

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

### CHUCK SPANGLER

This is an oral history interview of Chuck Spangler, a Corporal in the Pacific theatre of World War II. The interviewer is myself, Dwight D. Daniel, a volunteer at the National Museum of the Pacific War located in Fredericksburg, Texas. Today is 17 June, 2003, and this interview is taking place at Mr. Spangler's home, 12417, Austin, Texas, 78732. This interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies which is the archives for the preservation of historical information of the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Parks and Wildlife. This is tape one, side a. Chuck, do you want to do me a favor and just say something in the mike to verify this thing's working for you.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, his introduction works okay and that's what I was and everything to date is true and verifiable.

MR. DANIEL: Okay, let's see if this thing is working. Chuck, we always ask where were you born and what were your parents doing type of thing?

MR. SPANGLER: I was born in Perry County, Ohio, Somerset, Ohio. My father was a dentist; mother was just an ordinary housekeeper. There were five children in our family, four boys and one girl. At one time, three of us boys were in service at the same time all overseas.

MR. DANIEL: When were you born?

MR. SPANGLER: I was born April the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1923.

MR. DANIEL: Where is Somerset, Ohio? I kind of know Ohio. I am curious, where is Somerset?

MR. SPANGLER: Did you ever hear of Zanesville near Lexington and Newark?

MR. DANIEL: Yeh.

MR. SPANGLER: It's right in the middle.

MR. DANIEL: So I assume you had a typical childhood, you went to school and everything else. I think you told me you were in the middle of going to Ohio State.

MR. SPANGLER: I entered Ohio State in September of 1941. When Pearl Harbor was hit I said, "Where in the devil is Pearl Harbor?" I had no idea where it was. Read the newspapers of December the 7<sup>th</sup>, and January I was in the service in the Marine Corps.

MR. DANIEL: I assume you volunteered for the marines.

MR. SPANGLER: I did volunteer.

MR. DANIEL: Why the Marines and not the Army Air Corps?

MR. SPANGLER: I held them a little bit above the rest and I did not know the marines had a green uniform. I thought they wore dress blues, but I soon learned. This friend of mine joined with me. We talked about it and we got to a point of enlisting and I wouldn't back out and he wouldn't back out. So away we went.

MR. DANIEL: Where did you guys go? I assume you enlisted in Columbus or was it Zanesville?

MR. SPANGLER: Columbus.

MR. DANIEL: Then you went to good ole Paris Island.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes.

MR. DANIEL: And I assume they took you by train down there.

MR. SPANGLER: Yep, hard seats and no air conditioning went to South Carolina.

MR. DANIEL: The garden spot of America. We could use the old joke about how the Air Force picks the best place with a swimming pool; the Navy picks the best place for the admiral to have his house on the water for his boat; the Army gets what's left over.

MR. SPANGLER: The Marines, when I went in, had the leftovers from everything, I mean equipment, rifles, something that was bypassed by the army.

MR. DANIEL: Now when you were training at Paris Island, did you have a lot of equipment or were in you that area where everything was just short?

MR. SPANGLER: We just had rifles and a gas mask. We didn't do too much field work; I mean we did the rifle range. We stayed in barracks and we didn't sleep out in the boondocks. We did a lot of marching, close order drill over and over and over.

MR. DANIEL: At that time you probably had the O3 Springfield.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes.

MR. DANIEL: The Garand was hard to come by at that time.

MR. SPANGLER: I didn't see a Garand until we got to Bougainville.

MR. DANIEL: You're kidding?

MR. SPANGLER: No.

MR. DANIEL: I knew when the marines were at Guadalcanal they used the O3 but I thought just before they left they started to issue the...

MR. SPANGLER: They were coming in but we didn't. In between the O3 and the Gerand I had a Carbine and a Reising. Are you familiar with a Reising gun?

MR. DANIEL: Yes.

MR. SPANGLER: The Reising gun rusted so badly, it didn't last two months. So they discounted that and went to the Carbine.

MR. DANIEL: Yes, I heard about that because the only places you normally see the Rising gun is stateside. Now, anything you remember about Paris Island?

MR. SPANGLER: Lots of things. One of the first things we lined up to wash our skivvies, as they say the platoon there and the drill sergeant says, "Pick up your brush." Well, some guys picked up their buckets and it just tore him up. He said, "I just said brush, not buckets." Everything was done by the numbers. What I remember, we had a big garbage can in the middle of the sleeping area and if you called your rifle a gun, a deck a floor, you had to go and get in that garbage can and put that lid on and you had a little chant to say real loud. Well, I'll tell you what they said. Used to say "I'm a horse's ass from Yamasee, the biggest horse's ass you ever did see, yippi I'm a shit coolie." Some guy in the back would say, "I can't hear you." And you'd say, "Okay, you get in there." Maybe you don't want to put that in.

MR. DANIEL: That's okay.

MR. SPANGLER: But that really happened.

MR. DANIEL: I can believe that. We were never that bad. I used to run a drill company. We did Chinese fire drill.

MR. SPANGLER: I got along pretty good. We had a drill sergeant from Brooklyn, New York, Nick Robinson a marine. He was real tall. I remember we were on a rifle range and I didn't feel so good, I got kind of dizzy. And this was unusual for a drill sergeant; he says, "Why don't you go over there and sit down in the shade a little bit?" Usual drill sergeants would say forget it, get back in there.

MR. DANIEL: Remember his name?

MR. SPANGLER: No, I'll have to think about it. Oh, yeh, Robinson. Lots of things happened like we were living in Paris Island we were on the top deck of this barracks making up bunks. They came in in the morning and they didn't like the way the bunks were made, so strip them. They had a tennis court right on top of the barracks down on the ground floor. You've got two minutes to fall in formation, take your sheets and blankets with you, fall in down there and you've got two minutes to get back upstairs and make those bunks up. We did that fifteen times. I'll never forget the first time at Paris Island, they gave us our green uniforms and we were getting rifles and they still had the Casmoline floating on them. We had to do close order drill all the way back to the barracks with the Casmoline on that stuff. But, anyway, we survived.

MR. DANIEL: How did you get the Casmoline off the rifles? That's almost impossible to get off.

MR. SPANGLER: I don't know but we did somehow.

MR. DANIEL: I'd say what we did, we used gasoline, just don't smoke.

MR. SPANGLER: I don't know how we got them cleaned off but we got them cleaned up.

MR. DANIEL: There is allegedly a compound that supposedly when they got into the inventory that actually dissolves the Casmoline. When that stuff hardens, it never comes off. You get a court martial if you ever got caught doing it but you poured gasoline over everything and just eat the Casmoline away. It was great stuff.

MR. SPANGLER: We didn't have access to any gasoline.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, okay. The problem was if anybody was smoking you'd be in front of a court martial going, "Yes, sir, I lost the whole rifle, is that okay?" How long was your stint in the marines, so called basic? What do they call it in the marines?

MR. SPANGLER: Boot camp.

MR. DANIEL: How long was your boot camp?

MR. SPANGLER: About six weeks.

MR. DANIEL: Then where did you go?

MR. SPANGLER: I knew I had worked on a railroad a little bit as an operator, a telegrapher, and I knew Morse code. At the last week of boot camp they had applications. You interested in going to radio school, cook and baker, diesel fuel or

whatever, you signed up. Well, I signed up for radio school, had an interview and I was accepted and went to Quantico, Virginia, for radio school. I was at this interview for radio operator and it took me past chow time and the mess hall was closed. A Sgt. Robinson came back. He broke the cook's out, he said, "You feed this man."

MR. DANIEL: He knew how to take care of his people. Did he call you?

MR. SPANGLER: He stayed there.

MR. DANIEL: That's a shame 'cause there's not many good sergeants in this world. What was Quantico like?

MR. SPANGLER: It's like spit and polish. It's like going from boondocks to Waldorf, Astoria. We lived in brick barracks, our meals we had china, china mugs, they put the eggs on platters, you passed them around. It was good. We had polished floors. I got to tell you about this; I just got out of boot camp and just had my greens. Have you been to Quantico?

MR. DANIEL: Yeh.

MR. SPANGLER: It's right across the main entrance to the base. They had their own guard there at the base and my first liberty I was going into Quantico. I had my green uniform on. Each barracks had an iron in the basement, an ironing board, and so I'm feeling pretty good, I'm going through the gate. This guard says, "Hey, come here." I said, "Yes sir." He says "You got an iron back in your barracks?" I said, "Yeh, do you want to use it?" He said, "No, you get back there and use it." You didn't get off the base until you were spit and polished. From there on, I knew that I got caught in a hurry.

MR. DANIEL: What was Quantico's little town like in those days?

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, just a few beer joints and tattoo parlors and that was about it, a couple of restaurants, a lot of beer joints. Potomac is not too far down the way.

MR. DANIEL: So how long were you at, now this was radio school?

MR. SPANGLER: Radio school.

MR. DANIEL: How long were you at radio school?

MR. SPANGLER: About two months.

MR. DANIEL: Enjoy it?

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, I liked it.

MR. DANIEL: You had real china to eat off of.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes. That was great, you had beautiful music. I never will forget Tommy Dorsey had a beautiful theatre and Tommy Dorsey's theme song was "String of Pearls," that would come in there. They had slop shoots, as we called them, down there and we'd spend a lot of time there, they had ice cream, beer.

MR. DANIEL: This is what you mean by slop shoots?

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, a slop shooter is hamburgers, beer or what not.

MR. DANIEL: Was it a USO club?

MR. SPANGLER: It wasn't quite a USO club. Servicemen come in there. The sergeants, non coms, they had clubs, an officer's club, but we went to the slop shoots. I used to go a lot of times to Quantico only about 15 or 20 miles outside of Washington and we went into Washington, D. C. Coming back we had to go to the Union Station and they had the reveille special to get you back to camp. It was supposed to leave at one o'clock but you never did know when it would leave, so if you wanted to get back, you had to go down to Union Station and hang around until it got ready to go and they'd get back on the train and go back to Quantico. But I was never late.

MR. DANIEL: What was Washington like at that time?

MR. SPANGLER: About fifteen girls to every service man. There were little apartments several from all over the country, there might be twelve girls living in a two-bedroom apartment.

MR. DANIEL: There were a lot of girls and very few apartments.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes. I had a phone and one of my good friends in radio school that was his hometown. So he knew where to go and what not. We spent a lot of time in Washington and a good friend of mine was from Baltimore. So we were up and down the coast line quite frequently.

MR. DANIEL: I know the area well. I was born at Fort Meade which is in between Baltimore and Washington. Union Station is still there. They made it like a tourist trap now and at Quantico, because the marines used to have their air ground museum there, they're going to put a formal marine museum there.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, I get the "Leatherneck" all the time.

MR. DANIEL: Yeh, that's what I get, too. And it's of the air ground museum which has nothing to do with the Army is an excellent museum. I had a good time there one afternoon with a couple of sergeants. After radio school, where did you go then?

MR. SPANGLER: I was sent to North Carolina.

MR. DANIEL: North Carolina? Why?

MR. SPANGLER: Because of a forming up of the 1<sup>st</sup> civilian marine brigade. I mean I was in artillery; I was put in artillery in Jacksonville. It was close to Camp Le Juene. Right out of the boondocks they made a camp in there and I went to Jackson and I was in there. We trained; we had regular routine, exercising, guns and all that. I was in the 75mm Pack Howitzer. I've got some pictures here.

MR. DANIEL: I'll be glad to see those. Did you actually operate the spectrometer? or were you cross trained?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, later on I was but not right then. This was Jacksonville. They called them Camp New River, North Carolina. I don't know whether it is still there or not.

MR. DANIEL: I've heard the name.

MR. SPANGLER: Jacksonville is the closest town.

MR. DANIEL: So how long were you at New River?

MR. SPANGLER: We left there in the middle of September, 1942.

MR. DANIEL: Where did you head off to?

MR. SPANGLER: We went to Samoa and we relieved the Island defense. They had seventy-five pack howitzers in the mounds there. We relieved those outfits and they went on to Guadalcanal. Guadalcanal in September was pretty hot. We took over the island the 10<sup>th</sup> and our pack howitzer battalion. A lot of those guys were from Texas we relieved. I know one of the injured. I often thought were they reserves or what. I think they're from the 2<sup>nd</sup> Division, I'm not sure. Most of them were big, big Texans. I remember that.

MR. DANIEL: Now I assume being an Ohio boy this is the first time you've ever left the country.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes.

MR. DANIEL: Did you know where Samoa was?

MR. SPANGLER: I had no idea.

MR. DANIEL: This is like get on the ship and when it stops you're there

MR. SPANGLER: You know what we went over on?

MR. DANIEL: What?

MR. SPANGLER: A converted luxury liner, the Matsonia. There were three of them, the Hawaiian Phanter, the Matsonia, and Luraline. They had another one in there, three lines that ran regularly between Honolulu and Los Angeles. They did that run and then they converted to troop trains. We left San Diego, took us fourteen days and we were in American Samoa and man, this is like transporting you from a farm of corn fields to palm trees and corn to coconuts.

MR. DANIEL: Did you spend a lot of time in Hawaii, or just a physical stop and you changed ships?

MR. SPANGLER: We didn't go into Hawaii.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, you didn't at all?

MR. SPANGLER: No.

MR. DANIEL: You went directly from stateside?

MR. SPANGLER: To Samoa. We landed at Panga Pango harbor. The navy had a port, they were pretty big there, a Naval station and a hospital. I'll never forget my first experience with seeing men wandering around in Vavas and women in Lava Vavas and bare breasted.

MR. DANIEL: A boy from Ohio was in heaven, wasn't he?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh. Well, it didn't last long. You just got used to it.

MR. DANIEL: So you went up into the mountains?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, they had a coast line and then the volcanoes right behind us. Our guns were set up on the first flat hill, not the one up on the mountains. We had gun emplacements around there.

MR. DANIEL: Was that in case you guys got invaded?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, so we had a lookout. We had to maintain a lookout up on the mountain. It was a lonely place and one of my duties was to keep a watch up there. You went up there by yourself and you didn't know what was going on. The first time overseas by yourself sitting up there quiet and looking all over, and you're running this



but I'll never forget that. I also kept contact with the guys down with the guns and he said, "A big search light out on the bay, big search light out on the bay." "Ah, it's just a moom" he said. We lived right next to a native village all the time.

MR. DANIEL: That sounds like a pretty good tour, though.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, it was pretty good.

MR. DANIEL: How was the food? Were you getting good food then?

MR. SPANGLER: Fair, yeh, we had pretty good food there, not steaks. They were getting on the verge of getting into powdered eggs and powdered potatoes.

MR. DANIEL: But you still had regular food then?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, a little bit. Bananas grew everywhere. We used to make the natives mad. We were up in the hills we didn't know what to do. The natives went up there and they had a little plot of ground and they might have two or three pineapple plants. They would cut stalks of bananas and bring them back. We didn't know whose they were so we helped ourselves to the pineapple and it kinda made them a little angry for awhile but they understood. I tell you what I used to do in Samoa. The Seabees had a big camp at Leone Bay and I'll tell you what I saw. They brought Rickenbacker in there and I saw him on the beach down there. I was down there one Sunday and saw him walking down the beach. I want to put this in. The Seabees were so great to us. You could be out and if you were hungry they didn't ask question one. We just got in the chow line and they ate a lot better than we did. We'd eat with the Seabees but I was going to tell you about this marine at the Seabee camp at Leone. It was about a mile from our camp and had to go through the jungle trails down to the water front. We had a regular bus route took anyone that wanted to go to a regimental movie he had to get on this truck and they took him down there. I used to walk down to the Seabees movie and I'd go down there regularly. I met some Samoan natives. Back there, some of the more wealthy sent their children to New Zealand and they were educated in English schools. This one couple had a house, not a bamboo hut, not a big one. I got to be friends with them. She had returned to Samoa from Auckland previous to Pearl Harbor. Her father died and she couldn't get transportation back to New Zealand. I used to see her quite a bit. We were just friends. We did our exercises. Now this is where I went to artillery

school and I learned how to operate the 75 pack howitzer and mac reunion and all that kind of stuff.

MR. DANIEL: How did you like the 75?

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, it's a fantastic gun.

MR. DANIEL: Like a tape recorder when put together, isn't it?

MR. SPANGLER: Yes. It was on Iwo Jima. You could break it down. It was originally carried by mules. Anyway, on Iwo Jima they weathered the 75 and they broke one down and got it off a LSD and carried it up where they put it all back together. I learned something about putting it underneath a shower door, a 75 ????. You just put it in like this. You use your fist. You might lose a finger.

MR. DANIEL: What Chuck showed us, for the transcriber, is you never push the shell in with your hand open because that breach is really sharp and when they haul in that breach you can have your finger cut off, so you were trained to use your fist that way you kept your fingers out of sensitive spots.

MR. SPANGLER: We used to do a lot of firing with 75s on little targets; put them out to sea with a little launch and we would practice. When you're firing artillery guns you get around them; first is over, you keep cutting in half, left and right. I got a (several sentences transcriber could not understand) up twenty-five, fire for effect. They got all over me but I had it cut down to a pretty small area. One thing that impressed me was we had two or three Annapolis graduates, officers, and they were outstanding. I mean they overshadowed the regulars. The Anapolis graduates were far superior. We called them the ninety-day wonders not Anapolis men. They knew what they were doing. They had a commanding aspect about them.

MR. DANIEL: So you were in Samoa living the good life, then what happened?

MR. SPANGLER: From there, after about nine months, we went to Auckland, New Zealand.

MR. DANIEL: So this had to be probably around '43 sometime then.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes.

MR. DANIEL: This is tape 1, side b, of the oral history interview of Chuck Spangler. interviewer Dwight Daniel. We're back at Guadalcanal now at Coconut groove.

MR. SPANGLER: If it wasn't a moonlight night washing machine Charlie would come over and the search lights would come on and if they could pin point him, get two or three search lights on him, they could follow him but we were being bombed. We were off of Henderson Field, I don't know maybe six or seven hundred yards. They weren't looking for our area but we had to hit the foxholes. What got me was not the bombs so much but they used to drop the belly tanks and they'd come whistling down through the trees. So we lay there night after night and watched that. As we were on normal duty we played a lot of basketball on our time off, and we'd get a round of duties. I ran the battalion switchboard at this time; that was part of my duty. Oh, I got to tell you this. While we were on Guadalcanal, no this is after I'll get to that as we come back from Bougainville, we trained together. We did the Espirit de Santo, we did a practice landing over there and I was counting up the other day just for kicks I was on seventeen different transports all the time, counting LSDs and I was on a destroyer once. That's kinda life and we were just being bombed and the Japanese we could just go out and look at the relics and what not laying in the jungle and the beach. Japanese just beached some of those big ships along the beach.

MR. DANIEL: Were there Japanese still on the island?

MR. SPANGLER: Some of them were running around, little pockets of them.

MR. DANIEL: You have to be somewhat careful I would expect.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, but then we got ready and we were being prepared to go into Bougainville because at the time we were there they were fighting on Vella LaVella, Vella Savella and New Georgia, next island up. Most of the time what we did was ships could not dock, so by barges they'd bring the stuff and we were putting it on our LSTs. And they'd take the LSTs up to New Georgia, and we were working six hours on and six off, six on and six off. They finally got the New Georgia campaign over with and we got ready to go next shift was Bougainville. We had to practice landing in Espirit de Santos and did the whole bit over there. We headed out for Bougainville.

MR. DANIEL: Now did you know where you were going?

MR. SPANGLER: No. I didn't.

MR. DANIEL: Did you still have the Springfield or did you have the grand by then?

MR. SPANGLER: No, I had the carbine and I'll tell you what happened to it and I'll tell you how I got hold of a gerand. Anyway, it didn't take us long after we got all set to go we were going to land at Empress Agusta Bay. We made a landing there and I was in one of the first waves going in and no opposition in my particular beach, no opposition. On the beach I could see some of the landing crafts were broached and there were guys out there trying to shovel that, get them squared away, and we were strafed by a zero that came down the beach so we hit the holes. He wasn't firing at us he was firing at these other boats down there. That was my first day on the beach but you couldn't dig in where we were because when the tide was out, we were at a low area, it was dry, when the tide came back in your foxhole would fill with water. It came from the bottom up and many a night I slept in water. We got squared away. I was going to tell you about what happened to the carbine. I had my field pack, I had TBY radio, main radio, on my back plus my personal gear; I had a machete and a carbine and a pair of brass knuckles. I had given the knuckles to a friend of mine 'cause he didn't have anything. Anyway we were getting in the landing craft the strap came off my carbine it fell on the landing boat and broke the stock so I didn't have a rifle. So I went in and picked up a garand and I carried a garand from then on.

MR. DANIEL: Did you find this garand-M11ying there?

MR. SPANGLER: They just had a stack of them. I just picked up one.

MR. DANIEL: How did you get trained on a garand? Is it similar to anything else like OJT, somebody just showed you.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh. I never trained on a garand. I knew a garand operated on gas, you know, get the clip shove it down in there. Anyway, I carried that. I shouldn't say this, the first Japanese I ever saw was a dead one. We were seven or eight of us going up this trail and here was this dead Japanese officer lying right there. I don't like to say this but everybody stopped and urinated on him. I guess you've heard that before.

MR. DANIEL: Yeh, a lot of people did that.

MR. SPANGLER: We were on field observation, most of the time field observation. In the jungle on Bougainville the vegetation was so deep you couldn't see a guy four feet off the trail. A lot of times we had to use machetes to chop our way through. I could go on and on about that kind of stuff.

MR. DANIEL: Why did you carry the brass knuckles? Were you expecting to get really close and up personal with the enemy?

MR. SPANGLER: I just had them.

MR. DANIEL: You were going to say some more things about Bougainville when I interrupted you.

MR. SPANGLER: Let me tell you how we spent Thanksgiving Day. We were up in the lines, I guess you might call them, a group of us up there on Thanksgiving. We were five or six thousand yards off the beach on this ridge and here comes a guy up with two apple crates, just plain apple crates, and in the apple crates he had two cooked turkeys, just cooked turkeys nothing else. So we hacked off a couple of banana leaves laid them on the ground and took a bayonet and chopped up that turkey and we had turkey 1943 in Bougainville.

MR. DANIEL: It is an American tradition for servicemen to get Thanksgiving dinner no matter where you are. Well, you got your turkeys.

MR. SPANGLER: We got our turkeys alright but that's all it was. They weren't even wrapped in foil. There were just two turkeys in the apple crates. Somebody had to lug them up there by hand or shoulder, there was no roads. I got to tell you one at Bougainville. We were in this patrol. We were up on this ridge and orders were no smoking, no fires, no loud noises because the Japanese were right down in front of us. We were putting up an observation in this big Banyon tree, put a pulley up in top of tree.. Our orders were, we had a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant with us, if the Japanese came up on the ridge in front of us we were to fall back to a reinforced platoon about a thousand yards behind us. Well, sure enough, we went up and the first guy somebody cut loose with his BAR. He was seeing spooks, I guess. So next day our supportive planes were shooting out in front of us. They would come right over our heads low and empties would come tinkling down through the trees, but then on the third day they had coordinated all the artillery on the island for a big barrage out in front of us. First thing I know there was a shell burst right about fifty yards in front of us and pretty soon there was one about fifty yards behind us. So get on the phone or radio sure enough we got connected but, anyway, we survived that and pretty soon here comes this guy up and he says the Japanese are coming up over the ridge down there. So the lieutenant says let's take off and go back to the

platoon. I had a TBX radio which was chained on a tree, the generator was. You blow up that radio, blow it up. So I had a hand grenade and, we kept the radio so you could slip the transmitter out of the case, so I just pulled it out and placed a hand grenade in behind the transmitter and jumped around on the other side of this Banyon tree and let it go. I took off on the trail with all the rest of them. The second lieutenant was the first one off the hill. We got back to the reinforced platoon and the next day we all went back up there and believe it or not, they told me I didn't see it, they said the hand grenade all it did was just blow the back end out of the case didn't touch the transmitter. I survived that. From then on we spent Christmas up there.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, you're still on Bougainville at Christmas?

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yeh, we were there. For Christmas we had a little tree and we took some cotton and little trinkets and made us a little Christmas tree up there. Shortly after Christmas we went back to Guadalcanal.

MR. DANIEL: Did you get Christmas dinner?

MR. SPANGLER: I don't remember but I don't think so. I'll tell you what did happen. All the packages and everything that came from the States had been on this cargo ship and diesel fuel got in them and I saw them take truckload after truckload of cookies and cakes and dump them because you couldn't eat them. But anyway, back to the Canal.

MR. DANIEL: Let me ask a question. I read somewhere that they had dogs at Bougainville.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yeh.

MR. DANIEL: Did you see these in operation?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: Tell me about them.

MR. SPANGLER: I saw more of them on Guam, not too many in Bougainville.

MR. DANIEL: Okay, we'll start that when we get to Guam then. There was a big sea battle about fifty miles away, did you see any of the flashes in the sky?

MR. SPANGLER: No, I didn't but let me tell you what happened. We landed at Bougainville, we're still on Bougainville. Early in the morning, seven o'clock, I got to put this in. Those big transports don't make a sound and everything is eerie. You're just moving along the coastline and all at once the destroyers start shelling the beach. It was

kind of eerie. Anyway, we landed at seven o'clock in the morning and all the ships are out there unloading. I looked out there, I was still on the beach about three o'clock, there wasn't a ship in sight. How in the devil am I going to get off of this damn place? I can't swim back to Guadalcanal. But, anyway, what happened, the sea battle they got word that they were sending a task force down there so that's when the big sea battle over there to get the base in place. Our fleet got out of there and that's why they were leaving, sea battle right off the coast, Empress of Augusta Naval battle.

MR. DANIEL: That must have given you a really bad feeling to look out on an empty sea.

MR. SPANGLER: There was nowhere to go. That's the sea battle you're talking about.

MR. DANIEL: Of course, when you landed at Bougainville did you go transport landing craft Bougainville or where you just shipped up by an LC?

MR. SPANGLER: No, transport landing craft into the beach with a ramp.

MR. DANIEL: Let's get back to good ole Guadalcanal.

MR. SPANGLER: Good ole Guadalcanal. What a wonderful feeling it is to sleep on a cot again with a sheet and get a shower. It was heaven that's all it was.

MR. DANIEL: After three months?

MR. SPANGLER: No, a couple of months and sleeping on the ground; you can't imagine what it is to sleep on a cot with a pad or what not. This time we start preparing for Guam.

MR. DANIEL: Again, did you know where you were going?

MR. SPANGLER: No, I didn't know there was a place.

MR. DANIEL: Tell me about Guam then.

MR. SPANGLER: By this time I tell you what. We were up in Guam and I guess at one time up there I was on the LST, but anyway we had ducks on the LST and I had graduated to a radio jeep, I mean a radio in a jeep. So LST was anchored out in the bay and I was sitting up on the bow, I didn't go in until later on in the day but I had the whole panorama of the bay. The destroyers, the planes and what not I could just watch the whole thing. Later on they just opened up the bow doors on the LST, we got into duck right out there. What got me we hit the beach at Agat a little town that was completely obliterated but they had cleared the beach just wide enough for Duck tracks for this duck

to get in and out for the Japanese had buried bombs. The only thing sticking up was the fins. So I'm riding this looking over the edge and you can see why I sure hope this driver knows what he's doing. So we made it okay got in there late in the afternoon. By that time we had 105 howitzers and I had my radio. We didn't use a radio too much because once they got the phone lines in that's where our communications were done, very seldom radio, kind of a back-up deal. So we got the guns in place and the first couple of nights this lieutenant comes through. He said, "You all get in your holes there's some Japanese infiltrated this area. We're going to spray this whole area with machine gun fire tonight so get down and don't get out of those holes." and so we did all night long and they got about six or seven Japs in the morning found dead. This was my first extensive experience with star shells. I was sitting out on the guard post deal and they were throwing up these star shells all night long. It was about a hundred yards of open ground and then a bunch of trees over there and one of these little star shells on a parachute came swinging down behind those trees over there while I was on watch. The shadows just jumped out of the ground. I said it must be fifty feet tall. They were just shadows there. We had been told that these were Manchuran troops—much larger person than the regular Japs. I told my buddy, "Here they come."

MR. DANIEL: That is a scary feeling though.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, but anyway we survived that. I was more or less kept around the grounds from then on; I was no longer out in the forward observations. This was where the dogs come in and we were going up there, they had this whole deck full of dogs. They used them quite extensively in Guam.

MR. DANIEL: Looking for snipers?

MR. SPANGLER: Anything alert, they would alert you, anything out ahead of you, yes, snipers. They could scent, like I said a lot of our stuff could be seven or eight yards from you and you wouldn't even know he was there but these dogs did.

MR. DANIEL: Did you like the dogs being with you?

MR. SPANGLER: Sure. By the way, this is off to the side, I went back to Guam 1994, 50<sup>th</sup> Reunion and they had a world dog cemetery there maintained by the marines. They've got about twenty or thirty dogs buried in the cemetery. Each one of them has a history of being wounded or killed or what not but they maintain that cemetery at Guam.



MR. DANIEL: Fort Meade has a war dog buried in one of the cemeteries. I don't know why. As a little kid I was told that and you just went by you knew it was there from World War I. I don't know what it did to deserve that but it must have been special.

MR. SPANGLER: A lot of these dogs those guys got attached to and a lot of them were wounded and dogs would take the shots and what not for their handlers. Ours were war dogs not underfoot all the time. They were with us and I liked to have them with us.

MR. DANIEL: A question for you, I know the landing at Guam came after the landing at Saipan and Tinian.

MR. SPANGLER: Well, let me tell you about that. We were aboard ship for sixty days. We headed out they were going to hit Saipan and three days later we were to hit Guam. We were in reserve aboard ship off of Saipan and we'd go round and round and round. A month later we did go down to Guam but we were in reserve for Saipan.

MR. DANIEL: How long were you on that ship again?

MR. SPANGLER: Sixty days, two months on ship. One time we went to Eniwetok and they took swimming parties to the shore if you wanted to go to shore. And that was the only time we got off the ship. We had to refuel before we went to Guam, but we were in reserve for the Saipan.

MR. DANIEL: What did you think about it? Obviously the Japanese knew you were coming by this time and they had to know Guam was the target. They could look out and see all these ships sitting there. How did that make you guys feel?

MR. SPANGLER: You were always apprehensive, you never knew what, if you gotta go that's it. You were in a group you wouldn't let them down, they wouldn't let you down. I've got several tapes of liberation of Guam and I'll give you one of them.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, okay.

MR. SPANGLER: We got in there at Guam set up by the bulldozers dig a trench out just drove the jeep down in there. The infantry was later. I don't know if you know much about Guam.

MR. DANIEL: A little bit.

MR. SPANGLER: A finger sticking out, Orote Peninsula. I love these points and this one, first they bring the 1<sup>st</sup> Provisional Marine brigade landed on one side and 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division landed on the other and just cut that peninsula off. That's where the airfield

was, where the old marine barracks was out there. Then they started sweeping in and we cleaned out Orote peninsula, the airfield and the old marine barracks it was covered with debris and vines but from then on we forced the Japanese and just cleaned out the area moving on, moving on. Just a little aside, too, you might be interested in it.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, please.

MR. SPANGLER: One time on Guam, I don't know somebody wanted a load of sand so we took a truck up in the mountains a little bit, one of the hills, loaded the sand I figure it was Japanese radio station had been up there. They had tried to bomb it and all over there were five-hundred pound bombs that never exploded. They just came down and they just cracked open like eggs and they were laying all over the place up there. It kind of amazed me.

MR. DANIEL: How did you finally clean those out?

MR. SPANGLER: We just left them where they were, got our load of sand and let somebody else worry about them.

MR. DANIEL: This is getting real dangerous real fast.

MR. SPANGLER: I know. On Bougainville we had a Japanese torpedo plane crash real close to us and we were about to run over and go look at it. If that thing had gone off it would have cleaned the whole area out there and still had the torpedo on there.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, you're kidding. Everybody wants to go see the action but the last thing you do is be near the airplane, get away from the airplane cause that fuel will go up.

MR. SPANGLER: Imagine how stupid it is. Still have a live torpedo and everybody's over "look at that". I got to tell you about Guam, too. Our forces liberated a couple of warehouses full of sake and beer. I don't know if you are familiar with this or not.

MR. DANIEL: I'm not familiar with it but I can imagine what you guys did with the sake and beer.

MR. SPANGLER: Well, you imagined right. The first thing they did they gave everybody two bottles of beer. Well, some guys didn't drink so they traded them off or gave them to somebody. But anyway that was good beer, rice beer is good beer. The next thing you know a friend of mine came by and turns in a case of sake. And that stuff is dynamite. So everybody has bottles of sake so my one experience with sake was I had two bottles and I was going by this tent and there was a couple of old marines, China

marines, and they said, "Hey, come here a minute. What have you got?" I told him. Well, we opened one and I sat astraddle this stretcher over sand bags; the next thing I know I woke up in the middle of the night and that was my last deal with sake 'cause I was gonna run around and ??? with it. By that time we were getting ready to move the guns about eight or ten miles on the other end of the island. And this is right after everybody had their sake, so this convey formed and they would stop the convoy about every hundred yards this guy would run up and down giving everybody a drink; by the time we got up there I was sober. The whole outfit was drunk, guys passing out underneath trucks and officers running around pulling their hair out. Anyway that's past. You'll see; this is true. They said the Japanese buried sake out in the jungle and you'd see a marine out there with a pointed stick just walking around sticking that stick in the ground looking for some buried sake. But that was the sake deal, got rid of that.

This is oral history interview taking place in Mr. Spangler's home, 12417 River Bend, Austin, TX 78732. This is tape 2 side a.

MR. DANIEL: Okay, we were talking about the marines that were looking for the buried sake with the pointed sticks. Not the smartest move the world's ever made and then you were just about ready to leave Guam I think. Where did you go after Guam?

MR.SPANGLER: Back to the Canal, again.

MR. DANIEL: Did you stay at the same spots all the time?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, we had kind of the same area. I got to tell you this. After Bougainville we went to the Canal and they brought a bunch of replacements in and you looked them over. I was standing in chow line and here was this kid from my hometown in Ohio six or eight thousands miles away and I knew him. He was in the infantry and we both went to Guam but he was in a different outfit. I was running the switch board and one day this call came in and says, "You have a Pfc Chuck Spangler in your outfit? This is your high school coach." He was there in a PT squad and he was out on the beach. This other friend of mine we got a jeep and went down and visited him. I used to play a lot of basketball. We toured, spent the afternoon running around with an old high school coach. Can you imagine that? But we went back to the Canal and we settled back

in. We were going to get new assignment and I forget this was after Bougainville, I guess, and we had the tents torn down, the gear packed and ready to go and General Shepherd, I believe, on one of these island inspections and they called the whole thing off. But we were ready to go. Can you imagine the relief? You know, we were to hit New Ireland and Rabaul and all of that. I gotta say this, I forgot to tell you. The first time I was on the Canal, the first time I'd ever seen a night fighter, you know P-38's. So Japanese Charlie would come in and they would send up these night fighters. We'd lay in the foxholes and all you can see up in the sky was tracers and tracers going through the sky and finally I saw this outline of this plane on fire. We didn't know if it was their plane or our plane. We could see tracers all over the sky. It was coming down but it was something to watch at night. Dog fights up in the sky in the middle of the night. Up to then the Japanese had a free reign at night time and they didn't come over during the day.

MR. DANIEL: The night fighters changed that real fast, didn't they?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, sure did.

MR. DANIEL: Did you ever worry about being bombed at night?

MR. SPANGLER: Sure I was worried about being there, every plane is up there and you know it's right over your head, directly on your head.

MR. DANIEL: We've just left Guam, we've gone back to the garden spot of the Pacific, Guadalcanal again, what did you do at Guadalcanal?

MR. SPANGLER: By that time Guadalcanal was a big air force Henderson Field and airplanes and we settled into this company life, had movies with flashlights. I guess that's about it. .

MR. DANIEL: Where did you all come from? Did you guys make it?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, there are two things. Just before we went into Bougainville, some enterprising guys went down to the PXs bought up all the Aqua Velva they could find and created a little still. They boiled after curfew and I didn't get in on that but one of my friends was paralyzed that night. They made general juice with a five-gallon gallon jerry can made it with potato peelings, some sugar and what not and put it altogether and set it out there in the jungle.

MR. DANIEL: That can, was that a jerry can?

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, jerry can. They used to say the guy with the cleanest pair of socks they'd give the guy a sock and they'd strain it through it.

MR. DANIEL: I'll bet that was evil stuff.

MR. SPANGLER: I was not involved but a lot of guys did. Oh, I got to tell you this. Come back from Guam and I had a Japanese rifle and some other stuff. The guys in the air force would come around, souvenir hunters. Well, I had this Japanese rifle and, you know, I never could get enough lumber to give them to send it home. You had to box it up and all that. So one night this guy came down and said there's a guy looking for a souvenir. I sold that rifle for two fifths of liquor and I took the liquor and I sold it for fifty dollars a fifth and sent the money home but I didn't have the rifle anymore. But I sold the liquor for fifty dollars a fifth and that was a pretty good price back then.

MR. DANIEL: Did you have script or did you have real money where you were?

MR. SPANGLER: Real money, but I had an allotment, most of it was sent home.

MR. DANIEL: I asked because my mother in Europe had script. In order to cut the black market they wouldn't issue anybody but script.

MR. SPANGLER: No, we didn't have that.

MR. DANIEL: Okay, so you're at Canal the third time, like home to you.

MR. SPANGLER: I'm at Guadalcanal.

MR. DANIEL: Guadalcanal, excuse me. What happened after that while you were staying there?

MR. SPANGLER: By that time I was getting in over two years in the service, and I thought I'm never going to get home. I came to that conclusion that I'm stuck here and that's when they started rotating on the point system.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, I didn't realize that. I didn't think they started point system until the end of the war.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yes. There were so many points for age, and where you'd been, and what not and they kept putting a list up on the bulletin board of the guys that were eligible to be rotated. I kept watching that and a friend of mine ran the movies so he had a movie every night and somehow he finagled a gallon of ethyl alcohol and coke syrup and he and I would sit on the beach and reminiscence. Friend of mine had liberated a

portable typewriter off of the ship or something and we'd just talk about life. I'd write everybody in the world letter after letter.

MR. DANIEL: I assume you weren't married at this time.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, no.

MR. DANIEL: Obviously you wrote to your folks.

MR. SPANGLER: I wrote to everybody. I've got to show you something. Olivia de Haviland, Ginger Rogers, these pictures they sent me.

MR. DANIEL: You actually sent to them too.

MR. SPANGLER: Sure. It gave you something to do. I could type a little bit and there was nothing else to do. I was just kinda spending time waiting to get one thing. Finally I had twenty eight months and my name came up that I was going to be sent home. There was a big ship coming through; the GENERAL GEORGE S. RANDAL was the name of it. It was a new troop transport and it had been in India and picked up a bunch of English soldiers and it was making the trip back. So we get on one of these big barges on the beach and go out. The ship was anchored out in the bay and they pulled this barge along the side and we were standing there and this officer of the ship came down and said, "Sorry, we're full, can't take anybody else on this ship." The officer with us said, "We're not leaving." We stayed alongside that ship for three or four hours and finally they came down and said, "Come on, get aboard."

MR. DANIEL: It takes guts to tell guys who've been out in the Pacific for twenty-eight months you can't go home.

MR. SPANGLER: So we stayed out there and finally got back in November of '44.

MR. DANIEL: When you received that call what were they going to do with you, you're still in the marines?

MR. SPANGLER: In San Diego they called individuals in and said what do you want to do? I said, "I want to go to V-12 school." I wanted to get an education and the guy just laughed, laughed, laughed. He said, "They're so darned full you'll never get in that." They were taking kids out of high school. I had a thirty day leave and I went home on leave, Ohio, then I got orders to report to Quantico. I was back in Quantico. I was put in a training department, communications, for OCS. You'll get a kick out of this at Quantico. Our full time duty was right in the woods at Quantico and set up a mass

communications, radio, and had loudspeakers up in the tree. Oh, we were just sitting around until they brought this platoon of OCS guys through. Must have had a joker in the crowd so you were sitting there and out of the tree would boom this voice, "Ah there's good news tonight." And here we'd go through that whole speel of H. V. Kaltenborn. In the meantime, at Quantico we did Washington, D. C., again. I had been back about two months at this training battalion and this lieutenant came in there one day and says, "You still want to go to V-12 school?" I liked to have fell off the bunk. "I sure do." So he says, "Come on you're going to meet these three majors, you got an interview." So I went to see them and have an interview with them. I thought you might get a kick out of this. One of the questions after they asked the general questions was do you plan to make the military, the marines your career? I said, "No, this is it." He said, "Well, what do you mean by that?" I said, "While I'm here I want to advance, I want as much education as I can get, and I'm here for the duration. As long as it lasts I want to do it. I have two brothers both majors, both in the service." And I was accepted.

MR. DANIEL: Wow, you're lucky.

MR. SPANGLER: I was. When he said, "Do you plan to make this your career?" I told him no.

MR. DANIEL: You could go back to the Canal that way.

MR. SPANGLER: Well, that was the deal. When I came home it was three months rotation and then back to the Canal. I escaped that by going to V12.

MR. DANIEL: V-12. When you got accepted V-12, this had to be the early part of '45 by the time you got out of Guam and everything else.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, '45.

MR. DANIEL: Did you get to pick the school?

MR. SPANGLER: We had a choice, three schools. Everybody wanted to go to Colorado University and there was one in Ohio, I think it was Kent State because it was close to home, or Princeton. From out of the three you put your preference down and then they sent you where they wanted you to go. They sent me to Princeton.

MR. DANIEL: Do you remember when you first were at Princeton?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, first of all, they sent me to Camp Lejune and I spent a couple of months down there in what they call a pre V-12 School, kinda got you back into going to

classes. We'll say in August or late summer, maybe it was September, I was sent to Princeton 'cause I was at Princeton when they dropped the atomic bomb because we were glued to the radio but I stayed at Princeton until next March.

MR. DANIEL: When I talked with you on the phone, you said you happened to be at Times Square when the announcement.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, Yeh, we went to Times Square right after the announcement. When they dropped the bomb they gave us liberty. Princeton is only forty-five miles out of New York so several of us headed for New York and Times Square. We spent the day and evening there in Times Square. We had to be back I'll say seven o'clock in the morning, back at Princeton. So we got back. No sooner we got back and they said we're giving you another day off. So we headed right back into New York but at this time I had friends, a couple of guys that lived in New York, but I was there on V-J day.

MR. DANIEL: I've seen pictures of that. What was it really like?

MR. SPANGLER: Just marvelous people, people just so happy. You couldn't buy a drink, guys sitting on the sidewalk with bottles and kegs of beer and you just mingled and went around. There was no formal entertainment, just a mob of people.

MR. DANIEL: So the pictures you see are actually right, then, everybody just had a good time then, and your being in your strapping marine uniform probably...

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yeh, I'll never forget it. Well, I shouldn't tell this.

MR. DANIEL: Go ahead.

MR. SPANGLER: We picked up several girls, we went to this restaurant with a bar and had about three or four drinks. Well, we got tired of that and said let's just leave, let them hunger for bill. That didn't go over so good. They chased us down the street and had a lot to say about us.

MR. DANIEL: So you had a good time in Times Square. You went back to Princeton. You said you were in Princeton until March.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes.

MR. DANIEL: Did you actually graduate or not?

MR. SPANGLER: No. I don't remember when just at some other school – Ohio State.

MR. DANIEL: Being a poor marine didn't help a lot.



MR. SPANGLER: No, didn't help a lot. One thing, I had nobody to point out a way. The more I think about it, a Princeton University degree I might have stayed but also what they were doing, they were disbanding the marine V-12. You had to go in the navy ROTC and commit yourself to three or four years in the navy and I didn't want in it. I don't know how this navy ROTC worked but nobody said you can still be a marine and go to the navy ROTC.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, you thought you had to go as a marine.

MR. SPANGLER: I thought you had to go into the navy and I didn't want that. So I applied for discharge. Then I was discharged at Bainbridge, Maryland.

MR. DANIEL: I know that area, Aberdeen Proving Grounds right there.

MR. SPANGLER: We came through there, my girlfriend and I, not too long ago. We spent a day or two in Atlantic City and went on to Washington, D. C.

MR. DANIEL: I didn't realize there was a separation center in Bainbridge.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yeh. I got to add this, too. When you get separated you have to go down this hall to get out and they've got recruiting reserves down there just every ten feet. I wanted to go back home and I re-entered Ohio State in the fall of '46. A good friend of mine marine John was in the reserves. He said, "Chuck, you ought to get in the reserves, the marine reserves." Well, you know Somerset is about forty miles out of down there and I was driving home so I drove up on my way home to the Bexley Recruiting Office in the Reserves. I said, "Naw", I didn't go in, I went on home. In the meantime two or three months I moved to Texas. I've been here since 1950.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, I didn't know that. So did you graduate from Ohio State?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh. I did. I graduated in March, 1950, and I moved here in May. But I no sooner got to U.T, I entered U.T., and graduated from both places. They started calling the reserves for Korea now. Had I been in the reserves I would have found myself in Korea. That's just how close I missed going into the combat. I didn't join the Marines Reserves. They called them out here like crazy and I was here in U.T. and graduated. So I went to pharmacy school here. I had a combination pharmacy and business degree.

MR. DANIEL: How come you picked Texas?

MR. SPANGLER: My brother was a veterinarian here, had a clinic here. The major I was telling you about married a girl from Bertram, and he said why don't you come on to Texas? So I moved here. I really came down here to go to med school but it was so crowded and my sister-in-law said, "Why don't you go to pharmacy school?" A good idea and I went over there and they swept you off the streets. They were looking for students in pharmacy. So I signed up in pharmacy.

MR. DANIEL: I assume you used the G. I. Bill for this.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, if you say so. The only time I ever paid for any education was the first three months at Ohio State. From then on until 1953 never costing me a dime. I used the G. I. Bill and then I got to my last year I had enough time I was caught by the Texas Veterans Act, they pay for your tuition and books and nothing else. I started college in 1941 and finished in 1953, twelve years.

MR. DANIEL: You have two degrees, one from Princeton and one from U.T?

MR. SPANGLER: I got three really. I got one from Ohio State and two from Texas.

MR. DANIEL: So you became a pharmacist. We don't have to go through a lot of detail what did you actually do? Did you open up a pharmacy?

MR. SPANGLER: I worked for what used to be a chain here. I stayed in the Bray and Jordon. They had about seven or eight stores and I worked for them. The store I first started out was at thirteenth and Guadalupe. I was there for awhile and I worked for them in the Highland Park Pharmacy. Then I worked for them about ten years and then I had an opportunity to buy half a drugstore in Commerce, Texas. So we moved to Commerce, Texas, that's the home of East Texas State. We were up there about three years and I missed Austin and I wanted to come back to Austin. My wife's family was here in Austin, and we wanted to come back. So I sold out and I came back here and worked for Ace Drug Mart. I'm sure you've heard of Ace Drug Mart. A good friend of mine both of them that owned that thing and I worked for them for awhile. I didn't own a drugstore after Commerce. I worked for Gus's Drugline and Drugstore.

MR. DANIEL: You're one of the few people who knew how this place looked before it blew up in the seventies and eighties.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yeh, I've seen a lot of changes. You know I got lost in Cedar Park. Have you ever been back in there?

MR. DANIEL: Yeh.

MR. SPANGLER: Was there a library here?

MR. DANIEL: Oh, yes.

MR. SPANGLER: They've got a fantastic library.

MR. DANIEL: The whole area since we own land in Jonestown.

MR. SPANGLER: You lived in Jonestown?

MR. DANIEL: Yeh, and they were telling us that the roads didn't go out that far. I thought, what do you mean the roads didn't go out? I guess the roads have only been out that far as far as Jonestown, and like the late forties they hadn't been paved.

MR. SPANGLER: Only a lane with gravel. If I want to go to Lake Travis or I want to go from Lamar over to get on 183; Anderson Lane was just a gravel lane across there. I went back looking for the VA clinic, a new one in Cedar Park.

MR. DANIEL: I didn't know there's one in Cedar Park now.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, it is. I went over there to see it, I am a member now. I get my medicine from VA clinics, free clinics. But I go to Montopolis and for four or five months I've been using them. I found out they opened this new and I wanted to go see it and I got back in the car at Cedar Park and drove all over.

MR. DANIEL: I first moved here in '83, and in '83 Cedar Park really was nothing and nowadays Cedar Park is like a major housing area. There are roads everywhere. Pflugerville is the same way. When I moved here I used to fly parachutes and the transcriber really doesn't have to have this. I'll ask some more military questions in a minute, but when I flew over there it was in '85 it was cattle fields, most of them was cattle fields. Dell didn't exist.

This is tape 2, side b of the oral history of Chuck Spangler, interviewer Dwight Daniel.

MR. DANIEL: When the tape went off we were just talking about the local history of the area which is probably no concern to the researcher, now, back to the interview. Was there ever any USO shows where you were. Did they ever get that far out?

MR. SPANGLER: Yes. One show I saw overseas Randolph Scott and Ray Bolger on Guadalcanal. Now what in the world is two males, no women, see a couple of guys out there. Randolph Scott and Ray Bolger, that was it, no Bob Hope no women.

MR. DANIEL: Now, I know both of them but Ray Bolger at least had an act. What did Randolph Scott do?

MR. SPANGLER: He was just a cowboy hero. Imagine us sitting around coconut trees and hanging this and that and seeing a couple of guys. That's the only thing I ever saw overseas at USO shows.

MR. DANIEL: That would make me mad.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes.

MR. DANIEL: At least Bob Hope knew what to do, bring out girls.

MR. SPANGLER: I went for almost a year and never saw a white woman. You might see a nurse at a distance. Nothing you could talk to, but that was it. I never saw a white woman in the year and a half until we went to New Zealand.

MR. DANIEL: Then you had a good time in New Zealand.

MR. SPANGLER: I liked New Zealand. I'd like to go back. I want to go back to Samoa, too.

MR. DANIEL: I've always wanted to see Guam.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, did you?

MR. DANIEL: Yeh, I don't know why. It's just something that I want to see. I have friends that were in the Air Force there with B-52s going to Viet Nam.

MR. SPANGLER: I've been reading about 52s.

MR. DANIEL: The B-29s from all those air bases in Tinian and the Marianas. I always wanted to see that, but New Zealand is worth seeing.

MR. SPANGLER: Did you get to the mountains?

MR. DANIEL: Everywhere, I went to both the north and the south islands. It was a whirlwind tour so I didn't get what they call truckin, I didn't get a chance to walk or hike in New Zealand, but the sales team I was with gave me a lot of free time off so at night I got to see the towns.

MR. SPANGLER; ???????

MR. DANIEL: Yeh, I saw all of that, got a ski vacation out of it. There's a big ski resort, it's not like the American ski resorts but I got a ski vacation in on the weekends. It's actually pretty nice. I can't complain. They always ask this question, how did you actually hear the war was over?

MR. SPANGLER: How did I hear it was over?

MR. DANIEL: Did they announce it at the University?

MR. SPANGLER: We listened to radios.

MR. DANIEL: When you returned, were your folks still alive?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: Anything changed in those four years or five years that you were gone?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, not too much for the simple reason, see I came back when the war was still going on strong. I was back in the home before the battle of the Bulge ever took place. A serviceman would rarely be home on leave. Europe was still going strong and the South Pacific was still going strong. So that much had changed. Everybody was involved in overseas events and the war in Europe and the war in the Pacific, we're talking about change.

MR. DANIEL: That's true. I hadn't thought about that. I'm so used to most of the people I've talked to never came home on leave. They stayed over till the duration. My mother didn't get out of Europe until either late '46 or early '47. My father didn't get out until '46. They both came stateside and both were in the army, that's how they met. Most of the people I know didn't get back to the country until '46. What else do you want to add to this? I can't think of anything else.

MR. SPANGLER: I have another story to tell. From January of '46 I didn't particularly want to do it all again but I missed the service life in a way. I really do.

MR. DANIEL: This is the friendship?

MR. SPANGLER: I guess other than getting shot at there's the security of things. You've got a place to sleep you got medical care. As long as you're in the military you don't have to worry about I'm going to be laid off tomorrow or I'm going to be homeless tomorrow. I'm talking other than war time. All had the same values that you did, more or less. I hope I didn't sound like a wanderer or ne'er do well.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, no.

MR. SPANGLER: We often did stuff like everybody else, I never got any tatoos.

MR. DANIEL: I noticed that. That's unusual, most marines...

MR. SPANGLER: I do have a tattoo but you can't see it. It's called the Moki. You see that.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, yes, the little square on your upper arm?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, you know why that stays on there?

MR. DANIEL: No, how does it do that?

MR. SPANGLER: That was done in Samoa with heavy brooms. You light one of those broom straws and you put this little charcoal around in your outline and then you take another one and you get close to that and that will make each one red hot.

MR. DANIEL: Why did you get a tattoo?

MR. SPANGLER: Why didn't I?

MR. DANIEL: No, why did you?

MR. SPANGLER: Like you said, shittin' around and drinking beer or what not. We had access to beer at times and fill us up with three or four beers and it seems like a good idea, like these natives do it.

MR. DANIEL: You know how to spell Moki?

MR. SPANGLER: Moki.

MR. DANIEL: Okay, I was just curious.

MR. SPANGLER: (Transcriber could not understand Moki-Somoan words.)

MR. DANIEL: So you picked up some Samoan while you were over there.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yes. (more speaking in Samoan) I'm going to the movies is what it means. More Samoan translated I'm going home. We called it Fala there. Are we through?

MR. DANIEL: You're through.

MR. SPANGLER: I want to show you some stuff here.

MR. DANIEL: So you actually made "Look Magazine"?

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, this is in "Look Magazine/

MR. DANIEL: Cool.

MR. SPANGLER: See these guys there, what happened we were getting ready to go on exercise had combat gear on and everything, these photographers came by and said, “Hey, we want to get your picture playing basketball. So strip down and do it.”

MR. DANIEL: So that’s why everybody in the background is loaded for bear. You ruined my whole idea, it is a staged photograph. Let’s go back I think it will be interesting. The girls you met in Samoa we were talking about here.

MR. SPANGLER: Her name is Thelma Pritchard.

MR. DANIEL: That’s a good Samoan name if I ever heard one.

MR. SPANGLER: She went to school in Aukland.

MR. DANIEL: And you said she ultimately married a navy guy?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: Went to Buffalo, Texas?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh. I used to correspond with her. I tell you what happened. Even after I got out of service she would write me and I’d write her. That’s why I came back to the States and she married the guy and moved to San Francisco. I think that’s where this was taken, I know it was. She missed the water and sea and going to Buffalo, Texas. Can you imagine going from Samoa to Buffalo, Texas.

MR. DANIEL: Must have come as a shock. You let the good looking one get away, what happened here?

MR. SPANGLER: I used to correspond with her all the time.

MR. DANIEL: What if she is still alive?

MR. SPANGLER: I don’t know. These are at Princeton.

MR. DANIEL: Now this is you with the dog. Those formations bring back fond memories.

MR. SPANGLER: This guy lives in Washington, D.C. This was outside one of the dorms in Princeton. This is my roommate just got back from ????. This is on Guam; that was the guy from my hometown I was telling you about. He’s dead now. Believe it or not, I still have this jacket, dungaree jacket. It’s in there.

MR. DANIEL: Who is this?

MR. SPANGLER: That’s me.

MR. DANIEL: That is you!

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: You're a handsome devil.

MR. SPANGLER: This guy, Jim Hearn, was from Pennsylvania. He played football for a place you never heard of before, Slipperery Rock.

MR. DANIEL: I never heard of Slippery Rock.

MR. SPANGLER: You never have?

MR. DANIEL: No.

MR. SPANGLER: Are you kiddin'?

MR. DANIEL: Where is Slippery Rock?

MR. SPANGLER: It's in Pennsylvania.

MR. DANIEL: Where in Pennsylvania?

MR. SPANGLER: Outside of Pittsburgh in that area. I thought everybody knew where Slippery was, but, anyway, this friend, Gus over here, he joined. He used to get the college paper from Slippery Rock. In the radios here they'd give all scores, you know how they list all of the scores, and Slippery Rock. They always get that out. It's like you wanting people to know where Slippery Rock was.

MR. DANIEL: On this helmet, it doesn't look like camouflage cover, looks like a rope.

MR. SPANGLER: It's kind of a burlap thing and this is just a rope.

MR. DANIEL: That you can stick little things into it.

MR. SPANGLER: What we used to do going through the jungle they had a fungus growing on a tree and fluorescent.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, I've heard about this.

MR. SPANGLER: You're going down the trail and everybody that took one of those fluorescent things on their helmet and could just follow, stay on the trail at night ...

MR. DANIEL: Nowadays they do a fluorescent; they have the illuminous tape on the back. I heard about that, so that's true then?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, it is.

MR. DANIEL: I always heard rumors about that. Didn't know that was true?

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, it is true 'cause we did it. It glows at night in the dark. I was on leave this guy out of Washington, DC came to visit. He was from Baltimore and he came to visit me. I'm missing two or three pictures. This was in New Zealand.



MR. DANIEL: Who is this guy in the distinguished dark civilian coat?

MR. SPANGLER: That's my brother. He was worried about his pals that were in New Guinea. And this guy by me he was a character, my brother. He was a doctor. This just looks like Fred over in New Guinea.

MR. DANIEL: You said you had four brothers; three of you were in the military. What happened to the fourth one?

MR. SPANGLER: He couldn't make the physical. He was never in the service.

MR. DANIEL: That's unusual.

MR. SPANGLER: He and I are the only ones living anymore. He's eighty-five.

MR. DANIEL: Handing out mail here and got this mess kit.

MR. SPANGLER: I know what I was going to tell you. See ole Kearns, I'm missing two or three pictures, me and Jim Kearns. I always carried a spoon with me.

MR. DANIEL: What's wrong with that?

MR. SPANGLER: What's wrong with it?

MR. DANIEL: Yeh, I always carried a spoon. Have you ever tried to eat your C rations with plastic spoons?

MR. SPANGLER: That's what I said. We always carried a spoon because you never knew when somebody was gonna have something to eat. I always carried a spoon.

MR. DANIEL: For the transcriber to see what they don't know, they still give plastic spoons with your C rations and now with your MREs. The problem is they sometimes break, you may get real food and the plastic spoon doesn't really cut it. So the people in the know used to carry, I used to carry a spoon with me, a real honest to god metal spoon.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, I've still got the whole deal.

MR. DANIEL: And the other thing I used to carry instead of P-38 can opener for the cans, they're the most useless things the world has ever seen those wolf can openers, I used to carry a rotary can opener. I got it from the mess hall, it's about two or three inches tall. You can buy them at the stores now. Everybody out there would spend hours trying to get their C rats open, and I'm swish, swish, and I'm ready to eat.

MR. SPANGLER: I've got a picture of me with a spoon. Everywhere you were you would find somebody that's got something to eat and if you didn't have a spoon – tough.

MR. DANIEL: You were in trouble. People don't realize. My wife has asked me that.

MR. SPANGLER: I'll see if I can find one other thing I want to show you, you would be interested. I've got it; I'll just have to find it. I've got to pull the album down. Just take a 03 empty case a 45empty will fit right over it, put the Atabrine tablets in the case, we took Atabrine everyday.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, for malaria. That was your pill case?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, we carried it with us, and I've got a deal here, I've still got the Atabrine tablets in it.

MR. DANIEL: How did you seal it off?

MR. SPANGLER: You didn't seal it; 45 will just fit over the 03 case.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, cool! A 3006 case and a 45 case fits over it – carried the Atabrine tablets in it. I hadn't thought about that. That's cool!

MR. SPANGLER: I found it.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, cool! I've got to see this. Oh, look at this. I like this. It's still got the tablets in it.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, still has the tablets in it, I took one every day.

MR. DANIEL: That is alright. I didn't know this. I like that.

MR. SPANGLER: I could go on and on.

MR. DANIEL: That's cool, though. When I was in we used the plastic cases to carry the tablets and everything else. That's a good way to do it. After sixty years the pill is still so good let's see if you can skip it.

MR. SPANGLER: Well, I wouldn't take one.

MR. DANIEL: It would cure whatever you had though, I bet. That is alright, a cute little keepsake. You do know the Nimitz Museum is looking for donations not money but articles.

MR. SPANGLER: Are they? In the fall, October ???, they have muster day and the Nimitz Museum they send a group up here and I talked to some of them, but I didn't know. You know I donated some things to the navy museum on Guam. They were starting a little museum. I gave them a couple of green skivie drawers. You know we used to wear green.

MR. DANIEL: I've seen pictures of them. I wore the dirty brown ones.

MR. SPANGLER: These were green and I donated them. Something else I gave them, I forget what it was, when I went back to Guam in 1994. The 21<sup>st</sup>, as you know, is what they call liberation day, they treat it just like July 4<sup>th</sup> here, big, big celebration. That's when they were liberated.

MR. DANIEL: The liberation from the Japanese?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, from the Japanese. People come down town just like Congress Avenue in Austin and they'll stake out little plots for during the parade. They had a big parade, it was a fantastic deal. I have some video of when I returned to Guam so sometime when you're free come back out.

MR. DANIEL: I'll give you a call. Let's do that.

MR. SPANGLER: I'll tell about this liberation for history part. It will start when the Japanese put their digs in the Guamanians, Samoa we called it during their occupation, and they know they weren't going to learn Japanese. They had Japanese instructors for the old and the young. They're pretty repressive and then we liberated them. They were so thankful for it and I'm going to tell you a little story. On Guam, we had been there two or three days and the natives, with the shelling and what not, took everything they could up to the mountains, moved up there. I don't know whether the Japanese had anything on their own, they got out of there. A two or three acre field was across there and nothing in this field but an upright piano sitting out there. I guess they got it that far and we were out there and here comes along this little native kid. He sat down and he was playing "Under the Double Eagle" or something like that and we just kind of gathered around there right in the middle of the field one piano, a few breezes and a kid playing the piano.

MR. DANIEL: I've seen pictures of Saipan and Guam where the Japanese had convinced the natives that you're going to rape, kill and burn so a lot of the locals would jump off the cliffs.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: Did you see any of that or did that happen?

MR. SPANGLER: I didn't but it happened at Guam. Saipan was worse.

MR. DANIEL: I've heard that.

MR. SPANGLER: Well, no, no, Saipan was real bad. The natives were so glad to see us on Guam and I don't think they did, Saipan they did like crazy. Well, you know the story of Guam. There was a radio operator, all during the Japanese, the natives took him up into the mountain you know about him. He was there all the time.

MR. DANIEL: Did you get a chance to meet him?

MR. SPANGLER: No, sir. I'm, sure you're interested, I was. Did you ever read the story about those coast watchers?

MR. DANIEL: Yes.

MR. SPANGLER: That was a fantastic read. My brother-in-law gave me a whole book on it. We used those extensively; they would pass the word down from Bougainville or New Gorgea. You know what happened to Bougainville?

MR. DANIEL: No.

MR. SPANGLER: We went on one area end and we isolated about ten or fifteen thousand Japanese on the other end. And just the jungle in between and they had no supplies or what not. We were on this end and we didn't go after them or run them off and they were in areas and the air force guys were trying, they were starving to death really. They're all marines. I was watching down on Bougainville and the Seabees got this airfield built. A whole bunch of liberators and we were watching them coming over, going back to Guadalcanal, I guess, and here comes one trailing with smoke. You could just see it and he landed on that field there. He was lucky, I guess, 'cause we could see him just about as far as here to the lake when he come by, but he was just almost shot up. I'm not going to tell you this on Guam. Since you're a historian, they caught a bunch of Japanese in an open area; there was a bunker there. When we got up to this bunker it hadn't happened too long before because we went down to this bunker and the Japanese were dead but they were playing poker, and the money was still on the table, the cards were still on the table.

MR. DANIEL: How did they die, napalm?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, concussion, bombs, one burned. I picked up some Japanese money and I got some cigarettes and chop sticks and all that stuff I could carry. In that same area our artillery had caught a whole bunch of Japanese in an open area right next to this place. I was amazed, they were all over the place and I thought they just laid

down and died, one arm up in the air, both arms up in the air, legs up in the air, they were just all over the place. That was one of my first encounters of that kind.

MR. DANIEL: I was going to ask you, I can't think of it now. Did you carry the Garand the rest of the war after you got one?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: Oh, I know what I was going to ask you. Did you ever run into any of the code talkers while you were out there?

MR. SPANGLER: No.

MR. DANIEL: I didn't think so. I was just curious.

MR. SPANGLER: After we went overseas the serviceman wore long trousers. We got over there and the Aussies and New Zealanders were all wearing shorts and we were a pretty good deal. From then on, we started wearing shorts the first time. I lived in Ohio and men didn't wear shorts.

MR. DANIEL: Didn't you tear up your whites when you humped through the jungle or did you only wear the shorts when you're back in camp?

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, just one time in camp.

MR. DANIEL: Sometimes you'll see pictures of them hiking through these jungles with shorts and I'm going man, that's got to be rough on legs.

MR. SPANGLER: We didn't do that. Out there on Guam this is a little extra. Little streams and we were washing in that and we weren't drinking but we were washing. This guy came by there and said, "Two dead Japanese lying out there seventy-five yards upstream." You'll get a kick out of this.

MR. DANIEL: This is the oral history interview of Chuck Spangler, tape 3, side A. We were just sitting here talking. You were talking about the 27<sup>th</sup> Division there for awhile.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, well they came in, not right away, and the island was pretty well covered when the 27<sup>th</sup> came in and we were short of drinking water. Water was scarce. The 27<sup>th</sup> came in and we were back pretty close to the beach but they brought in cans, we called them Jerry cans, piles and piles of them. You didn't see a marine outfit doing this but we had a shortage of water. They put no guard around that and you can imagine a bunch of thirsty marines. We washed in it; we just helped ourselves to all the jerry cans. Now as far as how they intermingled their troops, but it was pretty well over when they

got there. You know about water, I learned something. We did an exercise prior to going to Guam on Guadalcanal up in the jungles swampy area. We were out of drinking water and you know bamboo grows six or eight inches in diameter. We ran out of drinking water 'cause one of our bright lieutenants told us every section of bamboo has so much water in it. You drill a hole down in the bottom section and get a little bit of water out. Each section of bamboo and there's a whole bunch of sections that's where we got our water. If you're ever caught in the jungle nothing but bamboo you'll know that. Drill a little hole in there. We waded in some swamps and water, sloppy area, wet.

MR. DANIEL: Were you wet all the time?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh. We got used to being wet. I got to tell you when the tide was out, your foxhole dried. When the tide was in, the water came seeping up through the bottom and you're in that water all night.

MR. DANIEL: Did you have a lot of fungus or any thing like that?

MR. SPANGLER: I never did but I've seen guys go to sick bay and they'd come back like a purple sea critter? They'd just use gentian violet and swab them all over. I never had any trouble.

MR. DANIEL: You were lucky.

MR. SPANGLER: I was. I really was. I didn't have malaria and no fungus. We had to sleep, not in combat, in the base area under mosquito netting. Each outfit had a night officer; he came around every tent and made sure that you were under the mosquito net. I still have my mosquito hood we had to wear at night. Button your sleeves down.

MR. DANIEL: You were lucky.

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh, mosquito nets just sit over we used to have those pith hats and mosquito nets would come down and I didn't have malaria but I took my Atabrine. The first group more or less said it was violent there and it didn't work out.

MR. DANIEL: I didn't realize that, I thought you just had to take a series. Okay.

MR. SPANGLER: So the next thing came into effect you had to go in front of this guy and open your mouth and he'd throw one down your throat. And they made sure you got it down before you could get in the chow line. You talk about eating, I thought I would be hungry but it didn't take much to fill me up, powdered eggs, beef and gravy, and bread. One night this friend of mine we were on the battalion generators, just checked

big at night and the movies, had a little Italian movie there on the shore. Later, though, this marine comes by, he was drunk had a big coil of rope on his shoulder and an axe when he come by there. He was looking for pfc so and so he was going to string him up to a tree, work him over with that axe 'cause he didn't like the way he put his eggs on his tray that morning. He wandered off. That's a true story. He didn't like the way he put eggs on his tray that morning.

MR. DANIEL: You said you saw your first black man in uniform.

MR. SPANGLER: Yes, that was on Guam. The island was pretty well secure when they came in to Guam, a whole outfit of them. Not just one guy, this was the first marine I had seen. They just came ashore that day or one night. The island was secure, so we were sitting on a Japanese island playing cards or what not and that outfit knew that up there was awake all night long they had a firing going on just shooting up at spooks. What they were shooting at we didn't know. We were down here playing cards in lights but that's the first black troop I had seen. They had a fire fight going on all night long.

MR. DANIEL: What did you think about the black people?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, it was strange. You have no real resentment or anything, nothing like. It was curiosity, strange dealing, they kept us pretty well separated, not integrated. They had their own uniform. So we didn't have much intermingling with them.

MR. DANIEL: I was just curious because if you read about the Alaskan campaign, not only did they keep the troops separated but the general head of it was very racist. So he made sure they didn't get equipment either. Separate or equal you can argue good or bad but when it is not equal and what they would do is they wouldn't issue the troops cold weather gear so it was abuse. They had to face some big ball of steel all the time. Now that's why I was asking the question.

MR. SPANGLER: No, they were just another outfit, strange other outfit, that's all there was to it. I'm sure you've heard the story about the garand. How much do you know about the garand?

MR. DANIEL: Quite a bit but I don't know which story you're talking about .

MR. SPANGLER: This one that makes a little ping noise.

MR. DANIEL: When it ejects the clip?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh And the Japanese you know what they would do.

MR. DANIEL: They supposedly would attack if the...

MR. SPANGLER: Well, they'd wait around until they hear the ping so you had the marines here. They'd take and empty that about half way through the clip and strike it on the rifle so it went ping. I was just under fire one time on Guam.

MR. DANIEL: Is this the place where you were always with the radios?

MR. SPANGLER: Well, I did a lot of line work, communications section.

MR. DANIEL: Well, the lines put you under fire sometime, didn't they?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: That's what I thought. You said you were only under one time, I thought your string wire...

MR. SPANGLER: No, I was several times, one night on Bougainville. We didn't attack at night. We'd consolidate our line at night. Just before dawn while we were supposed to fill in they came in there and said you guys are in the wrong spot. You folks fill in the gaps between us, so we had to move and dig in at night. You can imagine what's going on. It was dark and you're trying to fill in a hole in the line I guess it's good I'm not using the language he used. He was from Philadelphia. You know when it got dark you got in your hole and you stayed there. A man came by this hole just a screaming "I got bit, I got bit.". He got bit by a centipede and everybody was saying, "Get down, get down." "I don't give a damn, I don't care." He had been bitten by a scorpion there and he was just staggering along in the mud. I don't have to give you this but one of my radio people was shot by friendly fire.

MR. DANIEL: How did that happen?

MR. SPANGLER: We were on Guam, I'm not going to mention any names but there was about three or four of us in this open fox hole. We had just brought a bunch of replacements in and I often maintain officers had not fully trained because we knew once you got in that hole you stayed there until they stopped firing. Anyway, we were laying there and it was fairly dark and at once boom, boom, boom. We could hear somebody out there and we didn't know if it was Japanese, American or what. Pretty soon this friend of mine crawled in the hole with us and said "I just shot that kid." This was about an hour later. What happened to the replacement he stood up out of this hole putting his



shoes on. He was standing up and down, up and down, and this kid shot him. They were long gone, both of them, in the morning, the kid that did the shooting and the kid that got shot. They were out of there. You know what's so funny, not funny, none of them. I came home discharged went to Ohio State and I was moving here to Texas. My sergeant lived in Memphis, one of the sergeants I knew. So I stopped by there because I looked him up and I called his house and he was not there. He was in a VA hospital and his family invited me out for lunch. So I went and we had a nice one and they asked me about this incident because the parents of this kid that got shot had written that sergeant and they were asking me what I knew about it in a round about way. I offered them a lot of information about what happened and somebody had traced that back, he was from Montana. So they traced him back to the sergeant and his sergeant and then I got in on it 'cause I was there and was asked what I knew about it. I didn't elaborate on any of it.

MR. DANIEL: The kid, your replacement, was killed?

MR. SPANGLER: Yeh.

MR. DANIEL: If you haven't trained them it's a problem with the system. You've got to tell them, don't stand up.

MR. SPANGLER: That's one thing you learn.

MR. DANIEL: You've got to have sympathy but the bottom line is responsible training. If you don't train, it's going to happen.

MR. SPANGLER: The training part of it, we had trained enough to not even move until daylight.

MR. DANIEL: Anybody standing up or anybody going to your foxhole is Japanese.

MR. SPANGLER: They would come by and they'd say, "Japanese in the area." So you didn't know who was who. You'd hear this moaning out there, should I go out there and cry out there or you don't know whether it's Japanese or what not.

MR. DANIEL: I've been told that's one of the toughest things because you know if you crawl out there there's a chance you will be a casualty. And more importantly is to hold the line now and from what I've been told one of the worst things standing, sit in your hole all night hear the moaning, you have no idea who or what it is.

MR. SPANGLER: You're absolutely correct. There was about three of us in there. We stayed put until the kid that did the shooting crawled in there with us. He was beside himself.

MR. DANIEL: It happened to you?

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, yeh.

MR. DANIEL: I used to train at Hood, I guess about ten years ago the guys were shooting at night with the old M67 infrared spotter on them and he got confused by the hundred days of reason and so what he did instead of shooting at the target, he shot the source of the infrared. He shot another tank and they had a sergeant or officer outside the gutter commander 'cause this is on a range and cut him in half. The officer did and they blew most of the people off the tank and there was a big investigation. Is it easy to happen. Yes, it is, it is a very common error and what they attributed it to was a lack of forceful training in that area. So he instead of the shooting the target shot the illuminator. That was a bad year the year I was up there. We had a helicopter going killed like thirteen or fourteen people. So it happens; it's unfortunate.

MR. SPANGLER: We were on Guadalcanal, I guess it was after Guam, there's Rood, a strip of beach and then the bunker area, tent area and across there's a road. The machine guns are on the beach area. We slept on cots you know. We knew where the machine guns were, so about three o'clock in the morning (Mr. Spangler makes a noise like a machine gun) some guy was shooting at us. He went in there, loaded up one of the machine guns and started firing. He was seeing a Japanese submarine out in the bay but if he had had that machine gun turned the other way he would have wiped out a whole company of people. Somebody had to move up and crawl under his tent to find out what was going on. He was seeing Japanese. I don't know if he wanted to get sent home. He was seeing Japanese submarines.

MR. DANIEL: Some of the stuff you do in the military OSHA would go nuts. I don't have any more questions. I've had an excellent interview with you. If you think of anything let me know and I'll be glad to come back and look at your video tape of your fiftieth when you were down at Guam.

MR. SPANGLER: Oh, there is one other thing I would like to mention before we close.

MR. DANIEL: Sure, go ahead.

MR. SPANGLER: Our convoy was held offshore during the invasion of Saipan. We were aboard our troop transport for sixty days (60). We refueled then off to land at Guam. During these 60 days nothing but blue Pacific water day in and day out, sailed round and round. The highlight was off on the horizon we could see a speck. It came closer and closer, took about five or six hours. It was a ship approaching. As it got closer, the first thing we looked for was to see what flag it was flying. Oh, what joy—it was the stars and stripes of America – the feeling came over me – in the vast Pacific we were not (Alone) out there. Fellow countrymen and comrades gave one a small sense of security whatever it might be.

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