

THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PACIFIC WAR

The Nimitz Education and Research Center
Fredericksburg, Texas

An interview with Stanley Blumenthal
Fredericksburg, Texas
May 27, 2013

ED METZLER: This is Ed Metzler. Today is the 27th of May, 2013.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Memorial Day!

ED METZLER: Memorial Day. I'm in Fredericksburg, Texas at the National Museum of the Pacific War and I am interviewing Mr. Stanley Blumenthal. This 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 that's related to this site. So, Stanley, thank you for spending the time today to share your World War Two experiences with us. I'd like to get started by having you introduce yourself. Give us your full name, date and place of birth, and we'll take it from there.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Okay! Stanley Blumenthal, born March 6, 1925 in Brooklyn, New York. And I'm here by accident. I was driving to California and I saw this lovely town, Fredericksburg, and I says, "Hey, I gotta stop here." I did 400 miles. I was going to do another hundred miles but I decided to spend the morning here. It was too late to see the town, but this is the next morning. Go ahead, what's the next question.

ED METZLER: Well, okay, and now, tell me what your dad did for a living. Or your family. Tell me about your family.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Okay, my father was born in Poland and my mother in Russia. They became nationalized citizens. They came before World War One and my father was a house painter. That's all he ever did. His brothers became plumbers and they became boss plumbers. They were more successful than he was. My father never owned a car but the other guys, he brothers did.

ED METZLER: Yeah, but when you're in New York City area you don't have to have a car.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, you didn't have to have a car. And they didn't live in New York City. They lived in New Jersey. They could use a car.

ED METZLER: Oh, they coulda used a car! [*Laughter*] Okay now, what about brothers and sisters, Stan?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I have one sister who is 11 years younger than me. 10 and a half years to be technical.

ED METZLER: Baby sister.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Baby sister, yeah. An accident.

ED METZLER: Yeah. [*Laughter*]

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And my brother was six years older than me. And he went into the Army. We were both in [the] service. And unfortunately, my father found another lady. And got a divorce. Which was terrible to my mother and, you know, what else can I tell you? Well that's all I could tell you at the moment.

ED METZLER: Yeah, that's too bad.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: When I went to school we had ink wells and we had pens that were split. And I remember I wanted to buy a new pen and the sales guy was making sure it was split. I thought he was giving me a defective pen!

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] You thought he wanted to make sure it was broken before he sold it to you.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, right! But it's supposed to be split.

ED METZLER: Yeah, right! Now where'd you go to school?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: In PS-184. I remember that. Public School 184. And I lived about –

ED METZLER: And was that in Brooklyn?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, in Brooklyn. I remember in wintertime it was cold as hell, walking there, to school.

ED METZLER: So you must have been a Brooklyn Dodger fan.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yes! Yeah, Ebbets Field. I wasn't much of a baseball fan. I was a fan of anything. But I remember them.

ED METZLER: Yeah, yeah. Now where did you go to high school?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Samuel Gompers Vocational High School. In the Bronx. Because it had a nice lookin' building. I picked it. I traveled all the way for a nickel. The subway fare then. Three cent stamps and nickel subway rides, nickel hot dogs, sodas.

ED METZLER: Now if you ride the subway to the Bronx, you have to go into Manhattan, don't you? Before you go north up to the Bronx from Brooklyn?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I think I did. Yeah. It was an hour ride.

ED METZLER: That's a long ride.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yep.

ED METZLER: Man. And so if you were born in '25, I'm going to guess you graduated high school [in] '41, '42?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. I think it was in '43.

ED METZLER: '43.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So the war had started.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, the war had started. I remember it very well. They called everybody to announce it. They closed down the classes and brought everybody to announce what happened.

ED METZLER: Right, right. And it actually happened on Sunday and I guess when you went to school on Monday they pulled everybody together, huh?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh yeah, that's right. [*Indiscernible*] you brought that up. But I remember they announced it in class. Yeah.

ED METZLER: Things kinda changed after the war started, didn't they?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah. I remember I became a Radio Operator by accident.

ED METZLER: Really?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. The course didn't train you for college. It trained you to get a job right away.

ED METZLER: Right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And they gave various courses in electrical. Like electroplating, bell wiring, motors, generators, a whole series of things. The last course they gave you Morse Code and you were supposed to get a amateur license. So my last class, I passed the theory but failed the Morse Code test. So I asked my teacher, you know, "Hey, it's the last, I can't get any more practice. Where would I get Morse Code practice?" So he sent me to a school, Rivington and Fourth side. I still remember it was called PS-20 and it wasn't a school for kids. It was a school for Maritime school. And so rather than get an amateur license, I got a commercial license and the speed was 16 words a minute. You had to do 16 words in a couple of minutes without a mistake. And when I got out of there I had a commercial license. And in one day, the next day I was assigned the ship.

ED METZLER: So *that's* how you got involved in the Merchant Marines!

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, by failing the amateur course! [*Laughter*]

ED METZLER: That's an interesting story.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Luckiest break in my life.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I'm here on a pension from my Merchant Marine days.

ED METZLER: Yeah! That's an interesting twist.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So now how old were you when you got this license and went into the Merchant Marine?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I was 19.

ED METZLER: Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I was 1-AL which kept me out of the Army. If they didn't need one, one [*indiscernible*] but it was limited because I wore glasses.

ED METZLER: Uh-huh.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That was the only reason. Otherwise, my mother told me that like a couple of days after I joined the ship, they got a notice they're taking 1-AL in the Army. So I was a draft dodger in a way.

ED METZLER: Yeah! Well, your timing, they say timing is everything.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: [*Laughs*] Yeah. We, the Merchant Marine, now the AMMV, says we were volunteers. We were also draft dodgers! Both!

ED METZLER: Yeah [*laughs*]. Now when you say 1-AL, what does the "L" stand for?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Limited service.

ED METZLER: Okay. Alright.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Not, you know, combat.

ED METZLER: Well they're not going to make an airplane pilot out of you if you can't see
[laughs].

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No!

ED METZLER: So that kinda stuff. Okay. So, alright, so this is how you got connected with the
Merchant Marines.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Correct.

ED METZLER: So tell me what happened then? Did you have to go for training or what?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, I just needed the Second Class, it was a Second Class Commercial
License. First Class was only having a higher code speed. No more theory. But you had to have
a high, you had to copy so many words without an error. In a line, you know? They gave you
like five minutes and one minute of it has to be perfect.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I found out, they told me at the school where to get a ship.

ED METZLER: Okay, so where did you go?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: They had two unions that provided Radio Operators to the Merchant Marine, you know? One was Anticomunist, actually, and the other was Communist, believe it or not. The Communist party was founded by Communists. The Merchant Marine Radio Officers' Union. If you go to the Radio Officers' Union. I'm there and I gotta ship instantly. The same day. Showing my license.

ED METZLER: Right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And with that license, no, I didn't get a ship right away. I had to get seaman's papers. I remember they gave me large papers to join the Merchant Marine.

ED METZLER: And what did you have to do, fill 'em out?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, fill them out. It was issued very quickly.

ED METZLER: Did they give you a physical or anything like that?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, no physical. There was no physical. I just had to show the commercial license.

ED METZLER: And now you're a single man, here? You're not hooked up with any ladies –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right, I was single.

ED METZLER: Not married or anything like that, so going on a ship and going half way around the world is not a big deal for you?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, I got the ship right away. You didn't know, you had no control over what kind of ship we was going or anything. I put myself in, you know, in danger's way. You know, harm's way?

ED METZLER: Harm's way.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So what was your first ship?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: The *Lawrence D. Tyson*.

ED METZLER: Really? Tell me what she was like. Was she a liberty ship?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: She was a liberty ship. She had eight guns on her. No, ten guns I think. Eight 20-millimeters. And a big gun, like a three-and-a-half-inch gun forward and a five-inch gun aft. And there was eight tubs and each one had a 20-millimeter machine gun. 20 is a pretty big shell. And like every third shell was, you know, gave a tracer. Which would glow.

ED METZLER: Right. Tell me the name of that ship again.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: *Lawrence D. Tyson*.

ED METZLER: I want to get that down. Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, Lawrence D. Tyson was, owned a newspaper in the Civil War days in the 1800s and also Lawrence became a, was elected as a senator. I found out the history. We didn't know the history of these guys.

ED METZLER: Yeah, yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: So that's why it was named Lawrence D. Tyson. I got a paper at home.

ED METZLER: So tell me what your thoughts were the first time you saw the *Lawrence D. Tyson* when you went to board her. What went through your mind?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well everything was strange. And I know I felt a little bit seasick the first day. You know, we were showed our rooms.

ED METZLER: Now she was tied up at a dock?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah she was in, she was south on the east coast. Newport News. A lot of ships were there.

ED METZLER: So you had to get down to Virginia to even go aboard the ship?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So what'd you do? Just hop a train or hitchhike or what?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: *[Laughs]* No, I hopped a train. And at that time they wanted a Radio Operator around the thing. So there were three Radio Operators. The first, the chief had made one trip before. And he became the Chief Radio Operator. He had two Navy guys as Radio Operators. They took them off and put three civilians on it. The second guy, he became the Third Radio Operator only because I was there before him. He had no experience and I had no experience.

ED METZLER: Yeah, but you were a few minutes ahead of him.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right! [*Laughter*] And I got a few bucks extra than him.

ED METZLER: Well that's okay. That's okay. So you joined the union. And this was the Communist Union that was founded –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well it had nothing to do, I just mention it that the Officials, there were two brothers. The Winnackers. Jack and Murray Winnacker. They were president, and it wasn't called the American Radio Association, ARA, it was called the ACA. It was the Marine department of the ACA. ACA stood for the American Communications Association. And they handled, the main business was teletype. And this was the Marine division.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And the head, Joe Selly was the head of that and he was a member of the Communist Party. The Communist Party concentrated on unions.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And created unions.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm. Now had you been associated with the Communist Party before the war?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Tell me about that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, well we was young and it was a social thing. You met girls and boys and in many cases, they rented out stores. And they had meetings in there once a thing. And I remember I wasn't active. I drifted out of it and two pretty girls came to my home because I was registered. Why don't you come to a meeting? *[Laughs]*

ED METZLER: Yeah, did you go back?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: So they came, yes, I became a little more active.

ED METZLER: *[Laughs]* Ahh.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Two pretty girls came to my house.

ED METZLER: They have an influence, don't they?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: [*Laughs*] Yeah, they use girls to trap is into their Communist, but they're very careful.

ED METZLER: Not only are you a draft dodger but you're a skirt chaser too! [*Laughter*]

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So when did the *Lawrence Tyson* sail? How long were you on board before she sailed?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh I was there maybe a week while they were loading her. I know we went to a convoy conference. That was the first time.

ED METZLER: Oh, tell me about that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, it was a lot of people were there. The first convoy had like maybe 120 ships in it. Plus it had half a dozen escorting "Ds" they called 'em. Destroyer escorts.

ED METZLER: Destroyer escorts, yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And they used to row like hell. Small, fast ships.

ED METZLER: Oh yeah, they're small, little guys.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Little guys and skinny ships. They would roll, we looked at them roll. We'd roll but not like the way they did. I don't know how they didn't get thrown off the ship.

ED METZLER: Well, you talk to those DE guys and I mean, they're small compared even to Destroyers.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So tell me about seasick. You say you got a little –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Just a little bit. I didn't throw up. *[Laughs]*

ED METZLER: Oh, well that's good. You just didn't feel real good.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, I didn't feel good. And I never got seasick after that first day.

ED METZLER: Now, what do you sleep in a bunk five high? Or how –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh I slept with the other guy. The Chief Radio Officer had his own thing but I slept in a bunk. I forget if it was the upper or the lower. We had our own bunks, yeah.

ED METZLER: Okay, so what about the food aboard the liberty?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: We were served, we were served, we had waiters serving us. And of course, we had –

ED METZLER: You're being treated like an Officer, then?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. We was treated like an Officer. Well actually, the crew also had waiters.

ED METZLER: Wow.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, and we had purses. They took all these guys off afterwards, yeah. And they had the Armed Guard. The Navy Armed Guard. And I sailed with several armed guards and all, they had one Officer for the things and every Armed Guard Officer was a school teacher in life.

ED METZLER: That's interesting.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Is that just a coincidence you think?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I don't, well, I think maybe it was a coincidence but they were all school teachers. Well because school teachers made 'em Officers automatically. Just like becoming a Radio Officer on the ship.

ED METZLER: Oh, okay. Okay, now, so about how many in a crew on a liberty ship like that then?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: A lot then. There was like, I think 44.

ED METZLER: Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I remember a figure, 44. Now on a crew of a ship it's like 21. 22. And usually with a Cadet. Usually with a Merchant Marine Cadet. A deck and engine.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: A deck and engine.

ED METZLER: Now who was the Skipper?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: The Skipper was a retired old guy. He had a name like from an automobile. Captain, a very good Skipper. But he was an old guy. I think he was maybe in his 70s. 60s or 70s. An old guy.

ED METZLER: Holy mackerel.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And he got sick [*laughs*] and you could hear him out there throwing up.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] So even he got sick?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. But he was a retired guy they brought back because of the war. Captain, geez if I could only remember.

ED METZLER: Ah, that's alright. It'll come to you in a minute.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Alright, so you said something about going to convoy school?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, it was just a one day thing. Prepare us for the convoy. They tell us the convoy was going to be like four ships deep and like 50 ships wide. They felt that was the best way to protect the convoy. They were very wide and narrow.

ED METZLER: I guess that's so the U-boats don't get a clean shot at the side.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right. It was the easiest way to protect. And I remember during the convoy the guy at the convoy he says, the information he give us, "Stay out of everybody's way". [*Laughter*] "Don't bother us."

ED METZLER: Rule number one!

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Stay out of everybody's way. That's about all he told us.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] Man, oh man. So at this point you know how dangerous this is to be on a north Atlantic convoy. Are you a little worried about what's going to happen?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I remember the dropped depth charges. Happened every so often. I also remember as the Second Radio Operator, which was traditional, you stood a 12 to four watch. 12 to four in the afternoon and 12 to four from midnight to four am. And that was the only time I saw real combat in the Merchant Marine. I saw combat afterwards. After the war in one of the other wars.

ED METZLER: Korean War? Were you –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, I sailed, not during the Korean War but the other wars.

ED METZLER: Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: But I remember –

ED METZLER: So you sailed out of Newport –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Newport News.

ED METZLER: Newport News.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: The streets were full of armed Navy and Army guys.

ED METZLER: Right, that's a real military site there. I mean that's naval headquarters of the world I think. Now, and so the ships formed up off the coast into, you said four deep and 50 –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Four deep and yeah.

ED METZLER: That's 200 ships.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Maybe it was that many. Somehow I remember 140.

ED METZLER: Well 50 wide and four deep if you do the math, that's 200. So anyhow, it's a bunch of ships. So everybody had to form up, right?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I remember one incident. That I was on watch at night and they maintained radio silence. But they suddenly called my convoy. It had a number and I knew it was my ship. You know, and they gave us information that the convoy was going to make a radical change in course. And I had to tell the Captain and I was afraid there was going to be accidents.

ED METZLER: 'Cause some people hear it and some people don't.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's it, exactly right! And I was proud of myself. I copied a message very well and I gave it to the Captain and he called all the Majors up into the bridge to make sure. And they were afraid there was going to be accidents, bumping ships. There were no ships bumped. But I did my job!

ED METZLER: Yeah, you did. And everybody turned at the same time and –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right. Everybody turned at the same, everybody else did a good job.

ED METZLER: Yeah, no kidding.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Also they could see, my first trip.

ED METZLER: So, what were you, several days into the trip and –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, it was several days into the trip. I don't know how many days.

ED METZLER: So you had destroyer escorts to protect you and any other ships? That were protecting the convoy?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, as far as I know they were all DEs.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Very fast, maneuvering like crazy. And taking rolls, it was unbelievable to watch those ships make turns.

ED METZLER: So when, your first voyage, your first voyage, was this during the winter or the summer? Do you remember what –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, it was on, I remember I got the ship on my birthday. But my discharge said it was three days later that I signed articles. So when you signed articles, the articles said it was March 9th. And my birthday is March the 6th.

ED METZLER: Okay so this is late winter, early spring.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: March 6th.

ED METZLER: So that's kinda stormy weather on the north Atlantic, isn't it?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, I guess it was.

ED METZLER: So the little DEs are rolling like crazy.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: And you had to change course. So what happened?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well we went on and, the first, the convoy chain broke apart when we got to England. Some went north, some went south. We went through into the Mediterranean. And the first day on the 12 to four watch when I got off watch, the alarm sounded and it was still dark. 4am in the morning I got off watch. And I could, the convoy was a very narrow like, two ships, it was about a 90 ship convoy I think it was. And I could see the tracers going up from the ships in front. And I looked up, I could only see darkness. The stars. And I saw the tracers were coming closer and closer to my ship and I was running in and out undercover. Cause there were tracers going up, I knew they were falling down.

ED METZLER: What goes up must come down!

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah! [*Laughter*] And all of a sudden our ship began firing. And they're very noisy. *Rrrrum!* [*Firing sound*] And I saw the back, big gun go off. And it shot out, an unbelievable flame shooting up, you know? And afterwards I said, "I couldn't see any planes up there." I asked the guys afterwards, "What were you shooting at? I couldn't see any planes." He said they could see the planes blocking out the stars. That's how they knew the plane was there.

ED METZLER: Man.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And the next day we got notice that we got record for shooting down one of the planes.

ED METZLER: So you got credit, the ship got credit!

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. The convoy shot down two planes. And the plane hit two ships. And they were left behind burning.

ED METZLER: Really?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I don't know what happened to them.

ED METZLER: Did you see the burning ships?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, I didn't see the burning ships.

ED METZLER: Okay, they were back further.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah, I guess we passed 'em out. I couldn't believe it. I said, "What are we shooting at?"

ED METZLER: Now this happened before you got to the Mediterranean or after?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Into the Mediterranean. We passed, we passed, what's the famous rock?

ED METZLER: Gibraltar.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Gibraltar! We passed Gibraltar. But it was still dark.

ED METZLER: So you were in the Mediterranean when you got attacked?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, we were in the Mediterranean. It was tradition. They were shooting convoys regularly. My understanding was.

ED METZLER: So let me see if I understand. You had a big convoy but when it got kind of on the other side of the Atlantic it split up and went in different directions.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right.

ED METZLER: And yours went south and went over into the Mediterranean.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right.

ED METZLER: Okay. So now you're in the Mediterranean and you've survived the first attack. Tell me what happened then.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well I left out, they found some shrapnel on paint cans back there. So something exploded with holes in it. And they said some of the Gunners, they were supposed to, they're so noisy they tapped the Gunner and when the Gunner's loaded with the big shell. It's a big shell, the five-inch shell.

ED METZLER: Right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It's a tall shell. The guy squeezed it and it took blood out of his shoulder. He was so excited at something 'cause he had a short shoulder. But went to fire. When he was ready, the gun was loaded. I wasn't there. But that's the stories they told us.

ED METZLER: Yeah, yeah. No are you still on radio silence at this point?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, it was always radio silence.

ED METZLER: Seems strange to be a Radio Operator but you're always under radio silence!

[Laughs]

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Right. Didn't want to give yourself away.

ED METZLER: Yeah, absolutely. So where did you –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: There were frequent dropping depth charges. We also had nets to catch torpedoes. They rigged up nets on each side on booms. And they told me when a torpedo hit the holes in these things it would stop the torpedo and it would hang up on the net. And then they would drop the net into the ocean [*laughs*].

ED METZLER: [*Whistling sound*] Get rid of that thing! [*Laughter*]

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, get rid of it. They weren't going to pull that thing.

ED METZLER: Well I'll tell you what, it worked!

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: They dropped the whole net. Some ships had balloons, they were dragging balloons up above them to keep the planes from strafing, getting too close.

ED METZLER: Mm. Now did you –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: They also allowed us to fire the guns. They said, well if the Armed Guard got wiped out, we were authorized to man the guns. So everybody got on these things and they had these magazines. I couldn't lift the thing! [*Laughter*] Had 50 shells in 'em. The

shells came out of cardboard tubes. And then they would grease them up. Boy they would grease them up. And then they would put 'em, force 'em into the thing behind this spring. And then they would crank 'em up like a clock. So had a lot of pressure so they could fire 50 shells in about seven seconds.

ED METZLER: Man.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And they gave us permission to fire the 20-millimeter. So I shot off in a few seconds, I shot off about half a magazine. So *brr-bum-bum-bum-bum* [*shooting sound*]. I got the feeling of it.

ED METZLER: Oh, I bet. What is that feeling like?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: *brr-ttttt* [*shooting sound*] It was exciting.

ED METZLER: Pretty powerful, huh?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, pretty powerful. And it, the shell goes so high. It couldn't reach the planes. The planes are a little higher.

ED METZLER: Mm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And every third shell was a –

ED METZLER: A tracer.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: A tracer. Yeah, that's the word. I couldn't think of the word. Tracer.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And also the Captain broke out some 30 rifles. So he let us shoot that thing. Everybody, you know, when they fired the thing they would step back. When I fired it, I fell down I think.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*]

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Or I went back three steps [*laughs*] it's such a kick to it.

ED METZLER: Yeah, my gosh.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I only fired two times.

ED METZLER: So how much did you weigh when you were 19 years old?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh, I was skinny.

ED METZLER: Yeah?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah I think I weighed about 130 pounds.

ED METZLER: Yeah, that's skinny.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Now I weigh about 140.

ED METZLER: Well you're still pretty slim.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: 120, 130 pounds, yeah.

ED METZLER: Yeah. So what was your first Port of Call?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Palermo, Sicily. Very exciting to me.

ED METZLER: Tell me about it, tell me about it.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Very, very good city to be in, you know?

ED METZLER: Tell me about Palermo. What did you see?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well it was famous. The people, the teachers of school children would come out and we were like the only Liberty ship tied there. And the teachers come out to view the ship with the little school children.

ED METZLER: Really?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. It was exciting to see these little children looking at our ship.

ED METZLER: Well now, Sicily had been right in the heart of the war. I mean, you know –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, Palermo.

ED METZLER: Nazis occupied it and then we had to invade it. So did you see any signs of warfare or anything there?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I didn't really see signs. I didn't see any damage.

ED METZLER: Okay. So what was your cargo?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's a good question. What the hell did we have to unload there? I forgot what the cargo was.

ED METZLER: Well it mustn't of been important.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I think maybe it was food. I don't remember. I know the ship was loaded with deck cargo that had war material inside the ship. It would have trucks, Army trucks and so forth. We didn't have, I don't remember any tanks on the ship. I carried tanks other times. But it had trucks. Jeeps.

ED METZLER: So you unloaded your cargo there in Palermo.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Right.

ED METZLER: Ever get attacked while doing that or was it pretty calm?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, we never got attacked. I went sightseeing. I noticed they had horse wagons and the guy would have his little son, his middle aged, you know, 15 year old son, the driver of the cart. And I went sightseeing. I saw the catacombs, was interesting there, catacombs.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: The one case, a baby was embalmed so well it looked alive. Somebody, a rich man, embalmed his baby that had died. And the baby looked alive. Others were like skeletons with drapes over them.

ED METZLER: What was the food like there?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And they also had this cemetery. Some of the stones were like, they were like a church. Miniature churches they put up!

ED METZLER: Yeah, the crypts that they put up were real fancy, yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah, they were miniature churches!

ED METZLER: Yeah, right. Now what was –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Their food? It was the first time I ate lobster there.

ED METZLER: Really?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It wasn't really, it was not Maine lobster. It didn't have the big claws.

ED METZLER: Rock lobster.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, rock lobster. And it was cold and they put mayonnaise. It was delicious with their wine.

ED METZLER: Oh yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It was the first time I tasted.

ED METZLER: Yeah, they do good wine, too, there.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Oh their homemade wine was delicious.

ED METZLER: Mmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So what were you there, for a week or so?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, we was there for a week and then went to Algiers. That was the center. Deahmday [*phonetic*] there. I remember a destroyer came in and the destroyer got hit in the behind. And the behind, it was spread out. It was such a tremendous explosion to that

thing and it still floated. It had to be pulled, you know? Probably an acoustic bomb went for the propeller, the back of that thing. And it spread open like a tin can.

ED METZLER: My gosh, well I guess –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I saw damage that way, yeah.

ED METZLER: Man, man. So you went to Algiers and did you get liberty while you were there?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, I got liberty.

ED METZLER: So what did you do?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Algiers had big steps. It was high, it was run by the French. They considered part of France, that broke free, you know? And it had very nice steps, way up, you know? And so, but I was told to stay off. The Arab kids or something could rob you climbing the steps. So I [*laughs*] watched that.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] Pick your pocket, huh?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Things like that.

ED METZLER: Now did you get to know some of the other guys on your ship's crew? I mean did you have some buddies you kind of palled around with on the ship?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well I sort of palled around with the Chief Engineer. He was sort of a senior, he was like mature. I was like a kid I felt, but he was sort of mature.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And I know they talked about the Armed Guard, on there, talked about their Officer. One of the shells jammed up.

ED METZLER: On the three-inch gun?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, no, not on the three, I think on the 20. And he said, the Officer said, "Well get that thing, throw it overboard!" And meanwhile he went around the other side. They thought he was a coward because he gave the order – throw the shell off! And then he walked away from it. *[Laughs]* Self preservation.

ED METZLER: Well, yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: So they talked about their Officer that way.

ED METZLER: And they didn't necessarily have kind words about him?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, that's right.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] So after Algiers, where does the *Tyson* go?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Then I think we loaded off. I forget what the hell we were carrying, but we went this way. I got the, during the war, the war zone. The Mediterranean, the Atlantic was a war zone. That's what, and the Mediterranean Middle East which was one war zone. And we went to Karamshaw [*phonetic*]. Went through the Suez Canal and then we went to a place, Karamshaw [*phonetic*], the name stuck in my mind.

ED METZLER: Where is that?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It was very far south.

ED METZLER: Is this in Africa?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Let's see. Well it was the Middle East. We went through the Suez Canal.

ED METZLER: Right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I think it was on the other side of the Suez Canal.

ED METZLER: When you go out of the Suez Canal, you're in the Red Sea. And then when you get out of that, you're in the Indian Ocean.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. I went through it many times. It must have been on the other side. Karamshaw [*phonetic*], I remember the name.

ED METZLER: Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And they had a seamen's club and they sold a lot of beer. They also had a baboon. They had a friendly baboon out there. And he drank beer! [*Laughter*] But it was friendly. He didn't bother anybody.

ED METZLER: Well especially friendly after he had a beer, huh? [*Laughter*]

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: My gosh.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: So everything was new.

ED METZLER: Yeah, okay. Well keep telling me, where'd you go then?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Where did we go then? I forgot. *[Laughs]*

ED METZLER: Well, but I mean, I don't need to know everything.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Went back, um.

ED METZLER: Did you go back to the US?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, we went back. I know the first trip was almost six months.

ED METZLER: Six months?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Almost six months. Five months and some days.

ED METZLER: You went all over the place.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah we went to a lot of places. I went to Italy, never to Rome.

But I went to Naples. I went to some place –

ED METZLER: Was that on the first tour?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: On the first trip, yeah.

ED METZLER: Man, you got around.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah I got around on the first trip. And I signed back and went back on the ship afterwards. Yeah.

ED METZLER: So when she went back to the US, did she go back convoy or did you –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, we went convoy. The war was still going on so went back by convoy. And we went also to Norfolk, Newport News.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Everybody got off the ship but I stayed on my ship. When I say everybody, the Chief Radio Operator and the other guy got off. I think I became Chief Radio Operator afterwards.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm. Did that give you a raise in pay?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: That's good.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, I got a little more than the Second Radio Operator. I was the Second Radio Operator; I got more than the Third Radio Operator.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: A little less than the Chief Radio Operator.

ED METZLER: So you stayed aboard when she was in port.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Well, I may have gone home. They didn't keep us on the ship. We could go home. Gee, a lot of things went out of my mind. I stayed in the Merchant Marine for a long time afterwards. A matter of fact, I was taken off the ship in '51. Due to my background. My Communist Party thing. Then I went back to sea when there was a shortage of Radio Operators. In the meantime I got married, had children, and they all grew up, went out. And then I went back into the Merchant Marine when all the children left.

ED METZLER: So let's go back to Newport News.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Newport News, yeah.

ED METZLER: You've completed your first tour. It's six months, the voyage.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Right.

ED METZLER: And then, the war's still on. Did you sail again during the war?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, during the war.

ED METZLER: So tell me about that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well there was, I think it was the *Herman Krash*.

ED METZLER: So it was a different ship?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: A different, uh, I went back on that ship and then I got a different ship.

ED METZLER: Okay, so your second voyage was on the *Tyson* also.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Where'd you go?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I think we went back to the Mediterranean. We also stopped at England.

ED METZLER: Tell me about that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh yeah, we went back to England. When we got to England it was thick fog. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. And another ship hit us. And punched a hole into it, above the water line. We had grain, we had grain, I remember.

ED METZLER: Okay, now where was this in the UK? Where?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: We went to Glasgow.

ED METZLER: Okay, so you're up in the North? Up in Scotland.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah. It was so thick and, it was so thick we sent out an SOS as a matter of fact. We got hit.

ED METZLER: Were you in port when that happened?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, no. We were on the way in this thick fog where you couldn't see. And an English ship was coming to our rescue and we kept going. We didn't stop. And the hole turned out to be a few feet above the water line. We finally got to Glasgow and he gave up following us. And we just docked.

ED METZLER: He got tired of chasing you. *[Laughter]*

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, right. He got tired of chasing us.

ED METZLER: Now the old, speaking of chasing you, the old Liberty ships were pretty slow, weren't they?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, the convoy had to go as fast as its slowest ship in it. So the convoy would go about nine knots I think. Eight or nine knots.

ED METZLER: Was that about what it was good for?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Yeah.

ED METZLER: So tell me about Glasgow. What was that like?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh that was very good. It was a good port, you know, free port to go to.

ED METZLER: Different from Palermo?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, oh, way different. Very different. I know they had something, a lookout. Where you, we went upstairs to topside and we looked at a map, a moving map or a screen, and we could see everything below us. I don't know how they did it. It would reflect from the top and we could see people walking. It was like movies. You could see people walking, they were all looking around.

ED METZLER: All be darned.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, lookout. I also had a picture of me in kilts. *[Laughs]*

ED METZLER: Oh, yeah. That would be worth seeing.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Gee, I should have brought the picture with me.

ED METZLER: Yeah, yeah, you might want to keep that undercover. *[Laughter]*

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, I looked very well in it.

ED METZLER: You thought you looked good, huh?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Of course I was much younger then.

ED METZLER: Yeah, well.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It was one of the things my family appreciated.

ED METZLER: I'll bet they got a good laugh out of that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Yeah. So you had shore leave there while they were unloading.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, they were very good to us. In port they didn't need Radio.

While everybody was working, we could go ashore and look around.

ED METZLER: So you hit a pub or two?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Oh yeah, of course. We went to pubs. I learned to enjoy a Guinness stout.

ED METZLER: It's good stuff.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I drank, had a taste of fish and chips.

ED METZLER: Yeah?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Which they served in a newspaper, wrapped around. In a cone! They wrapped the newspaper around. [*Laughter*] I met a girl I remember. And that's it. Nothing ever happened. I sailed away afterwards. Very pretty girl, too, I remember. But I married an American afterwards.

ED METZLER: You married American, huh? So the *Tyson* sailed away from Glasgow. Did you go back to the States or what?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, we went back to the States eventually. The end of six months.

We went to several places before we went back to the States. Loaded and unloaded.

ED METZLER: Oh really? So you're still dropping cargo and picking up stuff?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah.

ED METZLER: Where else did you go? Do you remember?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well I don't remember. I remember after the war, I got on a ship, the *Marine Snapper*. When I got off the ship, the trip after I got off the ship the Korean War started. My ship happened to be in Korea and I was friendly, I got a letter from the Third Mate which I was friendly with. And he said a lot of refugees came on the ship. I wasn't on the ship at the time.

ED METZLER: So when you left Glasgow you hit several ports, and then what, back to the States?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: So the war must be getting pretty close to being over by then?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, yeah. I came back. The war was still on. But I never got into the Pacific during the war.

ED METZLER: Well that's a good place not to be from what I understand. It got pretty rough over there.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah.

ED METZLER: Did you sail again on another Merchant ship before the war was over?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, I did.

ED METZLER: You mentioned the name of another ship but I can't remember.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, let's see. It was the *Herman Krash*, another Liberty Ship. I also served on a Victory Ship. The difference between a Liberty and a Victory, the Victory, she had a steam turbine. And the Liberty ship had a piston.

ED METZLER: Yeah, the old reciprocating –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Reciprocating engine.

ED METZLER: Yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, only a three cylinder one.

ED METZLER: Mm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It only had 2500 horsepower. 2,500 horsepower.

ED METZLER: Now what was the name, the *Herman* what?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: *Krash*. That was a Liberty ship.

ED METZLER: Spell it, please?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: K-R-A-S-H.

ED METZLER: Alright.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: You can, you know, it's public record every ship that I was on.

ED METZLER: Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: It's registered.

ED METZLER: Okay. So let me change subjects a little bit. I know a lot of people who served in the Merchant Marine feel like they don't get the recognition that they really should have gotten on the part they played in World War Two. How do you feel about that?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well there is a difference. I can see both sides of the story. The Merchant Marine was extremely dangerous in the beginning of the war. When I went I didn't feel it was so dangerous. Unless I went toward the Murmansk. Then it was really dangerous. I didn't know where it was going. You got on the ship, you didn't really know where it was going. And I know that when we came to port I could go where I wanted to go. I know if you stayed off the ships you were going to get drafted. I wasn't on the same command as people who weren't on it. And certain legislators in the United States Congress turned against us as far as giving us, giving us recognition.

ED METZLER: Why?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well because we weren't in the service as far as being under command.

ED METZLER: That's true.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Although the war shipping industry tried to get us into the military. And they issued the Officers, they issued uniforms to us. And a rating. An Ensign's Rating. Which was the Navy Insignia. Ensign. It's the equivalent of a Second Lieutenant.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. I felt they should have done it, in view of the danger. We went into war zones. We were in history, we're the military, you know, the colonial days in fighting for our freedom from England.

ED METZLER: Yeah, the Merchant Marine goes way -

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: We were turned into Navy ships and Privateers. Grabbing other ships. I do feel, we wanted to get a pension. Well you can get a pension now but you have to prove that you needed it. So I never applied for pension. You can get a pension. But they also wanted \$25,000, they wanted \$1,000 a month at first. Then they lowered it to \$25,000. To get recognition from Congress. But the country's poor. With the national debt.

ED METZLER: Yeah, yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well we were mistreated afterwards but we also didn't, we had to pay for schooling. I paid for becoming a repairman. A TV repairman.

ED METZLER: So you didn't have the GI Bill because you weren't GIs.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right, we didn't have the GI Bill. We weren't GIs when it counted.

ED METZLER: Yeah, you weren't GIs. Yeah, really, officially.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right, yeah.

ED METZLER: Now did you wear any sort of a uniform?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, if you stayed on the ship in the war zone for six months, you were entitled to get the uniform.

ED METZLER: What did it look like?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Oh it looked exactly like a Navy uniform.

ED METZLER: Okay.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: You had a choice of a heavy winter coat –

ED METZLER: Pea coat.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Or a cravat. Yeah, I chose the cravat, most of it. Which was a raincoat. But it looked just like a Navy thing. But we got recognition emboss. When you're in all the

seamen's clubs. Yeah, they still have seamen's clubs all over the world. They're generally tied up with the religions.

ED METZLER: Mm-hmm.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: But I think even non-religions. And I go to them. And they help you out, change money, a place to stop, even have a beer or a meal. They give you information about what to see. They're very good.

ED METZLER: So the war, when the war was over, what did you do? Continue in the Merchant Marines?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. I continued until they took away my papers.

ED METZLER: Tell me about that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I think that's part of World War Two.

ED METZLER: Go ahead.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: During the war they didn't give a shit if you were [*laughs*], pardon.

ED METZLER: It's alright.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: They didn't care if you were a member of the Communist Party.

ED METZLER: You were a warm body and they wanted you! *[Laughs]*

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right. Yeah. There was no objection to it, even. I don't think, we had May Day parades! It was like a part of Americana. It was part of Americana. With parades and people cheered you and what not. The Unions joined the parades. There were various bands. You know, we spoke openly that we were better than a Capitalist system. And then they sent me a letter after the war. In '51, I had to quit. Before I was married. I had to quit, I remember, in 1951. After I went to sea and after the Korean War. We went to the Korean War because the Communists were taking over the Koreans.

ED METZLER: Yeah, that's right. Communists were suddenly the enemy instead of being an ally.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: That's right. That was, the Cold War started after that.

ED METZLER: That's absolutely right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. So they just sent me a telegram, "Turn in your papers." I didn't fight it or anything. I turned in all my papers. Except my discharges. Those were mine.

ED METZLER: How did they know you were in the Communist Party?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Somebody, one of the members in the thing, he snitched.

ED METZLER: All be danged.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. Then he apologized, then. Told 'em, he wanted us to know that he had snitched. Also I did something else. I did something more famous. There was first the leaders, the top leaders of [the] Communist Party were brought up on charges and they went to jail. Then there was a second, the Second Command or something in the Communist Party. And I put up half the bail of one of them. He was, you had to put up bail or go to jail. So I put up \$5,000 and somebody, another member put up the other \$5,000.

ED METZLER: That's a lot of money back then.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, that's right. It was my savings, you know? And that's how they knew I was in the party. After I put up the money, they still let me sail. They didn't know what to do with me. Because it was part of the law. Al Lannon, he was the leader of the Marine Division of the ACA. And he had a wife and two children, a boy and a girl. So he's a family man.

And they didn't know what to do about it. They let me sail afterwards. I sailed on the *Chris Jane* and the *Marine*. The *Marine Snapper* first and then the *Chris Jane*. And she was a turboelectric which was an unusual ship in my eyes. And they let me sail on here for about five months. Four or five months after the war. And I remember, what drove the ship was an electric motor. And they had gigantic generators on there. And the generators were tied up to the shaft. They were shaft driven. So they went at 60 cycles. Generators.

ED METZLER: Yeah, unusual, yeah.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And they go backwards and forwards with an electric motor. Then afterwards, when I quit that, then afterwards they asked for my papers. I sent them without fighting for it and then when I heard there was a shortage, like 30 years later, I asked for my papers back. And they just gave the papers back to me without any hearing or anything.

ED METZLER: So that must have been, 30 years later, that was in '70s and '80s then.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Right. I shipped out in 1986.

ED METZLER: So you sailed again.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah, I sailed again. I also know that the American, the what do they call it? There was a committee. Congress set up a committee. Un-American Activities Committee. And there were a bunch of us being called up before them.

ED METZLER: Did you go before them?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I went before him with a lawyer representing him. And I told him, we told him to go to hell. We didn't testify. To testify, he told me not to. And also, when I was going to work, two FBI men stopped me, going to work. Just before I was going into work. I was working as a, taking care of transmitters on the Empire State Building for radio paging purposes. And the transmitters were in the Empire State Building. And they said, you know, "we know you're a good guy". The two FBI guys said this. "Let us decide who's bad and who is good." I said, "I ain't talking to you." They wanted me to go with them to be interviewed and I wouldn't be interviewed. So I remember that very well. It was interesting that I got my papers without any problem. And I went back to sea.

ED METZLER: Did you stay in contact with –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And not only that, I went back to sea and I took a ship called the *Cape Texas*, and you needed security clearance. And I didn't have security clearance. And the ship got it, after the union assigned me this ship, the *Cape Texas*, the Captain and I both got security clearance with the same telegram. I don't know why the Captain needed security clearance.

ED METZLER: [*Laughs*] Maybe he was a member of the Communist Party!

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: No, he wasn't. He was a terrific Captain. He could have been a Radio Operator too. He knew all about radios.

ED METZLER: Oh he did?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I had a lot of respect for him. And he respected me. And he even let me take a picture holding a machine gun. 50-caliber machine gun. We didn't fire it [*laughter*]. Just take pictures. He called me, up, hey, "Sparks".

ED METZLER: Well I think this is really interesting to hear your story. I gotta tell you, I've interviewed a lot of veterans and civilians who were involved in World War Two. Never one that was a member of the Communist Party. And I just find this fascinating. And I particularly find it interesting how you viewed the Communist thinking and the Communist Party as being part of Americana. Because that's not the way, of course, when the Cold War started. That's not the way it became. So this is really interesting insight that you provided, Stan. What else can we talk about World War Two before I shut it down?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: What else? Well I agree with you, it has made my life very interesting. And I like it, it was a piece of Americana. May Day, May First. It was also said that May Day,

that Labor Day is an offshoot of May Day. That they decided to honor the workers. And it was a piece of Americana. Big parades and what not. And the people watched it. Threw confetti at us. You know, and so forth. We had big meetings. We had, in those days, before the World War and after the World War, we had a camp. And big bands, famous bands would come play for us. Band leaders I think were part of the party. And Camp Unity we called it. The Nazis had their camps, too. But they *[laughs]* weren't a part of Americana.

ED METZLER: No. No that wasn't a part of Americana.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: We had a Camp Kinderlach for children! And there's still a Camp Kinderlach. They kept the name. It's a German name. Jewish is part, it's really German. What else can I tell you? It was exciting. On the ship, a Captain of the ship my age, he says he remembers a bunch of Communists on the ship. Before the war, right after the war. From the AMMV. American Merchant Marine Veterans. And I appreciated, they knew my background and they still elected me. The American Merchant Marine is dying out and they're trying to get new blood into it. And they said I have to, it's non-political. You have to keep your political beliefs, and I understand that. My political opinions out of my job. My job in there is just to report meetings.

ED METZLER: Right, right.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: What went on at meetings.

ED METZLER: Sure.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Well I'm glad you brought it out of me. I'm not too good at talking. And I ran for Congress twice. I'm going to bring you some of my literature.

ED METZLER: Well tell me about –

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: And I'll tell you something else. You type in my name to a computer, "Stanley Blumenthal" and you'll see my website when I was running.

ED METZLER: I'm gonna do that.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: I spent a lot of money on it, speaking my piece. Over \$200,000.

ED METZLER: [*Whistles*] That's expensive.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: Yeah. And I got grandchildren to give it to [*laughter*]. I gave them anyway. But I feel that the national debt is so tremendous that the money's really not worth anything.

ED METZLER: That's right. That's a real danger I think.

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: This country is going down. And you know, it's shocking to me that they, I've seen it several times. That an average of 22 veterans are committing suicide. That does not speak well for our war. World War Two, nobody committed suicide after that war. We celebrated.

ED METZLER: It was different back then, wasn't it?

STANLEY BLUMENTHAL: We got no business telling other what kind of government they should have. If they want a Communist government, that's their business. And I'm not a Chinese Communist either. I resent all the factories being put into China. I want my grandchildren to have jobs here.

ED METZLER: I'm with you on that. Absolutely. Okay, I'm going to end the recording.