

Robert Scofield Oral History Interview

METZLER: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 17th of May, 2013. I am in Fredericksburg, Texas, at the National Museum of the Pacific War, and I am interviewing Mr. Robert G. Scofield, or Bob Scofield. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. So let me start, Bob, by thanking you for spending time with us this morning, to share your World War II experiences, and I'd like to get started by having you introduce yourself. Give us your name, and when and where you were born.

SCOFIELD: Bob Scofield, and I was born in Zerath, Texas.

METZLER: Now that one I've never heard of.

SCOFIELD: Just a stop on the railroad.

METZLER: Spell it, would you? Zerath?

SCOFIELD: Z-E-R-A-T-H.

METZLER: Okay. Where is that located in Texas?

SCOFIELD: Jasper, Texas.

METZLER: Jasper County. So is that east Texas?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Okay, all right. So what's your birthdate?

SCOFIELD: September the 24th, 1925.

METZLER: Okay. So that's going to make you about 88 years old, then?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: My golly. Well, you're one of the babies from World War II, you know. You must have gone in pretty young.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Okay. All right, so, did you have brothers and sisters?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Tell me about them.

SCOFIELD: Well, four us of surviving when my brother was oldest.

METZLER: Were you the youngest?

SCOFIELD: No, middle.

METZLER: So you had a brother and two older sisters?

SCOFIELD: Yes. One sister older and one sister younger.

METZLER: And, what did your father do for a living?

SCOFIELD: He worked for the extension service, agriculture.

METZLER: So, kind of out of Texas A&M, then? That's part of Texas A&M, isn't it? So he was helping farmers and ranchers and what have you?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: So if you were born in -- you said '25 -- so you grew up during the depression when you were about 4 or 5 years old. So were times tough for you and your family, or not?

SCOFIELD: No, really not. We were on a government salary, which was meager now, but was quite adequate at the time.

METZLER: Yeah, and your dad had a job, too, which was after that, huh?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Okay, so where did you go to school? Where did you go to high school?

SCOFIELD: A&M Consolidated.

METZLER: I've heard of that, that's a--

SCOFIELD: College Station.

METZLER: Yeah, they've had some good football teams over the years, I know that. Was that a big school back then?

SCOFIELD: No. Very small.

METZLER: So if you were born in '25 you must have graduated in, what, '42?

SCOFIELD: Forty-two.

METZLER: Forth-two. So do you remember what you were doing when you heard about the attack on Pearl Harbor, Pearl Harbor Day?

SCOFIELD: Sunday we were sitting around the area my mother was lying in the bed and then we were discussing current affairs and it came on the radio.

METZLER: So you heard it on the radio, huh?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: What was everybody's reaction, when you heard that?

SCOFIELD: Well, patriotism. We wanted to see what we could do to help.

METZLER: Was that how you felt?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So, you were still in high school, though? So you couldn't do much about it at the time, could you? Because you were still in school. So what were you, a junior or a senior?

SCOFIELD: Senior, I think.

METZLER: Yeah, you were a senior. Early part of your senior year. So did some of the other people in school go off to war?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: And what did you do?

SCOFIELD: Well, volunteered.

METZLER: Did you go ahead and graduate, or did you --

SCOFIELD: I graduated.

METZLER: And so I guess you graduated in that May or June, of '42? And then, so tell me what you did at that time?

SCOFIELD: Enrolled in A&M. They had three-semester years at that time. Three semesters per year.

METZLER: So kind of a trimester thing?

SCOFIELD: Yes, trimester. And so I enrolled in A&M just as soon as high school. In fact I didn't go to the senior outing because I was already in A&M.

METZLER: Oh, really. So, how long were you in A&M?

SCOFIELD: Year and a half.

METZLER: And what kind of courses were you taking?

SCOFIELD: Just basic liberal arts.

METZLER: Did you have a particular major in mind somewhere down the road?

SCOFIELD: Economics.

METZLER: And, you said you had a brother. An older brother?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Did he go off to war while you were at A&M, or not?

SCOFIELD: Yes. He was an instructor at Waco Air Base.

METZLER: And what was your plan when you went to school at A&M?

You mentioned patriotism earlier. Were you going to try to go and volunteer later on, or what was in your mind?

SCOFIELD: Yes, volunteering.

METZLER: And so, when did you volunteer?

SCOFIELD: Seventeen.

METZLER: As soon as you were 17?

SCOFIELD: I went in the college program and stayed in school for
a year.

METZLER: Were you 17 when you went in?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So you had to get signature by one or more -- both of
your parents, didn't you?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: Well did that do that willingly, or did you twist
their arm?

SCOFIELD: Willingly. They did let me pursue that -- I was
independent.

METZLER: So they were anxious for you to be able to do your
part, is that right?

SCOFIELD: That's right.

METZLER: So why did you choose the Marines?

SCOFIELD: Oh, just patriotism.

METZLER: Well you could have been patriotic and been in the
Army.

SCOFIELD: Yeah, but I just wanted to be proud to be a marine.

METZLER: So where did you go to volunteer?

SCOFIELD: Dallas.

METZLER: So you had to go all the way to Dallas, then, to enlist?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: So how did you get to Dallas?

SCOFIELD: Train.

METZLER: I guess there were a lot of people who traveled by train back then, didn't they? Did your parents go with you? Or did you go up there alone?

SCOFIELD: I went with a friend.

METZLER: Who was your friend?

SCOFIELD: Jimmy [Shugart?] and Brian Duke. And Brian was colorblind and he could not enroll, but Shugart and I did.

METZLER: Okay, so they flunked him out because he was colorblind?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So where did you know these guys from? From home, or school?

SCOFIELD: Yes, from school. We were all in the same outfit at A&M.

METZLER: Oh, okay. So you knew them at A&M? They weren't childhood friends, they were guys you ran into at A&M?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So, where did you go for your basic training?

SCOFIELD: I don't remember.

METZLER: Was it a long ways away?

SCOFIELD: Parris Island, South Carolina.

METZLER: Parris Island. I heard that Marine basic training at
Parris Island is pretty tough.

SCOFIELD: Well, it was something that I wanted to do so it
wasn't too tough.

METZLER: What was the toughest part?

SCOFIELD: Just discipline.

METZLER: Well, that's something you've got to learn, I guess.
So after Parris Island, where did you go?

SCOFIELD: North Carolina.

METZLER: So, from South Carolina to North Carolina, huh? And
what did you do there?

SCOFIELD: Just basic training.

METZLER: And did you meet any new buddies while you were in
basic training?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Like who?

SCOFIELD: Jimmy Shugart and Brian Duke.

METZLER: These are the guys that enlisted with you huh? They
stayed with you during basic?

SCOFIELD: Shugart did. Brian was colorblind and he flunked out.

METZLER: So after your basic training was over, where did you
go then?

SCOFIELD: North Carolina.

METZLER: Well after North Carolina where did you go?

SCOFIELD: Overseas.

METZLER: Directly overseas? So did you have to get out to the
West Coast to go overseas?

SCOFIELD: Yes. By train.

METZLER: Another train ride, huh? I bet that was a long one.

SCOFIELD: Yes it was.

METZLER: That must have taken several days, huh?

SCOFIELD: Yeah, two or three days.

METZLER: So was that an easy trip or a hard trip?

SCOFIELD: Easy, because it was going to war, so it was easy for
me.

METZLER: So at this point were you a little anxious to go to
war, or worried about going to war, or what?

SCOFIELD: Anxious to go.

METZLER: Now at this point had you been trained as a rifleman,
or artillery, or what?

SCOFIELD: Rifleman.

METZLER: So how did you do on marksmanship in basic training?

SCOFIELD: Well, marksman, second highest. I was not an expert.

METZLER: But that's pretty darn good. You were pretty close to
the top of the class.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Had you ever handled a rifle or a gun before you went to basic training?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: So this was all new to you?

SCOFIELD: Oh yes. I had a 22.

METZLER: Well I guess you shot squirrels and that kind of stuff?

SCOFIELD: Yeah.

METZLER: So when you got to the West Coast, what happened then?

SCOFIELD: We just prepared to go overseas.

METZLER: Were you assigned to an outfit at this point?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So you were part of the Fifth Marines at this point?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: And, what did they do with you?

SCOFIELD: Well, just basic training.

METZLER: More training?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: You get any beach assault training? Where they would land you on a beach and practice going in shore. Did they do some of that?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So you got your feet wet?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So what did they do, put you on a troop transport, or what?

SCOFIELD: Right, troop transport.

METZLER: That sounds like fun.

SCOFIELD: Yes it was a luxury ship, early Matsonia. The Matson Lines, it was key to -- it was luxury.

METZLER: Yeah, it was a cruise ship, a luxury liner that they had converted for carrying troops. So did you get a luxury seat when you were on board?

SCOFIELD: No, it was old, hot, so most of us stayed up on deck.

METZLER: Did you get seasick?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Were you the only one?

SCOFIELD: Oh everybody got sick.

METZLER: How long did that bother you?

SCOFIELD: Just a day or two.

METZLER: Some people may never get over it. But it took you a day or two, huh? So did they tell you where you were going once you got on the ship?

SCOFIELD: No, I don't remember when we knew where we were going.

METZLER: So where did you end up going?

SCOFIELD: Okinawa.

METZLER: Did you go straight to Okinawa, or did you go--

SCOFIELD: No we went to Guadalcanal. It was secure at the time.

It was just training.

METZLER: So, what year are we at right now?

SCOFIELD: Forty-five.

METZLER: So late '44, early '45? Right. So when did you actually find out you were going to Okinawa? Do you remember?

SCOFIELD: No. Aboard ship.

METZLER: Had you ever heard of Okinawa?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: What did they tell you about it?

SCOFIELD: That it was Japanese-occupied territory.

METZLER: They tell you what to expect?

SCOFIELD: They exaggerated. It was highly populated and so it was not jungle, but it was...

METZLER: I mean, they had cities and towns and civilians.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: And it wasn't just jungle, like some of the smaller islands.

SCOFIELD: No it wasn't jungle, it was very civilized.

METZLER: So, you were in the Fifth Marines? So which battalion, ba-dada-dada?

SCOFIELD: C Troop.

METZLER: C Troop. Okay, I need to write some of this down because I'm not going to remember it, otherwise. So Fifth Marines, C Troop, and did you have a company and all that other stuff? Did they assign numbers to you?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: So you're a rifleman and you're in with lots of other riflemen, huh?

SCOFIELD: Right. A nine-man squad.

METZLER: And so at this point, so we're early '45 and you were born in '25, so you're 19 years old at this point?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: How does it feel like, being a 19-year-old kid getting ready to go into a serious battle?

SCOFIELD: Patriotic. It was welcome.

METZLER: So you were looking forward to this? How did you feel about the Japanese that this point?

SCOFIELD: Bitter.

METZLER: Did you know much about them and what they would be like to fight?

SCOFIELD: No. Just the news, but nothing personally.

METZLER: So you went to Guadalcanal, I guess, just to form up with other outfits and with other ships and that kind of thing? Did you go ashore on Guadalcanal?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: What was that like?

SCOFIELD: It was a hot, South Seas island. Very pleasant.

METZLER: Well, there was a lot of battles on Guadalcanal. They shot that place up pretty good, earlier in the war.

SCOFIELD: Yes, that was earlier.

METZLER: Did you see any signs of some of those earlier warfare there, or --

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Like what?

SCOFIELD: Oh, just the embankments and battlefields.

METZLER: So did you sleep ashore while you were getting ready to go up to Okinawa?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: What did you do, sleep in tents?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: Mosquitoes get you?

SCOFIELD: What?

METZLER: I said did the mosquitoes get you?

SCOFIELD: Oh yes.

METZLER: You know, they carry malaria down there?

SCOFIELD: Yes. That was something to worry about.

METZLER: Did they give you pills to take?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: What were they like? Did you turn yellow after you took them?

SCOFIELD: I don't know. Yes.

METZLER: Well, I heard a story they gave you, what was it, Atrazine or Adezine or some funny name like that. And some of the guys have told me that they turned yellow after they took it, because, you know, it affects your liver function.

SCOFIELD: I didn't notice it.

METZLER: You never got sick from malaria or any of that?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: So then it's on to Okinawa. So tell me about the trip up there?

SCOFIELD: Well, we just -- troop ship took several days aboard.

METZLER: So you were a bit crowded I suspect?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: And it's hot?

SCOFIELD: Right. Most of us stayed up on deck, curled up.

METZLER: So were there lots of other ships in the fleet going up?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So you looked in all directions and you saw ships, huh?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: If I remember the first landings at Okinawa were on April the first? Were you part of the early first waves, or did you come later on?

SCOFIELD: It was non-resistant, so we just -- I was on a ship-to-shore outfit and we just loaded the tank.

METZLER: So you had been on an LCT or something like that?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: So you, and a tank, and some of your buddies rode in through the surf, huh?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: And they didn't even shoot at you?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: Why do you think that is?

SCOFIELD: I don't know. They just laid back and they went to the hills and left the beach un-resist--

METZLER: No resistance on the beach, then?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: So I guess they let you have the easy part. So, was Okinawa easy?

SCOFIELD: No, it was hard.

METZLER: I want to hear about that.

SCOFIELD: Well it was just -- we just dug in.

METZLER: So you landed on the beach, and then what did you do?

SCOFIELD: We just loaded and unloaded ships. Went out in the boat, the tank, and carried ammunition and supplies ashore.

METZLER: And still no resistance?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: Are you getting a little suspicious at this point?

SCOFIELD: Well, not really. I didn't think about it.

METZLER: You were too busy working.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So after the equipment and everything was unloaded, where did you guys go?

SCOFIELD: I don't remember.

METZLER: So you went inland?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: And when did you run into your first resistance?

SCOFIELD: When we landed on Okinawa.

METZLER: But when you went inland?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So tell me about that.

SCOFIELD: Well, I was -- the first month I just loaded ships and May 11th I was wounded, two or three days after I joined a combat outfit.

METZLER: So you were unloading for a while and then you joined the combat outfit.

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: And, tell me the circumstances of when you were wounded.

SCOFIELD: Charging uphill.

METZLER: You and everybody else, huh?

SCOFIELD: Yes. But I actually -- we were on the hillside and you could turn and go back, and they took your dog tag and court martial. And bad conduct discharge.

METZLER: So who did that?

SCOFIELD: Officers. Marine officers.

METZLER: So some of them did that, huh?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Many.

SCOFIELD: Well, quite a few.

METZLER: So when somebody did that, what did they do?

SCOFIELD: They took them out and assigned them to an outfit for a court martial.

METZLER: So they took their dog tags, and then they sent them in to be court marshaled?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: How did that make you feel?

SCOFIELD: Well, I just, I didn't do that so I didn't pay much attention to it.

METZLER: What do you think about the people that did that.

SCOFIELD: Well they're cowards. They were afraid. They chose that rather than risk their lives.

METZLER: Well the Marines have a reputation for being very brave and proud. I'm surprised to hear Marines did that.

SCOFIELD: Well, they did that, so some of them weren't proud.

METZLER: It wasn't everybody. So tell me how long you were charging up the hill when you got wounded? I mean, did you just get started, or were you almost to the top, or what?

SCOFIELD: About mid-way, and my sergeant, we were a nine-man squad, and I was the ninth man that was out of action.

Either killed or wounded 100 percent.

METZLER: Now are you telling me that nine out of nine were killed or wounded?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: That's pretty heavy casualties.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: It doesn't get any heavier than that.

SCOFIELD: Well that was the way it was.

METZLER: There almost wasn't anybody to take you back from the front. Did they have medics that would come up and help, or what?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Did a medic come and get you?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Tell me what you remember.

SCOFIELD: The medics came up and I remember they said, "Come over here this man is dying." And they said, well, the man doctoring me said, "This man is dying, too."

METZLER: The guy doctoring you said, "This man is dying, too," referring to you?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Dang.

SCOFIELD: And, I said, well, "How far have I got to run to get back to where somebody can take charge?" And they said, "Well, they will get up here even with us, and we won't have to go back." And so they did. They surrounded me. They went up the hill and were thrown back and I was doctored, but the medics, Navy medic, and they said, "Well, this guy's hurt bad." And so I didn't know anything.

METZLER: Are you awake all this time and listening to this?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So they're saying you're hurt bad?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: How did you feel?

SCOFIELD: Bloody. Because I was -- wrist -- I was shot in the side and the back.

METZLER: So your side and back is where you took the wounds?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Which side?

SCOFIELD: Left side. I think in calculating what happened, that the bullet went in, right off my spine, and hit a rib and broke a rib and followed it around and out, and exited under my arm.

METZLER: So you're in bad shape.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Thank God for those medics.

SCOFIELD: Well, yes. They were very brave, and they were not Marines. They were Navy medics, assigned to the Marines. But they were very patriotic and very efficient.

METZLER: I heard the Japanese tried to kill the medics first. That they targeted the medics because they knew how important they were. Had you ever heard that?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Well you're living proof that they're important. Because they pulled you through, it sounds like.

SCOFIELD: Yes, they didn't carry their cross marks --

METZLER: Red Cross.

SCOFIELD: Red Cross marks. They took them off so they wouldn't be recognized as medics.

METZLER: That's like wearing a target on your forehead when you have that Red Cross. So how did they get you back down the hill? On the litter or what?

SCOFIELD: Yes. They put me on a stretcher and carried me and put me on a tank, strapped me on an amphibious tank and carried me back to the battlefield hospital.

METZLER: Were there other people, wounded people on that same tank with you, or were you the only guy? Or do you remember?

SCOFIELD: I was the only one.

METZLER: On this run.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Did they give you morphine?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: To kind of help you through the pain?

SCOFIELD: Yes, right.

METZLER: So you must be bleeding pretty good at this point?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: Did you lose consciousness?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: What else is going through your mind at that time?

SCOFIELD: Well, they were taking men aboard airplanes and they said -- they looked at me and they said, "You can't go, you've got a chest wound." And I said, "Well, it's superficial, I'm not wounded." And so I was put aboard the ship.

METZLER: So is this a hospital ship?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: No tell me again about the airplane that they put you on, if -- I'm a little confused.

SCOFIELD: Well they had everybody there on litters and they carried them to the airplane and like I said they were leaving me out and I said, "I'm not -- it's not mortal wounded and I can go," and so they put me aboard the airplane too.

METZLER: So what kind of airplane was this?

SCOFIELD: Troopship.

METZLER: Oh, a troopship. Not an airplane.

SCOFIELD: Well, an airplane first. They had calculated they had -- cross -- bandage...

METZLER: So they got you to a hospital ship?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Were you cared for well there? Tell me about that.

SCOFIELD: Well, I don't remember a lot about that.

METZLER: I bet you don't. You were pretty well shot up, weren't you?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: You have any idea how long you were on the hospital ship?

SCOFIELD: No, just a few days.

METZLER: And then what did they do with you?

SCOFIELD: At a hospital in Guam.

METZLER: So, did the ship go back to Guam, or did they put you
on another ship, or what?

SCOFIELD: Airplane.

METZLER: Oh, Okay. So this is when you were on the airplane?

SCOFIELD: In Guam, yes.

METZLER: So that's a big field hospital -- it's not a field
hospital it's a big hospital there in Guam. So how long
did it take you to recover?

SCOFIELD: Recover -- what do you mean?

METZLER: I mean get better and get to where you could go back
home or whatever they were going to do with you.

SCOFIELD: I was in the hospital for a year.

METZLER: Oh, wow. I didn't know that. Was that whole time on
Guam, or did they --

SCOFIELD: No, just a few days on Guam and then I was in Hawaii.

METZLER: So they took you back to Hawaii.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So you're in a hospital there. Probably in Honolulu I
guess, or somewhere on --

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: And you were there for a year?

SCOFIELD: Well, just a few days and then I was on Guam.

METZLER: Well you were on Guam, and then you were in Hawaii, is that right? In a hospital?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: When did you come back to the states?

SCOFIELD: I don't remember.

METZLER: Were you still hospitalized when they brought you back to the states?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: So you were still recovering.

SCOFIELD: Right. I was infected. My wrist was draining.

METZLER: Your wrist?

SCOFIELD: Yes, from where I was shot.

METZLER: Okay. So you were hit in the wrist as well as in the back and ribs?

SCOFIELD: Yes. That was the main one, was my wrist. And it was infected and drained and they would wrap it up and I was sent to a hospital and before a doctor, and he said, "What's that smell?" And I said, "That's my arm." He said, "Take the cast off," and he doctored it from there.

METZLER: He treated the infection?

SCOFIELD: Yeah, and put it in a splint rather than in a cast.

METZLER: So were you released from the Marines then, after your wounds healed?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: You went back home?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Were you pretty well by the time you went back home,
or were you still in pretty bad shape?

SCOFIELD: I was -- my wrist was draining for a year.

METZLER: They didn't have the antibiotics then that they do
now.

SCOFIELD: They put -- doctored it.

METZLER: So when did your parents hear about your being
wounded? The Marines must have sent a courier there with a
telegram or something. Do you know?

SCOFIELD: Yes, but they heard earlier, when I was on a stretcher
fixing to go at -- a chaplain came by and said "Can I help
you?" And I said, "Well, I have a friend -- Army -- 77th."
And said "you can tell him I'm wounded and not mortally."
And so he told the captain and he wrote his folks, the
next-door neighbor. And so they heard actually before the
Marines notified them, or the Navy notified them. They had
heard that this friend, he wrote his folks that I was
wounded, and they told my parents.

METZLER: So they found out through unofficial channels about
you being wounded before the official channels got there.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Now, did you write letters home when you were overseas, and get letters back from your parents?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: And did they censor those letters, or what did they --

SCOFIELD: Yes. They censored them.

METZLER: Did they ever send you cakes or cookies, or anything like that?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Was it delicious?

SCOFIELD: Right. I had a special friend that I kept up with, that I wrote. I can't think of what his name was, but his name was such that they could interpret that as -- and so they cut that out of the letter.

METZLER: Yeah, they cut a lot of things out of those letters, I understand. Sometimes they cut out more stuff than they left in.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Now, had you gotten an Aggie Ring from school before you went overseas, or did they try and send it to you, or what? It seemed to me like your daughter was telling me a story about that. Does that ring a bell with you?

SCOFIELD: No, I don't know what you're --

METZLER: What I'm talking about, huh? Says here, "There was an ongoing theme about his Aggie Ring, which was being sent to

him and the mail kept missing him. Finally, after he was shot and recovering a hospital in Hawaii, the ring arrived, and the cake, which was sent with the ring many months before, but the cake had spoiled."

SCOFIELD: Yeah, right.

METZLER: Well that sounds like an interesting story. Tell me about that.

SCOFIELD: Well, they sent me my ring and my best friend, he sent his home and he was killed.

METZLER: He sent his ring home, and then he was killed?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: Was he killed on Okinawa?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Was that one of the friends you went in with from --

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: This was somebody else?

SCOFIELD: Yeah.

METZLER: So you lost a lot of friends during that battle?

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: You're one of the few survivors, it sounds like.

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: How's that make you feel.

SCOFIELD: Proud.

METZLER: Maybe lucky.

SCOFIELD: Yeah, lucky.

METZLER: So, was that a Japanese sniper that got you? Or what do you think?

SCOFIELD: Yes, probably so. We were charging up the hill.

METZLER: Do you remember which hill it was?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: All those hills look alike, I bet.

SCOFIELD: It was one hill short of Naha.

METZLER: So you were close to Naha, then?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Now that was the only sizeable city on the island of Okinawa.

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: So you never actually got to Naha?

SCOFIELD: No, I didn't. They got there after I was wounded.

METZLER: That's no way to tour Naha, is it?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: So do you ever think about the war years, after the war was over? Did you dream about it or think about it?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: At night? Or during the day? Or all the time? Or once in a while?

SCOFIELD: One in a while something reminded me of it. I was completely aware of it.

METZLER: So what do you think about the Japanese? They're the ones who shot you.

SCOFIELD: Well I thought they were savage.

METZLER: You still feel that way, or not?

SCOFIELD: Oh I don't like them.

METZLER: I can understand that. What did you think about your officers?

SCOFIELD: Well they were second lieutenants in the Marines. They got up. They were "follow me." They were first in charge and the mortality rate was very high.

METZLER: But they were courageous.

SCOFIELD: Oh yes.

METZLER: They were the first up the hill.

SCOFIELD: Right.

METZLER: Something to be said for that. What else would you like to talk about, about World War II?

SCOFIELD: I don't know.

METZLER: I don't think you enjoy talking about World War II, do you?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: It's not exactly a happy chapter, is it?

SCOFIELD: No.

METZLER: Does anybody ever come up to you and thank you for what you did for our country during the war?

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Sara and I'd like to do that, too. Thank you.

SCOFIELD: Thank you. (inaudible)

METZLER: Military Order of the Purple Heart. Combat wounded.

SCOFIELD: Several people have commented on that. Other than that, they don't know anything about it.

METZLER: I understand you've been to some schools to describe what it was like to some of the schoolchildren. How did that go?

SCOFIELD: Oh, they were very interested.

METZLER: Well, at least they're interested.

SCOFIELD: Yes.

METZLER: Well, I want to thank you for spending the time today with us, Bob.

SCOFIELD: Thank you. You're welcome.

METZLER: We appreciate your going back to what I know wasn't a very comfortable time and sharing your experiences with us.

END OF AUDIO FILE