

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Kenneth L. “Ken” Schuck

Date of Interview: June 17, 2009

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Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler; today is June 17, 2009. I am interviewing Mr. Ken Schuck here in Fredericksburg at the Nimitz Museum. The interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

Well, Ken, let me start by thanking you for coming all the way down here from Flower Mound to allow us to have a face-to-face interview ; we appreciate that.

Mr. Schuck: It's been my pleasure.

Ed Metzler: And I'd like to get things started by having you just introduce yourself; give us your full name; your date of birth, and we'll take it from there.

Mr. Schuck: My name is Kenneth L., commonly known as Ken, Schuck; a German name, quite obviously. I was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin August the 2nd, 1922 to Walter and Alma Schuck; I was born in the house in which they lived. My father, at the time, was a milk delivery man; my mother was a house mother, uh, was a housekeeper. My dad died when I was about ten months old from a ruptured appendix and lack of proper medications at that time to deal with the gangrene that had set in. My mother moved to Iowa where her people lived

and they (unintelligible) in Sioux City. She was a schoolteacher by trade and did not want to teach in the urban atmosphere at Sioux City and began soon thereafter to teach rural school in western Harding County, South Dakota for my two uncles...had a cattle ranch; she taught in that environment until she was seventy-five.

Ed Metzler: Did you have any brothers or sisters, Ken?

Mr. Schuck: I have one brother named Robert who is four years older than I am, and who currently lives in south Sioux City, Iowa. We spent our summers on the ranch in South Dakota, and during the wintertime my mother did not want us to go...to a one-room school environment, so we lived with a maiden aunt named Verna (sp?) Coggs (sp?) in Sioux City, Iowa and went to school there. For some strange reason I decided that I wanted to be a Civil Engineer. Whatever (unintelligible) on my, I could not tell you today.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: And I was determined to go to Iowa State University or Iowa State College at that time. Going to Iowa State (pause), I joined the ROTC which was mandatory the first two years.

Ed Metzler: Where is Iowa State located?

Mr. Schuck: Ames, Iowa.

Ed Metzler: Ames...that's the one in Ames, okay.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, the one in Ames; the one that's in the Southwest...or the Big 12. I stayed in...

Ed Metzler: So what year did you graduate from high school?

Mr. Schuck: I graduated in 1939.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so a couple of years before the war.

Mr. Schuck: Yes. The reason that I transferred after the mandatory two years in ROTC, I wanted to stay in the Senior Program mainly because I was involved in the trick-riding organization called the College Cossacks which had military horses and which you had to be in ROTC to be a part of. And we did two shows a years – acrobatic riding ending up with a six-man pyramid on three horses.

Ed Metzler: Wow!

Mr. Schuck: When the war came, I was in my junior year. They immediately, I say immediately, very quickly took the ROTC students to Camp Dodge, Iowa; swore us in as Privates and sent us back to college to complete our degree with the understanding that we would go to the first-available OCS class in our branch, which in my case was the Corps of Engineers. I graduated from Iowa State on March 19th, 1943, and shortly there...I was married the day I graduated incidentally.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! (Chuckles)

Mr. Schuck: Which I would not advise anybody to do.

Ed Metzler: That makes it a big day! (Laughter) Two...two life events in one day!

Mr. Schuck: Also, (unintelligible)...first time I ever stood my wife up. I couldn't remember whether I was going to pick her up after graduation or take her to it. I...I didn't take her to it which is a good thing; we'd have missed the train if she had.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: Anyway, it was...probably was in less than a month I was assigned to Fort Belvoir, Virginia OCS. I graduated from that...

Ed Metzler: Fort?

Mr. Schuck: Fort Belvoir, B-e-l-v-o-i-r.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Schuck: Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Ed Metzler: Thank you.

Mr. Schuck: Just outside of Washington, D.C.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: Graduated in July of '43; received my commission...

Ed Metzler: So what was OCS like? I mean...is this a breeze for you; was it really challenging - physically, mentally?

Mr. Schuck: Not really, no. What...what that amounted to in peacetime, between your junior and senior years at school, you went through six-week...one of those military bases. Because of the build-up of troops during World War II, they didn't want to be bothered with the ROTC students on that short term, so they had us go to OCS instead.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: OCS was basically to evaluate, to some degree, your leadership ability. Physically, it was not all that demanding; mentally it was not all that demanding. Probably a good example of what they were looking for...the day that I was to be the acting Company Commander marching the troops to class

or wherever they went...about the time that I was...transition took place at noon after...well I say noon, took place after lunch and during that time they had changed the...wardrobe of the day. Because of the possible rain, we needed a raincoat. I had to hustle back to the barracks and get a raincoat, and when they came by I had the raincoat in my hand; the troops are all standing there. One of what they called the Tactical Officer...his purpose was to heckle you.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: “Mr. Schuck, is that the way you’re suppose to wear your raincoat or have your raincoat?” I said, “No sir; never stopped.” Well, it was supposed to be tucked behind your belt.

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Schuck: I just said, “No sir,” and went on; never heard another squeak out of him. When I got the troops marching, then I put my raincoat behind. If I’d of stopped and started to do that..., “Well, Mr. Schuck, you got your raincoat fixed, but what about these troops; where...what are you supposed to do about them?” It would have just been *shu, shu, shu* (sounds)...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that was they’re way of...trying to draw you in and to...yeah.

Mr. Schuck: It would have been...yeah, it would have been...if I’d of stopped for even a minute or a second it would have...then there would have been a ping pong ball.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, and you’d of been the ping pong guy!

Mr. Schuck: And not one of them but two of them; one would take this side and the other would take that side. When I got to...never heard another word. As I say, that was basically the thing that they were looking for is...did you react properly and what was...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Schuck: ...(unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So you got out of OCS when...in?

Mr. Schuck: July of 1943.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Schuck: And I might add that I graduated from college; was married and had my de...had my commission before I was twenty-one.

Ed Metzler: Isn't that something?!

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, (unintelligible) turned twenty-one in August, but...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, but you...

Mr. Schuck: ...if I had gone through ROTC, you would have gotten your commission reserve, of course...when you turned twenty-one, but in my case, I got it before I was twenty-one. From graduation from OCS, I was assigned to what they called an Engineer Aviation Training Detach...Training Detachment which was stationed at March Field, California...with a two-week stop at a...Heavy Equipment and Camouflage unit.

Ed Metzler: Engineering Aviation...?

Mr. Schuck: Training Center.

Ed Metzler: Training.

Mr. Schuck: I don't remember for sure the number...I think it was 4...423rd, but...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Schuck: ...enroute to March Field, we went two weeks to Heavy Equipment and Camouflage School. In March Field...

Ed Metzler: What...what's Heavy Equipment...what did that involve?

Mr. Schuck: Things like bulldozers...

Ed Metzler: Okay, that's what I was...

Mr. Schuck: ...maybe...things that you would build roads or airports or whatever with.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum; graders and...yeah.

Mr. Schuck: Right, all the necessary tools and equipment...process the materials necessary to build and airport. And the name of the thing implies what our mission was which was to build airfields.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: Due to the weather conditions, they had flight...had...had aviation units in Geiger Field in Spokane, Washington, and they were being...weather-bound too often. As a result of that weather-binding, they transferred them to March Field and transferred me into (unintelligible words) to Geiger Field. During that time, my wife had gone home to have our first child, and I went back later on from Geiger and picked her and the child up and brought them back to Spokane. We worked there with the training unit teaching people to operate equipment and the things necessary for building airfields and...

Ed Metzler: So what was your officer grade at this point? You were a...

Mr. Schuck: Second Lieuy.

Ed Metzler: Second Lieuy.

Mr. Schuck: Second Lieutenant. And during our training period, we built a small airfield in northern Idaho for the Forest Service. And not long after that, I guess probably before that, they broke up the Aviation Training Center and formed two Aviation Construction Battalions – the 1902nd of which I was a...Platoon Commander of...in “C” Company, and the 1903rd which was a sister battalion.

Ed Metzler: You were 1902nd?

Mr. Schuck: I was 1902nd. We trained for a time, and on February 2nd departed from Seattle, Washington; headed to the Pacific. The two battalions could be accommodated – equipment and personnel, each battalion to four LSTs with the requirement that an LCT was blocked up on the front deck and a portion of the troops had to sleep under the LCT from Spokane to Hawaii, or from Seattle to Hawaii. Weather conditions in February, when they left, would not be conducive to people sleeping under the LCT, so those troops were left, and I happened to be one of the officers in charge of that group, and we could get a normal troop ship from Seattle to Spokane, I mean to Hawaii. Uh, apparently the LST that my company was in, when the ship sailed, was the farthest one in the right-hand lane...be two lanes of four each and I was the fourth one. The LST had apparently been through invasions in Europe multiple times.

Ed Metzler: It was a...high mileage, used one (chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: And kind of a spirited crew.

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Schuck: For example, a British Spitfire...just like a couple of swastika (?) that they ...but apparently that particular LST, about the time it get going, got the rotary check out and it'd start making a turn to the left and the troops and all and the sailors that were on the boat they'd get out there, "(Unintelligible) SOB's," when they were coming close to one opposite of them. They'd served them for awhile until they got it under control...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: ...apparently and then catch up again. About the time they'd catch up, they'd go through the routine again. Net result was that when they got to Hawaii obviously that...that LST was going to be replaced.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: When I got there, I'm sure all of that was in process, but that and the loading and unloading and so forth we spend probably a week or two in Hawaii. And from there on...

Ed Metzler: So you were at Pearl Harbor then, huh?

Mr. Schuck: Well, we stayed around on North Shore.

Ed Metzler: Okay, on North Shore.

Mr. Schuck: Uh, from there we...eight LSTs, totally unescorted, began our happy, joy...joyful trip across the Pacific...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Schuck: ...going by all the little island chains and went to a place...near I remember it, was called Mog Mog Island...

Ed Metzler: Yeah...

Mr. Schuck: ...which was a rest and recreation place...

Ed Metzler: ...right, famous R&R time.

Mr. Schuck: ...and a place for convoys...were formed. From there we sailed north to...the Okinawa area...that and a full convoy with destroyers, destroyer escorts; the whole nine yards. We...we were stationed on a little island called Ie Shima which was about eight miles off the west coast of Okinawa...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...and it was the island on which the noted columnist, Ernie Pyle, was killed.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: We arrived in Ie Shima the day after Ernie was killed. The island was unsecured, but really not...nothing but maybe some occasional sniper fire.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: We immediately set up a coral bed, and began work on airfields.

Ed Metzler: On the island of Ie Shima?

Mr. Schuck: On the island...on the island of Ie Shima.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And we and our sister battalion built five air strips on that island which primarily were used by P-38 fighter planes that day after day would take off fully loaded headed for Japan with, from my understanding, directions that if their prime target was socked in or inaccessible for any reason, go with whatever looked good and drop their bombs and strafe...whatever they...

Ed Metzler: Targets of opportunity I think they call that, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: ...yeah, yeah, right. Take advantage of what you...what they give you.

Ed Metzler: But (cough) no, no support work on the Okinawa Campaign? Was Okinawa secured at this time or not?

Mr. Schuck: Oh no, Okinawa, I think, was just beginning (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Schuck: When we settled in, we were there the night before we actually landed. We were coming up toward the island and the Navy was laying down a *heavy*, *heavy* barrage on the west coast of Okinawa. I mean you just...almost mind shattering to see it, but it doesn't even begin to compare with what they lay down now days.

Ed Metzler: Oh, I understand.

Mr. Schuck: But we went in there, and as I say, it...it began almost immediately to work. But in the early phases they were there, a few times we'd have enemy aircraft overhead...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...a few dog fights; saw one kamikaze pilot. The night before a torpedo plane had hit an LST that was in the harbor, if you want to call it a harbor (chuckles), or a shore...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: Kamikaze pilot did a real good job; he hit the beached LST. And there was a big, white Dutch ship loaded with munitions that really would have been a bonanza for him, and he managed to get the LST. The troops...and we were there...

Ed Metzler: So how...so where were you when that happened, I mean how close by?

Mr. Schuck: Oh, we were...probably like looking downtown Fredericksburg from...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...oh, I don't know...the edge of town (unintelligible)...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. (Throat clearing).

Mr. Schuck: ... really close. Kind of an example of the...

Ed Metzler: Now were you on shore at the time?

Mr. Schuck: Oh yes.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you're busy...you're busy overseeing...

Mr. Schuck: We're building an airfield.

Ed Metzler: ...right.

Mr. Schuck: And...our troops, I think, kind of thought, "Boy, we're at the movie," you know, and they...bulldozer operators shut down the motors; said they were going to watch the show till suddenly a little strafing fire comes by and guess where they ended up? *Sssht!*

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), *underneath!*

Mr. Schuck: Underneath (laughter).

Ed Metzler: That's when you realize this is not really the Saturday movies.

Mr. Schuck: No, we're not...we're not playing games; it's not a movie; it's for real.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And kind of an interesting, too, we had one enlisted man, big fellow, you know, six-four, "I can't wait to get my hands on them Japs!" First dad-gum time there's a bomb or something...*Sssht!*...he's gone from there; he was heading for wherever he could find some kind of cover!

Ed Metzler: Really?!

Mr. Schuck: And the people that you might think of normally as...as being sissies or whatever...

Ed Metzler: Meek...meek...a little average Joes, you know.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, were the more courageous. In other words courageous doesn't come necessarily in a big, strong package; it comes in the heart.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. (Throat clearing)

Mr. Schuck: Toward the end of...of the...our time there, if you worked on the airfield, which included the coral beds and supplies and materials going there...and there was a red alert which meant anti-aircraft in the...vicinity, you did not turn out your lights.

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Schuck: I was pit...pit boss most (unintelligible)...

Ed Metzler: Why not...why not?

Mr. Schuck: The work was more...

Ed Metzler: Okay you just...

Mr. Schuck: ...I would assume...assumed it was not really a material threat and the work was the most important thing.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: I mean that's the only rationale you can come to that would justify saying, "In those conditions you do not turn off your lights."

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: Being in a coral bed, you're kind of like a bull's-eye; you're in a small area; you got a...got a big power plant; you got your lights going; you got your equipment running; maybe some trucks in and out; not maybe, but trucks in and out that you're loading. I tried to go around to the troops and let them know that I was there experiencing the same thing they were.

Ed Metzler: Right, right.

Mr. Schuck: And sometimes they'd all sit on the light plant where they could all see me. One day in the mess hall our Chaplain was complaining that no one ever came to his chapel (unintelligible). I said, "Chaplain, I'll tell you what to do. If you do what I ask you to, I'll have your chapel full every time you open a door." "Well, what do you want me to do?" I said, "The next time there's a red alert, you come out to the coral pit with me and show them how much faith you've got in your God." His answer, "You go to hell."

Ed Metzler: Oh well, so much for that idea.

Mr. Schuck: I said, "That's your...there's your answer, Chaplain; that's exactly why your people are not coming to visit you which is a commentary because the Chaplain ought to be able to give some substantial comfort to where the people felt more at ease when they came in to what, on the surface, was not a pleasant situation. Shortly thereafter, the war came to an end. And we had been scheduled to go in on the Invasion of Japan which would have been...very definitely not a picnic.

Ed Metzler: No!

Mr. Schuck: Not a tea party. It would have been rough, rough; Okinawa was rough. Okinawa was probably the roughest campaign they had, and it would have looked like a picnic compared to going into Japan.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, (throat clearing).

Mr. Schuck: But within a month after...after the war was over, we were in Japan on the island of Fukuoku (sp?)...[s/b Kyushu island?], a little island called Mushiroda (sp?).

Ed Metzler: Excuse me, which...what was the name of the island?

Mr. Schuck: Kyushu, the southern island...

Ed Metzler: Oh the big...Kyushu, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: ...the southern island. We were probably twelve miles south of, I think, the capitol of that island which is Fukuoka. We built an airfield there, and then the unit was disbanded, and I was assigned to the 808th Engineer Battalion which was working on an (unintelligible) airdrome (sp?)...which was on the west side of Tokyo Bay about half way between Tokyo and Yokohama.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum (throat clearing).

Mr. Schuck: The project there was extending a small, about two thousand, twenty-five hundred foot runway that the Japs had on a peninsula...extending it on to an island that lay off...that. A U.S. dredge had been brought in from (unintelligible words) from the Philippines; steel sheet (unintelligible) walls were driven between the island and...and the peninsula and the area between them was filled by the dredge.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: I had charge of all the asphalt work on Haneda until fifty-two which was the number of points...which is an evaluation of time you've been there and so forth.

Ed Metzler: So you can go back home, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: And fifty-two points was the magic number for me to be eligible to go home.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And since I had a wife and child at home, I did that.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and what year was that?

Mr. Schuck: That would have been 1946.

Ed Metzler: Okay, (throat clearing).

Mr. Schuck: And I was discharged in San Antonio.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: My...my first wife lived in Arkansas, so it was more convenient to come here. She was in Little Rock...more convenient to come here than to go back to Iowa where I was inducted. And in that, I was given a temporary promotion to Captain in the Reserve, and as far as I know I'm...

Ed Metzler: Far as you know you're still Captain in the Reserves (laughter).

Mr. Schuck: ...still Captain in the Reserves (laughter).

Ed Metzler: You didn't get called up for Korea or anything like that?

Mr. Schuck: No, I...missed Korea; missed Vietnam.

Ed Metzler: Those would be good ones to miss.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, just...well, the trouble with both of those...we didn't get in them to win; we got in them to hold a (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Yep, now that's so.

Mr. Schuck: And I...

Ed Metzler: And that's a lot harder than going in.

Mr. Schuck: That's not a war really, that's a...

Ed Metzler: ...holding action.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, just like North Korea said, "We're going to go to war." That war has never really ended; there never has been a peace treaty. We're operating under a fifty-year old ceasefire.

Ed Metzler: No, that's so, that's so! Well, let's go back to...to World War II now. Describe to me how many guys you had under your command and what kind of guys they were; just some, you know, in general.

Mr. Schuck: What I would have...generally be...in the nature of forty people; mostly equipment operators; there's the demolition men; maybe surveyors; various skills that would be involved. Let's say if you're building an airfield here or...a road, probably the quality of the facility more comparable to, say, a county road or that sort of thing.

Ed Metzler: And what about...did you have to build structures like...buildings and stuff; was that...was that another group that would do that...or?

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, it would basically be another group.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: We really were specifically, not that we couldn't have built a certain amount of buildings, but...

Ed Metzler: But you guys were ground movers.

Mr. Schuck: We were ground movers; pavers; do whatever you want. In the case of the island, when you put that coral down and watered it, that...that was it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: It was fine; you didn't need to mess with it from there on. And after a time with, like (unintelligible), was oil drippings and rubber off the tires, the coral roads looked like an asphalt road. We had one Colonel that we needed to get out on those roads and use a motor patrol on them and when you got it set, you didn't mess with it. So we, "Yes sir'd." So what we did is told the Motor Patrol to get out there with his (unintelligible words) at least six inches off the road...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Schuck: ...and drive up and down all night.

Ed Metzler: It'll compact it anyhow.

Mr. Schuck: That's right; look how much better it looked. (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), oh well, what do you...what'd you expect?!

Mr. Schuck: Some little fun out of it.

Ed Metzler: Which brings me to a question; what did you think of your senior officers and leadership in your...in your area?

Mr. Schuck: They were a mixed bag.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, tell me about it.

Mr. Schuck: Some of them were very good. I had a...the Executive, Battalion Executive Commander...I thought was a joke. My own Company Commander was a nice guy, but he made a fatal mistake for himself. We...he was picked

Commander. He ran one shift; I was his, oh, I ran the other shift. On the coral pit there was a little hard knob which had a cave in it that...natives had apparently dug up. The road ran by...in front of that cave, and across the road was a signal (unintelligible)...involved with communications and so and so.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: My dear Company Commander decided that we needed to have that hard knot blown out; it was getting the roads (unintelligible words), so he told the demolitions man to go fill it up with...with explosives and blow it down. The demotion man tried to tell him, "I need to drill and do (unintelligible) fashion." "No, we ain't got time for that." "Well, let me go down and get at least a load of beach sand and tie it up with beach sand 'cause that...(unintelligible words) like a gun, and when I blow up, it's going to *sssh!*" "No, go ahead." Sure enough (unintelligible words), when I got there one of the Sergeants said, "Lieutenant," he kind of explained the situation to me, and I come in there...a couple of the officers from the Signal Company said, "(Unintelligible yelling)." I said, "If you're alluding to what I think you are, I had nothing to do with it, but I think that you'll find that the Captain is down in your area trying to make amends,"...poor judgment on his part again.

Ed Metzler: So he basically took out the Signal (unintelligible) (laughter).

Mr. Schuck: He...when I was in the service, my first wife was very opposed to drinking; her dad was an alcoholic. And one time when I had inadvertently taken a little swig of a 7-Up that was very lightly spiked; she threatened to give me my ring back.

Ed Metzler: Whoa!

Mr. Schuck: So when they had parties and all...alcoholic and all, I didn't take part in it. I used to complain...well, (unintelligible) the Captain said, "You got a bad attitude!" "Oh, okay, I got a bad attitude." His name was Ashley, my Captain.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: After he got...after he blew up the Signal Company, he suddenly didn't have anything more to do with (unintelligible). "I was not a pit officer; it was another Lieutenant who was my assistant...and run me (unintelligible)..."

(end of tape 1, side A)

Ed Metzler: Okay, Ken, keep on...

Mr. Schuck: He'd be griping about (unintelligible); I'd say, "Ash, You got a bad attitude!"
(laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Schuck: Ah, but generally the, I think, the Commander of Battalion, who unfortunately later was killed in a jeep accident in Tehran after the war, I think he was pretty...most...most of the officers I would say were compe, were capable people.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, and the guys underneath you; you must have had a good cross section of...U.S.

Mr. Schuck: Uh, I had...I had an Italian from New York, (unintelligible), was my Platoon Sergeant and he was a jewel!

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: I had farmers from the Midwest; we had a fellow in there, one of our crane operators that operated on big cranes on...at...Pearl Harbor before the war.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Schuck: He...so we had people of quite a variety. One interesting thing we had; we...we had a basketball team. And for some reason, most of the men in it, regardless what company...in the battalion in it, if they wanted something done by an officer they came to me, and don't ask me why, "Lieutenant, will you be...will you be the command...will you be our coach?" We had a guy that was a freshman sensation in Florida; one played for St. John.

Ed Metzler: Good gracious!

Mr. Schuck: He...UCLA...sent a pro-basketball player from Kentucky; other than basketball I hardly knew how to dribble, but they wanted me to be there coach...now I just let them play. We won the tournament for a larger unit that wouldn't let us go to the Olympics because we were just (unintelligible words) since they didn't win it; they'd send an All Star team.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Schuck: But I think it was typical of, for some reason, the men that I had...that if they had anything at all, they'd come to me, "Lieutenant, will you do so-and-so?"

Ed Metzler: Sound like you had a real rapport with them.

Mr. Schuck: I did. An example, when we were in Japan, a man from one of the other companies...he wasn't in my company, "Uh, Lieutenant," he says, "I was in town last; an MP picked me up; I had a forty-five of mine. Would you mind going and getting it for me?" He didn't ask his own Lieutenant or Company

Commander, so I went in; I had a big sheath knife that I wore around my head...Navy beach knife had been given to me on the way over (chuckle). He, a young Lieutenant handed me the weapon; he says, "By the way, Lieutenant, you're not supposed to be wearing that knife,"...which is the condition...we were supposed to be in Japan; we showed no...

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible sentence.)

Mr. Schuck: ...no (unintelligible words), but for some reason, as I say, when they wanted something done...

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Schuck: ...I was the sitting duck or whatever.

Ed Metzler: Well, you were...they knew they could...rely on you and...

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, that's right.

Ed Metzler: ...and you were approachable.

Mr. Schuck: But other...and kind of like, I guess, probably it shows the reason. When we got off the boat, ship, if you please...when we went into Japan...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...my unit was unloading and there was a young Marine officer down there that...kind of feeling his oats; he started cussing at my people...what you're doing wrong or what they're supposed to do, and I told him, I said, "You...you...I don't cuss my troops and you don't cuss my troops. If you cuss them one more time, you're going to be in the damned bay. I suggest you go up the gang plank; salute your deal; whatever you got to do and get out of the

road and I'll take care of my troops." He got...he and I both might have been, but I'll guarantee you, he'd of been in the drink!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Schuck: I think that attitude is probably one of the reasons they...they liked me.

Ed Metzler: Uhm! Did you stay in touch with any of the guys after the war?

Mr. Schuck: No, I really didn't; probably should have. I really got separated from them when they disbanded the 1902nd. I went into a new unit (unintelligible words); we all just kind of...everybody just left; it kind of happened that quick...in a quick environment.

Ed Metzler: Alright. Let's go back to when you were headed up to the Okinawa area. Now, were you part of a big flotilla that was going up there or...

Mr. Schuck: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ...were you guys kind of doing a small...

Mr. Schuck: No.

Ed Metzler: ...run or what was that like?

Mr. Schuck: No, from Mog Mog to there, it was a total flotilla; I can't tell you what all was in it because I don't know, but I know there was constantly destroyer escorts up and down. I'm sure there...probably...maybe one battleship.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: I don't know whether there was an aircraft carrier or...probably not, but it was a well organized...

Ed Metzler: And you went up there on LSTs, right?

Mr. Schuck: ...yeah; we were still LST (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and when did you find out where you were going; after you departed Mog Mog and they told everybody or...?

Mr. Schuck: Well, (chuckle), speaking about the truth; generally we knew where we were going when we got there.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Schuck: I mean, obviously, the commanders and troops knew...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...the Battalion Commanders, and the people, I'm sure, in headquarters knew where we were going. They got their orders to go to Mog Mog; they got their orders to join the...the rest of us. As I say, we knew where we were going when we got there.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: Which is...the way it ought to be.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: Because of the old statement, "Loose...loose lips sink ships!"

Ed Metzler: Yeah, right (chuckle). And once you were on Ie Shima, what kind of facilities did you have for eating and for sleeping and that kind of stuff?

Mr. Schuck: For sleeping...

Ed Metzler: (Throat clearing).

Mr. Schuck: ...we'd have two...two foot deep hole in the ground with tents over it where two of us slept in it.

Ed Metzler: Slept in a hole?

Mr. Schuck: Slept in a hole under a tent. We had a mess hall...well, we messed...being in a box a lot of times. And I know one time I had...had been kind of, "You got the day shift; no, let's see, you got the night shift." This had been going on where I had been up...about...what, forty-eight hours or so...swapping shifts and I got kind of...about two o'clock in the morning, I just said, "I've had enough of this baloney, I'm going to go get a little sleep;" come in; stopped in front of my tent; I was going to eat a little sumptuous breakfast out of a box; was standing there and all of a sudden I heard, *Cheew, bang!, Psst* (sound). I could hear the bullet whistle in front of me.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Schuck: I kind of got low and looked around; no signs of anything; no...nothing else; that was it, and I...I really suspect it was one of our guards kind of woke up and...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle), he got startled and thought he was under attack.

Mr. Schuck: (Chuckle), So all that, you know, I...I tell you is as close as I as...I (unintelligible) it whistle.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Schuck: So I...finally decided I wasn't being attacked with a bayonet or anything, so I crawled into the hole, but I was kind of looking out.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Schuck: My little roomie says, "Is that you?" You know, who...who were you expecting? "You almost got a knife in your back." You know, I mean, you know, he was ready for...

Ed Metzler: He didn't know it was you then, huh?

Mr. Schuck: No, no, obviously not; he was asleep until I crawled in there, I'm sure.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle), so they hadn't completely gotten all of the snipers and everything off that island yet or...or not?

Mr. Schuck: No, they...probably...I don't know whether they ever got them all off. From the pit to the airfield (unintelligible) big curve, probably a mile or a mile and a half up to the air strip, and around the curve, well, we were really away from the waves, a little rocky escarpment that probably had some caves in it...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...trucks used that as a...as the pit was lined up...trucks might be clear there and the drivers just lay there and sleep; no problem, but if a jeep went by...you'd hear and occasional (*pop* sound)...

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Schuck: ...and occasional shot which says that if they're sniping, let's get (unintelligible words). We're going to get an officer and not just some common Joe.

Ed Metzler: Right, yeah, the officers...officers first. (throat clearing)

Mr. Schuck: Well, that went on for awhile; the is...the island was not really declared secure for several days after we landed.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. Now did you...and your crew get over onto Okinawa at all?

Mr. Schuck: No, no.

Ed Metzler: So there were already airfields there (unintelligible words).

Mr. Schuck: They had people building airfields over...and I think probably when we were there, I'm not sure there were too many airfields on Okinawa because that was the 12/12 Campaign.

Ed Metzler: Oh man; it went on forever.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah! And ultimately yes, Kadena Air Force Base was the big one.

Ed Metzler: What could you see then other than the time when you were first coming in and they were laying the bombardment down; were you aware of anything going on over there?

Mr. Schuck: No, nothing...only time you really were if someone...armistice was signed; kind of like the Fourth of July.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), you (unintelligible words).

Mr. Schuck: (Unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: When they surrendered, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, you could see them shooting over there. In fact I think there was somewhere...eight or ten people killed from, you know, stray bullets.

Ed Metzler: Coming back down.

Mr. Schuck: What goes up must come down.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that's true.

Mr. Schuck: But other than that, we, you know, we were far enough away that we didn't see it, and we were busy doing our thing.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And, as I think I told you earlier, one of the things, well, probably one of the things to be proud of was that when the Japanese were ready to surrender,

they flew down, in a Japanese plane, or a Japanese planes and landed on one of the strips that we, the 1903rd had built and transferred from their planes into American planes; fly them on down to Manila (unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: I remember you telling me that.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. So what...tell me what you saw? Let's repeat that for the...for the recording here.

Mr. Schuck: Well, what we saw was two white airplanes come in; make an extremely smooth landing; troops were lined up all over the place to watch them come in.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And they were, very honestly, probably better landings than their American escorts (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Schuck: But, they simply transferred to the American planes and flew out.

Ed Metzler: And so you figured they were headed down to...

Mr. Schuck: Oh, I'm sure they were headed to...Manila.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, down to the Philippines.

Mr. Schuck: Down to the Philippines where, I think, MacArthur was at that time.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: He had come back...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...so it was probably from...they flew *to* the Philippines.

Ed Metzler: So this was before the official ceremony up in Tokyo Bay?

Mr. Schuck: This was to...this was to *negotiate* and set up the peace that was actually finalized in Tokyo Bay.

Ed Metzler: So you don't know what the rank was of the Japanese...?

Mr. Schuck: Oh, I'm sure they were pretty high ranking.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, that was *major* stuff!

Mr. Schuck: And...they had to be big enough to negotiate.

Ed Metzler: And what...and so they flew them the rest of the way on the American planes?

Mr. Schuck: On the American planes.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, like a B-24 or something like that.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: How long was the...the landing strip on the base that you built there?

Mr. Schuck: It'd...probably been in the nature of...I'd say three thousand, four thousand feet.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so we're...definitely...

Mr. Schuck: So...some of the fighter planes could get (unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: ...definitely fighter planes and not strategic (unintelligible).

Mr. Schuck: They were *not* for the big strategic bombings.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: As an example, the one that we worked on...or worked on...my last one in Tokyo Bay, Haneda, that was being expanded to a twelve thousand foot runway to accommodate the big bombers and transport planes, you know.

Ed Metzler: Right, all loaded down with these bombs...

Mr. Schuck: It could have been similar to what they had, I'm sure, on Guam and places like that.

Ed Metzler: ...and Tinian and that kind of thing, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, or they had the big, the big airplanes capable of flying a long distance and dropping a big bomb.

Ed Metzler: So you had mostly P-38s?

Mr. Schuck: I had P-38s; I think we had one squadron for awhile of the...P-39 which was a...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ... but not as...not as heavy duty as a P-38; probably faster. And I think there was maybe one...one or two night fighters.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and the P-38s were going...they were making runs to the Japanese main islands?

Mr. Schuck: (Unintelligible) Japan.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And they ran out of there...

Ed Metzler: And they weren't doing bomber escort or anything like that, huh?

Mr. Schuck: No, they were strictly...they'd go out with a load of bombs and rockets; wing tanks because with wing tanks, I understand, to go there and back was just about the limits of their...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: ...capability, and some of them didn't make it back.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I know.

Mr. Schuck: I think most of them that didn't make it back was because they ran out of fuel. I think I was told by somebody that their losses were ninety-five percent due to either mechanical malfunction or...

Ed Metzler: Not...

Mr. Schuck: ...not...not due...not due to enemy fire.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, did you have the opportunity to interact at all with the pilots and the crews?

Mr. Schuck: No.

Ed Metzler: So you pretty much built it and then they used it.

Mr. Schuck: That's right.

Ed Metzler: And after you had built it, what did you guys do...just do maintenance or...?

Mr. Schuck: Well, we were still building.

Ed Metzler: So you built...were building the whole time you were there?

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, yes. And really, as I said, there was...should have been no maintenance (unintelligible) of what we did.

Ed Metzler: I guess you didn't have, you know, tropical downpours and all that stuff up there...washing out?

Mr. Schuck: Uh, well, well...we had a typhoon or two, but it didn't wash out of them. Once you got it down, it was pretty solid.

Ed Metzler: That sound like...a *great* paving material!

Mr. Schuck: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: And you had an infinite supply of it right there!

Mr. Schuck: That's right.

Ed Metzler: Hmm! What about when you were in the occupation forces in Japan, how...what was your...what interaction did you have with the local population if any?

Mr. Schuck: In the first assignment that I had, first of all when we landed, we landed in the south part...the Japanese had a big bay down there; I don't remember it right now, but we got off the boat and got out our ship and got into a jeep...people were very friendly and bow and...

Ed Metzler: How soon after the end of the war was this?

Mr. Schuck: That was within the last few months.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so quite soon after that.

Mr. Schuck: And...no animosity whatsoever. When we got to Moshiroda (sp?), somebody in our organization had arranged with a Nagasaki...what I mean is a family came and called Nagashima (sp?) that I think was pretty well off; I think they owned coal interests around Nagasaki, they had a group of four or five of us officers of which I happened to be one of them, that they brought over to their house...invited over to their house. They had a gentleman by the name of Dr. Soto (sp?) who had attended the Southern Baptist Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky, and Dr. Soto was supposed to teach us Japanese and teach the...the Nagashima children English.

Ed Metzler: Hmm!

Mr. Schuck: And they were just very, very gracious to us; took us out one weekend to a...country...place that they had...*beautiful!* But they were just as nice as they could be, and I regret that I never kept contact with them, but I unfortunately

didn't. I think he wanted to become...one of their sons wanted to become, oh, I don't know...it was in aviation type engineer...or aeronautical engineer or...some type of engineer as I recall. I think he kind of wanted to come to the States and study which he may have. But the whole general cantor of the people, they were not at all antagonistic. They go...well, they accepted the Americans; that was it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. Hmm! When you were overseas, what about contact back with family; with your wife, etcetera in the States? Just letters and that...and that seemed to work okay or...?

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, worked fine. We, you know, we sent letters and you got a time lapse, and I can understand that the country was waiting on the pony express to come...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles.)

Mr. Schuck: ...about the same deal, but you got to go with the APO; I'm sure in some cases...maybe need to be censored...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...and then on to you.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: Or you...to them, so...

Ed Metzler: What did you miss most when you were away from home and over there?

Mr. Schuck: (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Schuck: Uh, I, as I say, I had been married for a short; had a child...about a year later...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...and was wanting to go home to them, and see her like I do here.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: They tried to get me to stay, and there ain't no way that I...declined...but I was told that I could be made to stay; declared (unintelligible) made to stay and I made some comments to the general effect that...they couldn't make me work...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), that's right.

Mr. Schuck: ...which if I had of stayed, I would have worked, but...he didn't know whether I would or wouldn't.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, what was it like when you came back to the States; was it awfully different than when you left or...how did it feel to be back in the States?

Mr. Schuck: Well...felt good; kind of hard to find a job that matched First Lieutenant's pay...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...or Captain's pay, but the things like milkshakes; ice cream, things like that...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: ...seemed...seemed awfully good.

Ed Metzler: You didn't...you didn't get a lot of that when you (unintelligible).

Mr. Schuck: No, not a whole bunch.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), I guess that's one thing I've heard about...a lot of the sailors over on...particularly the larger ships in the Navy is, you know, they had...they ate pretty well!

Mr. Schuck: Navy...Navy didn't live too bad; they lived better than we did.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Schuck: But, you know, I wouldn't have traded places with them.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Schuck: Being on the ocean constantly would not appeal to me, but it had its perks.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, did you ever get sea sick when you were...?

Mr. Schuck: One time.

Ed Metzler: Hmm.

Mr. Schuck: The first night when we left Seattle, we left along in the evening; Seattle Bay and Puget Sound is just like a sheet of glass.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: About midnight or a little after, suddenly hear (*creaking* sounds); you hear the creaking of doors and something banging every now and then ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: ... you didn't notice you're...not just laying flat in the bed. The next morning I got up and went down...had breakfast. When I got done with breakfast, I started going up a set of steps; took the first step...well, and breakfast came up with it.

Ed Metzler: Oh boy!

Mr. Schuck: That's the only time.

Ed Metzler: Well, you were lucky; some people really had problems with it.

Mr. Schuck: Oh we had...we had one Lieutenant...I said he was grinning the whole...whole way to...probably all the whole way to Ie Shima...

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Schuck: ...and he just *could not* take it! (Unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Did you spend any time on shore when you were at Mog Mog?

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, we were on shore there...I'd say probably in the nature of a week.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, and what did that look like? What was the lay of the land there?

Mr. Schuck: There's not much lay to it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Schuck: You know, a bunch of...of buildings, and I say buildings, more like native huts almost, but I'm sure there were some bars and a few places...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), brothels, etcetera.

Mr. Schuck: You...you slept on the boat.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Schuck: You know, we didn't go ashore...to...do other things...just mess around. We spent probably more time on the island of Guam.

Ed Metzler: Okay, now where was Guam in your itinerary?

Mr. Schuck: Well, Guam was...probably two-thirds the way to...Mog Mog nearly.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you hit Guam enroute to Mog Mog?

Mr. Schuck: Enroute to Mog Mog, and I think I related this to you on the phone, but when we moved into a port, we were four LSTs...two...two lines of four LSTs.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: We were the right hand line; we followed and were...the end of the line; (unintelligible) happened to be the eighth ship in line. When we sailed into Guam, here sits a big aircraft carrier; the wind was from the right; the day was

beautiful; you could see forever; you could see all these other boats...very nicely going around the aircraft carrier. What did we do? We come chugging out; there were some boys out painting out on that carrier...close to where the anchor chain went out; they looked around and somebody says, "Hey, they're (unintelligible words) up the deal." Here we come...scraping down the side of that aircraft carrier. Had a small boat on...lifeboat on the deck that kind of got raked around a little bit.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: We spent three days on Guam. I'm sure some poor little Ensign that had attained position of Captain of that LST was trying to explain to some Admiral why the hell he couldn't miss.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), couldn't...couldn't stay far enough from...

Mr. Schuck: Broad open day light; he just wanted to come by; couldn't manage to miss something as big as an aircraft carrier! (Laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), so we still had an explanation for it?

Mr. Schuck: No, he apparently didn't get fired because we went on, and...

Ed Metzler: He must have had a good story!

Mr. Schuck: Well, probably...probably the lack of anybody replacing him wasn't a good stories.

Ed Metzler: Yeah (chuckles).

Mr. Schuck: But well, you know, there weren't that many (unintelligible). But to contrast between him on that new LST and the old one that I'd described that I'd been through three or four invasions...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...whole different set of experiences.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: Which, I'm sure there's a lot of that...sort of.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever hear Tokyo Rose on the radio?

Mr. Schuck: Never did.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you must be the only guy (chuckle) of all the people I've talked to.

Mr. Schuck: I never listened to the radio much.

Ed Metzler: I guess you really didn't have time; you guys were busy full time building stuff.

Mr. Schuck: Well, we were busy doing that; it really didn't...I never did.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Well what else comes to mind now we're talking about the war years?

Mr. Schuck: Well, I think one thing that when we started our LST journey across, unescorted, I think at that point in time our people pretty well knew that they had the war under control, (unintelligible) LSTs which would be just like shooting ducks in a barrel, but at any type of military air...military aircraft...(unintelligible)...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, fish in a barrel, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: ...that...although we weren't the greatest prize in the world, they didn't need to have a bunch of equipment sitting at the bottom of the Pacific. So, I think they felt like there was not much chance of us being followed.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: I think that same thing was reflected in what I talked about earlier that we did not turn the lights off when we were under a red alert; that our anti-aircraft, our destroyer screen between us and Japan...any aircraft we had in the air, night aircraft, were pretty well able to take care of ninety-nine percent of it.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: We did have one bomb run of the Japanese; it kind (unintelligible) fairly close to our unit. In fact one of the officers in...sister unit didn't quite make the cave in time and got...hit with shrapnel and killed.

Ed Metzler: Wow.

Mr. Schuck: And one of the bombs lit...in an ammunition dump...(unintelligible words) aircraft guns.

Ed Metzler: That must have been interesting.

Mr. Schuck: Well, I...I'm trying to sleep...afterwards, and they come around checking, "Are you alright, Lieutenant?" "I will be if you shut up and let me sleep."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), yeah.

Mr. Schuck: But you...what you'd hear is...*ping*, one of those things would go off and then you'd here at the caves...*Pssst*...whistling through the air; that kept going on for a long time. But that...that and one or two early on, as I say, there were a few enemy aircraft would show up; never in big number, but I think you...it was basically under...pardon me, under control.

Mr. Schuck: And I think they knew it. The only thing they didn't know was...that if we had to go into Japan...already knew that, too.

Ed Metzler: Did...

Mr. Schuck: (Unintelligible words) try to get...it wouldn't necessarily be under control.

Ed Metzler: Absolutely!

Mr. Schuck: I mean that would have been a *whole* 'nuther ball game!

Ed Metzler: So do you remember when you heard about the atomic bombs being dropped; was that a big deal?

Mr. Schuck: (Pause), I think very honestly that the atomic bombs, in a way, were a big deal. I think in another way, Curtis LeMay (unintelligible words), "We're going to bomb this place; that place; this place on this night; this night, this night," and then turned around and did it. And I think *that* had a very marked effect upon them. I know I had a friend of mine that went into a unit...was in a unit that was assigned to one of these little Japanese villages; *one* building left where they set up their headquarters. He said, "You could have *never* convinced the Japanese in that city that they didn't deliberately leave that building standing so they'd have it for headquarters."

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), really?!

Mr. Schuck: In other words, LeMay made believers out of them.

Ed Metzler: Yeah! They were believers.

Mr. Schuck: That's right; they...they had learned that we...with our air power...if we said we were going to do something, we could do it.

Ed Metzler: Overwhelming force and precision.

Mr. Schuck: That's right. And...I think that...ever bit as much as the atomic bombs...the atomic bombs were just the icing on the cake that showed we could not only do what we said, but we could do it in a very dramatic...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...and deadly fashion. But, you know, I'm sure it had an effect, yes. In my mind, I think that...as I said before, of the LeMay leaflet attack.

Ed Metzler: And the power bombing techniques, too...

Mr. Schuck: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: ...took a huge toll.

Mr. Schuck: Oh yeah, I mean that...it just wiped out some of those areas.

(end of tape 1, side A)

Ed Metzler: Okay, tape 2, side one...uh, side one.

Mr. Schuck: Tokyo did not look partic...yeah, the parts of it that I was in...

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: ...I didn't generally tour, you know, all of Tokyo.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: We went there one time...the basketball team that I had...I spoke of...took a trip to Tokyo...quote to play...couple of ball games which we never really played; we just took R&R and...

Ed Metzler: Good excuse to get out, huh? (Laughter)

Mr. Schuck: Yeah. I experienced one of my...second earthquakes while we was there; we stayed in the YMCA in Tokyo.

Ed Metzler: It hadn't been destroyed, huh?

Mr. Schuck: No, and we (unintelligible)...you know we stood by and watched...people get ready for MacArthur to come down this building. He had a black limo...when he was about ready to come...a man out there dusting it with a feather duster;

crowds beginning to form. When the crowd got big enough, then MacArthur came down...show man.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, he has that reputation.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, oh he was a show man. He was...he was a great General, but he was a show man.

Ed Metzler: Well he was...apparently did a very good job of...getting Japan back on her feet.

Mr. Schuck: Well, I think that showmanship...Japanese understand that kind of stuff; they put a lot of credence in it. But he would do that; he'd line them up until...you know, till he decided it was time...if you looked here close, you'd probably see people looking out of the second story window...(unintelligible words).

Ed Metzler: It's all about rights (laughter) to get out, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: Have him come out. Naga...I mean Hiroshima...going through two or three times on a train...it was pretty much brown dirt...a bunch there. Nagasaki I never did get to. But I'm sure parts of Tokyo, yes, they were...they...when we worked on Haneda, there was a factory there full of German equipment – German air compressors and stuff like that. I don't know just exactly what type of a plant it was; it had been damaged some what...not...from a prime target, but it had been damaged.

Ed Metzler: What's your feelings about the Japanese people after having had them as the adversary during the war?

Mr. Schuck: I think they're very capable people, and I think we're better off to have them on our side than against us. One of the things that amazes me...we were

laying asphalt on the access road into Haneda, and the Japanese would come here and see it and they'd start to walk around (clopping of feet sound); they'd tippy toe because it was hot!

Ed Metzler: Uh huh (laughter).

Mr. Schuck: They didn't realize it was hot. But...but you look at a Jap back in those days; you look at a Japanese tractor like some of our caterpillars...looked more like a garden tractor.

Ed Metzler: Small.

Mr. Schuck: Yeah, small; everything they had was small; most of their...a good share of their motors ran on...alcohol. Man, they were...it was very puny; you look at them today...they're very adaptable. They can pick up things very quickly and adapt them to their...their cars were small; their cars didn't amount to squat, and just look at them now.

Mr. Schuck: Mostly based on...(unintelligible words) based on American design, but they've taken all of it.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Schuck: But, I think that they are people that generally...once they make up their mind, that's where they'll set until something real dramatic changes it.

Ed Metzler: You don't have any animosity towards them?

Mr. Schuck: Not really, no. In a way, I resent eighteen months being slashed out of my life to be over there, but...I don't really feel animosity toward them.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, because you were fortunate enough not to get exposed to any of the atrocities of the war.

Mr. Schuck: No I didn't...,you know, I'm sure if I'd been through the Bataan Death March...

Ed Metzler: You'd feel (unintelligible).

Mr. Schuck: ...yeah, I'm dad-gum sure I'd feel different...because they didn't show any mercy to anybody – man, woman or child...

Ed Metzler: No, that's true.

Mr. Schuck: ...which was their old samurai attitude.

Ed Metzler: Mentality, yeah.

Mr. Schuck: We're in charge; you'd better be in...awe! But once that was broken, they adapted very quickly.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Schuck: And I think we showed one thing while I was there in Germany that we did a good job of creating constructive citizens in the...in the world in both countries.

Ed Metzler: Helped them rebuild and rebuild them as democracies and allies.

Mr. Schuck: Yes, right.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Okay, well we pretty well covered the war haven't we?

Mr. Schuck: I think we got it about under control. (Chuckles)

Ed Metzler: Interesting stories; thank you a lot for your time, Ken, I appreciate it.

Mr. Schuck: Well, just...my pleasure.

Ed Metzler: And take the opportunity to again thank you for what you did for our country serving overseas; we don't say thank enough and so I'll say it again.

Mr. Schuck: Well, the way...personally, I know that there are those that live on the memories of what they did; that's their lot. I feel like what I did was what I was asked to do; no more, no less. I don't consider myself a hero because I did it; I did what I was asked to do; enjoyed part of it; part of it I'd just as soon not have done, but...

Ed Metzler: Yeah,

Mr. Schuck: ...I think it's no less than we can do and I think, again, this country needs to get back to the attitude that if it's something serious enough to go to war, then you'd better go to win; not to hold some artificial line; not to...some status quo and let it seep and simmer, but go in and *win*...from the conclusion and do what we did in Germany and Japan.

Ed Metzler: Right.

Mr. Schuck: Unfortunately, we've kind of lost that edge lately it seems.

Ed Metzler: Well, life's more complex than it used to be, too.

Mr. Schuck: It sure is.

Ed Metzler: But you're right; we help make it complex. Okay, well, I'm going to end it here; thank you, Ken.

(end of interview)

FINAL copy
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