlockers, you had your shaving gear, and then your razor and all your personal...if you had any pictures or a radio or anything, they had a spot for it, but it would have to be neat. You had to fold your underwear just right. Your socks were in one space. They had to be rolled just neat. In the bottom of your locker, you sat your shoes, and they had to be...no matter if they was civilian...at that time we could have civilian clothing. If you had a pair of civilian shoes in there, they had to be shined, too. Just because they was civilian shoes, they couldn't be unshined.

Marcello: How long did your basic training last?

Champion: Well, we took just about six weeks, I believe,

Marcello: After you got out of boot camp, what did you specialize in? What was your specialty, or where were you assigned?

Champion: Well, I was in a howitzer section, I was what you would call a cannoneer,

Marcello: You were in a howitzer section?

Champion: Yes, We had the 155-millimeter howitzers--heavy artillery--and I was what they called a cannoneer,

Marcello: What does the cannoneer do?

Champion: Well, my job was to load,,the 155-millimeter was the largest field artillery piece there was. We laid the projectile on a tray or sled, and my job was,,me and one guy on the other side,,we-- what they called--rammed in the shell. We had a loading rod, and they laid the shell out on the tray,,well, they carried it up on a tray and laid it down, and we rammed it in. I reached out there and put the powder in it,

Marcello: So you rammed the shell in and also put in the powder.

Champion: Well, that was my job at the time, when I first went out. I can't remember just what number I was, but all cannoneers had a number. I just can't remember what number I was called. But then when they called out your number, you'd fall in in the rear and sound off.

Marcello: How often would you actually fire those 155-millimeter howitzers?

Champion: Well, we would go out to target practice,,we would have target practice out on the range. We had a range out from Schofield, and

we would go out about, I would say,..well, if we wasn't on a maneuver, we would have us a regular area, Of course, if we was on a maneuver, we might march every day for two or three days. But then once every month or so, we would have a simulated drill and use all dummies for loading firing, and we'd go through all the drills. The gunnery corporal would take the firing battery and everything out without firing. We would do that about every day, but as far as firing, I would say it was not over once a month, and at times it would go longer than that,

Marcello: So most of the time, you would be engaged in simulated drills?

Champion: Right, right,

Marcello: These drills would be done in order to increase your speed and efficiency in loading and so on.

Champion: We had a dummy artillery shell that you could ram in the howitzer bore, but then you could reach in there and jar it back out. We would go through the whole process, and still on that we would have to pull the cord.

Marcello: So you did have a dummy shell that you,..

Champion: ..yes, and we had dummy powder there. Of course, we done that every day. We would do that right out where we had the howitzers kept on the field behind the quadrangle,

Marcello: What was the food like there at Schofield Barracks?

Champion: Well, I'll tell you, we had plenty to eat, but sometimes, according to just what kind of cook we had,..but I gained quite a bit of weight over there, so I don't guess it was so bad.

Marcello: What role did sports and athletic competition play in the Army during that pre-Pearl Harbor period?

Champion: Well, especially over there in Hawaii, it played a big part. We all played, I played quite a bit of basketball, and I run track and boxed.

Marcello: I understand those boxing smokers were very popular, were they not?

Champion: We'd start with the battery, and then we'd have competition between, say, the 9th Field Artillery and the 11th Field Artillery. Then the whole division would go down...at Schofield Barracks they had what they called Schofield Bowl.

Marcello: So you would start out with competition within the battery, and then you would work up to the division.

Champion: Yes, right.

Marcello: And then would there be competition with other units...other divisions and so on, too?

Champion: Right.

Marcello: How does the liberty routine work for you at Schofield Barracks?

Champion: Well, we had every weekend if you wasn't on a special duty or anything. In the evenings, you could go into town, but you had to be back by eleven o'clock. But you could go on into town if you wasn't on special duty.

Marcello: How often would you get into Honolulu within the space of a month?

Champion: Well, generally, while we was in training in boot camp, we never...well, after we got out of that, I would generally go in...I

would say that within the month, I would probably go in...not over three times. But then all of us would go in on payday if you didn't have a special duty.

Marcello: How would you go from Schofield to Honolulu? How would you get there?

Champion: Well, they had a bus that run from the main gate. They had a bus come inside the main gate, and it would go downtown. Then when it came back...and they had MP's that would ride it back and forth, and when it came back...of course, no alcoholic beverages or anything could be brought through the gate...or wasn't supposed to be brought through the gate.

Marcello: When you went down to Honolulu, what did you do?

Champion: Well, the biggest part of the time, I found a bar or found a "red light" district and went down there...mostly.

Marcello: So you did go over to the Hotel at Canal Street from time to time?

Champion: From time to time, yes.

Marcello: How much was a trick at that time? Do you recall?

Champion: Well, at the time before Pearl Harbor, it was anywhere from five up to maybe ten, fifteen dollars. I just don't recall. But after Pearl Harbor, it went on up.

Marcello: I understand there were long lines to go in those places.

Champion: There was, And from time to time they run plumb out on the street. Of course, it was strictly controlled because you had to take your prophylactic and things. You were checked before you went in.

Marcello: Oh, the men were checked before they went in, too?

Champion: On, yes, Now there was sometimes what you called a black market and things where you could go down to different places which would have been off-limits, But in them up on Hotel Street and all that, you had to take...pass that line,,you took an inspection,

Marcello: So the men had to pass inspection, and you also had to have prophylactics, too?

Champion: As you came out, yes, When you came back out...or else you,,I don't know what they would have done if you refused one, which I never did,

Marcello: Did you have a particular drinking establishment in downtown Honolulu that was your favorite?

Champion: Well, no, not at the time, It was just anywhere I could get a cold beer, I just drank beer, I very seldom drank any mixed drinks. I didn't drink much at that time.

Marcello: Did you ever stay overnight very often in Honolulu?

Champion: Well, not too much, There was a couple of occasions when I would get a three-day pass and go down, but it wasn't...in the two years I was there before Pearl Harbor, I guess, I would say, I did that five times at the most.

Marcello: Why didn't you stay overnight more often?

Champion: Oh, I don't know,

Marcello: Was it a matter of money?

Champion: Money was the main problem because what we got in them days never went all that far, especially if you went down to the "red light"

district and had a few beers and things,

Marcello: Was there also not a small village close to Schofield where a lot of people would go in the evening?

Champion: Well, yes, there was a couple,,,

Marcello: Wouldn't they go to Wahiawa?

Champion: Yes, just outside of Schofield,

Marcello: What was there to do over there?

Champion: Well, you could go down on the beaches, and they would have some dives, Well, they had a couple of nightclubs if you liked to dance and things. Maybe you'd dance, If you did pick up a girl or anything out of them, it cost you more than some private could afford,

Marcello: You could actually walk to Wahiawa, couldn't you?

Champion: You could walk,

Marcello: It wasn't that far away.

Champion: Oh, no,

Marcello: What kind of entertainment was there at Schofield Barracks itself?

Champion: Well, we had a couple of theaters and things, and then each field artillery and each infantry unit would have their own big PX, You'd sit there and drink beer for a while, Then there was always some kind of special event going on around Hawaii. There was always something going on. There'd be a football game or baseball or boxing, track meet,

Marcello: Were you ever entertained by Hilo Hattie?

Champion: Well, no,

Marcello: You mentioned awhile ago that you did some boxing. Were you able to get any kind of special treatment or special favors since you were a boxer?

Champion: Well, the only favor we would get,..we would have a training table. Of course, all the boxers ate at one table. Like, in the morning, we never had to stand for reveille, and we never had to take calisthenics because we would be out on the,..then during boxing, we would get out of a lots of things, like K.P. and all that because we had training. We got out of lots of special duties which we would have got if we hadn't have been boxers,

Marcello: As one gets closer and closer to December 7, 1941, and as conditions between the United States and Japan continued to get worse, could you detect any changes in your training routine?

Champion: Well, just right there at the last, we had quite a bit,..it was about a month or so before the attack that they had an alert flashed, and we went out in the field. We had had these before, and we would go to the ammunition dump. We would back up two trucks and load on ammunition. The detail would back the trucks up to the dump and load up, and then we would take off and go out to the field-- to the beach or wherever. And that would be all to it. It was all simulated,

But especially this one time,..it was a night when it sounded, We got up, went out. And I was on the ammunition detail. At the time then, I had already got to be a,..I was a corporal, gunnery corporal. We had two corporals in the squad. One of them would

go with the fieldpiece, and the other one would be on the ammunition depot, and they loaded us with real, live ammunition. This is something we had never had before. We went out in the field and unloaded it. Of course, we never did fire any of the live ammunition. We never did know just what caused like that. That was really the only time.

We was out there for, I think, three days when it was called off. But it was beginning to get pretty strict. You could tell something was....

Marcello: How did things get strict?

Champion: Well, at the end there, just at the last, it was...I forget how many days...we couldn't...anybody that did leave the quarters... just a certain percentage could leave, even at night. And if you did, you went to the charge-of-quarters, and you left your name that you were going, and if you was late and that percent had already left, you just stayed in the barracks. Or if you went down at the gate, you had to have a special pass, or they wasn't going to let you out. you slipped off, and they caught you....

Marcello: So they did restrict liberty, then, as one gets closer and closer to December 7.

Champion: Yes, I would say within...I don't remember how long that was in effect. It was at least two months. We still had liberty on the weekend, but that just got small. When it first started...but right at the last, it was very...like, the weekend it happened, I know several of them...a friend of mine was boxing with me. I was going

to have to box on the night of the 10th, and I couldn't. He wanted me to go down with him...he went to get him a pass, and it was already...or he would have been down there.

Marcello: You were mentioning this alert awhile ago, during which you were issued live ammunition. How close to December 7 did this alert take place?

Champion: Well, I would say,,I believe it was every bit of two months before then. Of course, I can't actually remember when those.,,

Marcello: Did you have any alert during that week prior to the Pearl Harbor attack?

Champion: Well, no, nothing but,,they restricted,,we got less liberty.

Marcello: Did they seem to be increasing the number of sentries and so on on the base?

Champion: Well, that part of it I never noticed if they did. We had our own guard duty and everything. We hadn't increased that, which, of course, we all caught so often. At the time, I was boxing, and if you was in some sport, you got out of that. But we had the same guard routine--same number that we always had.

Marcello: When you thought of a typical Japanese during that period before the attack, what kind of a person did you usually conjure up in your own mind?

Champion: Well, I never, you know, gave it that much thought. Over there lots of them was Japanese. I couldn't tell some of them apart. I guess I'm like lots more over there--they just never figured it would ever happen.

Marcello: So you and your buddies never did talk about the possibility of a Japanese attack in the Hawaiian Islands.

Champion: Well, I never talked so much about it, but I can never forget my section chief, Sergeant Fessler,

Marcello: Sergeant Fessler?

Champion: Yes, He would always tell us nearly every day that one morning we was going to wake up...and it nearly happened just like he said. He was nervous all the time. I don't know how many times he was decorated during the First World War. But he told us...and I can never forget him on the morning it did happen. He was standing in the hall, and he said, "I told you it would happen!" And the man did tell us.

Marcello: Sergeant Fessler said that there was a possibility that the Japanese might pull a surprise attack?

Champion: Well, he never said...actually, he kept saying there wasn't a possibility. He said that they would. But what he was basing this on, I couldn't say.

Marcello: Okay, that brings us into the weekend of December 7, 1941, so let's talk about that in a great deal of detail. What was your routine on Saturday, December 6? Do you recall?

Champion: Well, yes, On Saturday, December 6, like I say, I was boxing. I was due to have a bout on the 10th. And on Saturday morning, I got up, and we would have just work details or calisthenics, which I would never had to take it because I was out training. On Saturday, we just trained on our own. But I was at the gym because

I was fighting middleweight. I was at 162 pounds, and I was a little overweight, and I was out doing roadwork with a slicker suit and my sweatpants over it so I could sweat. Then I came back and took gym work.

Marcello: So you were preparing for this bout that was to take place on December 10?

Champion: On the 10th, I was about five to seven pounds overweight. Well, by Saturday morning, when I weighed in over there, I was still four pounds overweight, which I had to lose,

Marcello: What did you do Saturday evening?

Champion: Well, Saturday evening, just about dusk, I went out for some more roadwork. I worked out in the gym and came back and ate at the training table. Then I just laid around the barracks, but late that evening, I got out and done probably seven or ten miles of roadwork and then came back and showered.

Marcello: What time did you go to bed that evening?

Champion: Well, on Saturday lights turned out at eleven o'clock. I was probably already in bed because I never...I was probably at my bunk by ten o'clock, if not before.

Marcello: Did anything out of the ordinary happen that night back in the barracks?

Champion: Well, it was just routine.

Marcello: This brings us into that Sunday morning of December 7, 1941, and let's talk about the events of that day from the time you got up until all hell broke loose. I'll let you pick up the story at this

point,

Champion: Well, when I woke up that morning, I went down...after showering, I went to the mess hall and picked up a half-pint of milk and drank it, came back, went to the gymnasium, and done a little warm-up there in the gym, put a slicker suit back on like I had the day before, and put my sweat pants over it, and I was getting ready to go for roadwork. I had to get that other...like I say, I still had four pounds that I still had to get off by the 10th. But I was still in the gymnasium when it broke,

Marcello: So you must have gotten up pretty early this morning.

Champion: I was up before...all us that wanted to fight...as I was speaking of Sergeant Fessler before...he was always up early. Of course, the section chief had his own room and things, He would tell anybody that wanted to be woke up early to just lay a white towel on your footlocker, and he would wake you up because he was always up early, I had him to wake me up,

I was down by the mess hall, The cooks were all there standing by for the athletes, especially boxers. They would give us some juice, but I just took half a pint of milk, which I wasn't supposed to have. I drank that...that was before even...well, the cooks were just getting there,

Marcello: So you must have gotten up pretty early, then.

Champion: Well, I just couldn't say a time, but it was before daylight.

Marcello: Describe how you got the word of the attack, or how you knew that the area was being attacked,

Champion: Well, me and this fellow were still in the gym, and we heard machine gun fire. He spoke up and said, "The Air Force,..." see, Schofield Barracks wasn't too far from Wheeler Field, and at times the planes would be out doing target practice, and we would hear them and things. He just made a comment that "the Air Force is really on the ball today. They're out doing target practice on Sunday morning." And about that time...I guess it was one of them dive-bombers because we heard a plane, and it dropped a bomb. He said, "That plane crashed!"

That's when we run out of the gymnasium. When we run out into the quadrangle, there it was. You just looked up there and seen them. Well, they was all...they strafed up there at Schofield some, but they was mainly down at Wheeler Field. We looked down towards Pearl Harbor, and there was nothing but a big black roll of smoke.

Marcello: So what did you do at that point then?

Champion: Well, we went back and changed. I put on my khaki uniform and never even...just grabbed my shoes and shirt. I went to the barracks. I met the company commander...the company commander was just...I ran into the barracks, and the company commander was running in, and he says, "Get all the automatic rifles!" We had a few B.A.R.'s, and that; that's the only thing we could have fired. We got them up on top the barracks. By the time we got in the armaments, we never had no ammunition for them because the armaments room was locked. That's as far as we got. We could have got up there, but probably by the time we got up there, we probably wouldn't have had

time,

Marcello: So you did have the B.A.R.'s, but you didn't have any ammunition for them,

Champion: The ammunition we had was in the armaments room, and the supply sergeant was the only one that had the key. When we went in, we could get to the...I don't know where the rifles was, but the ammunition was locked. And where he was at the time or where... when he got there, I couldn't tell. I had already went back in the barracks,

Marcello: The attack was over pretty quickly, then, so far as you were concerned,

Champion: Well, yes. Up at Schofield it was over. We had two planes that came in through what they called Kole Kole Pass. We could look right at...and tried to drop a bomb at the big storage tanks. By the time me and this other fellow looked at them, two P-40's, which I imagine were Welsh and Taylor--I don't know for sure who they were--came through the pass, and we seen the planes with the P-40's on their tails. They went back through Kole Kole Pass. And that's about all we got...they did strafe...our PX got hit with a few machine gun bullets, but where we was at, we never got nothing. I wasn't anywhere close to any strafing.

Marcello: After the attack was more or less over, what did you do then?

Champion: Well, we got prepared...by the time the attack was over, we took... by one o'clock that afternoon, we had a battery of howitzers--all four of them--in position. We zeroed our guns in because I was

gunnery corporal on the other guns. That day, by one o'clock, we was already forward. I was on number three gun, and that's the one they used to sight the guns in on. We fired a couple of rounds to zero in, and all the other guns followed it. But that happened just about one o'clock or one-thirty.

Marcello: Were you out there all the rest of that day and into the night?

Champion: Well, when we put our howitzer, in position out there, we was there until,,well, we stayed there until I went to Guadalcanal. We left Hawaii the following Thanksgiving Day to go back. But that's where our battery stayed from then on,

Marcello: So you were out there for almost a year,

Champion: Yes. We dug in, and we lived in quarters there--in a bunker. We lived there until the battery relieved us, and we went to Guadalcanal.

Marcello: So you never did go back to Schofield Barracks again, really.

Champion: Well, just after it started. We stay out there,..before I got back to Schofield, I guess it was a month. We just stayed right outside in the field, and then they started, on the weekend, bringing so many in, and we would take a shower and go visit the PX or whatever. But, no, we came back to the barracks when we got relieved out there in the field. I forget the field artillery unit that relieved us. But we come back in and got ready to go overseas.

Marcello: In general, when you look back upon the activities that were occurring during the attack, would you say that everybody was acting in a professional manner, or was there a great deal of confusion?

Champion: Well, up at Schofield, and where I was, everything was pretty well in order. I heard some rumors that at other places it could have been, but not out at Schofield.

Marcello: Did you have any problems getting trucks with which to move your artillery pieces?

Champion: We had our own Diamond T trucks. We had four Diamond T's. Each howitzer had its own truck.

Marcello: So you were all set to go then.

Champion: We were set to,,,like I say, by eleven o'clock,,,I think it was eleven o'clock when we loaded up. And that was something else. We kept, what we called, our full field packs. To get back to the alert before that, we had to keep one for the last, say, month or so. We were ready to go at any time. We'd just pick up our packs.

Marcello: Did you have a rifle, also?

Champion: Well, at the time, the field artillery just had .45 pistols. We was issued rifles right...they started issuing the rifles...our piece was a .45. That's what all the field artillery people had.

Marcello: When you were out there in the field that night of December 7, what rumors did you hear?

Champion: Well, it turned out to be rumors, I guess, but we heard that the Japs had already landed and all. As we went into the field, our field dress then was khaki trousers and OD shorts, and we heard that the Japanese had landed, and that's the way they were dressed. The only difference that we could tell from them was

that they had a red star on them. That proved to be all rumors because there was never,,how it got started, I don't know.

Marcello: At the time, did you believe all those rumors, though?

Champion: Well, yes, after what had happened that day, we sure did. Out there at night, when we posted the guards,,I was corporal-of-the-guard, and one fellow in Battery D killed a white-faced cow. Of course, he said he hollered, but it was at night, and they kept coming at him.

Marcello: So he killed a white-faced cow that night,

Champion: He opened up on him with a B,A,R. That was just right after we got everything set up and had barbed wire strung. But out there where we went, where we set up our defense of the beach, the cattle were still out there.

Marcello: I guess there were a lot of trigger-happy soldiers around that night.

Champion: There was. I saw lots of antiaircraft firing and everything. But that night, when they opened up down there at Pearl Harbor, when some of our planes were coming in, we was up on the hill where we could see right down on Pearl. I never seen anything,,in all the time I was over there--different battles I've been to--I never seen nothing equal it.

Marcello: What did you think was happening when you saw all that firing down there?

Champion: Well, we thought that they were invading. See, we was nearly positive that there would be a landing the next morning.

Marcello: Did you get much sleep that night?

Champion: Well, to tell you the truth, I didn't sleep any.

Marcello: Did you dig foxholes out there?

Champion: Well, by nightfall, that night, they took a bulldozer and come out there and dug emplacements for our field artillery piece, and out at the perimeter that night, all the guards dug a foxhole. The following day we dug a trench in the morning. We put a guard on the perimeter outside the field artillery piece. Around the field artillery, the piece itself, we used a bulldozer. We had a bulldozer with the battery.

Marcello: You mentioned that you were out there for almost a year before you pulled out of there and went to Guadalcanal.

Champion: Well, when we left there, they told us we was going to Australia, and Battery B, the battery I was in, was in the forward echelon, and they told us we was going to Australia. But we got into New Caledonia, and we stayed there one night and left the next day. We was out one day, and they brought us back in and they reloaded us, combat loaded us, and sent us into Guadalcanal to help the Marines. I don't know just what happened...what changed their mind because, as far as we knew, we was on our way to Australia. But we never did go there. We wound up...we went right into Guadalcanal, and then the rest of the division followed us into there.

Marcello: And this was the 25th Division?

Champion: Right, 25th Infantry Division.

Marcello: And when was it formed?

Champion: Well, it was just before,..it wasn't but a few months before,.. it was from the old Hawaiian square division. They formed two divisions--24th and 25th--which was the last regular infantry division formed--24th and 25th.

Marcello: They were the last what divisions formed?

Champion: Regular divisions. Of course, they probably got more now, but the regular division was made from that. They had what they called the triangular division after that--new divisions.

Marcello: Okay, well I think that's probably a good place to end the interview, Mr. Champion. I want to thank you very much for having participated.

Champion: I was glad to do what I could,

Marcello: You said a lot of interesting and important things, and I'm sure that students and scholars will find your comments very valuable.