

Ross Hoagland

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Question: Could I get your first and last name and the spelling of it?

Answer: My name is Ross Hoagland. H-O-A-G-L-A-N-D.

Question: I'll bet you people spell that a million different ways.

Answer: They do.

Question: Where were you born?

Answer: I was born in Everett. Right here in Everett. January 12, 1915.

Question: January 12. Again, my Dad's just a little younger than you, but he's January 2.

Question: What was Everett like when you were a little boy here?

Answer: Well, Everett was Everett and I was part of Everett, but, I came from a poor family. I didn't know my Dad. Dad died during the flu epidemic when I was 2 years old, so I was raised by my Grandmother and my mother who was an invalid never worked, so my Grandmother and Grandfather raised me, and he operated a grocery store on the corner, and we had enough to eat, but wasn't very fancy. For instance, I'd come home after school and have a molasses sandwich. This was during real tough times, and my childhood, of course, was not hampered by television or radio. We played mumbly peg and did a lot of things that young people don't do today. We managed to have fun in our life, but we didn't have much and we didn't need much. We didn't know the difference, actually, until high school came along. We found that what we didn't have a lot of other young people did have, so that's when we began to notice that.

Question: Mumbly peg, that's played with a knife, isn't it?

Answer: That's right.

Question: I kind of remember it.

Answer: It didn't cost anything.

Question: And that probably was important.

Answer: That's right. We got to be pretty good at it. And then marbles, we played a lot of marbles in those days on the school grounds, and those were activities that didn't cost much money because we didn't have money.

Question: Was Everett a small city?

Answer: Everett about that time was probably 40,000. It's now around 90,000. This, of course, was before Boeing. It was a mill town. The waterfront was full of shingle mills. The whole economy was based on the mills. That's where Everett had its name as a smokestack city in those days. Smoke stacks and the shingle mills.

Question: The Teepee burners?

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Answer: Yeah.

Question: Was it a good place to grow up?

Answer: Well, I enjoyed growing up in Everett. I've always loved Everett or I wouldn't be here. I've been around. I been a lot of different places and Everett is..... I've been involved in Everett in my adult life and some of these things and I still love Everett and I don't particularly want to leave it, so. I have nothing but good memories, even though there were bad times.

Question: It's always interesting that way I mean, that is a part of life, some of the bad times. But again quality people, fun adventures.

Answer: Always. My family, my grandmother, my mother, my aunts all belonged to one church. First Congregational Church at that time, and we had a lot of church activities that were inexpensive.

Question: I assume you probably grew up with the same kids.

Answer: Yes, I a lot of my childhood friends got to be lifelong friends. They're all gone, every one of them. About seven or eight of us were real close friends. They're all deceased now. I'm the only one left.

Question: What are you doing right?

Answer: Well, I don't know. I enjoy people. I'm a people-oriented person. I don't know what I'm doing right. I'm still hanging on. I been ready to go any time the Lord wants me.

Question: So when did you get involved with the service? How did you get involved?

Answer: Alright. This is probably a story that you've heard before, but in 19... 1930, I was 15 years old, had a National Guard outfit in Everett, and the football coach was the captain in "L" Company, and the baseball coach was the captain in "M" Company, and they were looking for recruits. Well, we lied about our age, this was a normal thing. I was 15, some were 16, and we signed up for a three-year hitch, and uh. The attraction was direct in the midst of the depression, we got a dollar a drill, once a week, but the main thing was, we got that pair of boots. We weren't supposed to take them out of the Army, but we'd drop them out the window, and I'm sure the officer knew what was going on, but it was those pair of boots and that dollar a week. A dollar was a lot of money in those times. It took 10 cents to get into a movie. We'd go to movies, I probably shouldn't.. well, so it wouldn't make any difference. We'd get 4, 5, or 6 of us would raise a dime and one would buy a ticket and we'd open up the side doors and the rest of us would get in there. Well, that kept them hustling, but they finally fixed it up so we couldn't get in anymore. The last time we got caught we went in through the ladies bathroom, and they closed that one up so that ended that, but that was the way we went to the movies was go up fire escapes and they opened up fire escapes and we'd all we had to do was raise 10 cents to get one ticket, then 7 or 8 of us would go to the show.

Question: Do you know what a movie costs today?

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Answer: I have a feeling about \$6 \$7 or more, I don't know.

Question: \$8.50

Answer: \$8.50. Yeah. We saw them for 10 cents or nothing!

Question: Cause it was all innocent stuff of the kids being kids and like you said tough times, you made due.

Answer: Well, I look back at it as... I knew they were tough times. I knew we were poor. In 1930... 1933, I think it was when President Roosevelt he formed the Civilian Conservation Corps, the CCC. And I spent 15 months in that over in the Sequim ar.. over in the Olympic Peninsula and that was quite an education. I was... operated a jackhammer and also was a putter monkey, and 15 months in that. To qualify for that you had to come from a poor family and we got \$30 a month and \$25 of it went to the family and we got five dollars, and but it was good. This was our first my first taste of Army life because we were in barracks at Sequim under Army supervision, and they turned us over to the Forest Service at 7 o'clock in the morning. So that was my first real experience with discipline, which probably didn't hurt me a bit at my age, I was 18 years old at the time, and that was quite an experience. One I've never regretted, and it's helped me get started in life.

Question: They worked you hard and

Answer: They worked you very hard, and but it helped. The food was good. We didn't have any money and we didn't need a whole lot of money. The money went home you see. I was a good basketball player so the captain wanted to form a basketball team to play with the uh.. play against different high schools in Hoquiam, Aberdeen, Forks, and Pt. Angeles. So he had me organize it and by doing so then I got a promotion to \$36 a month and I was the dispatcher for the company. A cushy job, and I only got it because he wanted me to organize a basketball team, but we played all these teams and we beat some of these high school kids you know, but that was quite an experience.

Question: What camaraderie-ship must have

Answer: Oh, absolutely. We had we had people young people older people, too, as a matter of fact, that came from Brooklyn, Kansas City, and some of them were real tough eggs, actually. That was an eye opener, too. It was the first experience I had with marijuana. I tasted it and didn't like it but that was when I was first introduced to it. They had a lot of other things there too, they started a card game called Panguingue where they use 7 decks and that came from Brooklyn some of these people. But we learned a little bit about life during that 15 months.

Question: That must have been a real experience for you, having been in Everett all your life and now being exposed to people from across

Answer: Yeah, away from home. I know that Sequim wasn't very far from Everett, but you had to go through ferries and had do a little hitchhiking. They had a a, they had a dance that I wanted to go on home for, but they decided they weren't going to let any passes go until Thanksgiving weekend. They weren't going to let anybody go home, so I had a date, so I went home, and I got demoted... shipped to a side camp for that, too. I got sent over to east of the mountains to Cle Elum a side

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camp, but I had a good time at the dance anyway. I had to spend the first night in the forest there with a bonfire to keep warm so I could hitchhike there. They didn't approve of that, so I was demoted back to where I started, back to \$30 a month. But I never regret that.

Question: Some parts of kids that will never change.

Answer: That's right. I didn't get into much trouble, but I was kind of a maverick at times. I didn't like the idea that all of a sudden they weren't going to give us passes to go home for Thanksgiving. I said no way.. I'm going, so I left, and I paid the price. There was another experience 'cause over in Cle Elum in that forest over there where we built trails and it was another new experience, new friends and so forth, and I enjoyed that part of it, too. And to get home to Everett we'd ride the blinds on the Great Northern Railway on weekends. I never knew what that meant until I found it out to ride the blinds is a little place where the two cars come together and right in between there that's the blinds, so. 'Course they were after us all the time, but they could have kicked us off but they didn't do it. We rode back and forth over the pass in those things without paying any money. We didn't have the money to pay anyway, so...

Question: So you had to hop them then.

Answer: Oh, yeah.

Question: That must have been a cold....

Answer: It was cold and it was probably dangerous, too, but we didn't know it. We didn't care.

Question: Ignorance is bliss.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: So were you still in the Guard all this time?

Answer: No. No. I went from 1930 to 1933 and I graduated from high school in 1933, and that was the end of my three-year enlistment. That's when I went into the CCC. I got out of Civilian Conservation Corps when I was 20 years old and, but there were no jobs to be found, and I, you know, we didn't have any money so I'd make my spending money mowing lawns and in the wintertime shoveling snow and paper routes. I had two paper routes. All those little things, but I finally got a job at Weyerhaeuser Company on the graveyard shift at \$70 a month, and it was hard work. I was 20 years old and I was happy to be making some money. It lasted for 4 months and so then the supervisor came to me and said We're going to have to let you go. I said Why, Isn't my work alright? He said You're work's fine, he said, but the policy is that a single young fellow can't hold down a job that a man with kids could have, so they have a priority. Good bye, so...that hurt quite a bit, but I could understand it, too. NOW I can understand it. At the time I thought it was very unfair, but, there was nothing I could do about it. So.... um...through the Episcopal Church we had an Episcopalian father who had opened up this church to all the.. attracting young people and he attracted them all. Attract them from the mainline churches, the Catholic churches, they had dances there and they had youth fellowship that they'd meet on a Sunday night with probably 150 young people

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there, and he told me he said. Well first what he used to do to me at 2 o'clock in the morning he'd call me up sometimes and say Come on up to the Parish Hall. I've got someone here you'll find interesting, so I'd get out of bed and go up there and he'd have a transient in there interviewing and he wanted me to hear the interview. I'd threatened probably to run away at the time, but he was a very much of an influence in my life and he arranged to.. he said that the owner of Agnew Wholesale Hardware in Everett was a member of the church and he had told Father Rodgers that things were picking up they were going to have to put on some more help so Father Rodgers arranged for me to interview there, and I passed the interview and I went to work there. I was 20 years old. \$50 a month. No fringe benefits of any kind. It was \$50 a month, and I was told I'd be on probation for 6 months and then I'd get a raise. Well 6 months went by and I didn't get any raise. Finally 11 months went by without a raise so I went to the owner and said How come? Well, I was going to get around to it. He never got around to it, but I finally got a \$10 raise to \$60. I had...I worked there for 5 years and any raise I got I had to go to him, and say I gotta have it. He wasn't about to give it to me.

So I was 25 years old and war broke out in Europe and the President of the United States was quite active in the lend lease with England and we knew very well that eventually we were going to get into it. We weren't sure about anything, but all the trend was that this was going to be a world war that I'm sure that President Roosevelt knew that, too, and he was doing everything he could, but I used to listen to his fireside chats and he would say Our boys will never fight overseas! And he kept up that slogan and uh.. I believed him!, I figured we'd never be sent overseas. But, um, finally um we were activated. The National Guard was activated. All the National Guard in the United States was activated. And our battalion being part of the 161st Infantry, the only infantry regiment in the state was activated. We spent a week in the... at that time I'd been in for quite awhile till 1937 till 1940 I'd been a squad leader, a corporal and a platoon leader. I was a buck sergeant, but the highest rank you could get outside of the First Sergeant in the company, so I'd had that experience, and as we were inducted, we were inducted supposedly for a year. It turned out to be 5 years, but at that time it was supposed to be for a year, and we recruited a lot of young people from high school came in, just out of high school. Some hadn't even finished high school. There's where Bob Linden came in at that age. I was 25 and I knew that if we got called up I'd have to go, so I had no problems with it at all. I was a member of the National Guard and being inducted for federal service and that was it.

Question: Is this still prior to Pearl Harbor?

Answer: Yes.

Question: So everything's coming together

Answer: Everything's coming together, but we went down to...we spent a week in Armory, living in the Armory with cots and blankets and we weren't supposed to go home 'cause we had paperwork to get done and, then we went to Fort Lewis and they weren't ready for us. Nobody was ready for the mobilization. We slept in pyramidal tents now in the winter, on wooden platforms, and they what they call little Sibley stoves and they weren't good at all and you couldn't get any heat, so with my connections in the hardware business, I went to the (Huntmotay?) Hardware in Tacoma and arranged to buy these airtight heaters for \$2 apiece and I got them for every tent in the regiment. Then the problem was getting fuel, and the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company shipped a carload of presto logs down to us and

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later replaced it with another car of presto logs, but that first winter and we were there until September 1940 and all during the winter we trained, but it was miserable and half the regiment was in the hospital with flu, so we never had any more than 50 percent trained at one time and it was a rough winter in pyramidal tents and without heat, but we managed to get through, we managed to train and in February of the following year the draft came in so all our units were filled up with draftees. They came from all over the country. Some were 35 and 40 years old. They finally got rid of them after things got rolling, but at that time 35 and 40-year-old men were being drafted and being trained by 19, 20, 21-year-old (??).

Question: How did that go?

Answer: That probably was a little adjusting. I look back on it now and I read Bob Linden's interview and he talks about this and then I recalled it, too. We had a 40-year-old draftee, were down in the maneuvers in Jolon at the Hearst Ranch in 1940. Our maneuvers were with some Army units and of course we were confined pretty well to camp. But the first sergeant was a good friend of mine and I was the supply sergeant and this fellow by the name of Walton, he said I'd sure like to get a pass to San Francisco and I said, Boy, they're hard to come by Walt. He said if you could get me a pass we'll invite the first sergeant and you and I'll show you the best time of your life. He was an ex-bartender down there. He knew everything! I went to the first sergeant and said How would you like to be entertained down in San Francisco for a weekend and I told him about it, so the three of us got a pass, and he just showed us everything. He knew all the nightspots and so forth and got a suite somewhere that just something that... out of this world. He introduced us, he said Now we're going to have some drinks here but I want to tell you something. The best thing you can drink is Scotch. You learn to acquire a taste for Scotch and you can operate on that. And I tasted it and it didn't taste very good, but we used it. We never got drunk. We never got out of line. We just kept going all the time, the whole weekend. It was just a beautiful time, so...it just goes to show you what can happen, but he finally got out. The Army finally woke up that these older people shouldn't be there. It's not...you're an old man at 40 years old. The average age of a company commander about that time was 26 years old, battalion commanders were 30 years old. That's... and all the cream were the 18, 19, and 20-year-old people who could, you know, could adapt. You could train them so much more quickly. The Army in 1940 was not very efficient. Made up with a lot of fat old men that had been there actually...it was a boon to the Army to have all these young kids with potential come into the Army, and they adapted real quick, you know, they're sharp as a tack at that age. So that was quite an experience.

Question: 'Cause you were even at.. you were in your early 20s, right?

Answer: Yeah, I was 25.

Question: So you were getting to be an old man.

Answer: Well, I was getting closer to old man. I was 5, 6 years older than these young fellows, see, BUT, I'd had all my training ahead of time. I'd been a platoon sergeant and now I'm in supply, and so when my company commander, he was promoted to division, no regimental supply officer. And so he said I'd like to take you up with me, so I go up there and immediately I get promoted to a staff sergeant, and before I left there I was a master sergeant, and I was happy there. I've got the top enlisted rank, and for a lot of the non-coms we had were going to

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OCS, I did not want to go because I was happy where I was. And then on top of that eventually I became a warrant officer, which gave me the same pay as a first lieutenant, so I had no desire to go to OCS and I didn't go. That's why all my career was spent with the 161 and all...everywhere it went. So there's a story about that too. I did not want to be a lieutenant, second lieutenant, because I was drawing the same pay as a first lieutenant was and it was a technician's job. I was assistant regimental supply officer, and I was pretty well schooled in that, so I was happy in that particular slot. I didn't want to go to a rifle company and be a second lieutenant, so they had a little. They had some experiences in Guadalcanal where I had done what they thought was an outstanding job and the lieutenant commander wanted me to be his battalion supply officer, but the regimental commander says No, he can't be a supply officer, he's not an officer, he's only a warrant officer. And Carver, Colonel Carver said Well make him an officer then. So I was asked if I'd be a second lieutenant and I said No, I will not go for before a board to be a second lieutenant. I'm a warrant officer, I'm making as much as a first lieutenant and I'm a technician, I know my job. If I go to a second lieutenant I've got to go to a heavy weapons company or a rifle company. There's nothing in it for me. The answer was.. from Colonel Dalton, Colonel Dalton was his name. He was a West Point graduate. Lt. Colonel at the time, later appointed to Colonel as regimental commander. But he said Hold on, I want you to listen to something. It isn't what you want to do in the Army, it's what the Army figures would be best for the country. You are going to be a second lieutenant. And I says No thanks. I'm not going before a board, so I figured that was it, you see. What eventually happened, I figured Hey, they've got to send me before the board I'd be a second lieutenant. When he called me up to his tent he stood me at attention he said, Hoaglund I want you to listen to something. Just keep quiet. He said I have the authority as a commander in the field to appoint people a field commission as a second lieutenant. He says You are now a second lieutenant. Dismissed. And that's exactly what it was. Had no choice. Here I'm a second lieutenant. So the Adjutant said Well, Ross, you do want to go to a heavy weapons company or a rifle company? I said Well my training's been a rifle company, I'd like to go to a rifle company. So nothing happened for a couple of months and then finally I had to go to the hospital to have some minor surgery and I came back from the hospital and all my gear was gone, and I went to the first sergeant and says Where's my gear? He said You're not a member of this company anymore...a service company. He said you're assigned to heavy weapons company, second battalion. I said Oh, so I go over there and find out that I'm assigned as a section leader in the 81 Mortar Platoon. I wanted to go to a rifle company and I went to heavy weapons company. This was in...I went through Guadalcanal and the Solomons.. New Georgia I was in supply, but in the Philippines I was a mortar platoon commander. So I've gone from supply into actual combat, which is a little different. And uh, I was made a platoon leader, the 81 Mortar Platoon had six 81 mortars, heavy mortars. It also had four 4.2 chemical mortars which could fire the mortar rounds that they utilized so I had we had 10 mortars in the platoon. The platoon was commanded by a first lieutenant, and there was a second lieutenant. There were three sections, you had two mortars, two mortars and two mortars, six mortars that was a section. And I was a junior lieutenant. Well, things happened in training that the lieutenant commander didn't like with the other two who were senior to me. And when the platoon commander vacancy opened up as the adjutant to a promotion to captain he accepted that and he recommended me to be the platoon commander over these other ones, and so I got it, and of course, this made a little bad situation, but I couldn't do anything about it. I didn't volunteer. I just did what I was told. So I became the platoon commander and the other two lieutenants evidently didn't shape up to what the lieutenant commander

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wanted so he transferred them out of there. He put them in the in the uh machinegun platoon, so I was the only officer then. But I had good non-coms. I'd gone to the non-coms when I was first assigned to the section that were my....got the sergeant, they'd been in combat and I hadn't. And I said I want to tell you something sergeant, through no fault of my own I'm assigned as a section lieutenant here, I don't know a damn thing about mortars, I'm going to depend on you to help me learn. Evidently he wasn't used to that, but I got along great with him. I told him I didn't know anything and I wanted to use his expertise. I learned a lesson in life about that, too. I always respected.. having been an enlisted man I always respected enlisted men. So when we went into combat with that platoon I had a well-trained platoon, and uh, I had a lot of experiences I could talk about but...

Question: So you went from, and I'll back up to some of this eventually, but so at Guadalcanal you were doing supply.

Answer: Right.

Question: And now in the Solomons...

Answer: New Georgia.. the Solomon Islands.. New Georgia was one of the Islands. The 161st was go to into New Georgia, where the other two regiments of the division, which was the 27th Infantry and the 35th Infantry were assigned to other islands. They make up the Solomon Islands, but New Georgia Island was the island that we went into. We relieved an outfit that was just wasn't doing the job.

Question: And you're now

Answer: I'm still in supply.

Question: Oh, still in supply.

Answer: Now, I've got a little story there if you're interested. I don't know how interesting this is to anybody.

Question: No, all this is fascinating.

Answer: But, I have to keep it in perspective of what I experienced, not what somebody else experienced, but I was a regimental, I was a warrant officer. I was Assistant Regimental Supply Officer. The supply office was made up of the Lieutenant Colonel, who was a supply officer, Captain in the munitions, the service company "Company Commander", and another captain. When we went into Guadalcanal.. no when we went into New Georgia, uh the Lieutenant Colonel Commander was in the hospital. Munitions captain didn't go. I as a warrant officer, and the service company commander were the only officers that went into the... And the funny part of it is that I formed a forward supply where I could be right around regiment, cause we had three battalions we had to be responsible for getting ammunition and food and everything, and the first battalion pulled out. I put the captain down on the beach 'cause that, you know, to get part of our platoon down there, the main part of our platoon. I took all the good men up with me at the forward, left the captain down there. And uh, anyway, we moved in there and the first battalion was moving out engaged the enemy, this was an opcom patrol they soon engaged the enemy, so I decided I'd better get the supply officer of the first battalion to get up there and make contact with the battalion and I found him in a

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tent in his cot like this, you see. He was out of it, and so I called a friend of mine who was the first sergeant of the medical detachment. He got his captain and went over and looked at him and just shook his head and tagged him and they shipped him out, and we couldn't find his sergeant at all. So I called the regimental commander, I said Colonel Dalton, we don't have any supply people in the first battalion, send me up a lieutenant and a sergeant. He said Hoagland I got news for ya. I don't have anybody available. In addition to your other duties you're now the supply officer of the first battalion. So hear I am a warrant officer with all the other officers not being there and I got the whole doggone responsibility. Well I had good non-coms and that's what made it good you see. Well, we did evidently, somebody thought I'd done such a good job that they wanted me for second battalion commander wanted me as his supply officer, his supply officer, but I couldn't be. That's where I got to be the commission. That was very interesting, but I'd made a little bit of a repetition of myself for being able to do this sort of a job, and when I look back at it I didn't...didn't bother me any, it was just a challenge. We had to make the best of it.

Question: That's the big thing that a lot of people don't realize about war as a whole. You always hear about people that were on the front lines or whatever, but if I understand right, Andy Rooney said For everyone on the front lines, there were seven people behind him because all that stuff had to get there somehow.

Answer: Oh, yeah. And I was fortunate to have experience in both. Very fortunate.

Question: I don't know if I consider that fortunate.

Answer: Well, yes, for my military education, I was fortunate to be able to see both sides of it, and we had, we used Fiji carrying parties quite often, or we'd have to get supplies in by air, dumping. And uh, so I was into all that sort of thing. We had some very interesting experiences. You know, I could talk all day about this thing.

Question: How do you keep track of everything? You're in the middle of nowhere.

Answer: Well, I don't know. Let's... Quite frankly, it looked like confusion, but it wasn't confusion. We knew what we had to do. We knew we had to...our job in supply was to make sure the troops got everything they needed to fight the war, which meant clothing, water, ammunition, food, hot food if we could get it to them, you know. That was automatic. We knew that was our responsibility. And we had to do it through some pretty difficult times, too, that you couldn't get it up there. I had one experience that I was a master sergeant at that time, and it involved Canal, and anytime that we weren't in combat our infantry troops were used to unload boats and that was supplies and luxuries for the Air Corps and the Navy and the whole thing. We used to figure we were just slave labor when we're not in combat. We better be in combat. So one of the battalions had been on the line for about oh, maybe about two weeks without a change of clothing or anything. They had dirty uniform, no shower facilities or anything. They were right on the front line, and it uh, kind of funny actually, but one of my sergeants in charge of unloading a boat saw some crates that said Green uniforms for Fiji carrying parties. And uh, so he managed to drop them off in the weeds and he told me about them. And he said Well, let's analyze that then. What's more important, to put some clean uniforms on the fighting troops or put them on a carrying party of Fijians. So it happened to get

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into our supply dump and we took them up to the first battalion and we outfitted the whole battalion with clean uniforms. Well, you know what that started. Whole island command went up in the air and they tracked it down to me being the responsible person. So Colonel Orndorf called me in and he wanted me to confess to doing it. Well, I was pretty experienced in not confessing to things and I said I had nothing to do with it, don't know anything about it, didn't make any difference, they've got clean uniforms and they've probably got more morale and will fight a better war, or something like that. So he said Hoagland you're a liar and he stripped off my master sergeant. Well, Colonel Katarski came to me that night and said Don't worry about it. This colonel is too old and he's being shipped out because he's not in good enough physical health. He's going to be out of here in two days. He said just hold tough. No orders were cut, but I didn't have my stripes, and sure enough he was transferred back to the states and they got this West Point colonel in there, so I got my master sergeant stripes back, but in the meantime they got that.

Then the other incident, this is the funny part of a war that can happen. Unloading another boat and the medical platoon, the medical detachments, uh, had alcohol, pure grade alcohol, came in 55-gallon drums. Well, my sergeant accidentally dropped one of those and it didn't get to its destination. He pushed it into the weeds and he came to me and he said My God, I said You really got something. He said I can't take it to the battalion now because it's too late. I said Well, let me think about that for awhile. He said Ok. That tech sergeant and two men and myself that knew about it. And I said, You know, if we take that they're going to suspect us anyway. We've already had this incident with the green uniforms. I said I'll let you know tomorrow. So I said, the next day I said, Well, it's too late now, we'd better go down there tonight and take a 2-1/2 ton truck and take it up to our regimental supply dump and hide it in between the rations there and just stay away from it. So I said we're going to just leave it alone for 10 days. Sure enough they're after us, but What are you talking about?, Don't know anything about it. We had that 55-gallon drum of pure grade alcohol that.. actually the medics were drinking it or rubbing it, so we just figured well, we'll have it.

So we had that drum in our cache there all during Guadalcanal and I made some rules. Just listen now, I was the only officer, no other officers involved, only enlisted men and my non-coms. I said We'll meet here every night at dusk and we'll have a little bit of that alcohol in our canteen cup. We'll mix it with grapefruit juice. One drink is all you get. No singing, no loud voices, no nothing, and maybe we can get away with it. We had good discipline. We had that one drink every night. By the time we left Guadalcanal it was down to a 5-gallon tank, a 5-gallon can. We put it in a 5-gallon and labeled it Gasoline and took it with us. I never should tell that story actually, but those were some of the funny things that have nothing to do with combat, but were good for the morale.

Question: So that's where the movies haven't ...I mean, I'm sure they exaggerated, but in moving these goods there was somewhat of a barter system and things like that to get what you needed where?

Answer: Well, one of the things as a supply officer of a battalion, when you came off the line and established a camp, the bivouac area, we had to go out and find anything that we could do to make a little more comfort. That meant stealing something from the Air Corps, maybe stealing something from the Navy or borrowing it or something, and we got to be pretty efficient at that sort of thing. And, uh, I'm not trying to say that there weren't times that were a little difficult, but we did have some good times there too.

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Question: How did um for example, if I'm on the front line and I have my troops up there and I need guns or I need ammo or whatever it was, how did all that take place. Did you just assume what they needed or was there...

Answer: No, no, there was direct contact, either by field phone or we always had any time a rifle company moved, we had our mortars registered right in behind them. If they needed mortar fire, we had an observer right with the rifle company. As a matter of fact, during the Battle of San Manuel, we had, we were able to able to 81 mortars in the artillery were able to zero in on the enemy line before they went into San Manuel. They went in and got San Manuel with very few casualties. They caught the Japs in their holes, you see. And when they captured San Manuel, I was in direct contact with the company commander, Captain Dyre who was a friend of mine from Everett, and I had my lines in there before the.. the regiment didn't even have their lines, he couldn't talk to the regimental commander except through splicing into my lines, see. I remember the colonel said How come you can get in there? I said Well, we're probably better trained than your people are. That didn't go over worth a darned. Anyway, the night that uh, the day they took that at night they set up a defense, and so forth, and the Japs counter-attacked, and I was right on the line 'cause we had already zeroed in he wanted me to bring my mortar fire within 25 yards of where he was, which is not very safe, but he wanted it so he got it. Anyway, we were able between artillery and my mortars, we were able to knock them out completely. We repulsed that counter-attack and there wasn't a Jap left. Dead bodies, trucks and tanks all over the place and there are no Japs left. If there were any left, they got into the hills somewhere, but uh, I remember Captain Dyre, who would have been on a tank as one of the.. 13 then, but he was in the hospital. He got wounded, not very bad, but he wasn't there for that tank picture. He said if I'd known that I wouldn't have gone into the hospital. So most of it was direct contact or we strung wires from our supply depot right behind a rifle company because our job was as support them. They had their 60 mm mortars, but they weren't as effective like our 81 mortars. And we tried to use those mortars. In San Manuel we had all 10 mortars right on San Manuel. I had a section was assigned to F company was going to go up to take the hill at the side, but they were thinking they were going to be moving too fast so they wouldn't want any mortar fire so we had 10 mortars fire all night long at that counter-attack.

Question: Any when you say, stringing wire right behind the rifle company, you mean that the person...

Answer: I'm talking with the real wire in a field phone.

Question: I just could never imagine how you guys ever kept those up and running if they weren't...

Answer: We had to. We had to.

Question: So were you constantly fixing and splicing?

Answer: Yeah, we had to do that. They were trained for that and we were good at it. And it was OUR responsibility. Not the rifle company's responsibility. To give effective fire to them, we had to have communication. Always. We'd even string alternate wire, quite frankly. We had radios, but they didn't work half the time. The field phones did, you see.

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Question: Now you were, I mean I'm just looking at the places you were: Guadalcanal, and I'm going to pronounce it wrong...Matanikau River Pocket?

Answer: What?

Question: Matanikau I'm probably totally off on the pronunciation. The pocket estimated to hold 500 enemy troops, was a dense jungle, positioned between a steep hillside and a high cliff?

Answer: I could probably explain that a little bit better. Guadalcanal, for some reason, though, is known as a marine operation, which is not true. It was Army there, too, and uh, we were the 25th Division, which we were part of. There were 3 infantry regiments in the division. The 161st of our regiment, then the 35th and the 27th, plus the artillery and the engineers and so forth.. Uh, we were assigned to go into Guadalcanal because the Marines had not advanced in three months. We were assigned to go in there, relieve the Marines, and get those Japs off the island. We went 18 miles in one day just killing Japs, boom, boom, boom boom, and we got up to the north and Doma Cove in record time. And what Japs were left evacuated or died up there, you see. So uh, I don't have the names of a lot of those places. I know that Cape, Oh, I forget what it is. I've got it in my history sometime, but I can't recall what it is.

Question: When you ended up over there. Let me back up just a little bit. Pearl Harbor. Where were you?

Answer: Well, all right. Pearl Harbor... we were part of the 41st division, our regiment. That time there were 4 infantry regiments in the division. So they wanted to make triangular divisions and so they dropped one infantry regiment. They dropped us. So we were an independent regiment, and we were assigned on to go to the Philippines to bolster General MacArthur's troops in the Philippines. And on December 7, we had advance party down in the Presidio San Francisco, loading the boats to go to the Philippines, and the main body was on a train going through Klamath Falls on December 7 in the morning. And they stopped, the train stopped at Klamath Falls, Oregon, to take on fuel or whatever they stopped for, water or whatever, and they were selling Extras. Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. So, that's it. We got down to San Francisco, San Francisco was all blacked out and the people were confused and they immediately assigned us to guard the bridges and so forth and try to get some order there. It was rain. It rained all the time, the 10 days we were there it rained and we were in pup tents out in the golf courses. The officers, of course, were taken care of, but not the enlisted men, but we spent 10 days in San Francisco.

One of the instances I remember, a few people got moving around at night and got in trouble, got shot, so forth, but the people in San Francisco were all confused. They thought there was going to be an attack, see. I look back at those days, and the blackout that makes it more confusing. People not supposed to be moving around. But we were, as we were loading the boats, we had a shortage of jeeps. We were about 20 jeeps short. So there.. it wasn't an order, but we were told that if you found any jeeps around anywhere to with keys to appropriate them. So when we loaded we had we were up to snuff in our jeeps. Nothing was ever said about it, but uh, so we didn't know where we were going. We pulled out of there on the 9th or 10th of December and we didn't find out until we were practically there that we were going to Hawaii, and that was blacked out, too, you see, so immediately get a string of barbed wire or manning machine gun positions all around the island. They were

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confused. They were all blacked out. They thought it was going to be another attack, too. So we stayed on... in Hawaii, and at that time we were assigned as a regiment in the 25th division, which was known a Tropical Lightening Division, and we stayed there until we went to Guadalcanal.

Question: Were you surprised by Pearl Harbor?

Answer: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely surprised. I look back at it and I sometimes wonder about it. I don't like to be quoted on this, so I probably shouldn't say it, but I sometimes think we provoked Japan into doing what they did. I can't prove that, but looking at some of the narratives and some of the things that have come out of that, I feel that they had all the warning they needed and they just wanted the attack. Talk like that you could be branded as unpatriotic, which I'm NOT, but ...

Question: I don't think so, because we've talked to a number of veterans that have felt the same way.

Answer: Yeah.

Question: Again, I mean they believe red, white and blue but in studying and looking at the politics of it, you know the President couldn't...it's kind of like what Bush is facing right now. I mean, if we go in and attack Sadam, we're going to be the bad guys, but you know what, if somebody came and attacked us, it would change the way ...

Answer: Well, no, you talk about what's going on right now with Sadam Hussein. Being a military man, war is hell. You go to war, you go to kill the enemy. That's what war is all about. You just don't fight political war, you try to take somebody out of power, I think it's completely wrong. The United States...to do what they're trying to do now. What the President's trying to do. I think he's backed off, quite frankly. I think the American people have told him that. That you just don't go in and fight a war and risk American lives to remove a regime. And I still feel that way about it, and... I'm glad to see it backing off. Of course, I don't know what's going to happen now that Bush has had such a victory in the election, he...he may go completely berserk. He evidently wants to avenge what he figures was an insult to his father. I don't know that. I don't know that.

Question: Was WW II different?

Answer: Well, WW II was completely different, because everything was. You'd be surprised at the young people, immediately after Pearl Harbor, signed up immediately! And there was never a question about it. Our country has been attacked, you see. Vietnam was completely different. Korea was completely different. Korea in my opinion was a political war. Vietnam we never should have been in there. The excuse for that if we have to fight communism before it gets on our shores. There are different ways of fighting communism than sacrificing your young people, too. Being a military man, I'm not for war at all! War is hell and the war is simply, you go to war you go to kill the enemy. Otherwise you don't go to war, in my opinion.

Question: Which is an interesting concept because, so when you went to war, when Pearl Harbor happened...

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Answer: No doubt.

Question: Who was the enemy to you, though?

Answer: Anybody that was against us. The enemy was Germany because you declared war on Germany and the enemy was Japan.

Question: As a country or as individuals? I mean, I don't know.

Answer: Well, it had to be the country. You know, I still have a hard time trusting the Japanese. I wouldn't own a Japanese car. That was engrained in me. See, they're all over the place now. Now they're our allies. This is the silly part of war. Your enemies' turn into be your allies. You get their economy going then they're your allies and somebody else is your enemy. Russia, for instance, was our allies in WW II, and we had all that Cold War with Russia. Japan is our ally now. Russia is our enemy. We used to have Saturday morning orientations. This was during the war where we talked about what are we going to do with Russia? So I don't know. It's a mixed up world.

Question: I think you've touched on some of the irony of war. I mean, you said, which is interesting, you said, I'm a military person, war is hell. I'm not for war. Which all the veterans I've talked to.... nobody's ever said We think war is the way the world should be run or anything like that. Most of them say, some say, at certain points it becomes a necessary evil.

Answer: Well, you see. The whole world has been from the beginning of the world, wars. Religious wars. Everything. God created too many nationalities in life and...way too many, and there's always going to be war. Look what goes on in the Middle East. That's never going to be solved and they're still fighting religious wars in Ireland. That's never going to be solved in our time, anyway. Middle East it's the Arab against the whites, and the Arabs were brought up to hate us, so who knows what's going to happen.

Question: Did WWII change the world? Was it a positive...

Answer: Well, if you look at it, it cost the United States. You want to remember that brought them out of the depression, too. Sometimes I think wars are necessary to bring the economy back. I hate to say this, but after a war, the economy seems to get up there. A lot of jobs and so forth. They get these defense industries, they got to keep them going, they got to sell arms all over the world, you know. Uh, WW II was a completely different war than Korea and Vietnam because our country had been attacked.

We lost thousands and thousands of people in Pearl Harbor, and this was done to us by a country, whether we promote them or not, it was done so we had an enemy. Now the President had declared war on Germany, too, at the same time. This gave us an excuse to really come out. They'd been helping England with the lend lease program, but we had something to fight for. I have a lot of friends and people I know about Vietnam and they didn't feel the same way. Of course, we had the draft. You want to remember this, that Vietnam army was made up of draftees, not volunteers. It wasn't until after the draft. Now the armed services is made up of volunteers that get paid for it. Privates got \$21 a month. So... uh, I can't see people getting excited about sending their sons and daughters to Iraq, uh, just on the threat

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that he's got weapons that could destroy us. China's got them. India's got them. France has got them. Everybody's got them. Israel had even got them. Why don't we go get there.. knock all there's off. I'm not saying that Saddam should have them, but let Israel take care of it. They knocked one of their atomic things out long time ago. All we have to do is say Israel, go knock them out!

Question: What, what was the worst part of the service for you, or war as a whole.

Answer: Well, I think the worse part is losing so many close friends. You know, from Everett. It's hard to have your friends die. I think uh, I think probably the worst part of evening thinking about it is the fact that, that here I personally have spent 3 ½ years in the infantry in the war zone without even a leave of absence. Now they go in there after a year they're rotated home. Completely. It wasn't that way with us.

Question: I gotta do one thing here. I gotta switch my tape. Just a second.