

Interviewer: This is Jeff Pennig on February 12, 2005 interviewing Mundell Lowe. Would you state your date of birth and place of birth?

Lowe: Born Laurel Mississippi April 21, 1922.

Interviewer: Okay and where were your parents born?

Lowe: Same place.

Interviewer: Same place?

Lowe: Same place.

Interviewer: What did your what was your fathers occupation?

Lowe: He at one time was connected with the schools and education and then he was a farmer basically as they all were in those days. We're talking about the early 20s or the 1800s something like that. And then he became a minister after that and stayed that pretty much until his death which was 1976.

Interviewer: So he was a minister?

Lowe: He was a minister yeh. He was more like a Baptist preacher you know to be perfectly frank about it. I think in terms of minister someone with cloth and all of that but this was a very basic rural Baptist church.

Interviewer: Now did the WPA affect or any of the Roosevelt programs affect your family?

Lowe: Not really much because we were farmers out in the country and it had very little to do with occupations and things like that you know. Everybody was just hanging on for dear like you know to get through that period and they all more or less were farmers.

Interviewer: Was there a general support for or opposition to Roosevelt and those programs?

Lowe: Not that I remember no. Everybody thought he was doing what should be done but none of us really were the recipients of the movements that were going on the programs he had going and that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Now did you have electricity and radio and all of those things in the 30s?

Lowe: A little later on yes but when I came along which was 1922 it was just a fireplace lamps that we used to sit coal oil lamps kerosene lamps with only one radio in the neighbor hood. It was the silver tone put out by Sears and Roebuck and on Saturday night we used to all gather around at this cousins house to listen to the Grand Ole Opry or whatever else was on yeh.

Interviewer: Now where in the late 1930s say 1938, 1939 where were you and what were you doing at that time?

Lowe: 1939 I had gone to Jackson Mississippi and I was living with an aunt and an uncle up there and going to school. Later on I tried to finish up school but the Army caught me and I was drafted into WWII.

Interviewer: Okay when this was post Pearl Harbor yes?

Lowe: Yes

Interviewer: Was this post Pearl Harbor?

Lowe: Yes

Interviewer: Where were you when Pearl Harbor happened and what was your response? How did you find out and what was your response to it?

Lowe: I was in Hammond, Louisiana when this happened we were all called into this big auditorium they used to call it the study hall and we listened to Roosevelt on the radio little dinky radio Atwater Cap I believe it was. And that's when we discovered what had gone on and realized that we were in the throws of a terrible war.

Interviewer: Did you or the people you knew your age see it coming at all?

Lowe: No absolutely not.

Interviewer: Not at all

Lowe: No you have to remember Jeff things were terrible unsophisticated in those days especially on the farms down there. There was not a great deal of education available perhaps high school and maybe junior college and if you wanted to go to a real college you had to leave the state to go somewhere you know that kind of thing.

Interviewer: Did you realize as soon as you heard the Roosevelt speech you and the people you were with realize that your life specifically had changed from that?

Lowe: I knew that sooner or later I realized that sooner or later I would probably be going yeh. But see I was much older than a lot of the kids in high school then because I had gone away before that I had kind of skirted finishing high school to play in music you know that kind of thing. But so I was old enough to realize see I said I see the war coming and I know that I'll be it so just do the best you can and sure enough that's what happened.

Interviewer: When did you get drafted and where were you at that time?

Lowe: I was in the letter came to my mother who was living in Mobile, Alabama at the time and my family had broken up during the depression as it had torn up a lot of families. And she had moved down there to live and the Lowes were living up in Laurel. I remember it came in the mail and I left on a bus in 19 that would have been the end of 1942 somewhere around the beginning of 43 the best I remember.

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: I went to Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Georgia inducted there and then went to several places and wound up my training about three months later in Camp LaShae which is outside of New Orleans. And from there I went to Camp Stoneman and from there to Guadalcanal.

Interviewer: Was your training, what was the nature of your training?

Lowe: Just basic training.

Interviewer: Basic training?

Lowe: Just basic training they were cramming to get as many guys into the service as they possibly could and then once they get you into the service they'll figure out what to do with you. You know it was that way in those days.

Interviewer: And was there a cross section of people in your basic training unit? Was it a cross section as far as education, geography or were they primarily from the south east?

Lowe: No the best I remember they were pretty much from all over the states. And all kinds of educational levels and occupations all that kind of stuff yeh.

Interviewer: So after the, you said it was the initial six weeks?

Lowe: Yeh about six week's yeh.

Interviewer: Then where did you go from there?

Lowe: A place called Camp Picket Virginia.

Interviewer: Camp Picket Virginia.

Lowe: And from there I went to a place called Camp Gordon Georgia which is outside of Augusta.

Interviewer: So this was continuing training?

Lowe: Yes you were you would finish one phase of your training then you'd be shipped somewhere else and then from there I went to Camp LaShae.

Interviewer: Okay and would each phase of training be giving you would be working different skills or would you go from one camp to another one fort to another would you work on then a different set of skills or were you just refining them?

Lowe: It seemed to me there were more inclined to get you to march in tempo than anything else as I can remember at this point. I don't remember being any specifics of being trained to do this or do that. For instance I when I was inducted they said, I was trying to get into the entertainment business because there was an old band leader around called Wayne King and he had sent the word out that is I could maneuver it through my commanding officer he would except me into his military band.

Interviewer: Swing king the waltz king?

Lowe: That's right that's right but in the service he had an entertaining band he had put together for you know those purposes. So I was interviewed by this rather large Sargent who had gravy stains on his front. He wasn't very careful I don't think and he picked up a manual and he thumbed through it and he said what did you play you say you're a musician? I said yes a musician what bands did you play with and I said well I have played with a band called Jam Savage and several other bands and I would like to continue in the music business. So he's thumbing through the manual and he says we ain't got no guitar players in the army and he put the book aside. He says your in the infantry I said ok boy so I guess part of my training was to you know the riffle and all of that routine. When I got over to Guadalcanal they decided they would put me in what's known as the malaria control unit. So we around spraying all the places that held water like these little lagoons and things like that and that didn't work out.

Interviewer: Now is this late 42 no this is 43?

Lowe: It would be 43.

Interviewer: 43 okay

Lowe: The kind of the let's see half way through 43.

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: Then they put me into what's known as the combat engineers building bridges repairing runways things like that. So I pretty much stayed in that until about three or four months before we made the push on the Philippines. And then they said we need a lot of entertainment now and we've got enough guys doing what you were doing before, we're going to put you in this band. So I stayed in the band for oh I guess a couple of months the Philippines and from there the unit was broken apart and sent to Tokyo Yokohama as a matter of fact. And we stayed there until the end of the war and then we were sent home.

Interviewer: Now during the course of your training at what point did you know whether you were going to the Pacific or Europe.

Lowe: I had no idea had no idea. There was a big thing that said loose lips sink ships, nobody talked about anything in those days. It's very different from today. That's kind of the way I couldn't even tell my wife, then wife, and family where I was going I didn't really know and if I had it would have been against the law to tell them. So they would write me in care of the post master general in San Francisco he would forward the letter to our unit that's as much as we knew.

Interviewer: Did you were you aware of any censorship in those letter in regard

Lowe: Oh yeh

Interviewer: Coming to you and from you?

Lowe: Oh yes I've seen letters with blacked out and clipped out and all kinds of things sure. They would you know they would ask where are you? And if you answered them they would simply black that out editing you know before the letter was sent off back to them.

Interviewer: Where on the west coast did you leave from?

Lowe: Camp Stoweman San Francisco.

Interviewer: Okay San Francisco and did you you went right to Koradel?

Lowe: No we went right to Guadalcanal. We stopped in Caledonia for a couple of days because a lot of the guys were so sea sick that they had to try to repair that. For instance I had been in the hole so to speak on a ship called the USS General Black for at least two weeks and I was so week that I could not get out of my bed. And luckily it was an officer a lieutenant who played accordion as I remember and he knew I was a musician and he used to come down after a while when he discovered I was there and bring me fresh fruit. And then when I finally got my sea legs together he would take me up stairs and put me on the deck in the sun you know to and finally I got well enough to get around and everything was back to normal.

Interviewer: Was there a gentle feeling of fear or an omnis feeling about where you were going and what you were going to do and all of that or were you able to just take it a day at a time and not think too far?

Lowe: No it was pretty much the same thing that is going on in Iraq now. Let's go out there and win that war boys. We're going to kick their behinds because they've done us wrong with Pearl Harbor and a few other things. And we're going to make them pay for it you know that kind of attitude.

Interviewer: Look at a couple of things here. Let's see did you participate in any maneuvers state side? And how good did you think your training was did you have any way of evaluating?

Lowe: It was I thought it was rather loose you know we did some bid whacking for instance. I didn't do any serious military training you know dealing with hand to hand combat and all that kind of thing. It was just we would run around they had those straw dummies on poles that we would stick the bayonet into that kind of activity that was about it.

Interviewer: How good were the living conditions in the camps? What were the living conditions like?

Lowe: Well they had these little huts that they threw up fabricated huts in the states. When we got over to Guadalcanal they had some quanza huts they had thrown up. They used to put you know rows on each side where they guys could sleep in and there was like a trail in the middle where we all snapped to attention when the First Sarg came out in the morning. But it was pretty basic.

Interviewer: It was still pretty basic?

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: When you were talking about the malaria detail what exactly did that consist of? You would go to a particular patch of water where there were

Lowe: Well they would apparently send out a patrol to figure out where we were most needed and then the next morning they would gather up say six or eight of us with those tanks on our backs you know with that spray gun. And they would take us out and as I said these little lagoons you would spray them down because that's still water. Or it rained a lot over there and anything that contained water you would simple spray it down and because the misquotes were ferocious and malaria was very rapid over there it was a problem.

Interviewer: And that lasted for a month or two?

Lowe: Oh I would imagine about three or four months.

Interviewer: Now did you get any sort of additional or retraining before going into the engineers?

Lowe: No they just put me in and they said for a while at that point I was a Chief Sargent Tech Sargent. And they said we're going to assign a jeep to you and it's your responsibility to be in the transportation end of this thing until we can find a hole to put you in which they did. And then they took the jeep and went into these units you know we would go in for instance over night and prepare an airfield like Henderson Field in the Philippines. We repaired that like early one morning it had been torn up with fighting the day before. And so a crowd of Marines would come in and cover us and then we would go in you know and repair what had to be done. And hopefully we wouldn't be attacked by the Japanese before we could finish it but this went on for some time.

Interviewer: Now had you gone in as a private?

Lowe: I did.

Interviewer: So you had been promoted twice by this point?

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: Can you say specifically why you were promoted?

Lowe: No I don't really remember Jeff. I just remember that they would make you Corporal two stripes. And then they would give you a little pay raise then the next thing I made a T3 they called it that was down with a T technical you know. And a little more raise in pay and that's about the length of it.

Interviewer: Now over all when you saw people getting promotions did it seem to you that the promotions were generally justified that there was a recognition on part of those people as far as their ability goes? And that they were deserved?

Lowe: I can't really remember that that was the case. It's been a while of course but I don't think that was the frame of reference at all.

Interviewer: Let's see how long was the voyage overseas?

Lowe: It was 21 days. We went to it would have been a little bit shorter except we stopped off in New Caledonia to get fruit and water fresh water and things like that. And I remember the this officer coming to me and he says you need to get off and stretch your legs a little bit you know you've had a rough go of it and I said okay and he said I'm going into town he said why don't you come along with me and we'll you know see whatever there is to see and I'll bring you back in the meantime you can get some exercise. So we did we passed by this place and I said I can't remember that officers name and I said what it that? And he says that's where they keep all the what was that terrible disease that they used to keep people I can't remember it you know they would become distorted their faces

Interviewer: Leprosy?

Lowe: Leprosy thank you. That's where they kept all the lepers in that colony there. And you weren't allowed to go in, Americans weren't allowed to go in there we just passed by it. That was an education to me because I knew nothing about leprosy before that. Then we eventually went back to the ship and continued to Guadalcanal and arrived there very early in the morning. And they put us on a skiff and we went to the beach and crawled around on our belly for awhile before we were able to get in. And the first marines were just really getting their butts kicked there on the island. But finally they got it done.

Interviewer: So that was so the fighting for Guadalcanal was still going on?

Lowe: Oh yeh

Interviewer: When you got there

Lowe: Oh yeh

Interviewer: Low long after you got there was the island secure?

Lowe: It simmered down pretty quickly once we got there. I think the first marines had really done a supper job they just put the quietus on that really quick you know once they got in there because they had a lot of American's to protect. Various things we were doing and had to do for the service and also they had to anchor the Japanese soldiers down. There was a bunch of them that had gone up into the hills if you look at Guadalcanal there's a mountain that goes up this way and then there's a sharp drop off on the other side. Well they were up on the top there and you know they were up they discovered some of those guys like a year after the war was over still up there imagine that.

Interviewer: So they had been dug in?

Lowe: They were dug in for real yeh. But anyway the first marines cleared that all out as best they could and it was an interesting time.

Interviewer: I imagine it was. How many of you were on that transport? Do you have any idea?

Lowe: To tell you the truth I don't remember. I remember that the USS General Black you mean?

Interviewer: Yes

Lowe: It was filled to the brim. They dropped us off they turned around and went back to San Francisco, gathered another load and got half way there and broke half in the middle and everybody sank. How do you like that?

Interviewer: The next trip?

Lowe: The next trip. Because I guess they weren't making the ships too reliable. But I remember reading that in the paper and I got the shivers you know that little paper they put out for the armed forces you remember that, it was in there.

Interviewer: Stars and Stripes?

Lowe: Could have been could have been yeh. Ernie Powell I remember was writing. So I got the shivers you know just thinking about you know what if I had been on that trip you know. But I wasn't.

Interviewer: And at the same time was this your was there your first exposure to gun fire and fighting and all of that?

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: Did you have feelings of apprehension about that or were you just going about your business?

Lowe: Well you just did the best you could you know you know the funny thing about memory and wars I've discovered all these years is that your mind retains the funny aspects but it gets ride of the nasty things.

Lowe: For instance I was standing three or four of us were standing in a little circle late one afternoon a guys was going on patrol or something you know around the camp and the kid didn't have a lot of brains. He was standing with his muzzle on his toe and his arm on the stock like so and we were talking and laughing and pretty soon I hear this gun shot you know and the kid fell down, he shot his toe off. You know his arm slipped off the stock and the gun went off and blew his toe off and we just howled we thought it was so funny you know. So they picked him up and they took him to the you know the red cross place or whatever it was and repaired him I suppose and sent him home. I don't' know what happened to him but I thought how dumb can you be you know with a loaded riffle your going to do that. Idiot, but things like that you know.

Interviewer: Well those memories are actually clearer.

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: And retainable

Lowe: Yeh things like that. I remember another one that wasn't funny at the time and it's still not funny but. They had pulled a ship into the harbor there in Guadalcanal and they were off loading ammunition you know I mean a whole ship full of it and somebody did something wrong and they dropped one of

those crates and blew the ship up and after that they were looking for volunteers and if you were a volunteer you would go down and pull these bodies out of the water you know and what was left of the ship things like that.

Interviewer: What kind of equipment and arms did you train with and how well did they operate in general?

Lowe: The thing I had training in was the M1 actually whatever that riffle was you know it was the big one and the carbine. The carbine we swung on out back while we worked. You put it on your back and it's got a strap that it was light and it had what do you call those things that hold the bullets.

Interviewer: Like a bandoleer or something I can't remember.

Lowe: No it was one of those metal things that go into the gun that holds the clip it was a clip.

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: And so that was on your back and if you needed it you simple swung it around and away you go. Those were the only two things I had training in, so machine gun or anything like that.

Interviewer: Did you feel close to the people that share the time with you? Did you make buddies and feel close to them or did you

Lowe: I was in the army with a bunch of Mormons who I'm still in contact with. They were all from around Salt Lake City. Many of them are dead now but we stayed in contact I'm still in contact with three or four of them that are still around they were nice people and I'm still in contact with a fellow that I met in Camp LaShae, Louisiana. He was just across the road he was an Ozzie from New Zealand and he and I still correspond and we pick up the phone occasionally and talk. His name his Ken Arkel.

Interviewer: No kidding?

Lowe: He's my buddy yeh he's a piano player. I suppose being a musician we were kind of drawn together. But he's still around and raised a nice family and still over there in Auckland.

Interviewer: Now were you with generally the same people once you got to Guadalcanal did you stay with

Lowe: No they would break you up when they would ship you from camp to camp you know you would be with a different set of people. The Mormons I would up with were in LaShae and then we all kind of went over together in mass on the ship.

Interviewer: Now after you got over there did you then fragment with those guys who went different places but did you

Lowe: For awhile and then I think we got back together as I remember there was a lot of scrounging around trying to fit everybody in over there because there's so many people and so much going on that I suppose that was one of the problems they were having. But we eventually would up kind of I think

there we 18 and 19 of us together the Mormons and three or four guys that were not Mormons kind of put together. I don't know how they figured that out but.

Interviewer: Now were you the malaria unit together?

Lowe: No

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: That was when we got over there and they had separated us before we got back together and I don't to tell you the truth I don't remember those guys at all Jeff. I just remember being in this unit and spraying for mosquitoes and malaria that's about it.

Interviewer: When you went on to the engineers was that a pretty was that a more stable unit? Or was that also were there changes in personnel frequent changes in personnel?

Lowe: Pretty much they would break us up you know that was one of those things where they had two guys from signal two guys from sanitation two guys form this there were six or eight of us that I remember. But they would put you in the unit where they needed your services. So there was no like no stable unit that you stayed with. They put you where they needed you within that frame work.

Interviewer: So this you were on Guadalcanal until when? O you remember when do you remember about when

Lowe: Do you remember the push on the Philippines? Was that 44?

Interviewer: 44 I think.

Lowe: I think that we were there until 44 because I remember we were one of the first ships out of Guadalcanal to go to the Philippines.

Interviewer: Really?

Lowe: Because the fighting was just starting over there and we were needed.

Interviewer: And it was in the Philippines where you were repairing air strips?

Lowe: Just outside of Manila.

Interviewer: Just outside of Manila?

Lowe: Yeh and as I remember Henderson Fields not too far from there. That was the big airfield they were worried about because that's where the big planes could land. Other wise all those other little strips that had trouble with those big army planes you recall in those days.

Interviewer: What did you do with your free time assuming that there was free time?

Lowe: Well I ran into a fellow from that I am still in contact with from St. Louis if name id Emit Werner and I bought a guitar from him and a practice book and I used to do that in my spare time just to keep my insanity in tact.

Interviewer: What kind of guitar?

Lowe: It was a Gibson guitar but it was like a not very complicated no electricity none of that. It was just a plane lower S ulnae Gibson guitar. I kept that guitar, I don't even know how I managed to do it, but I kept that guitar until I got to Japan.

Interviewer: No kidding.

Lowe: And I had gotten to know some guys in Signal Core form working with them. And they built me a little amplifier which I used to probably had 15 or 20 watts something like that. But I used to in my old and my mother sent me a D Armand pickup and I put that on the guitar so I was able to play electric guitar to some extent you know. And I sold that guitar just before I left Tokyo to come home. We went into Tokyo and we were housed in the Yokohama ship yard building the office building.

Interviewer: Now what this would be this is late 45?

Lowe: Oh yeh this is like remember the big meeting where they turned over everything? It was just about that same time. Terrible terrible time.

Interviewer: So you were housed near the ship yard in Yokohama and how did you make the transition again? Fill me in a little bit on how you made the transition from the engineers in the Philippines that's quite a maneuver in the engineer n the Philippines to

Lowe: Now that was about the time the war was winding down.

Interviewer: Now were you in the Philippines at VJ Day? When VJ Day happened were you still in the Philippines?

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: Oh okay

Lowe: And then immediately we were sent to outside of Tokyo there's a military place kind of like the thing on the Hudson

Interviewer: Like West Point?

Lowe: West Point kind of like that where they train Japanese soldiers and that's where we wound up after a short time in the Yokohama shipyard building. They had to get us out to bring other guys in because they were beginning to feed them into Tokyo and send them home so that's we were there for awhile. I remember when I left there and was sent home they gave me sword and they gave me an instrument called a shimmy send that's a Japanese guitar with a long neck. And they gave me a Japanese

very cool little Japanese fiddle and I turned those things over to the University when I got home. I don't know what ever happened to them but.

Interviewer: Where were you when you found out first of all about VE Day that the war in Europe was over and then VJ Day?

Lowe: VE I have to remember I remember being on Guadalcanal when Roosevelt died VE I can't remember exactly. VJ we were in the Philippines and very shortly went from there to Tokyo.

Interviewer: And when word came down that's an obvious question how did you feel I mean did you

Lowe: You saw the crack under the door of going home so everybody was elated you know. But there wasn't a great deal of information given to you just go there and stand there until I need you. You know that kind of thing.

Interviewer: So you were you not necessarily aware of how the war was how the war was going in the Pacific?

Lowe: In Europe you mean?

Interviewer: In the Pacific while you were there did you have an overall picture of how things were going?

Lowe: Not really because you have to remember Jeff that information was hard to come by over there and they wouldn't let you know it because they were afraid it would leak out get to the troops and there would be hell to pay. So very little information was available to you whatever they could squeeze by and put in that little paper I referred to is the only thing that you could really they had armed forces radio but that had nothing to do with the news. That had to do with more entertainment than anything else. That was the way it was.

Interviewer: So were you aware when the atomic bomb was dropped?

Lowe: Oh yeh that was very much a sign post that things were beginning to wind down.

Interviewer: Now were you entertained over there? Did anyone come to entertain you guys?

Lowe: I remember going to two concerts one with Bob Hope and Frances Langford that was on Quata Canal. And then when we got to the Philippines' Bob Hope again with Dorothy Lamoure. Then some other people you know Jerry Kilonon a guy names Tony Romano who played guitar he had that little troop you know that he took out every time he would just change the girls so that to thrill the boys I suppose.

Interviewer: Once you got to Tokyo how long were you there?

Lowe: I got there let's see the take over was what the 12th of October August?

Interviewer: Somewhere in there I'm not sure.

Lowe: Well we arrived there I would say within two weeks after that so that would have been about the beginning of October. About the middle of November we were put on a ship and sent back to El Paso where I was discharged from. And then home.

Interviewer: And what was your job in Tokyo again? What was your specific job?

Lowe: Nobody had a specific job because the war had wound down you know. What I did was I hooked up with a bunch of American musicians you know because I had the guitar with an amplifier and we would go around and entertain in the awards. Or just a lot of soldiers were really beaten up and all kinds of situations. But that's just about all we did because there was nothing to do and they'd do anything to keep you busy you know so that you didn't sit around and fester.

Interviewer: Were you able to evaluate the Japanese as an opponent? From your stand point when you looked at them or thought about them as an opponent not engaged them directly in your case.

Lowe: Well you know that attitude was going around a good Jap is a dead Jap which always bothered me a little bit you know. As a matter of fact I'm pretty sure that that was written across on tall letters like of like the Hollywood sign across the top of Talogie which was right across from Guadalcanal. And who put it up there Nimitz.

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: Yes sir used to bother me.

Interviewer: Once you realized you were going home obviously you were relieved how long were you still in the service once you got back to the states?

Lowe: When I got back to the states I would say no more than ten days. Got back to El Paso they were what's the word taking care of everything that had to be done to get you out of the service. Interviews with the officers and things like that and you'd meet the committee to give them your discharge and whatever medals if you had any medals coming that kind of thing. But mostly you just hung around the barracks and if they didn't need you you may be able to go into town for a few minutes and come back but not really.

Interviewer: Were you then continuously in the reserves at least officially.

Lowe: No when they discharged me there was a piece of paper that showed it on there it said do you want to be in the reserves and I wrote No. I didn't sign the paper I just handed it back to the. But a lot of the guys did stay in the Reserve and I would imagine that's how they wound up in future wars you know.

Interviewer: Back in Korea.

Lowe: Korea and all that other stuff. No I had had enough I didn't want any more of that.

Interviewer: In later years, there's a few things I want to come back to in just a little bit, but in later years as you thought back on that experience what did you think about it? Did you think about it a lot or infrequently or did you just kind of put the whole thing behind you?

Lowe: Jeff I thought about this a lot I still don't know what we were doing over there unless it was a fight over money and property. It sent me being over there under those kind of intense conditions sent me to a psychiatrist for six years when I got back to the states. Before I could put everything into place and live with my family and me and so that's just the way it was.

Interviewer: So the conclusion you came to is it was basically about money and property?

Lowe: I couldn't figure out any other reason you know why do people fight with each other? It's over those kind of things. You may say well you know that guy over there's got more money than I have and I'm going to get some of it. It was that kind of attitude that I felt anyway right or wrong. You also have to remember that I had come out of kind of a Quazie religious household and that added to my quandary about what am I doing over here? Why am I shooting at this guy, I don't know this guy. Why are we doing this?

Interviewer: Were there specific incidents that came back to you from what happened over there or was it just an overall kind of feeling of

Lowe: It was an overall kind of feeling also I remember certain things over there. For instance down below where we were stationed on Guadalcanal was a thing called the Bluffs. They were like flute kind of situations with caves.

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: And the Japanese would run into those caves when they were in battle and from there they would they have an advantage to shoot whoever's coming up the hillside. Well one of the officers in charge probably a General said let's burn them. So they got these huge flame throwers and they used to lower the guys down on a rope from the top of you know that top down to the side of it. And he would turn that flame thrower on and put it in there and roast duck. And then when that was done the guys form the medics had to go in there and lean all that mess up. Same thing in the Philippines just before we had gotten there there was a place called Fort Santiago which is where MacArthur had his little headquarters. And around that compound was a 12 foot thick fence and within the compound itself were concave where you could store equipment and thing like that. But when the Americans came in there those Japanese soldiers ran into these cubbies and the Americans simple took these bulldozers pushed the dirt up, sealed them up. Then a week later the medics had to go in there and pull all those things out and dispose of them. Terrible things people do to each other isn't it?

Interviewer: It is. Of the people you stayed in contact with from that period of time and it sounds like there are a number of them.

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: You mentioned the bond with one piano player.

Lowe: Yeh

Interviewer: What was the bond you felt with the Mormons for instance or some of the other people you selected to stay in contact with after the war?

Lowe: Well some of those guys were musicians and some of them were friends of musicians. And you know how it is when you're in the service you kind of hang together. If the guys a nice guy and you know you're relaxed around him and he had a joke you would like to hear or something you know you hang together. Certainly not with some red neck from where I came from and you have nothing in common with them and you keep saying to myself what am I doing here.

Interviewer: After you got to the end of the six years after the war ended and you processed all of this did you were you then able to put that away or did it continue to come back to you?

Lowe: No I was able to put it away.

Interviewer: You were?

Lowe: One day at the end of near the end of my road I got up the Doctor's name was Doctor Adolph Jones I got up out of that chair and I said doc I got there I wont be back I can manage it now. And he applauded and he said congratulations and that was it.

Interviewer: Great do you think there was something intransient in your nature or personality going in to this that would have a particularly hard time? Or is it the kind of thing you think everybody had to process in their own way having been

I think everybody did I think a lot of guys were not able to do that too with the Vietnamese war and the other wars. I'm convinced that is a lot of the reason some of them sit around in a wheel chair with those old uniforms on. They have not been able to put this at rest and until they do they will be right there. And I think it's a shame that they have been able to come to grips with what happened and why it happened.

Interviewer: I'm sure there are a couple more things I want to ask you here but what did this affect, this is just a general question, after that how has that experience affected your politics as an adult later on in your life?

Lowe: Not really.

Interviewer: Not really?

Lowe: I you know being an adult I do understand the thinking of a politician and I understand why they think the way they do for the most part and just go on.

Interviewer: Okay let me see. Did you mainly play music in your downtime? Is that mainly how you spent your downtime you didn't play cards or read or play sports or that stuff?

Lowe: I did some reading and some playing. That's about it I never was one to drink beer and hang out with the guys that's not my style. So we would also a couple of us would go up to the other end of the island you know just on a jeep and drive up there and see the scenery. Guadalcanal was beautiful it really was all of those palm trees that Lover Brothers had planted that we later paid for you know that?

Interviewer: No

Lowe: I understand I don't know this to be a fact but I understand that we had to pay for every palm tree that was torn up during that war on Guadalcanal.

Interviewer: Really?

Lowe: Because it was the Lover Brother's property and we had destroyed it. I'm not sure you might check that out.

Interviewer: I will.

Lowe: But I understand that was the truth.

Interviewer: I will. Food when you were in the field did you get hot food or C-rations something between or

Lowe: Both depending on the situation.

Interviewer: And you were in you said you were in quanzas most of the most part?

Lowe: Quanzas and also they would have these little huts with the wooden floor they would build with the cloth side what do you call that? Canvas, canvas sides and top because in the Philippines you know it could get awfully hot over there so you simple roll the sides up so you could get some air when you were trying to sleep.

Interviewer: Now how often did you feel sleep deprived or over worked or what was the nature of fatigue if you can remember?

Lowe: I wish I could remember I don't' it's just simply been too long Jeff.

Interviewer: Okay and let's see were the officers and NCOs in your unit recent recruits or were they still pre war career service men and could you tell the difference?

Lowe: Mixture

Interviewer: There was a mixture?

Lowe: A lot of we called them shaved tails were coming through the place on the Hudson what's it called?

Interviewer: West Point?

Lowe: West Point and a lot of them

Interviewer: So shaved tails are

Lowe: New

Interviewer: New rookies okay

Lowe: You could see them they were still wearing their gold bars they just graduated. And a great deal of them were old die in the wool soldiers who had come through there still in the service you know the officers for instance and of course the Generals they had been there for a long time. But it was kind of a mixture of the two elements.

Interviewer: And could you tell the difference? I mean could you in terms of

Lowe: If you were around them for a couple of days you can. Simply by the way they conduct themselves and they way the execute an order you had better listen to. And the way they could control their anger in situations where they needed to. All these kind of things that these shaved tails were not used to, they were learning under battle conditions.

Interviewer: I have a question for you specifically as a musician. Did what you went through express itself either in your composition or your playing in areas do you think?

Lowe: I don't know I've thought about that if it had anything to do with the way I think today. It must on a subconscious level I don't really know Jeff. I can tell you this if I had to do things over I would probably do them the same way.

Interviewer: Okay

Lowe: To get to this point in April I'm going to be 83 and I'm fairly comfortable with my life the way it is we have my wife and I have a good home my kids are all grown and out of the nest and it could be a lot worse.

Interviewer: Great thanks