

Eric Walz History 300 Collection

# Ray Dean Gurr – Experiences of WWII

By Ray Dean Gurr

March 17, 2004

## Box 4 Folder 14

Oral Interview conducted by Emily Gurr

Transcript copied by Luke Kirkham March 2005

Brigham Young University – Idaho

EG: So it's Bougainville right?

RG: Yah I was there all right.

EG: When were you there?

RG: I was there from the 28 November to the 25 of December 1943.

EG: Where were you before Bougainville?

RG: Guadalcanal. When I went over seas I land on New Caledonia. We had a camp called Camp Magenta.

EG: You landed in New Caledonia?

RG: I boarded the USS Georgia Elliot in Sandi ago to go over seas. We were 28 days on the ocean crossing it. We landed in New Caledonia which was a French possession but the US took it over and camped at Camp Magenta, we were there for a month. And it was an ammunition ship pulled into the harbor at New Caledonia and just started unloading and it blew up in port. There was 95 men reported missing they never did find. We dug graves for the ones we found. There on New Caledonia. New Caledonia is quite close to Australia and New Zealand. So it's down pretty low. Yah and we a got nothing but...Oh maybe you don't know but Australia and New Zealand are great sheep countries they raise great lost of sheep and wool and the only chow or food we got was lamb stew. I've never been able to eat a piece of lamb since then. Everybody got dysentery from the greasy food they fixed up for us. New Maya was the capital of New Caledonia.

EG: Were the French on New Caledonia?

RG: OH yah, it was all French. That goes back into WWII French surrender to Germany so it became BC French. BC French still controlled New Caledonia. Vechee was the capital of France they didn't use Paris as the Capital, they used Vechee. Anyways one of our warships shot a couple of shells over the island. Why the old French flag came down in a hurry and the stars and stripes were raised up. So we controlled it all through the war. I have told you haven't I, about the dog tags.

EG: Yah, you did.

RG: I was telling you about what we got for chow for eating. We would have dry eggs mixed up for breakfast and this lamb stews generally for a couple of meals a day. Everybody got diarrhea there from that. They told us by the time we got to Guadalcanal that we would be on C-rations and we would all get better.

EG: What consisted of the C-rations?

RG: We were there for about a month a month we boarded the HMS Quip Fontaine. The Quip Fontaine was a Dutch ship it was one of the worst ships. I was on all of the time I was over there. I think.

EG: So that was the ship you took from New Caledonia...to

RG: From New Caledonia to Guadalcanal. It had an all French crew and everything on it.

EG: On the Dutch ship it had a French crew?

RG: Mmh, no not all French crew I meant a Dutch crew.

EG: Ok, Wow we've got some bilingual, trilingual people!

RG: It was a Dutch ship that had escaped out of Holland before the Germans took over. It was a big ship, but it was a terrible ship it didn't have sufficient drinking water on it or anything.

EG: How long was your trip from New Caledonia to Guadalcanal?

RG: From New Caledonia to Guadalcanal it was four days I think. Yah four days I was aboard that ship and we finally, two or three things happened there. But I don't know if that will be included or not.

EG: Well, what happened, you are going to make me curious?

RG: Well every night at chow an officer would get by a little water spiket and fill your canteen cup half full of water. That's how we would get our water. One night I didn't want to go to chow. I was sick of the chow so I didn't get up to get in the line before the officer put a stop to it. I got up there anyway, a couple of men back to where the lieutenant was back. I told him I didn't go to chow and I wanted my half of cup of water. He went into a tirade and rip me up one side and down the other. I got mad; it was the one time I really got mad at anybody over seas. I says, "Well maybe tonight when you are up in the upper quarters and I'm down below deck you can take your fresh water shower." Boy that made him mad and he said your going up to see the colonel. I said lets go. So we went up to see the colonel and I really felt sorry for him after the colonel got through with him. He said, "You take that man and get him his water" and he says, "If you ever come up here with something like that I'll rack yah good." Usually an officer doesn't talk to an officer in front of them unless it's a man like that, I felt sorry for the lieutenant. We reached Guadalcanal and set up our tents in a cocoanut grove field. It had cocoanut on all of the ground about a foot deep they hadn't harvested them. I guess since the war started. So we had all the cocoanut we wanted to eat.

EG: Did you drink them or how did you eat them?

RG: Well some guys drank the milk out of them but I didn't care for any usually they fermented it first so they could get drunk.

EG: Did you eat the meat then?

RG: Oh yah the cocoanut meat was good. We were on Guadalcanal about a month, I guess. We were patrolling in the jungles picking up stray Japs that got through the war alive and we started to go to Bougainville.

EG: When you were on Guadalcanal did you invade or was it already taken over?

RG: It was already wound up on Guadalcanal except for digging out these Japs out of different places for where they were hiding out but we were still under air raid there. We had air raids quite regular.

EG: From the Japs?

RG: Yah.

EG: Was it marshy there or was it like Iwo Jima with the caves and rocky...?

RG: No it was jungle there and fortification they had build themselves. There were no caves just plain jungle would go down theses jungle trails and all at once a vine would grab yah and you couldn't pull through it at all. You had to back out of it we called them wait a minute vines. The vine stickers all run opposite of what they do on the rose bushes and things. Why when they grab, yah couldn't pull out of it for nothing you had to back out and take a minute and go around it.

EG: Were they long?

RG: Yah some of them were quite long they usually grab you anywhere that you had clothes on. It was a different kind of like for me, never been a way from home and I got into some quite some places and things yah know the new kid standing out. But ah, Bougainville was actually on at that time.

EG: What was that?

RG: Bougainville was actually being fought at that time before I got there.

EG: Oh OK.

RG: The first of November they invaded Bougainville. They were trying to take a 10 in. Bougainville is the big island they were trying to take a 10 mile strip of it. To set up a airport for our planes to bomb the enemy all over the area. They needed reserves I Bougainville, especially the company I joined had lost quite heavy.

EG: In Guadalcanal?

RG: No in Bougainville.

EG: So they sent you over as replacements?

RG: So we went out as replacements to Bougainville.

EG: What company were you in?

RG: I was in the sea company 1<sup>st</sup> battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> marine division.

EG: That was the same that you went through your whole...

RG: Well yah I was in the war that was my main outfit in Iwo Jima, in Iwo Jima I was in the intelligent section as a Japanese interpreter.

EG: But you started out in it didn't you?

RG: I was in the sea company 1<sup>st</sup> battalion 3<sup>rd</sup> marine division. We were put aboard the LST 195 to go to Guadalcanal to Bougainville and we boarded the ship and about two days out a fleet of planes came over. I thought they were our planes. I was laying out on the deck there with one of my buddies and was talking I said look at those airplanes up there I says looks like there gonna drop something. Oh they have dropped something probably their spare gas tanks that they ejected then all at once something landed on one side of our ship and blllloomm. I says those are Japs. Jap planes and our ships hadn't even fired at them. This one plane comes down and drops one bomb on one side of the ship and drops one on the other side and that ship just eased both ways. That was my first experience with bombs at sea. Then we got to Bougainville and landed at Emperors of the Dust of Bay Teroqulia Point. That first night we were on the beach it started storming and raining we dug fox holes. Our fox holes filled up with water all you could see the next morning was iron hats sticking up out of the water. Then we were in swamps the Japanese sent planes over quite regularly to bomb and they were on one side of the mountain naturally and we were on another side. We sent out patrols everyday, I would go out on patrol and would usually scout for them. I remember one day we walked into a mine field, a boy stepped on one and was really blown up bad. We leaned him up against a tree one of the guys that was in the group pulled out a cigarette and lit it took a puff and stuck it in his mouth. I said you sure gonna kill him in a hurry aren't you. That was one situation on the island. I will tell you a couple of instances. (Marine Corps theme song on wall clock sings on the hour). We was out, patrol one day I was scouting for it and I had gone up ahead about 200-300 yards and I was on a trail I got up to a big dead log. I thought it would be a good place to hold up at. So I backed up and got into the jungle into the bush so I couldn't be seen. I could see down the trail from where I was sitting. Oh another thing I was reading my new testament all the time when we weren't patrolling for Japs.

EG: So when you were patrolling did you just go out to a post and watch?

RG: Well, you would go out, and may take a 10 minute break or something and just watch and listen. That's what I was doing. I was on a listening post. And all at once I saw the grass start moving down the trail big high grass, I thought they had me spotted. I took the safety off my rifle and had it pointed that way. I was afraid to move and head back to my lines afraid they would get me. I could see this grass parting and getting closer all the time it got up to the log and it had to come over the log and I was already to start shooting and one of the ugliest faces I ever seen came over that log. It was a wild bore. Boy it looked at me and I looked at it. I was just ready to shoot that thing. But it turned and took off down the trail the other way.

EG: Aren't they dangerous?

RG: Oh I think they are. We would go out and have combat with the Japs several would get killed when we go back out of the area again I better not tell you this it's to gruesome. There are great big frogs on Bougainville in the swamps.

EG: I bet there were a lot of frogs everywhere.

RG: Yah, there was these frogs, great big things. The Jap bodies from the night before they would all be sitting on them and eating on them. It was really gruesome and dirty looking. Yah know. But boy these frogs would jump right up in the belly of these dead Japs.

EG: Were they all over?

RG: Yah, all over in the areas of that swamp. Another thing, we carried two canteens of water with us. If we run out they told us if we drink any of the swamp water we would be dead within two hours. There was some kind of bug in it. So that was miserable being thirsty and lying in water and not being able to drink any of it. Actually, Bougainville was the worst living I ever had in those swamps.

EG: How big was Bougainville?

RG: Oh it might be a thousand square miles or something like that it's a big island we never did capture it all until after the war and it surrendered. So it was never totally captured. Our skins was just peeling off from being in the water.

EG: Every night you went to sleep, did your holes fill up with water?

RG: We didn't sleep too much though. The holes already, we didn't dig anything any holes we had to gather up dirty stinking rotten logs and stack up to get behind. One day I just got mine all stacked up here comes a snake slithering through the water; boy did I pull my feet up. I don't even know how we lived in that mess. In Jungle rot.

EG: Did you ever get dry there?

RG: Oh, I guess we did when we went out of the swamp for a while. I don't know it was just one miserable place. I usually, one night I took a patrol out and we dug fox holes out next to the trail that night. A Jap tank came down over us. He ran right across us with out even seeing us. We didn't make any noise we didn't want to attract his attention he was better armed than we were. But we did have a phone with a lines and we did call them said you gotta a Jap tank coming and we called the CP the man post just let it go by. This tank went down right into our regimental command post CP and parked and all the Japs got out of it. They didn't even know where they were at. So they took them right quick.

EG: Did they have a pretty good set up then the Japs there on?

RG: Yah, they controlled it for a pretty long time. They had some big facilities on the other side of the mountain. Another thing that happened there they had a Charley a Jap plane would come over every night and drop leaflets or drop a bomb.

EG: What are leaflets?

RG: Leaflets, if you would like to surrendered we will give you food to eat and water to drink and get you out of the war. It was really something when our company was going to be evacuated. Because we had been hit the hardest not quite wiped out on Bougainville but completely on Guam. The word went around they were going to evacuate us Christmas day 1943. They were bringing the army into relive us.

EG: So when you were in Bougainville, there were only Marines?

RG: At this time there were only Marines, the army came in and relieved us. What was really awful for awhile was that we found out didn't have to come to pass. We got word on Guadalcanal that the army was losing the ground we had taken. The Japs was overrunning them. We got all our combat gear ready to load up to go back and the army started getting a head and winning against them so we didn't have to go that we were thankful for. It was a miserable place.

EG: That happened on Guadalcanal?

RG: No, no, no we were back from Guadalcanal and wanted us to go back to Bougainville. Guadalcanal was where our headquarters were at. Bougainville was the place that the army was losing and they were going to send us back up to retake it. Christmas Eve now still on Bougainville we woke up Christmas Eve and if happened to be asleep in the fox hole there were two marines. One was suppose to stay awake and the other tried to sleep. But all at once on this Christmas Eve all at once 1953 that old island started heaven like this...it was really hard. I thought an earthquake was like this...but their not there...Hu, hu, hu, hu, they really shake, popping the top out of these big trees. I was glad we were in trees and not buildings it was quite an earthquake the island was

shivering every once and a while all day and night. Finally Christmas day 1943 they took our company and loaded us in the US Cesence Civic the 3<sup>rd</sup> boat no the 4<sup>th</sup> boat there. And the navy fixed us a nice Christmas dinner we was on our way back to Guadalcanal. We're waving goodbye to Bougainville.

EG: So you went from...let me see if I understand you started in New Caledonia than went to Guadalcanal then to Bougainville and went back to Guadalcanal?

RG: Sounds like you got it.

EG: What did you eat on Bougainville?

RG: The worst part were C-rations, C-rations you have C-ration stew, C-ration biscuit, C-rations meat and beans and C-rations hash and you a can't stand that but the Rearashalon people would keep all the good food and send us up the hash up the lines. So we got SR but it was mostly hash the SR candy bar the Rearashalon kept all of those cause it was pretty good chocolate.

EG: The lines you called on? Were they the ones run on the ground?

RG: Oh the phone lines, oh yah you would just have a big reel of wire and you would carry it with you and it would be unwrapped as you went forward.

EG: Did you do that while you were scouting?

RG: Sometimes we would carry it mostly with patrols but when at nighttime the people going out on outposts would drag a line with them. One time when I had been back to sick bay with Dangee fever. I was going back out to the lines the day after I went back to sick bay. I ran into some Japs cutting our lines in pieces I didn't do anything about 'cause their 8 or 10 of them and I was alone. So I sat in the tree and watched them.

EG: How did you get Dangee?

RG: Just like everybody else did. There is something else I went back for, I went back to get men. Once in a while they all go out of the lines and go back to the airfields or the navy supplies and get food and stuff. Some on time you had to go bring 'em back. They didn't want get back into the battle. Dangee fever did come on Guam.

EG: Oh that was on Guam?

RG: Yah, Dangee fever, I don't know all I got over there, when my son (Dennis) was born he had a lot of problems and they blamed it on my south pacific living.

EG: Did you ever get sick on Guadalcanal or Bougainville?



RG: No, I never really got sick at all except that one time with Dangee fever. I had mosquitoes eat me up tear me to pieces. I didn't get malaria like most everybody else did, I was really lucky or blessed or something.

EG: When you had Dangee were they fevers or...?

RG: It's a fever.

EG: Did you have a headache?

RG: You just get everything its miserable.

EG: How long did you have it for?

RG: I had it for a week maybe two. They would release you from the lines until your fever reached a 105 at a 105 they send you back to the medicals. When my fever hit 105 they sent me back there one night but the next morning. I was all better that's when I ran into these Japs. But I didn't really get sick in the Marine Corp. There was lots of sickness I remember I used to get scared 'cause if a guy comes down with spinal meningitis which we had quite regularly they would quarantine your whole unit. That wasn't in combat cause you would get killed there that was in peaceful situations. I might have a book with a little story on Bougainville, do you want it?

EG: Did you walk in the ship to Bougainville? You were on the LST right?

RG: They got up as close as they could, they tried to get right up to the beach but it was quite heavy and hard. 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> division, 3<sup>rd</sup> platoon of Sea Company... 1st battalion, 3<sup>rd</sup> regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> division.

EG: What did you ever do with Macarthur?

RG: We didn't do anything with him he was with the army.

EG: Who was in charge of the marines?

RG: There were several generals, "Howlin Mad" Smith, marine general on Okinawa. Erkins, I remember him we had an old gun recharging, he had been in the marine Corp for years. He was about to wrinkle away. Even though he was an enlisted man the general didn't mean anything to him he would say hi Erkie or hi "Howlin Mad" he said anything to the general he had been in so long.

EG: Were there people living there on Bougainville?

RG: Oh ya, but they were mostly on the other side.

EG: Do you never run into them?

RG: Two army division 37<sup>th</sup> down the Americow with replaced the 3<sup>rd</sup> marines stood ready. Americow relieved us on Christmas day (reads text from Island Fighting WWII). The book tells about the 3<sup>rd</sup> division.

EG: So you were on the island for about a month, so you came 2-3 weeks into the fighting?

RG: Yah, they hit the first of November, I got there the 23 of November.

EG: Were their Japs, I mean natives living?

RG: I guess there were natives I ran into natives on Guadalcanal. I don't remember seeing any on Bougainville they were all over in the more developed part of the island over where the Japanese controlled.

EG: How hot was it? Was it always really, really hot and humid?

RG: It was hot and humid it was stinky. You have never been in swamps have you?

EG: Not like that.

RG: There was just a dead smell over the whole area just stifling. I guess it's luck I'm here. I did drink a little of that water. But what I did was go off from a fox hole to some high ground and dug down with my trenching tool till I hit water and let some water coming through the sand and I took a little drink from it.

EG: Did you get very much water?

RG: What they would bring to us. That's one thing you do in war, go thirsty for a while.

EG: Like everyday.

RG: We always carry two canteens, they brought in water wagons trucks with big tanks you filled up your canteen as often as you could the place where there was no water was Iwo Jima. That was a completely dry place they brought ship loads of water in 5 gallon cans and put them in different areas. The water they brought in looked like it had been canned in WWI it was all rusty.

EG: How did it taste?

RG: It tasted good when you were out of water but really good if you were out of water.

EG: Did you get any mail on Bougainville?

RG: Oh yah, I got a little mail on Bougainville, my mother mailed a fruit cake to me.

EG: That was for Christmas wasn't it?

RG: Yah, for Christmas on Bougainville but I didn't get until next Christmas on Guam. The cake was a year and 3 months old when I got it. Bougainville, we had plenty of water but we couldn't drink it. Guadalcanal they set big blister bags around, when ever there was water in them you could fill your canteens. Another thing you had to do that didn't make it taste any better was every time we filled our canteens you had to put 3 drops of iodine in each one.

EG: To kill the bacteria?

RG: Yah, we always carried iodine with us to put in our water.

EG: When you were there on Bougainville, did you have to build the air strip?

RG: No, that was the CB's and the army engineers.

EG: You didn't have to clear anything out or anything to do with that.

RG: No, we didn't have anything to do. No, we were just in the fighting fronts. After we were fighting the CBS would come in, but not till after we were done fighting.

EG: Was the air strip built while you were there?

RG: Oh yah, they started building them. They were right on our tails all the time, we pushed the Japs, they pushed us. Built strips, they did a good job keeping the strips open for our fighter planes. We had another big explosion on Guadalcanal. Henderson field was a big airfield they had taken and remodeled and made bigger and one time that whole field went up in explosions. What happened was really silly, there had been a group unloading some stuff in the ordinance area where they kept their bombs and everything. They got messing around with the stuff on the truck, going after a load of stuff; they picked up a load of flares. You see at nighttime we would fire flares quite often over the area to catch Japs if they were sneaking in. But these three I don't know if they were marines or navy or what it was they loaded the flares and pulled down to dump it into the ordinance in Henderson airfield. One exploded in the back of the truck they all jumped out and the truck went on in to the area where all the explosives were at and blew up.

EG: Everything?

RG: Everything went up. They had to fly all the planes off Henderson airfield.

EG: That was a big explosion!

RG: It was. We had some big ones. That one at camp Magenta in New Caledonia looked like an Atom bomb going off when that ship blew up just a big ball of fire went shooting clear way up in the air.

EG: You were home when they let off the Atomic bombs weren't you?

RG: Yah I was home, I was going to OCS University of Southern California.

EG: How did you feel about that when you heard about it?

RG: I thought it was pretty good. I was kinda glad to see the war ending. I was going to school and University of Southern California I was at OCS, Officer Candidate School and if they hadn't set off those atom bombs...they were planning a landing on Japan itself. In my case I would have been a 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant and 2<sup>nd</sup> lieutenant aren't worth much in battle. The enemy is always trying to kill the officers. I would have been sent right back over if the war hadn't ended. I don't like to see so many people killed but the Japanese asked for it.

EG: I remember you telling us about, I don't know if it was on Bougainville or Guadalcanal, but you had to carry everything above your head when you were in the river so its wouldn't get wet?

RG: That was the Balsimma River in Guadalcanal.

EG: What happened there?

RG: Same thing happened in Guam, we had to cross some swamps to outflank the big Japanese Airport on Guam. We were going through swamps that were over our head to getting to where we were going to make the attacks the next morning. In Guadalcanal it was the Batasuma River it was swift running river and we would dive in and by the time we got across it, we would be down a hundred yards it ran right into the ocean. We would go down there and dive in and do our best to try to go straight across with the current hitting us like this and at that time you just couldn't do it. I set three things for myself there was an old blown out Jap tank on one side and about half way down there was a big gob of bushes and half way down their was an old shack or something I don't know what it was I called them the celestial, terrestrial and telestial. I was gonna get the celestial. You know I finally out swam it and went straight across. Guys lost their rifles and everything in that river.

EG: Did you ever lose anything?

RG: No, I always got across it with my rifle. I could have dropped my pack I don't know. Sometimes when things got rough, I would drop my pack if it was holding me down.

EG: What was on the other side, why did you always have to cross it?

RG: It was a training area that was some of the training getting across that river and it was only 3 miles from our camp so we would go there and bathe and clean up. Anytime we went there we had to double time, we had to run all the way down and all the way back.

EG: For three miles?

RG: Yah.

EG: Did you do a lot of training on Bougainville?

RG: The Marine Corp is one training session after another...continually. That's what made you glad to go back into action. Into the war you weren't moving all the time you were hiding behind something. They just wore you out with these training sessions. You would come right out of Bougainville and be right into training.

EG: You would go out and fight and comeback into training?

RG: You would come back and go into training, you would keep yourself build up strong we were running and hiking going through the bush, the jungle. Everything was just hard. When this training was just real hard.

EG: I bet it was. Were you with your friend at this time? Your buddy?

RG: When he was killed?

EG: Was he with you at Bougainville and Guadalcanal?

RG: Oh yah, we were together from the time we met back at Camp Vagoon, North Carolina. He and I just kind of went together because our ideals were the same. Our churches were different; his was the Church of Christ. Mine was The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His morals and ideals were just as good as anybody's. We went through Bougainville and Guadalcanal and stuff like that.

EG: Did anything ever happen to you both with him?

RG: No, we got along pretty good in Bougainville. He was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, I was in the 3<sup>rd</sup>. We had a lot to do with each other on Guam just before he was killed. We were out on a patrol together, when we got back another group was getting ready to go out and scout the area. They were short one man. Walder had told me he was going to volunteer to go with him. I say you already been out Walder, don't need to take more chances today, wait until tomorrow. I tried to talk him out of it, but he said he was gonna go with them. He went with them they ran into an ambush and was killed... What he did was pull a pin on a grenade, he raised up to throw it and they cut him down with machine guns and rifles. He dropped down and went down right by the grenade and the grenade

went off by him too. Anyways...we have taken him through the temple. There are some things I don't tell and some things that I do tell. Some of the scariest patrols were on Iwo Jima. Crawling up to caves and bunkers and yelling at them to come out and surrender. It was a crazy thing to do.

EG: When you were in your platoons, when you went out as a scout, did different people in your group take turns being scouts?

RG: No, generally any group I went with I usually scouted for them.

EG: Why was that?

RG: I don't know I was trying to remember and think why I did it all. The scout usually goes out and spots Jap emplacements and bring the information back to the lines and know where the Japs are gonna come at them. I should say the enemy, the Japs are our friends now, I guess. You know the Jap in there will tell you how blood thirsty they were. They wanted to kill Americans as bad as Iraqi wanted to kill them. When we hit Guam, I hit the beach; there was a little shack there with a lot of magazines in it. One magazine I picked up and looked at for a minute while getting across the beach. It said how blood thirsty marines were in order for a man to get into Marine Corp, a man had to kill either his father, his mother, or both, that was the kind of propaganda they were putting out. The Japs hated the marines.

EG: You were the first ones in weren't you?

RG: Yah we were, I was never was with a Rearashalon.

EG: The Rearashalon that who comes in after...

RG: They unload ships onto the beaches; ammunition, food, everything and the MPS are back there on the beach with them. The Rearashalons were just unloading ships and barges. Dig holes and put toilets over them. The Guamanins didn't mind at all. You would be sitting on the toilet and some women would come in and sit down right beside you. They were just that way; they thought the facilities were the same for everybody.

EG: Were there ever any women in the Marine Corp?

RG: Not in the fighting, but they were bringing women in when I got home; that's when they started. They just did office work and stuff like that they didn't get into everything like some do now. During the war, the main part of the war, they didn't allow women in or blacks in the Marine Corp.

EG: But they did have a black division?

RG: No, the army did but not the marine core. Blacks and women weren't allowed in the Marine Corp in my day.

EG: Who are the Guamians in Guam who lived on Bougainville?

RG: Well they were black like those on people on Guadalcanal. Why they wer just plain blacks I don't know. Just blacks on Guadalcanal. I was trying to think of the Blacks name he would scare you every once in awhile. You would be walking along and a knife would go flying past you and stick up into a coconut tree past your ear or somewhere. That little guy, he was only about so high. He would go up those trees, well the coconut trees are high. He would just run right up them. He would stay with our dividison all the time. His hair was colored red and if their hair was colored red, it meant they were eligible for marriage. One day a gang, I tried to kick them off and tell them to quit messing around. He'd ever got loose they would have killed him. They got him and cut off his red hair, he just cried like a baby. I was trying to think of what we called him.

EG: He just followed you guys around?

RG: He ate our chow and was just part of the outfit I guess.

EG: Did you always call your dinner "chow"?

RG: I think so; I think it has been chow for 200 years.

EG: What did you call it at breakfast?

RG: No, chow, chow, chow for the morning, chow for the noon, and chow for the evening.

EG: Did you get three meals a day?

RG: Not in combat, but back in the states. Yah, we got three meals and all the ice cold milk you could drink. I never tasted any milk over there.

EG: When you left Bougainville, were there still quite a few marines on Bougainville?

RG: We were the first evacuated, and I think they were going to evacuate the rest of time as quick as the army could set-up. Like I said, the army just about got knocked off by the Japs; come close to sending us back up there. Wouldn't have liked that a bit.

EG: When you got sent back to Bougainville, what did you do there?

RG: Trained.

EG: How long were you in training for?

RG: We were in training up to June 5; I guess when we left Guadalcanal or what?

EG: So you were there for 6 months is training?

RG: Yah, we went from Guadalcanal to Guam was the next one than Iwo Jima, and then home.

EG: How long were on Guadalcanal the second time?

RG: We made some little operations; we hit a little island of Roserra. They took us over on a little destroyer. We cleaned the whole island. The Japanese had a look-out post and radio there. Then we were scheduled to go to New Ireland. We had our gear and everything on and they called the operation off. They said it wasn't needed to sacrifice men of the 3<sup>rd</sup> division. They decided not to kill us off. If they had done that operation I probably wouldn't be here. We were scheduled to hit the main port and the rest of the division was going to hit way up the island; ours was to be a diversionary action. They said not, because they were sacrificing us, on one would come through this. The Japs would be swarming to that area to stop us. The next day we were all set to go aboard ships a runner came and brought a message saying they had called off the New Ireland operation. We were glad they did.