

*National Museum of the Pacific War*

*Nimitz Education and Research Center*

*Fredericksburg, Texas*

Interview with

**Mr. George S. Halfin**

Date of Interview: November 23, 2016

# **National Museum of the Pacific War**

## **Fredericksburg, Texas**

### **Interview with Mr. George S. Halfin**

Interview in progress.

Ed Metzler: This is Ed Metzler, and today is the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 2016. I am in Fredericksburg, Texas at the National Museum of the Pacific War, and I am interviewing Mr. George Halfin. This interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

So, George, thank you for spending the time with me today to share your World War II experiences. Let's get started by having you give us your full name, and when and where you were born, and we'll take it from there.

Mr. Halfin: Okay. My name is George Stapp (sp?) Halfin, and I was born in Port Arthur, Texas December the 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1921.

Ed Metzler: So, you were almost a Christmas baby!

Mr. Halfin: That's right. I don't know whether they (chuckles) were ... were excited about it.

Ed Metzler: Now, that kind of messes things up for you as a kid, didn't it? Because that meant the birthday was two days before Christmas?

Mr. Halfin: Never had a birthday party (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). Well, that's enough to depress anybody!

Mr. Halfin: (Chuckle), yeah.

Ed Metzler: Especially when you're a kid.

Mr. Halfin: Yes (chuckle).

Ed Metzler: Oh, my goodness! Well, let's see, 1921, so that means you're coming up on ninety-five years old?

Mr. Halfin: Yes sir.

Ed Metzler: That is very impressive. Congratulations!

Mr. Halfin: Well ...

Ed Metzler: All of us hope we can make it that far.

Mr. Halfin: ... just depend on the Lord, if you're going to make it that far.

Ed Metzler: I think that's got a lot to do with it.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you were born in Port Arthur, Texas. Do you have brothers and sisters?

Mr. Halfin: I had one brother and one sister.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, do they survive or ...

Mr. Halfin: No, they're both gone.

Ed Metzler: Okay. Okay, were you the eldest or ...?

Mr. Halfin: No, I was ... I was the middle.

Ed Metzler: You were in the middle?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I've heard stories about middle children (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter). Good or bad?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, well both (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: (Chuckles).

Ed Metzler: So, did ... were you raised in Port Arthur?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, spent all my young ... young childhood days up until I left to go to college.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And what did your father do for a living?

Mr. Halfin: He was Superintendent of the Paraffin Department for the Gulf Oil Corporation.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, I think I've heard of that company.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, they had ... they had some huge refineries over there in Port Arthur (unintelligible).

Mr. Halfin: Oh yes.

Ed Metzler: And your mother was a homemaker then?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, uh huh, she'd never worked out (cough).

Ed Metzler: I guess we'd call the domestic engineers now, huh, right?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), and so, you went to the local public schools?

Mr. Halfin: Yes.

Ed Metzler: If you were born in '21, then you were just coming up on twenty years old when the war started.

Mr. Halfin: That's right.

Ed Metzler: So, tell me about what you remember about December the 7<sup>th</sup>, 1941.

Mr. Halfin: I was a ... just ... just beginning my sophomore year at ...

Ed Metzler: At Texas A&M?

Mr. Halfin: ... Texas A&M.

Ed Metzler: Uh huh.

Mr. Halfin: And they ... and they had a place called Gyne (sp?) Hall which they had a theater, and it was a free show every Sunday afternoon. And we were ... I was watching that show when they came across the loudspeaker saying that the Japanese had just bombed Pearl Harbor. And the next day at A&M ...

Ed Metzler: Well, what was the reaction in the room when ... when they heard that?

Mr. Halfin: Gasping. I mean, I can't ..., "What?!" you know (chuckles) just 'cause of ... as far as we were concerned, there was nothing leading up to it that we were aware of, leading up to the fact that ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: ... we would be attacked.

Ed Metzler: Blindsided, we were!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Right.

Ed Metzler: Now, back then everybody was a member of the Corps, were they not?

Mr. Halfin: Right.

Ed Metzler: So, you were, too.

Mr. Halfin: Yes.

Ed Metzler: And so, that means, all of you guys are, and it's all guys back then ...

Mr. Halfin: That's right (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: ... were basically going through modified military training as well as going to university.

Mr. Halfin: Oh yes. And the day after Pearl Harbor, why, we were out there digging trenches on the campus.

Ed Metzler: For what purpose?

Mr. Halfin: Just training, I guess, (unintelligible) war footing.

Ed Metzler: You decided to dig ditches, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah!

Ed Metzler: You might need that knowledge.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, might need trenches, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So, I guess since you were in university, you weren't a prime draft uh, candidate, I mean, right away. What did you decide to do? Did you decide to stay in school or what?

Mr. Halfin: Uh well, I ... you know, later on they ... they deferred the juniors and seniors, but any below that they just said, "Go see your draft board."

Ed Metzler: Oh!

Mr. Halfin: But at that time that ... they hadn't settled on that, and I realized that being a ... starting first, second year, why, I was not going to be able to finish A&M ... just before I'd be drafted, so I dropped out in order to save the money that I had put up. They would refund it to me, early, and I'd left there and went to San Antonio and became a draftsman in the uh, State Highway Department in San Antonio. And then I was ... I found out a job that was opening at the Post Engineers in Hondo at the air base there, so I ...

Ed Metzler: So, you're still a civilian though at this point?

Mr. Halfin: I'm still a civilian. And I went to work there as ... with the Post Engineers, and it was there that I uh, found out my notice was coming.

Ed Metzler: So, you were a single man at this point?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, right.

Ed Metzler: So, what were you ... living in an apartment or in somebody's house or what?

Mr. Halfin: You know, you just ... you just ... no one would believe this, but they ... they had a room in a ... in some kind of a boarding house, I guess, I don't know; they just had cots. And you took a cot, you rented a cot.

Ed Metzler: This is almost like barracks!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's right, only they just ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckle).

Mr. Halfin: ... no, (laughter), they just ... just a row of cots. And the night shift slept on it during the day, and the ... and the day shift slept on it at night. You put your suitcase underneath the ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Halfin: ... underneath the cot. But ...

Ed Metzler: Well, that's efficiency for you.

Mr. Halfin: Oh, yeah!

Ed Metzler: Especially when you have a housing shortage which I'm sure ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's right. It was a housing shortage; you just couldn't find things.

Ed Metzler: So, was that what, an Army Air Corps base there?

Mr. Halfin: Uh yes, its an Air Force base, uh hum.

Ed Metzler: Like it sounds before they actually had the Air Force per se.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: It was just the Army Air Corps, I guess.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, uh hum.

Ed Metzler: And so, what were they doing? Fly ... training there? Do you remember?

Mr. Halfin: I don't know. I ... I don't remember what ... what the purpose of that was.

Ed Metzler: And so, what was your job there?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, draftsman with the Post Engineers.

Ed Metzler: Which I think goes back to what it was that you were studying at Texas A&M. Why don't you tell us that?

Mr. Halfin: Well, I was ... I was (unintelligible) architecture.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: So, I ... I was used to the drawing board, T squares and so forth.

Ed Metzler: Right, yeah, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: So, uh, but when I found out that the draft notice was on its way, someone in San Antonio had been living called me and said or called someone, I ... I guess, at the Post Engineer's office, and said, "Your draft notice just arrived, and I will forward it to you."

Ed Metzler: Oh.

Mr. Halfin: So, I said ...

Ed Metzler: *Greetings!* (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah, Greetings (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: You have been selected. So, I said, "You know what? They're not going to put me where they want me. I'm going to go in and select my ..." So, I went into San Antonio, and I went into the Paratroopers office, and told them I wanted ...

Ed Metzler: So, is this at Fort Sam and ... when you went in?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, no, I ... I don't ... it wasn't on the base, it was just a recruiting uh, center there.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And I told them I'd like to sign up for the paratroopers. And they asking me some questions. Said, "Well, have you gotten your ... your draft notice yet?" I said, "No, I haven't got it, but its on its way." They said, "We're sorry, we can't take you." You know?

Ed Metzler: Because you had already, in essence, been drafted, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, been drafted, right. 'Cause this ... this was a volunteer ...

Ed Metzler: Right, sure.

Mr. Halfin: ... and you know the longer I thought about it, uh, that ... that two by four that hit me up beside the head, I begun to realize that ... it saved my life because I don't like jumping out of high places (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Paratroopers took a licking anyhow.

Mr. Halfin: Oh, yeah!

Ed Metzler: You probably would have ended up in Europe.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause that's where most of the paratrooping was.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so. Anyway, I was inducted in Fort Sam Houston.

Ed Metzler: About what date?

Mr. Halfin: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Was that early '42 or ...

Mr. Halfin: Yes, uh huh, yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, the war was several months old anyhow.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Yeah, it just ...

Ed Metzler: When we went to war, how did things change on the domestic front? What ... what changed?

Mr. Halfin: Well, like I say, my dad worked at Gulf Oil, and he was ... he ... it was his job to provide the necessary things for ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you had to run the refineries.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, right. And my mother, she went to the Red Cross and ... and volunteered to wrap bandages.

Ed Metzler: And what about ... you said you had a brother.

Mr. Halfin: Yes.

Ed Metzler: Was this a younger brother?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, a younger brother, and he came in a little later, and he was in the Navy.

Ed Metzler: Did you run into rationing or ...

Mr. Halfin: Oh, oh, well, uh ...

Ed Metzler: It probably took a while to kick in (unintelligible).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, but I know ... I know my parents, everything was rationed, you know, gasoline and some food products were ...

Ed Metzler: Sugar and coffee and ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, things (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: It was a different time, wasn't it?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, it was, yes it was.

Ed Metzler: But everybody was behind the war effort from what I understand.

Mr. Halfin: Oh, that ... that was the greatest generation that ever ... God ever created.

Ed Metzler: That's what we call you guys.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.



Ed Metzler: The Greatest Generation.

Mr. Halfin: Because everybody dug in. Uh, even ... even the little kids. They, ... they collected scrap iron, you know, to ... to centers. And if you had something that you didn't use it, made of metal, you'd throw it into the recycling, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, where did you go to boot camp?

Mr. Halfin: At Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Ed Metzler: Is that on the coast or inland in the ... in the mountains?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, yes.

Ed Metzler: So, that's what in the Norfolk area kind of?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. It ... it was mountainous, I mean, hilly part of the country 'cause I ...

Ed Metzler: So, what ... okay.

Mr. Halfin: ... I remember, our basic training there was in ... they put you a full fill pack on your and you'd going uphill was though, but going downhill wasn't so bad (laughter).

Ed Metzler: It was easier anyhow.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: How did you find basic training? Did it wear you out or were you ... did you feel like ...?

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, it was something different, something new. Like any young kid, why, "Hey, this is it," you know? And I didn't have any ... any ill feelings against the basic training.

Ed Metzler: How'd your mother feel about you going off to war?

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, she never ... uh, my parents never said a whole lot, you know? I mean, they knew that we were at war and it ... everybody ... everybody else was being drafted, so you just had to accept it. I'm sure that's what they did.

Ed Metzler: You were really separated from your parents fairly early ... fairly young when you went off to school and ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's right.

Ed Metzler: ... you didn't come back (laughter) ...

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter).

Ed Metzler: ... for a while, did you?

Mr. Halfin: That's right.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. But after ...

Ed Metzler: So, you made it through boot camp and survived, so what happened next?

Mr. Halfin: They sent me to the University of Kentucky to do ... uh, study geodetic computing. I didn't even know what that was or what it meant (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: I didn't know they had computing, well, I guess ...

Mr. Halfin: (Chuckles), well, now the computer ...

Ed Metzler: They had slide rules probably.

Mr. Halfin: ... it was ... it was just like a big uh, typewriter deal, and I spent six weeks. We were stationed at ... in a hotel there. And every morning they would fall out in formation and march to the university.

Ed Metzler: Which town ... which ... which area of Kentucky was it?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, I'm trying to remember, Phoenix Hotel, I (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, was this in the Louisville area or ...

Mr. Halfin: Uh, no, Ken ... uh, no, I can't remember just what town.

Ed Metzler: That was a long time ago.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, I ... I forget a few things.

Ed Metzler: So, you're typing stuff in. That means you have a kind of an early version of a keyboard then?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, right, uh hum.

Ed Metzler: And was it hard what you learned or did it come naturally to you?

Mr. Halfin: Well, it ... no, it came naturally to me. I ... I'd ... I really, I guess, I didn't realize what it was even doing (laughter), you know, but I guess (unintelligible) because I had gone to A&M that college, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. So, geodetic?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Computing?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, and I don't know ... I'm not sure just what that encompassed. But aft ... after we finished, we were sent to Washing, State of Washington to Fort George Wright. Typical Army, I never did anything in geodetic computing, never (laughter).

Ed Metzler: You were trained, but you never ...

Mr. Halfin: I (unintelligible), that right.

Ed Metzler: ... but you never used it. Welcome to the Army, huh?

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), yeah.

Ed Metzler: Now, you said, "We went to Washington."

Mr. Halfin: Oh, I got ...

Ed Metzler: You and what, a group of guys ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... that trained together?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, we were training together, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, you had some buddies I guess ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah! Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... that you had made.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. I ... I'm assuming that all of them, uh, most of them went to where I went, but some ... they might have sent some someplace else, I don't know.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: I ... I didn't follow each ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah, well.

Mr. Halfin: ... each one (cough).

Ed Metzler: So, how did you get out to Washington State? They put you on a train?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, yes, on ... by train.

Ed Metzler: That's a long train ride, isn't it?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, long train ride. We went to Salt Lake City first, and then from there we went to Washington.

Ed Metzler: Had you ever been out west like that?

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: So, this is a ... kind of an adventure and explore ... exploration and an adventure for you.

Mr. Halfin: I'd never been out of the State of Texas (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Until you went to Virginia, huh?

Mr. Halfin: That's right.

Ed Metzler: So, you're just a ... a good ole Texas boy at that point?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's right.

Ed Metzler: So, what was it like to go into the outside world?

Mr. Halfin: Well, I, you know, I had no regrets because I ... I enjoyed traveling around, and while we were ... I was in the uh, 9 ... 10, uh, 910<sup>th</sup> Engineers, we did a lot of traveling.

Ed Metzler: So, was that your primary unit, the 910<sup>th</sup> Engineers?

Mr. Halfin: (Cough), it was until they ... they moved us in ... to Colorado Springs.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so how long were you roughly ... were you up in Washington then?

Mr. Halfin: I'd say about, uh, about six months, I guess.

Ed Metzler: And what were you doing while you were there?

Mr. Halfin: Uhm, I was in the, can't remember what we called it. Anyway, we were in the drafting end of it, and it was our business to ... to lay out uh, extending runways in the United States to handle military airplanes. We would design up runway extensions and ... and then I guess the Seabees or somebody built them. But they transferred us to Colorado Spring at an air base there. We became ... then we became the 910<sup>th</sup> Engineers Air Force Headquarters Company.

Ed Metzler: 910<sup>th</sup> Engineers Air Force Headquarters ...

Mr. Halfin: Headquarters Company, right.

Ed Metzler: And that's in the Army though even though it says Air Force.

Mr. Halfin: Yes, yes, yes.

Ed Metzler: So, it's the Army Air Force.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, well we just attached to the ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: ... we were in the Army, but we were attached to the Air Force.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And what was the name of the Fort up in Washington State where you were? Fort?

Mr. Halfin: Fort George Wright.

Ed Metzler: So, you're in Colorado Springs; what are you doing there, the same thing or ...

Mr. Halfin: Well, we ... we traveled all over the United States by ... by rail, and you know, I can't ... I ... I can't understand why we would... traveling so ... so many states. I think we ... we were ... went through ... with stops at probably about forty, forty-five of the ... of the states.

Ed Metzler: My word, you got all over the place!

Mr. Halfin: We were on a train practically the whole time we were in this country.

Ed Metzler: Well, when you went to these various locations, what would you do? I mean, did you actually have to go and design something for (unintelligible)?

Mr. Halfin: You know, that part ... that part of my life, I ... it just ... now it just a haze.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: I can't ... I can't remember what our purpose for traveling like that was for. But the one ...

Ed Metzler: Were you always with the same group of people ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... in your unit?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you get to know some of those guys pretty well?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you stay in contact with them after the war?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, yeah. Yeah, a few of them, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Uh hum. Uh, now one ... one thing that I do remember that really stood out. We had a survey crew, too, you know? Yeah, that laid out, oh, that's what it was. We ... on these landing strips, we would ... we would ... we were clocking the amount of time (unintelligible) amount of length ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: ... that it took these planes to land and to the end of the runway.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, now it comes back to me. Yeah, we would sit on the side of the runway, clock when the ... when they touched down and when ... when it finally came to rest at the end. But one ... and then, also, we had ... had laid out air to air gunnery range in the country first, so that they were big enough, these ranges were big enough so that ... any air ... air ... artillery from ... from the plane would not harm anybody on the ground.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, the gunfire wouldn't ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... wouldn't ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... wouldn't take out some guy's chicken coop out (unintelligible) ...

Mr. Halfin: Right, that's right.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Halfin: That's right.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter). And we were ... they had an abandoned school that, a little abandoned school near Kim, Colorado, and so we used that as sort of ... what'd you'd call a bivouac.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And ...

Ed Metzler: That was kind of your headquarters then, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's right, and that's where we slept in that school house, and it was abandoned. And we had a terrific snow storm that dropped about four feet of snow, and even our jeeps couldn't compete with that. Man, and ...

Ed Metzler: That's a lot of snow!

Mr. Halfin: That's right, and we were snowbound for about two weeks.

Ed Metzler: What was the name of the town?

Mr. Halfin: Kim.

Ed Metzler: Spell it.

Mr. Halfin: K-i-m.

Ed Metzler: And where is that in Colorado, eastern part of Colorado?

Mr. Halfin: You ... no.

Ed Metzler: Is it in the ... in the plains area or ...

Mr. Halfin: No, no, it didn't ... it's in the more, uh, it's not mountainous; it's not the mountainous part, but it's ... it's not just plains.

Ed Metzler: So, four feet of snow and the jeeps couldn't make it?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, no! We were ... we were snowbound, but we did have enough K-rations (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles). So, about how many guys in your unit there? I mean, are we talking twenty or fifty or ...

Mr. Halfin: No. It was about ... about fifteen or twenty.

Ed Metzler: So, this is a pretty small group.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And you were all doing the same thing then?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever get a cooked meal or were you always on K-rations?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, no, well, before the storm, why, we could ... they ... they had a little bit of ... they had a little bit of ... of food that you ... you could eat, but most ... most ...

Ed Metzler: What was the food like?

Mr. Halfin: Huh?

Ed Metzler: How ... how was the food?

Mr. Halfin: Well ...

Ed Metzler: Great home cooking or ...

Mr. Halfin: I ate it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: I don't (laughter) don't remember much what it tasted like. By anyway ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), it wasn't Mama's cooking, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Boy, yeah, no. No, but most ... most of the ... most of the eating when we were ... like that were on K-rations, C-rations.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And when you were traveling around the country, did you tend to stay in what local hotels or ...

Mr. Halfin: Oh ...

Ed Metzler: ... on the trains or what?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, you know, I can't ... I really can't remember.

Ed Metzler: Well, it doesn't stand out for you.

Mr. Halfin: No, no.

Ed Metzler: It must have not been very, very impressive one way or the other.

Mr. Halfin: No, it ... no, it wasn't no Waldorf Astoria; wherever we stayed, I tell you (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), that's right! Did you get leave to go back home during any of this period of time or were you just ...

Mr. Halfin: Uh, when I was at Fort Belvoir, I ... I got a three-day pass to ... and went up to New York City.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And when I was in Washington, I got a three-day pass up at ... into Canada. I went to ...

Ed Metzler: You can't get home on three days though.

Mr. Halfin: No, no, no.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: So, you really didn't get back to Texas?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, the only time I ever got ... I didn't get back to Texas at that time, but it was ... as close as I ever got to home was in Lexington. I ... that's where we were, Lexington, Kentucky.

Ed Metzler: Lexington, Kentucky.

Mr. Halfin: That's where I went to ... at university.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: But they had what they called a pass over, how was that called, some kind of pass over station there where ... where you can make a recording, a little recording and to send home to your ... your home, yeah.



Ed Metzler: So, what was it a little tape recorder of some sort?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, a little ... sort of like ... almost ... almost like a paper disc, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Halfin: It ... it wasn't real paper, but it was hard enough ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: ... that they'd record your message on.

Ed Metzler: Huh, never heard of that!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: That's the first time ...

Mr. Halfin: I though ... I think you called [it] the lay-over station.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And they catered to ...

Ed Metzler: So, you sent a recording or two home to ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... Mom and Dad?

Mr. Halfin: Right, right.

Ed Metzler: Said, "I'm okay."

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: "See you when I see you."

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. I'll tell you something else that was a little interesting from Lexington, too. During Christmas holiday, another friend of mine in the Army, we decided that we would hitchhike to Carl ... not Carlsbad, but Mammoth Cave, and we ... people ... pick us ... pick us up, and we didn't any trouble getting to where we were wanting ... wanting to go because people would pick up a soldier, you know? When we got there, it was closed for Christmas.

Ed Metzler: Oh, no!

Mr. Halfin: But they had a ranger on ... on duty; he took us on a special tour ... took us ...

Ed Metzler: That's neat!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah! Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Mammoth Caves is a neat place; I've been there.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: That's a hole in the ground ... that is.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. It doesn't compare to Carlsbad Caverns, but ...

Ed Metzler: No, but it's the best they got in Kentucky (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, yeah. They was ... it was nice.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: You're stationed out of Kim, Colorado, and how long were you doing that job before things changed for you?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, we were probably out there maybe three weeks.

Ed Metzler: Oh, it's that quick?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, it didn't take long to ... for them to survey that out. And ...

Ed Metzler: So, who was your commanding officer, do you ... I don't ... you don't have to give me the name, but I'm curious as to what the relationship was between you enlisted guys and your officer.

Mr. Halfin: Uh, oh, man, no, (unintelligible) very good, very good. The only one I can remember offhand right now is, Lieutenant Ca ... DiCessa (sp?), Lieutenant DiCessa.

Ed Metzler: Where was he from; that's an interesting name.

Mr. Halfin: He was from Pennsylvania.

Ed Metzler: Probably Polish or something.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Hum. I guess you probably met people from all over the United States when you were in the Army that you wouldn't have met otherwise, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: I guess New York City ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, the other (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: ... and California and all points in between.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. They came from everywhere.

Ed Metzler: So, where did you go then after that assignment?

Mr. Halfin: Uh well, you know, I don't ... don't remember just how long we were at Colorado Springs before we shipped out to Puget Sound ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: ... to go overseas.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And ...

Ed Metzler: So, what is this? 1943?

Mr. Halfin: No, I don't ...

Ed Metzler: Maybe even '44 by now?

Mr. Halfin: No, it ... well, it probably was '43.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, 'cause it ... we were probably in the States probably close (unintelligible) year.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. Did they tell you where you were going when you ...

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: ... shipped out?

Mr. Halfin: No, no, no.

Ed Metzler: No, just ...

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Halfin: They didn't ... they was all secrets, so (chuckles) but I'll tell you a very interesting little story though.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Halfin: Before we left, they ... they'd told us, he said, "Now, when you get on that ship and start out they said its going to be a little rocky." He said, "Now, it ... it ... sea sickness is all in your head. I mean, you ... you don't think about it, you know?" So, we ... we all listened and then when we got ashore, I mean, aboard, why, one of our men had a little dog, and he put it in his duffel bag, and ... and took it aboard ship. And that poor little dog, it didn't get the instructions, because it was so sick it couldn't stand up. I'll tell you (chuckles) ...

Ed Metzler: So, you had a sea sick dog in the group (laughter)?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, along with the rest of us (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Well, did you get sea sick?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, twenty-eight days I was sea sick. I was sea sick the whole time. I spent all my time practically in sick bay.

Ed Metzler: So, you're one of the guys that literally never got over it, huh?

Mr. Halfin: That's right. That's right.

Ed Metzler: That is a horrible ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... horrible thing, too.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, I was sick the whole time (chuckle). Twenty-eight days we were going.

Ed Metzler: It's a *long* time to be physically ill the whole time.

Mr. Halfin: It's a long haul, yeah. Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: What kind of a ship was it?

Mr. Halfin: Well, they called them troop ships, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: I don't know ... don't know too much about the ship itself except that it ... it had ... down in the hold, why, they had bunks, you know, where ...

Ed Metzler: It's probably what they called a liberty ship, just kind of like a freighter.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Yeah, right, right.

Ed Metzler: Only stuffed full of troops.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, (laughter) that's right.

Ed Metzler: So, there was a bunch of guys onboard, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, what you have, a bunk that you tried to sleep in ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... when you weren't sick (laughter)?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Well, yeah, yeah (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Maybe that's one nice thing about being asleep.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: 'Cause you can't ... you can't be sick ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... while you're asleep.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's right.

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, the food was great, was it, and you enjoyed it all?

Mr. Halfin: Well, I don't know about the food; I can't remember anything about the food.

Ed Metzler: But you didn't keep it down anyhow, so it didn't matter, I guess.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right, that ... that's right.

Ed Metzler: So, you must have lost some weight.

Mr. Halfin: Uh yeah. I ... there at the beginning, I was down to about a hundred and twenty pounds.

Ed Metzler: What was normal or you back then?

Mr. Halfin: Well, I was, back then when I went in I was about a hundred and twenty-five, twenty ... twenty-eight.

Ed Metzler: Okay.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, I lost a little.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so that's, yeah, that's not too bad.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, twenty-eight days, and where did you end up?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, well, we stopped at Hawaii for uh, refueling.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: I went ashore. So, I ... I've said, "Now that I once went to Hawaii," you know.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, okay.

Mr. Halfin: I just got off the ship long enough to put my feet on the ground.

Ed Metzler: How'd it feel to be on solid ground?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, good (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), yeah. I welcomed that ... that little change.

Ed Metzler: So, how long were you there before you shipped out again; just a day or so?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, oh yeah. Yeah, it wasn't ... it was hardly any time (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Did you get into Honolulu?

Mr. Halfin: No, oh, no. I didn't even get off the ship except to put my foot on the ground.

Ed Metzler: Kiss the ground (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: And then back on ... on the ship.

Ed Metzler: So, that was ... you were in Pearl Harbor then, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Yeah, now I wasn't stationed there, no.

Ed Metzler: No, no, no, but I mean, that's where your ship went in ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... for refueling and refitting.

Mr. Halfin: Right, re ... refueling. That's right.

Ed Metzler: What did you see there that was anything out of the ordinary?

Mr. Halfin: Nothing. I remember seeing a sign that said, "Aloha," or whatever it is; welcome and the same thing, I think, when you leave.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: (Chuckles).

Ed Metzler: It means the same thing I think either way.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. Anyway ...

Ed Metzler: But you didn't see any of the ...

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: ... Battleship Row ...

Mr. Halfin: No, no.

Ed Metzler: ... where they hadn't gotten their ships out?

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: Did you see any girls in hula shirts?

Mr. Halfin: No (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Well, heck!

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), I know it! What a waste of time, huh (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah, you didn't stay there long enough then (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. But I didn't know it, my brother was stationed there at the time.

Ed Metzler: Is that right?!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, he was in the Navy.

Mr. Halfin: He was in the Navy.

Ed Metzler: And you guys didn't even know to cross paths?

Mr. Halfin: That's right.

Ed Metzler: You didn't have a cell phone; you couldn't communicate with him?

Mr. Halfin: Cell phone (laughter)?

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). Just a joke (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, I know it (laughter). I knew it had to be.

Ed Metzler: So, its back aboard ship, your favorite place to be.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And then out again?

Mr. Halfin: Out again, and we headed for Guam.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And that was your destination?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, Guam had been overrun by the Japanese, and it had to be retaken.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And so, it had been fully taken back before you got there?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, they took Guam right, almost after Pearl Harbor.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. And ... but when you got there, they Japanese had been defeated from ...

Mr. Halfin: They had been defeated; the only thing they had to worry about was still snipers that didn't know the war was ... whether it would be over or they wanted to keep fighting or what.

Ed Metzler: They didn't get the memo, huh (chuckles).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, they, you know, there was so much jungle there that they ... they could hide pretty well.

Ed Metzler: Describe for me what Guam looked like. I have never been there – mountainous and jungle, what?

Mr. Halfin: No, no. No, no, it wasn't mountainous as far as I ... its not a very big island, you know.

Ed Metzler: Is there a town there?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, they had ... Gana, G-a-n-a [s/b Agana?], and uh, that was, I think that was the biggest. But they ... we're talking about towns, now, you're not talking about (chuckles) ...

Ed Metzler: No, I understand.

Mr. Halfin: ... about shopping centers and all that. And (unintelligible) on all the ... all the huts now, they had the thatched roof.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: You know? You didn't have anything like a metal roof or a shingled roof or anything.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: It was thatched.

Ed Metzler: It's the old grass-hut thing, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, a lot of grass huts.

Ed Metzler: So, you have an indigenous population there, I ... which is, I guess, a nice way to say natives.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right.

Ed Metzler: And they were brown skinned, kind of Samoan type or ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, they ... they were ... they weren't real dark.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: They were ... they were sort of light, light tanned.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: But they ... they were very friendly, you know.

Ed Metzler: Is that right?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, yeah. They appreciated us.

Ed Metzler: So, I guess the Japanese didn't treat them so well.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, (chuckles), no. I don't think so. The Japanese didn't teach [s/b treat?] anybody ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... treat anyone too well.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), no it's ... they seemed to have that reputation.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.



Ed Metzler: So, the ship came in there and what happened in Guam with you? What ... what did you do?

Mr. Halfin: Well, we ... at the very beginning, we really didn't ... did nothing. They ... we ... we had some bulldozers and they cleared a ... area in ... in the jungle.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And they ... pretty good ... pretty good area around and, of course, at the beginning we slept on ... on the ground in ... in sleeping bags.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And ... in the tents.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Got ... kind of got used to those rock making holes in your back. But before they ... they finally got around to building a ... a actual building there ... but they cleared this area around and they ... it was like a road that went all the way around the area, and they had a little ditch in case of the rain, you know.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, to drain.

Mr. Halfin: To ... to drain the ... uh, so they wouldn't get flooded from the outside. Once we set up then ... then that's when we began in ... in my ... my particular platoon, uh, began to design runways for the different islands and try to get airplanes a little closer to ... to Japan.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. The area that they cleared on Guam was basically for you guys to set up shop?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Or were they clearing it for a runway?

Mr. Halfin: Oh no, no, no, just for us. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And so, they ended up building barracks of some sort for you guys?

Mr. Halfin: Well ...

Ed Metzler: Or Quonset huts or what?

Mr. Halfin: ... they were, yeah, sort of ... sort of like, uh, a barracks I guess you might (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: But a wooden building?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Yeah, wooden buildings. And they was just like anything that they had to, you know, your ... your bunk or your cot on each side ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: ... and down the middle was the walkway.

Ed Metzler: So, is Guam tropical?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, we're talking banana trees and palm trees and ...

Mr. Halfin: Palm trees, yeah, and lots of rain.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, lots of rain.

Ed Metzler: So, what was the food like there? Did they have a decent cook?

Mr. Halfin: Well, they set up ... they, yeah, they ... they tried to set up a ... a campsite that had ... had cooks and so forth, you know. We weren't on ... on C-rations.

Ed Metzler: And at least, you weren't at sea either.

Mr. Halfin: No, (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So, you didn't get sick (unintelligible).

Mr. Halfin: So, I got to eat again (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Put some weight back on.

Mr. Halfin: That's right.

Ed Metzler: So, if its tropical, that means mosquitoes.

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, I don't ever remember anything like mosquitoes on that island.

Ed Metzler: You didn't sleep under mosquito netting?

Mr. Halfin: No, no, nope.

Ed Metzler: That's amazing.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. I don't ever remember fighting mosquitoes.

Ed Metzler: So, nobody got malaria or ...

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: ... dinghy fever or any of that?

Mr. Halfin: No, no, no.

Ed Metzler: Just the stray bullet from a sniper up in the hills?

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), that's something, yeah, that's something you had to kind of watch out for.

Ed Metzler: Yeah. Did it ever actually happen to you?

Mr. Halfin: (Chuckle), uh, no, I never got shot at by ...

Ed Metzler: That's good (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah (chuckle) by a sniper. But one night when I ... it was my turn to do patrol duty.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Of course, it was dark as you ... as you patrolled the edge of the ... of the bivouac area ...

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: ... you ... your ... all your attention is (unintelligible) front is to the right because you're listening for any kind of commotion. And that night I was walking real close to the ditch and in ... in the meantime, some ... uh, canes began to sprout out, small canes that grow in ... in the ditch, and as I walked along, uh, looking to my right and listening to my right, these canes shook real ...

Ed Metzler: Stared rustling, huh?

Mr. Halfin: ... rustling, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: And (chuckle) the only thing I could do was swing with my carbine and just wield it and just pump, Boy, I *boom, boom, boom!* And it was so dark you couldn't see, you know, what ... what the deal was. But everybody, now this was before we had ... had built up the barracks and so forth, uh, everybody was intense. Man, they came out ...

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles), they came boiling out of those tents (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... oh, looking for a car ... uh, for a firefight, you know, because (laughter) anytime you heard a ... heard a shot like that. When we finally realized that, you know, there was no, no, no Japs attacking, uh, everything quieted down. And the next day, I went back to that area to see, you know, what they ... caused it. And on Guam the ... the toad frogs are that big.

Ed Metzler: And you're saying like almost a foot long.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, like a ...

Ed Metzler: *Huge!*

Mr. Halfin: ... like a turtle (laughter)

Ed Metzler: More like the size of a turtle, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. And there was a dead frog. I had ... I had actually hit that frog.

Ed Metzler: You'd hit him, too!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, that's ... that was my first casualty (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: So ... so, you didn't get a Bronze Star or anything for that, did you?

Mr. Halfin: I ... I didn't get any kind of metal for that (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), I love that.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, did anybody try and eat bullfrogs when they were there? I mean, frog legs are supposed to be good.

Mr. Halfin: I don't think the cooks cooked it (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), they wouldn't know what to do with the stuff.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: My gosh!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: How long were you there on Guam?

Mr. Halfin: You know ...

Ed Metzler: Was it the balance of the war, was ... or did you go elsewhere?

Mr. Halfin: No, I stayed there on Guam the whole time. You know, because of my architecture ... fresh ... freshman year, knew very little about architecture, but they called ... they came over one day and said ... asked for me. And ...

Ed Metzler: Personally?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, personally. And ...

Ed Metzler: And who is *they*?

Mr. Halfin: Huh?

Ed Metzler: Who is *they*?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, some, uh, Lieutenant or a Naval officer or something came over that I can't remember.

Ed Metzler: So, it's from the Navy?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And they said, "We understand that you have architectural experience," you know? And I said, "Well, not ... not very much." Said, "Well, you're the most qualified on the island." (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Halfin: And so, they said, "We need a set of plans for ... because Admiral Nimitz is coming back to set up his command on Guam."

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And so, they said, "We need for you to design up an office for the Pacific Command." And (chuckles), I was ... you talk about ...

Ed Metzler: That's a real honor!

Mr. Halfin: Oh, it's an honor, but it's ... it's something that you kind of get nervous about (laughter). And so, anyway, they ... another draftsman in the company by the name of Gerald Green (sp?) from Timpson, Texas ... they assigned him to help me with the drawings. So, we started out and we got the ... the floor plan laid out with the rooms and so forth, kind of got an idea from what they ... what they expected or ... or what they wanted, you know? So, we ... we did ... we did up the floor plan, and ...

Ed Metzler: Well, they described to you what it was they were looking for in generalities?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. And Gerald said, "We have to have a ... a conference room here and ... and a private room for him and so forth." So, we ... we laid it out, and give it ... the Seabees took it. And the Seabees started in and they laid ... laid all the foundation and ... and everything and the flooring and started up with the walls around. And we were in there trying to draw everything up as fast as we could. And those Seabees, of course, they're professionals. They're big ... all of them are builders, you know, and they put that thing up so fast and (chuckles),

and the ... the command came over and said we didn't have ... we need, you know, we need the ... these plans for our, I guess, records or whatever, and we had to go over and ... and sketch the roofing and everything that they had already built (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So you could have it in the plans (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right.

Ed Metzler: That's kind of backwards, isn't it?

Mr. Halfin: I ... that's where they put their horse, I mean, the cart before the horse.

Ed Metzler: Yeah (laughter), I think so.

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), yeah.

Ed Metzler: That is a great story!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. But its so surprising, when I was going through the Museum, it said there Admiral Nimitz came back to Guam to set up his central command.

Ed Metzler: And by golly, he did!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah! And he did!

Ed Metzler: And you helped design the building that he stayed in.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. I thought that was (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: That makes you feel good, doesn't it?

Mr. Halfin: I told ... I told my kids about it, and I ... I said ... they probably think I was just lying, you know?

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Halfin: And when we got to the house, "Come here, I want to show you (laughter)."

Ed Metzler: That is interesting!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: The Seabees worked so fast that you guys had to go up to see what plans you should be drawing ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... so they would match what actually got built?

Mr. Halfin: That's right!

Ed Metzler: So, describe the building to me? Was it wood?

Mr. Halfin: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Stone?

Mr. Halfin: No, no, no. No, no, it was framed.

Ed Metzler: Framed?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: I mean, pretty nice-looking little building?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, yeah they fixed it up real nice.

Ed Metzler: I might ... if I remember correctly, it was kind of like up on a hill, wasn't it? I ...  
I mean, I've heard these stories about it, and ... and I ...

Mr. Halfin: You know, on Guam, they ...

Ed Metzler: There aren't any hills (laughter)?

Mr. Halfin: I don't remember any hills, but there might have been some.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well ...

Mr. Halfin: But I'm sure it was ... it was ... it was near Harmon Field, that was ... that was  
the main air base.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: So, was it occur ... it got occupied then while you were still there on Guam.

Mr. Halfin: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: I mean, Nimitz came.

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah! Oh yeah, the war was still going on.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, I guess, you know, the ... powerful people would come in and have a  
meeting with him – MacArthur and ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... even the President came there to ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. I don't know who all was involved ... anybody else.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever see Nimitz ...

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: ... from afar?

Mr. Halfin: No. I nev ... aft ... out (unintelligible) when it was finished on that building, I never saw the building again (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Until you saw the photograph (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah (chuckle).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), I'll be darned! What did you do for entertainment and recreation while you were there on Guam?

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, until after the war ... well, the war was still going on, but it ... they considered Guam secure.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: And we, uh, the Red Cross came in there and set up a Quonset ... Quonset hut and they brought over a piano 'cause we ... they had built a little, I guess sort of a little recreation center.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, and we could ... had ... they'd set up some ping pong tables, you know? And had a piano in there, and some of the guys could play the piano. Uh ...

Ed Metzler: So, the officers were off in their officers' quarters somewhere?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, oh yeah, oh yeah, yeah. Yeah. Now, their piano in the officers' quarters was first class. We got second class piano (laughter) which was fine.

Ed Metzler: At least you had a piano (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Better than being on K-rations (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you have access to alcohol?

Mr. Halfin: Uh ...

Ed Metzler: Did they give you guys a beer a day or on weekends or ...

Mr. Halfin: You know, I ... you know, I didn't drink.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: But I ... what it ... what ... a buddy of mine and ... and I did, we uh, give our beer to the reproduction department because they had chemicals and everything to process film, and they had access to film. So, we would give them our ... our beer rations for film and chemicals. And this ... this friend of mine and I set up



a little dark room, and I don't know how in the world we wound up with a dark room, but then we ... we started processing film and printing off pictures that we ...

Ed Metzler: For who?

Mr. Halfin: Huh? To sell. We would sell it to guys 'cause it ... it ... we ... we had pictures of burned-out tanks, you know, and uh, bat ... battered buildings.

Ed Metzler: So, the remnants of the battles ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right, right, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... to retake Guam.

Mr. Halfin: And so, we ... we printed up pictures and sold them in sets.

Ed Metzler: Is that a profitable business?

Mr. Halfin: It ... well, we sent it home, put it in an envelope, put money in the envelope and sent it back home (laughter).

Ed Metzler: You guys were entrepreneurs!

Mr. Halfin: That's right, right on the ship.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: And ... and too, I'd take ... I had a ... a knack, I guess, being into architecture, but I ... I had a pen with a fine, fine, fine point on it. I ... and ... and from reproduction I'd get colored ink and I would paint these little (unintelligible) shells ... lit ... you know what a (unintelligible) shell is?

Ed Metzler: Uh ...

Mr. Halfin: We ... we'd go out and dive down in shallow water and pick up these ... these little (unintelligible) shells, and I would print or draw out scenes on them and put on Guam on those ...

Ed Metzler: You're a regular tourist industry there!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, oh yeah. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And then do what, sell them to the guys?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, uh hum. Sell them.

Ed Metzler: Isn't that something?!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. I still have some ...

Ed Metzler: Do you really?!

Mr. Halfin: ... buried somewhere in all my stuff.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: But I don't know where they are.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, is the water clear there? Is it ...?

Mr. Halfin: Uh, yeah, yeah. Uh hum, pretty clear, and you can ... you can ... when you dived down to go down in the water, why, you could see the bottom.

Ed Metzler: Did you ever fish there?

Mr. Halfin: No, but we did get a little taste of barracudas.

Ed Metzler: Tell me about that.

Mr. Halfin: Uh, this friend of mine and I were ... were out there hunting for shells, and this fish kept, oh, it kept ... ramming at me, you know, and I said, "Man!" I ... I told him, I said, "Hey!" And I could ... I could read his lips, he said, "Barracuda (in a whisper)."

Ed Metzler: *Barracuda!*

Mr. Halfin: You don't ... you talk about some fast kids (laughter).

Ed Metzler: So, you ended up being a pretty good swimmer after all, huh (laughter)?"

Mr. Halfin: Oh yes! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: 'Cause, I guess they could tear you up pretty good, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah! A barracuda can (unintelligible) pretty ...

Ed Metzler: Bite? You ever see sharks?

Mr. Halfin: No, never ... never ran into any sharks. Nuh uh,

Ed Metzler: Did you get care packages from home or did you ...

Mr. Halfin: Uh, yeah, I asked my mother to ... to buy some t-shirts because the reproduction department silk screened. They'd do up Guam on it, you know?

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: A t-shirt. And you could take and they ... give it to them and they would silk screen it out.

Ed Metzler: Silk screen it onto to a ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, silk screen it, yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. That's Guam.

Ed Metzler: You guys have time to actually do drafting work or was just busy on this all the time?

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), well, I'd ... this would ... I guess things slowed down; they had already retaken a lot of the islands ...

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: ... Wake Island, and all of those along the way. So, we were ... we were not quite as busy, I guess, as we were at the ... at the beginning.

Ed Metzler: Did you write letters home?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: You got letters back?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Uh, yeah, oh yeah. But a lot of times, they'd ... they'd write back and said part of it was cut out, you know (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Well, that was very typical to ... for it to be, you know ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, they censored ...

Ed Metzler: ... parts that they thought was sensitive, they censored it, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah, they censored ... yeah, they censored, yeah. If you said ... if you said something that ... what was going on, why, (*fst!* sound).

Ed Metzler: Or where you were or ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ed Metzler: Was there a lot of gambling going on the spare there? Did guys get poker games and all that ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... dice games?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah, yeah. Yeah, I'm not a gambler and I'm not a drinker, so I didn't participate in those things (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Well, you were busy selling the shells and (laughter) ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, selling ... sending money home (laughter).

Ed Metzler: and ... and photos and ... sending money home. You were the good boy over there!

Mr. Halfin: Well, I'd hope to be, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, I was ... I was hoping I was good (laughter).

Ed Metzler: Yeah!

Mr. Halfin: So I could get a Good Conduct Medal.

Ed Metzler: Well, did you get one?

Mr. Halfin: I got one.

Ed Metzler: That's good!

Mr. Halfin: Don't know where it is, but ...

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... (laughter), I got one.

Ed Metzler: But you know you've got it!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, but ...

Ed Metzler: That ... that's what's important!

Mr. Halfin: Yes, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, could you ... were you able to hear or find out what was going on in the war while you were there or were you kind of cut off?

Mr. Halfin: The command there at Harmon Field and everything, uh, they were pretty much in touch, you know, with what was going on, so they would pass it on to ... the Commanders and Lieutenants that were in the outfit and they would share the information with us.

Ed Metzler: As the war ground on, there was Iwo Jima and Okinawa and did you design, did you guys design airfield modifications or airfields for those?

Mr. Halfin: You know, I ... I guess we did. I ... I don't know just ...

Ed Metzler: They probably didn't tell you where some of these things were located.

Mr. Halfin: You know, we really didn't know which islands where we were designing for. I guess maybe that was for safety purposes, you know?

Ed Metzler: Yeah, security, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, security. At the end there, why, they were slow getting boats back (unintelligible) islands that, you know, to take us back home after the war was over.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: One of our designers in ... in the reproduction department, I guess, got a piece of rubber off of a ... an airplane tire, big thick, thick one, cut it out into a sort of a block and then and ... and engraved it out and made a sign that said, "No boats, no votes (?)."

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: And every letter that we sent back went through the post office with (unintelligible), and they'd stamp it.

Ed Metzler: They ... they made a stamp out of it, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Made a stamp out of it and stamped every one of them, "No votes ...

Ed Metzler: No boats, no votes (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... no boats, no votes (laughter). Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, I guess you were still in Guam when they dropped the atomic bombs?

Mr. Halfin: Right. The Enola Gay took off from Guam.

Ed Metzler: I didn't realize that!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Did you know it at the time or were you ... just found out about it afterwards?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, no found out afterwards.

Ed Metzler: Hum! How ... how ... was there a nice big party when they heard about the ... the atomic bombs? I mean, the war wasn't over yet.

Mr. Halfin: No. Uh, but we were, of course, we were ... hadn't ... we knew nothing about the atomic bomb. I mean, that was all fairly secret, you know.

Ed Metzler: It must be (unintelligible) secret, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: And uh, but oh, we'd heard that they'd dropped a super bomb on ... on Japan, and it wasn't long after that, of course, that the war ended. And I can remember (chuckles) I can remember laying in my bunk and it was night time. And (unintelligible) at that time and all of a sudden *Boom! Yeeeee*. You could hear the shells going overhead, you know. And the *boom, boom, boom*, boy, and the Navy was just ... I said, "Oh lord, what ... what's happening?" And someone shouted, "The war is over, the war is over!" And I ...

Ed Metzler: Fireworks celebration only they're shells (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, yeah! They were celebrating, they were just shooting over the island, you know, back in the ...

Ed Metzler: As long as it was *over* the island!

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah, over the island.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: You know, but you could hear them whining over the ... over the ...

Ed Metzler: I've heard that you can hear the shells (unintelligible).

Mr. Halfin: Oh! And so, I ... I ... I turned over in my (unintelligible), and I said, "Lord," I said, "you kept me safe during the war from men that we ... fire." I said, "Please save me from friendly fire!" (laughter)

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). You saw as much friendly fire as you saw ... saw enemy fire.

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah (chuckles). When I heard all those shells going over, I said, "Whoa!"

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Uhm, uhm! So, what do you think about the Japanese?

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, they were ... the Japanese, I never realized that they was so ... so aggressive in wars against everybody! And you just thought they were super people and couldn't be defeated, I guess.

Ed Metzler: I guess the samurai mentality that they seemed to have.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, they were accused of some real atrocities.

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, I guess everybody didn't think real highly of the Japanese.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Still feel that way?

Mr. Halfin: Oh no. No, no. I ... I think the Japanese realized their mistakes, you know, especially against the United States; they learned their lesson.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. You ever think about the war years after you came back to the States or ...

Mr. Halfin: You know, no, I tried to wipe them out of ... I ... I never talked about it. The only thing ... thing I ever did, I did after I got back and it had been quite a few

years later, why, it was a place called, or outfit called The Band of Brothers, and ...

Ed Metzler: Band of Brothers, yes.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. They ... they sent me something – some literature on it and asked me if I would send them, you know, something about my experiences. So, I did, and sent it to them, and it went on their website, you know, on the internet. Uh, of course, I never went on the internet, so I never was able to access it, but my kids said they found it.

Ed Metzler: Well, I know I've talked to a lot of veterans. A lot of it depends on how horrific ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, right, right.

Ed Metzler: ... their experiences were. Some of them, it's haunted them ...

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: ... to the present day.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And others said that they laid it aside, and it ... went on with their life, and others said what you said. And that is, "I never talked about it."

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: "I just played like it didn't happen."

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: "And I got on with my life." Why do you think the Greatest Generation doesn't talk about that experience?

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, I ... I guess it's because it was something you had to do, you know? It wasn't something that you just followed it; I mean, you just said, "Oh, I think I'll go out and have a war," you know.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Halfin: But it was something that was thrust upon us, you know? And everybody ... everybody pitched in. I mean, you didn't have any ... any people that said, you know, "I'm ... I'm," well, a few conscientious objectors, but ...

Ed Metzler: Not many.

Mr. Halfin: ... not many. Everybody else was patriotic and they ... they were ready to go to do what they had to do.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And even the ... even the civilians all sacrificed, you know? They were rationed, had to pitch in, so, yep.

Ed Metzler: So, the USO never came to Guam to entertain you guys, huh?

Mr. Halfin: No, no, we never had any. Now, after the war was over with, uh, they set up ... on Harmon Field, they set up a ... a theater so they showed movies.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: And one of the odd parts about ... or the, I guess is the funny part about it was they caught a Japanese soldier sitting in the audience.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: He had on an American uniform, I guess, he'd taken off of some uh, dead American soldier, and had ... had an American uniform on and I guess someone noticed that his eyes didn't look exactly like an American (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: Doesn't look totally American.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, and so ...

Ed Metzler: They got him?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, they (chuckles).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter). Now, did that happen when you were still on Guam?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, uh hum.

Ed Metzler: I'll be darned (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), did that make you look over your shoulder the next time you went to the movies? (laughter)

Mr. Halfin: (Laughter), uh, but there was one ... one incident that ... that I ... well, I guess was stupidity in ... on my part, and the buddy of mine. But we ... we were out in ... in the jungle the two of us, and we came across a big hole, and we dropped a rock down in there and boom, until we heard it hit, and said, "Man, that's a pretty deep hole." So, I said, "Why don't we come back and ... and go down and explore that hole?" So, we got a jeep and had another guy that had ... it had



a wench on it and we fixed up a seat, and put on (unintelligible) cable, and had a ... had a little generator and a ... and a light on a card. So, we lowered that thing down there. We could ... we could see way down in there and we could see, you know, it had a bottom down there. So, we got on the seat, the two of us, and the other one ... other one up there operated the wench and lowered ... lowered each ... each of us down into there. When we got to the bottom, you know what we found? Ammunition! Fifty caliber machine gun bullets and ... and thirty calibers and hand grenades and ... when ... when Guam fell, in order to keep the enemy from taking the ammunition themselves and using it against us, they dumped it down into that hole, you know.

Ed Metzler: This is American ammunition?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, American, to get rid of it, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, they ... they had dumped it before they had to vacate the island?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right, before ...

Ed Metzler: Before the Japanese took over.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Now, that's interesting!

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. And so, we were ... we realized we were standing on (laughter) on a ... a whole depot of ... of ammunition, and there's hand grenades and everything else down there. And I can remember I moved my foot, you know, to take a step and something went (*errh* sound), you know, kind of squeaked, and I said, "What goes ... what goes with that kind of a sound?" And he said, "I don't know," but he said, "I tell you what ...," and he pulled out his ... his little knife that he had in his scabbard there, and he said, "Move your feet back, a foot back, one half inch at a time!" And so, I did, and he pushed down on it and, "No, nothing here, keep going." One more time till we got all the way ... I guess it was just two pieces of metal rubbing together (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, where you guys actually on foot out walking around in there?

Mr. Halfin: Oh yeah! It ... well, I ... I guess you'd say it was probably the hole was probably twice as big as this office.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, so ...

Mr. Halfin: But it ... it would ...

Ed Metzler: ... twenty feet by twenty feet or something like that?

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah, it was ... but it was ... it was stacked up with just (chuckles) ammunition. And I said, "Maybe we better get out of here," so we ... hoisted up and got out of there.

Ed Metzler: My gosh.

Mr. Halfin: But that was something!

Ed Metzler: My ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Now, when you were doing your drafting work, what'd they have a big drafting room with drafting tables?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, uh hum, yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, everybody was just busy drawing away, huh?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. If I'd of hadn't ... if I'd of been able to find my photographs, uh they'd been all ... I don't know what happened to all of them, all my albums, but I had some pictures somebody had taken.

Ed Metzler: I was going to say, you were in the photography, I mean, the business of making photographs.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, we, oh yeah, oh yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, the war is over now.

Mr. Halfin: Uh hum.

Ed Metzler: And the shells, the friendly fire, went overhead.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, right.

Ed Metzler: And since you had been in the service for going on three and a half years ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, very close to four years.

Ed Metzler: ... you were probably pretty early on to get to go back to the States, weren't you?

Mr. Halfin: Well, you know, it ... it took ... seemed like it took forever. I don't know, maybe we were just overly anxious to get out of there, but that's when that "No ... no votes, no boats" came in.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum.

Mr. Halfin: Because it ... we ... we were there quite ... quite a little while after it was all over.

Ed Metzler: So, you're anxious to go home.

Mr. Halfin: Oh yes!

Ed Metzler: But you're ... but you're not ... you're not getting to go home.

Mr. Halfin: That's right. That's right.

Ed Metzler: So, when did you finally actually get to leave Guam?

Mr. Halfin: Well, when ... when we were supposed to be leaving, why, they woke us up probably at four o'clock in the morning, and we'd had supper the night before, but the cooks were all ... I mean, everything was all packed up, you know, sealed up and so forth, and so, we boarded the landing craft that took us out to the boat. And we climbed the uh, cargo netting up to ... to the ship, and after the ship got underway, why, uh, man, we hadn't eaten un ... since the night before, and it was ... it was getting close to noon, and I thought the Navy was going to feed us, but they didn't. And so, three ... three of us cornered a cook and asked him if he could spare a roll, a loaf of bread, you know? So, he did, he give us a loaf of bread. And there was ... outside ... (unintelligible) was a sack of onions, so we took a sack of onions, I mean, onions out of the sack, put them between the pieces of bread.

Ed Metzler: Onion sandwich!

Mr. Halfin: Best sandwich I ever ate in my life (laughter)!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: Oh yes! (laughter)

Ed Metzler: After ... well, you were hungry for one thing!

Mr. Halfin: Oh, we were hungry. And when we dis ... disembarked on Saipan, uh, why, they fed us a meal.

Ed Metzler: So, was it a fairly short run from Guam to Saipan?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, its part of the Mariana Islands.

Ed Metzler: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. So, it wasn't ... wasn't too far.

Ed Metzler: So, did you transfer to a different ship at that point?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, we ... that was the ship that took us back to the States.

Ed Metzler: So, was that another troop ship or ...

Mr. Halfin: No, no, it was, you know, and I don't ... I don't remember, I mean, it's just completely blank, I don't remember *ever* the trip back to the States. I might have been sea sick, I don't know.

Ed Metzler: (Chuckles).

Mr. Halfin: But (chuckles), uh ...

Ed Metzler: Do you remember arriving in the States?

Mr. Halfin: I remember, well, I really don't remem ... uh, arriving in the States, but I remember, uh, being on a bus back to uh, El Paso at Fort Bliss. That's where I was discharged.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum, so, what'd you land in San Diego or ...

Mr. Halfin: I guess. I ... you know, all of that is just ... just hazy; I can't ... I can't ... can't remember it.

Ed Metzler: Okay, so you mustered out at Fort Bliss.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: And what'd you do – get on a ...

Mr. Halfin: Well, before we ...

Ed Metzler: ... you hitchhiked to ...

Mr. Halfin: No.

Ed Metzler: ... to Port Arthur or what?

Mr. Halfin: No. No. No, I ... I went ... on bus from there back to Port Arthur where my folks met me at the Greyhound Bus Station.

Ed Metzler: So, they knew you were coming home?

Mr. Halfin: Yes, yeah.

Ed Metzler: How'd it feel to see the family again?

Mr. Halfin: Oh, it was so great! It ... just to be home again, you know? And they had they ... they had renovated my old mattress or a mattress and ... and put it one of the bedrooms, and when I got home and got in that bed, it was so soft, I could not get used to it.

Ed Metzler: You couldn't sleep! It was a ... you were too comfortable!

Mr. Halfin: I got ... I got a cot to sleep on ...

Ed Metzler: Is that right?!

Mr. Halfin: ... yeah, that's right. I ...

Ed Metzler: How long did you sleep on a cot before you could get back to being a civilian?

Mr. Halfin: You know, I don't know how long it took me to ... to get used to that soft mattress, but uh, I know I was more comfortable on that cot 'cause I was used to it, you know?

Ed Metzler: But it was good to get home cooking I guess.

Mr. Halfin: Oh, yeah, yeah! And it wasn't too long after that I went back to A&M.

Ed Metzler: And so, did you finish your degree?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: In ... in architecture?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, uh hum.

Ed Metzler: And what did you end up doing after you got your degree?

Mr. Halfin: Well, I went to work for a company in uh, in Dallas, and I ... I designed four office buildings for them up in Amarillo or Lubbock, uhm, Beaumont, and one other town, but I designed those buildings (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: Uhm!

Mr. Halfin: And then I did residential.

Ed Metzler: Uh hum. What other stories about your World War II experience are you holding back from me?

Mr. Halfin: (Chuckles), well, let's see, I can't ... oh, I ...

Ed Metzler: You said you got a Good Conduct medal.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: When did you receive that? While you were still overseas?

Mr. Halfin: No, no, no. I ...

Ed Metzler: They sent that to you in the mail ...

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, yeah ...

Ed Metzler: ... with a thank you very much?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ed Metzler: Yeah?

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Uh, I can tell you uh, something that on my resume ... resume, why, they asked, you know, what your hobby was and what you enjoyed doing and all that, and I said, "Well, I loved to swim." So, I was up in ... in Spokane, Fort George Wright, (chuckles), they sent me over to the pool at ... at ... I don't know whether it was on the base or ... I guess it wasn't the base to uh, combat swimming survival, just how to survive in the water, you know, in case you had to, and I was supposed to be a teacher. You know, after I got through with it, I was supposed to teach, but I'll tell you that mountain ... that mountain water off that melted snow coming down there, it must have been fifty-degree water.

Ed Metzler: It's that warm (laughter)!

Mr. Halfin: Oh! (expletive), I was purple half the time!

Ed Metzler: (Laughter).

Mr. Halfin: I tell you, it was so cold! And ... but I never taught anybody else. That's another one of those Army deals that ...

Ed Metzler: Deals that didn't pan out (laughter).

Mr. Halfin: ... they train you ... they train you (laughter).

Ed Metzler: (Laughter), your ... your taxes at work, huh? (laughter)

Mr. Halfin: That's right, that's right.

Ed Metzler: Okay, well, George, I appreciate your spending the time today to ... I think you're the only draftsman that I have interviewed, and I've interviewed a lot of veterans.

Mr. Halfin: Yeah.

Ed Metzler: So, I ... I've had cooks and everything else, but draftsman, that's something!

Mr. Halfin: Well, that's good.

Ed Metzler: So, and then to have ... have you come to the Museum and see a photograph of the building that you helped design.

Mr. Halfin: Well, they didn't have a picture of the building, but they just had the quotation that ...

Ed Metzler: Oh, okay.

Mr. Halfin: ... Admiral Nimitz was to go back to his ... uh, (unintelligible).

Ed Metzler: So, you could tie it all together and say, "I did that!"

Mr. Halfin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ed Metzler: Well, okay, unless you've got some more stories for me, I'm going to shut it down.

Mr. Halfin: Well ...

Ed Metzler: I appreciate you sharing your experiences with us.

Mr. Halfin: Well, I've enjoyed ... I've enjoyed the interview very much, I appreciate it.

Ed Metzler: And I want to thank you from my generation and all the younger generations, thank you for what you did for our country.

Mr. Halfin: Thank you.

Ed Metzler: And we do appreciate it.

Mr. Halfin: Thank you very much.

(end of interview)

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