

Transcription: Dan Abrams

My name is Tom Cengle, and I'm with the General Land Office. Today is Friday, February 15th, 2008. It's approximately 1:30 in the afternoon and I am interviewing Mr. Dan Abrams by telephone interview. I am located in the General Land Office and Mr. Abrams is at his home. The interview is in support of the Voices of Veterans Program of the state of Texas Veterans Land Board. The purpose is to create a permanent record of the military service experiences of veterans. Mr. Abrams, as you know, I am about to interview you relating to your military experiences. The interview is by telephone and I will be using a tape recorder to record this interview. The interview will be transcribed and made into a permanent record at the Veterans Land Board in Austin, Texas. Does the Veterans Land Board have your permission and consent to conduct this interview and to make it a part of the permanent records of the Veterans Land Board?

Dan Abrams: Oh yes, go ahead, OK.

One other thing I want to add to you, is a Ms. Joan Kilpatrick from our office is listening by headphones to this interview. She is going to be an interviewer with us for future interviews and she wanted to listen in to see what it's like. So we're a couple of old jarheads so we got to be careful with our language when we're talking, OK?

Dan Abrams: How about that? OK, let 'er rip.

And she wants to thank you very much for letting her listen in. OK, the purpose of the interview is to record your recollections of your military experience. We will follow somewhat a question/answer format, but please feel free to expand on your answers and add anything that you think may be helpful in refreshing your recollections so that future generations will have the opportunity to know what it was like for you during your military life and how those experiences have shaped your life since then. We understand that some of your experiences may be difficult to discuss and if so, you are free to limit the interview to the extent that you are comfortable in relating the experiences. Is that OK with you?

Dan Abrams: OK, yup.

Now we're going to start with some background information. So first thing I'll ask you is what's your name and present address?

Dan Abrams: Dan C. Abrams.

OK, and your address, Mr. Abrams?

Dan Abrams: It's Post Office Box 4, Frost, Texas.

And your age?

Dan Abrams: My age? 85.

85, OK. And could you give me a little background about your family, parents, brothers, sisters?

Dan Abrams: I have three brothers alive and one sister alive.

OK, and I assume that both of your parents are now deceased?

Dan Abrams: Oh yes, both of them are gone.

Were any other family members in the military at the time that you were in?

Dan Abrams: Now you're talking about direct family -

Brothers and sisters, yes.

Dan Abrams: I had a brother that got in just at the end of the war, no.

At the end of the war.

Dan Abrams: I had four cousins in there though. They was in the Marines.

All in the Marines?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, I had one that was with the 4th Range. He was captured on Gregidor. I had one that was seagoing on the Honolulu. I had another one was on Johnson Island and then myself, and there's another one somewhere. But anyway -

What service was your brother in?

Dan Abrams: He was in the Marines. We was all in the Marines.

All in the Marines.

Dan Abrams: Yes. Then I had another brother was in the Marines in Korea.

OK, how did it come to be that everybody ended up being a Marine?

Dan Abrams: I have no idea. I know how I come to being one.

OK, and we're going to get into that. How about your education before you entered the military?

Dan Abrams: I dropped out of high school as a sophomore.

And where was that at?

Dan Abrams: Hooker, Oklahoma.

OK, so you're not a native Texan.

Dan Abrams: No. I was born in Kansas, I was born in Ayuka, Kansas, and as I look back, I think there was a fellow by the name of Ellis goes back to 1900 was born there, too. A big city, I think there was probably 50 people there, in the northern part of Kansas.

OK, and how long did you live in Kansas?

Dan Abrams: We moved from Kansas to Oklahoma when I was 5 years old.

And how long in Oklahoma?

Dan Abrams: Until I went in the service which I was 18.

So when you left for the service, you were an Okie.

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

OK, you say you left school at some time in your sophomore year?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, during the Depression. In the dust bowl days up there.

Up in Oklahoma, that was really the dust bowl.

Dan Abrams: We were right in the middle of the dust bowl out there in no man's land, right in the middle of it.

I can believe that was rough.

Dan Abrams: That was a lot rougher than anything else that I've been through.

Is that right?

Dan Abrams: Yep.

And you said you had three brothers?

Dan Abrams: I have three brothers. There was four of us boys and there's seven girls, and there's only one of the girls left. The rest are gone.

11 children in the family?

Dan Abrams: 11 altogether, yes.

And they were all living at the time of the Depression in the dust bowl in Oklahoma?

Dan Abrams: Well they were all born then, but they were born during that. There was the two older sisters and myself and one had died, and a brother was born, the one in Oregon now, he was born just before the crash, and then the rest of them was all born after. I lost one sister before we moved to Oklahoma, and lost two sisters right after we got out there. Two of them died within five months apart.

Wow. Could you tell me what were your family's economic circumstances at that time?

Dan Abrams: Financially? My father was voted one of the most successful farmers in Pratt County, and we went out to Oklahoma, it was no man's land and what have you, went out with all new equipment, and yes, he was in good shape.

So during the Depression, your family did fairly well.

Dan Abrams: It completely lost everything. Everything went down the drain I mean with everybody lost, I'm sayin' almost 90 percent of the people in that area lost everything they had.

And what was your father doing during that period of time?

Dan Abrams: He was trying to stop the ground from blowing.

I guess that's all there was to do at that time.

Dan Abrams: But there wasn't any roads, there wasn't nothing out there, right in the middle, there was trails, and it was no man's land.

OK, and after your sophomore year, you would have been like about maybe 15 or so, 16?

Dan Abrams: About 16 I think, somewhere in there.

And how long was it before you entered the service?

Dan Abrams: Well, about two more years. I went in in '41.

OK, what did you do for those two years?

Dan Abrams: Anything I could to get any kind of work that I could. I worked as much at one time was not 10 cents a day. And then there was a farmer down the road that hired me for \$15 a month and room and board, so I was one of the richest kids.

So you lived on his farm during that period of time?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, off and on all the time. My folks' place was about four or five miles from there, and this guy was a bachelor and he was very well off and he liked me, so I worked for him and stayed with him and went to school until it got to the point I had to drop out and help make a living.

And how did you get back and forth between his place and your home?

Dan Abrams: Well, I didn't go back and forth. But I mean if I did, I walked.

You walked the four or five miles.

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, that was no problem, or run, trotted.

Run?

Dan Abrams: Well you galloped, or yeah, trot.

That must've helped you get ready for the Marine Corps.

Dan Abrams: I was starvin' to death, in the Marines I was ready to eat.

Ready to eat, I can understand that.

Dan Abrams: I went to Kansas City from there, and I was in Kansas City when I joined the Marines.

What caused you to leave Oklahoma to go to Kansas?

Dan Abrams: Well, an old boy there at Hooker, he was a painter, and he come home and he was a painter up in Kansas City, and we just didn't have anything doin'. He asked me if I'd like to go to Kansas City with him and help him paint, and I said yeah, had a job. So I went up there with him and I had never painted, so I didn't last long as a painter, but I took a job with a carpet and binding company binding rugs, and it seemed like it was \$8 a week, it seemed like that's what it was. And then at night, over there is a place called Emery Takonga Garden out in east town there, and I'd go out there and it was kind of a hangout for younger people and they had hot dogs and good stuff like that, pop, and kids kind of hung out out there, and this Marine drove up there one evening and he had that red stripe down those blue pants and a khaki shirt and a seagoing, dipping that white hat, and the next thing I know that's what I wanted to be right then. So he was on leave and at that time, if they was on leave it seemed like they could get somebody to join up, well they'd get five more days on their leave, and so that's the way I hooked up.

You kind of got suckered in didn't you?

Dan Abrams: Well, I was ready to go, you know. And the funny thing about that, you know, General Holcomb was a commandant.

General Holcomb, yes.

Dan Abrams: And do you know he was the one that swore me in in Kansas City?

Really?

Dan Abrams: Yes sir.

Wow.

Dan Abrams: Of course at that time, see that's 1941, I had no idea who he was until I found out later that he was a commandant.

So he was a commandant when he signed you in?

Dan Abrams: This was in September of 1941, and this is what I can find on whatever I've looked up, that he was the one that did swear me in.

That's quite an honor.

Dan Abrams: That's why I started sayin' and of course you mentioned this, and I'm not for sure but I'm pretty sure that's what I found out that he was the one that swore me in. And I'd like to look up the record and see if he was there then.

Did you ever meet him again?

Dan Abrams: No. But you know, you talk about that, he did, I didn't know of him or heard of him that he did come to the Canal while the Canal was hot and heavy. So he wasn't afraid to get out and get in it.

OK, so you kind of joined up in September of 1941. Your motivations weren't powerfully patriotic or what have you, you wanted to eat.

Dan Abrams: Well everybody back in that dust bowl day, everybody was thinkin' about going into the service because there wasn't any work for anybody and the CCC camps was startin' and everybody was thinkin' about joining the service and I was thinkin' real serious, or two or three of 'em did, and when I went to Kansas City I had a mind to go, but patriotic, no, because we didn't know enough about the military at the time.

But you did when you went in, you knew that there was a war going on in Europe.

Dan Abrams: Well yeah, we knew that.

And you knew that the Pacific was starting to get very hot and –

Dan Abrams: Well, we didn't know, I mean we was ignorant enough we didn't know, but we did know there was a war going on in Europe.

OK, so you joined in September and then I have the date here as September 24th, 1941.

Dan Abrams: That's right.

And you joined and the commandant swore you in, and then you went where?

Dan Abrams: Went to San Diego.

San Diego, same place I went, many years later. And so you went to San Diego Marine Corps recruit center.

Dan Abrams: Yes sir.

And that's where you went to boot camp.

Dan Abrams: Yup.

And how long was boot camp?

Dan Abrams: At that time, everybody said it was 12 weeks, but it wasn't, it was 8.

8 weeks?

Dan Abrams: Yep, because we were out of boot camp on December 7th.

OK, so you were already out.

Dan Abrams: Yep.

OK, tell me about boot camp. What are your recollections? Do you have any things that really stick out in your mind?

Dan Abrams: Oh, there was some funny things happened. I wasn't that big, I mean I was one of the feather merchants, and we all went back in a column going out through the boondocks there, and a big guy was walking up there and us little guys draggin' along in the loose sand going down towards the bay, and they switched us around one morning and all of us littler guys got in front of the big guys, so they bogged down. And of course I volunteered for stuff, you know. I wanted to be a dive bomber pilot and they give me a stick with a nail in it and I'd go out and pick up cigarette butts.

That's how you were able to get your training as a dive bomber?

Dan Abrams: I was eager to go, man, and anybody that wanted to be a dive bomber pilot, and I was warned by this old boy that was out there at the carpet binding company I was working at to never volunteer, and he was an old chief that had been discharged. And I was the first one that fell for it, you know. So he said, boys, and picked out three of us and give us a stick with a nail on it. OK, you're a dive bomber pilot. Get out there and dive bomb, and stuff like that which was funny. We had funny things happen during boot camp, but it was really, it wasn't tough on me. I mean heck, I was in good shape. I was tough as a boot, so it didn't really bother me, and the groceries was good. I weighed 140 pounds when I went into boot camp and weighed 165 when I come out, so I wasn't too hurt.

Well they said that back then the drill instructors were pretty tough guys.

Dan Abrams: Oh they were, I mean they were rough, and you know, they would slap you up the side of the face with a DI stick, and they can knock you down if they wanted to, and if you wanted to fight 'em, they'd fight you. It worked very good that way. We had one DI there named Slappy. He was corporal, and he looked at us, his old lip snarled up and he was real gruff and ornery, and challenged any of us when boot camp was over, he told us the last day there he had been hard on us and all of that, and if any of us wanted to whip him, why come into the YMCA and try it, and a kid by the name of Whitlock and myself, he was from M___, Kansas, we decided we'd go down and do it, and when we got down there we decided that old boy, he may be as tough as he says he is, and we may not be as tough as he's told us we'd be, so we changed our mind.

What transpired?

Dan Abrams: We didn't even go in. We just went down there and before we went in, well we decided maybe we better not challenge him because he weighed about probably 210, 215 pounds and he was all there.

That was probably a very wise move.

Dan Abrams: Oh, yeah, a wise move, but then a funny thing happened after it came back the last time, that was at Miramar, and I went down to Nago there and went into one of those domino places where they were playing cards and what have you, and there sat Slappy playing cards. He was still a corporal.

So you met him after.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, I met him just before I discharged and of course -

That was four years later then.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, and he was sitting there and I come up there and at that time, hell I had a full arm of chevrons and whatever you know, and I looked at him and I said something about his lip still curled up or what have you, and he kind of grinned a little bit, and I told him what platoon I was in and when it was, and he said well he said, I wished I'd gotten over and helped you guys, but he said they never, he said I'm still a DI.

So he stayed at that DI for the four years and stayed a corporal for four years.

Dan Abrams: Well that's why I asked him, you know. And he said well, he'd been busted a time or two.

He went up and came down again.

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

So you didn't have any physical problems getting through boot camp?

Dan Abrams: No, not any at all.

Pretty good shape. OK, so what happened once you finished with boot camp?

Dan Abrams: Well, we all had to take IQ tests and everything, and of course I wanted to go to aviation. I wanted to be a pilot and I kept harpin' at it, and sure enough, when we split up, well that was my order to go to North Island. So I get where I wanted and get over there, and of course, my name being Abrams on the list went over there, well I was the first one to get mess duty and guard duty, but I was very fortunate other than go to the regular galley well I was assigned to chief's quarter, chief mess, so I had it pretty good there, about all you could eat and everything and it was pretty easy going through there.

What were you doing there?

Dan Abrams: Washing pots and pans.

Oh, so you weren't training to be a pilot?

Dan Abrams: Oh no, right then I had just, we had just gotten out of boot camp and what they done just sent us over there to form a new squadron is what it amounted to which we didn't

know. We were just boots. I didn't have education for a pilot. I mean I didn't qualify for it then.

OK, so what was your next assignment?

Dan Abrams: Well, the next assignment was being a country kid and they wanted to know if anybody could drive a jeep, and my gosh, I'd been out there on that old farm and I had driven everything that was out there, so they give me a jeep and consigned me to driving a jeep for the colonel, and my job was with him was to drive him over, he was staying at the Coronado Hotel there on North Island, and I'd take him over, or go over and get him in the morning and come back in the evening and that was it. And then they decided that we needed to go to transportation school, so they sent us over to the base back over to the recruit station.

Back to San Diego?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, back across the bay, and we went over there and went through transportation school. Yeah, I didn't last long. I mean I could do as well as anybody that was an instructor, so they sent me back over to North Island and I was there permanently and we formed the next squadron, VMO-251.

OK, how did you get from transportation school to an aviation outfit?

Dan Abrams: Well, I was in aviation, see I was already in aviation, and all they wanted is a bunch of us that was on the island, they needed somebody to train to drive jeeps and what have you.

So until they had a unit put together, they were trying to find occupations for you.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, they wanted something for me to do because I wasn't a pilot, or wasn't going to be one, and at that time, and so they were just trying to place us where we were going to be the most good. At that time, whatever there was to do, well you did it.

OK, and how long were you there?

Dan Abrams: We left out of there in June of '42, we left North Island on the USS Haywood.

So you were there on December 7th.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, I was in the mess hall. I was in the galley there at the chief mess. I had no more idea where Pearl Harbor was than the man in the moon. When they started getting all excited, and then of course at that time, everybody fell out, you know, and everybody got their rifles and what have you and went to the beach and heck, you know, there might be an invasion, you know, so they put us on the alert, and that lasted four or five days, and of course the Saratoga was in there then, too. They put us all on alert.

The Saratoga, keep in mind we're doing this for people who may not know some of these things, the Saratoga was an aircraft carrier.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, and it was tied up there at the dock, right there on North Island, and they had us for work detail. Everybody was on work detail. It didn't matter who you are, they had

something for you to do, that's where you went. So they put some of us up on there to help load the cargo and what have you all on deck and in the hold there on the Saratoga. It was only there a couple of days until it got loaded and we were still aboard when we felt it movin', and we got out there and they sent a launch, got us off there with a launch and dumped us off on the island. We were startin' off pretty early.

Leaving without knowing you were leaving.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, but we were down in the hangar deck movin' stuff around, and we looked around and hell, we felt it movin', and we said hey, and one of the boatsmen or whoever were down there said you guys are not supposed to be on here. We said we know it. And so we piped up and they got our butt up there and before we got out to Point Loma, they dumped us off.

Wow, OK, tell me about when you heard about Pearl Harbor, what were your reactions? What did it do to you as a person?

Dan Abrams: Well, gun-ho, because at that time, when we first heard about it, I didn't know where Pearl Harbor was. We didn't know they were being attacked, and we knew we were going to have to go to war, but everybody was so gun-ho at that time, I mean everybody just kind of reacted all alike, let's go. Everybody was ready to go get 'em, you know, ready to go.

The typical Marine reaction, let's go get 'em.

Dan Abrams: Well it was, I mean everybody was I mean, let's go. Of course some of the old China Marines up there, gunnies and what have you, they encouraged all of us. Of course we was boots, hell we were just out of boot camp. We were just green ass kids, but a lot of 'em said hell, you're ready to go, aren't you, you bad, kills us, go get 'em, and stuff like that, so not knowing what really happened, we knew they had been bombed, but we didn't know how serious it was or anything like that, and we really didn't have any idea what war was. Didn't have any idea what it was.

Did it scare you?

Dan Abrams: Not really, I think we was all anxious, but actually we all seemed like we wanted to go and get over there, get it done, you know what I mean, go. I don't remember ever being what you'd call afraid of what was going on, but I was scared a lot. There's a difference between afraid and scared.

OK, tell me what's the difference to you.

Dan Abrams: When you're afraid, you've got a different feeling, but when you're scared, you feel like running or getting out of the damn way. When you're afraid, you feel it in your back, back of your head and your neck, but when you're scared, it's just a different feeling.

All right, now you were still in San Diego in June?

Dan Abrams: We left there June 18th.

June 18th, 1942.

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

OK, and then what transpired, what happened to you next?

Dan Abrams: We left out on the USS Haywood. It was an old scowl, and it was just our squadron, VMO-251.

Tell me what VMO-251 was.

Dan Abrams: That was an observation squadron. VMO was observation. It was I guess that's what the V meant was, but we were supposed to be an observation squadron to take photos. We were supposed to be over to photograph, and we had F4's. I think if I remember correctly there was 14 F-4's and 1 F3, grummins.

Those were called the Wildcat. It was the first naval fighter of World War II, is that right?

Dan Abrams: That was the first one, and the tough one, he was a tough little dude.

What was your job with the VMO-251?

Dan Abrams: I was a jeep driver and whatever else they wanted. I mean if there was anything, like when we came in, we came into New Caledonia at Namaya.

Now wait a minute, you left California in June, correct?

Dan Abrams: We left California on the USS Haywood and first we stopped in Samoa, British Samoa, and we were supposed to pick up a radar battalion there, and they weren't on British Samoa. They were on American Samoa. So we went to pick 'em up.

So you didn't go to Pearl Harbor first? You didn't go to Hawaii?

Dan Abrams: No, no, we went past Pearl Harbor.

Right down to Samoa.

Dan Abrams: We went directly to the South Pacific.

OK, and you unloaded there I assume.

Dan Abrams: We went into Numea – the capital of New Caledonia.

Numea.

Dan Abrams: Yes, and it's the capital of New Caledonia. And we unloaded the planes on the dock. The planes, the fuselage was all there and the engine was one piece, and the wings were in crates and the propellers were in crates, and they had to haul them from the dock up to Komtoota, which was a strip up in the middle of the island there to assemble them. The natives there worked in the copper mines, their hair was read and they sang, they were good guys, and they helped us in every way they could, and we got 'em up there and had to assemble them, and

every one of us was part of it. We didn't know what we was doin', but we went out there and put all the planes together and they got 'em up and got 'em flying.

OK, and so how long were you on New Caledonia?

Dan Abrams: You know, I'm gonna have to think. It don't seem like we was over there about three weeks, and then we moved to, when we got the planes put together and everything, well there was one night we had struck camp out by a little creek out by Tontu which was the air strip, and one night after the planes had gotten together and got 'em running good and they tested them, one evening they said break camp, we're leaving. And so we had to bundle up everything and go out there and put everything aboard the ship and we pulled out at night out of Numea and went to Espirito Sancto up in New Heberdes.

In the New Heberdes Islands.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, Espirito.

Now these are all South Pacific Islands northeast of Australia.

Dan Abrams: Yes, mostly north. The islands all up through there, New Heberdes is all most like north of New Caledonia, and the Solomons are just north of those.

OK, and did that become your base for a while?

Dan Abrams: The headquarters of our squadron stayed in Espirito until February. It was either March or February when our headquarters moved to the Canal. But they shuttled some of us back and forth to the Canal until they moved the squadron up there, and after we got there we was there about a month before the island was secured.

OK, so you were stationed on Espirito Santo but you went back and forth to Guadalcanal –

Dan Abrams: ___ into pilots and crews, up and back, just why they shuttled us, I don't know.

OK, what was your job during that period of time?

Dan Abrams: My job was anything they asked me to do, but mostly I was transportation. Mostly I was to meet celebrities or like General Geiger and what have you, and people like that. General Geiger came in one time I was assigned to go get him, and he was in a PBY.

Now General Geiger was the commanding general of the Marine aviation in the South Pacific at that time, correct?

Dan Abrams: Yes sir.

OK, so you were hauling him around?

Dan Abrams: Well, just once, they sent me down to, he just flew in and they sent me down to pick him up and they give me strict orders not to get too close to the plane. They said don't drive under the wing of that plane, and said the minute you get there, you get out of that jeep. And so man, I zipped up there and got out of that jeep and stood at attention and he come by and I give

him the salute, and he give me one, and he grinned and we got in and left. He spent a little while and I took him back to the plane. But that's the only time I had any dealings with him, but I did meet him, or I did pick him up. He was a tough old boat.

OK, so although parts of your squadron were being shuffled back and forth between -

Dan Abrams: The headquarters was the most of the Clear Court, most of the personnel went to the Canal, but the Clear Court stayed and when they did move the headquarters, they commissioned one of the boys, his name was Keithley, and he was CO when they moved up there. I don't know what, to this day I don't know what his ___ was when they commissioned him, but he was well educated ____. We had an old gentleman that was, by the name of Pardee, but he had been enlisted and he had been transferred into something else besides that because at that time, at the New Heberdes, they really didn't need anybody but to kind of keep the records I guess.

While you were there on Espirito Sancto, I assume you did not have any air attacks from the Japanese at that time.

Dan Abrams: No, we didn't have any air attacks. When we went into Espo, we had to build the strip there, we had to build the air strip there, so they got natives which were more like savages there. They would climb up a coconut tree for it and get coconuts and stuff like that. But we had to clear and lay down matting, landing matting, and they moved at that time they was photographing the islands, and we had with us two photographers that went with the Army. They had a B-24, and they came in and doing the photo work, and our boys went up and took the photos of the islands.

What was island life like at that time?

Dan Abrams: Well, there on Espirito it was real nice. I mean we was right on, there was a stream of water coming in the back of the camp, clear water, and we could go swimming in it and clean up, and it was just a nice, tropical island, very quiet. Of course we heard, we'd have air raid drills, I mean they would sound 'em, but never that I know of that Espirito was ever bombed or attacked.

I assume that at that time you knew what was happening on Guadalcanal.

Dan Abrams: Oh yes, you bet, because we shuttled back and forth. Well not when we first got there because they hadn't landed on Guadalcanal yet when we first got there out to Espirito. At that time, nobody knew anything. I don't think, we were really, I don't know how we ever got off the ground as much chaos as it was, because actually people really didn't know what we was doin', I mean we were just following orders from somewhere. But no one knew anything, and when we came over to New Caledonia, we had one of the pilots was an enlisted pilot by the name of Garten, and he was a navigator. So we didn't know where we were going. And he had a sextant, and at night he'd come up and shoot it in the ___ direction, what are you doin', so we knew pretty well, but when they moved the planes from New Caledonia to Espirito, there was none of the officers were capable of doing navigation, so Garten, I believe he was a staff sergeant at the time, and he did navigating for them. His purpose was to fly the F-7 which didn't have guns in it, it had cameras in it, so he was supposed to help take pictures of surrounding islands.

When was your first time that you went to Guadalcanal?

Dan Abrams: It was either the last October or November.

Were you anxious to go there?

Dan Abrams: Oh you bet, heck yes, let's go, everybody was.

Notwithstanding at that time I'm sure you knew that there was some terrible fighting going on there.

Dan Abrams: Oh yes, two of the pilots had gone up and was aboard one of those cruisers that was sunk right at the beginning of the war, and they came back and I mean they told us what it was. Of course, everybody was very much in doubt there for a while because it looked like, we didn't know it, but you know it now that pulled out and had orders to get the fleet out of there and leave the ones that were there, but Nimitz and all these, they were real, the Pentagon said no, we're not gonna leave the Marines there.

But for a while there, the fleet did move away.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, they did pull out because they were afraid to lose any of the carriers. And see, the Coral Sea had already been full in Midway, and so -

Those were two battles that took place, the Midway Island battle and -

Dan Abrams: Well, the Coral Sea was the first one and it come out even more or less. The Lexington was sunk there and what have you, and then of course Midway, well that was the turning point of the sea battle.

That was back in June.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, and the Coral Sea was in May.

So when did you know you were going to Guadalcanal? Did you get advance warning?

Dan Abrams: No, about 15 minutes before. Before we knew we was going up there? About they'd call you and say hey, there's a fight, you're going to be on such and such truck, get your pack and go. You didn't take your sea pack, get in the truck. So you just whenever they told you to and whatever they told you to do.

So were you shuttling back and forth?

Dan Abrams: No, not me. When I got there, I stayed.

Once you got to Guadalcanal you stayed there.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, I stayed until May.

I assume being in aviation that you were somewhere near or at Henderson Field?

Dan Abrams: There was Fighter 1 and Fighter 2 there, and Henderson Field, to me it was on the south side of the Lungur River, and Fighter 1 was south of Henderson Field, and then Fighter 1 was on the south of Henderson Field, and then across the Lungur River – wait a minute, it was Fighter 2 which is the old Fighter, but Fighter 1 was over the Lungur River looking out over the ocean, and we helped put that together, too. But Henderson Field was the only field there was at the start, and it wasn't finished. The engineers and what have you and everybody else up there was raisin' up on the potholes up and keeping everything running, keeping it going.

When you got there, was Henderson Field completed?

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah. Well yeah, was it complete, the length of it was and what have you, but they was always pock marks from shells out of the hills. The airstrip was always under fire, a lot of grenades, I don't mean grenades -

Tell me about your own experiences while you were there relative to any action that you saw or affected you.

Dan Abrams: No, I can't say there was anything that really affected me because I don't really feel that I was ever in any danger. I mean we didn't realize it if you were. Yeah, there was snipers and what have you, but as far as being where you're going to be captured or anything like that, well no. Well Charlie would come over there every night and drop personnel bombs and ___ or something would keep you up, but other than that, snipers and what have you, but no, there were no breakthroughs or anything while I was there.

If I'm right, washing machine Charlie was the name they gave to a night-flying Japanese pilot who flew over the bases and dropped bombs more to keep you awake than anything else so you didn't sleep.

Dan Abrams: They would stay high enough that the aircraft barrier could not reach them. We had a spotlight and you could get him in that spotlight, but he'd be up so high and you'd see the berth below him. There was one morning there, everybody was kind of lulling away and all of a sudden the Betty come down right across the strip there.

Hold on a second, we have to explain to everybody what a Betty is.

Dan Abrams: Well, it was a two-engine light bomber.

Japanese twin-engine.

Dan Abrams: A light bomber kind of pretty much on the design of our 25.

Yeah, kind of like a B-25.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, 25, it was in that category. It was a fast little plane come across there, and they strafed the field and everybody just looked as they went by because they wasn't expectin' them coming down through there. One night we had a kid by the name of Somerville from Sweetwater, Texas, he was on the light truck. You sent out a morning patrol, a sunrise patrol and a dawn patrol, and then when the planes would come back in, well the dust patrol when it came out, come in, why it was nearly dark and so they had to, there wasn't any landing lights on the strip, so they had a light truck down at the end and he'd shine the lights down the runway so the

pilots could land, and this one particular evening when the dust patrol came in, well the Japs followed 'em in, and knocked the lights out on the light truck. I don't think Somerville ever got over that. It scared the hell out of him.

I would imagine.

Dan Abrams: And we had, there was some funny things that happened. We had a kid by the name of Patistich, and no one could ever pronounce his name, so when they had muster they'd go out and try to say, and he said ah, just call me back shit, and so that's the way he went when they roll-called, that's what they called him. And we got there up on the flyer strip and instead of him digging a foxhole, there was a kind of a little arm chair lookin' indent in the volcano rise that was behind the strip there, and meet him, and another guy just got in that, and there's only one way it could've hurt him was the bombs had dropped and come in from, and sure enough, first night that they crawled in there, well a little old bomb went off and killed them both right there in that deal, so it was their time to go I guess. But he was a comical kid and had lots of fun. Everybody loved him.

So you saw some of your friends die there.

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah. We had a kid by the name of Lucero. He was on the fire truck on the airport, and they had the night before we'd all sat up and watched, ___ Charlie because nobody was afraid of him because he's just keeping you awake. But Lucero was talking and he was from Pueblo, Colorado, and we were talkin' about when we got home, and he said that night, he said I'm not goin' home. And oh yeah, you are. And no, no, said I'm not. He said any of you get to be to Pueblo after the war, he said stop and tell my mother. So we all promised we would. Sure enough, next morning, two planes collided right together. One was taking off one way and the other run head on and one of them hit the fire truck and killed him. Oh, it was 25 years later I stopped in Pueblo, had a job up at Pueblo and I thought I'd see him, I'd promised and thought well I'll see. I got the phone book open and hell, there must've been 50 Lucero's in it, and I called several of them and none of them had any recollection of him.

So you tried.

Dan Abrams: The two planes was run head on that morning was the Army was taking off from one end of the strip and the Marines was taking off on the other, and there was just a new officer by the name of Sturret that come out and he was running the light, and he was supposed to give a red light to one and a green light to the other one, and he give a green light to both of 'em, and so here they come, a B-40 and an F4F, and hit head on just as they both come up off the ground. Luckily both pilots survived, but Lucero got killed.

Wow. Did you observe any of these collisions or crashes?

Dan Abrams: Well yeah, I was standin' right there when it happened.

You saw that one?

Dan Abrams: Yep.

And the planes exploded I assume.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, head on and the first time we run out, and both planes caught on fire, and the first thing we did was run out and try to get to the pilots and both of 'em was out. Both of 'em had gotten out somehow, some way, and one of them was sitting on one side of the runway and the other one sitting on the other, and then we looked over and the fire truck was all damaged and beat up, so we go over there and Lucero was laying over the steering wheel.

So the pilots survived the crash.

Dan Abrams: Both of 'em.

The truck driver didn't.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, both of 'em, I mean they got out and they were shook up maybe, both sitting down, but when we got to 'em, we was prayin' you know, that they was both burned up, but they weren't. I don't even remember their names, but Sturret, the signal officer, I think he got a pretty good eatin' out because he'd given the green light to both of 'em.

I would hope so.

Dan Abrams: He was just new and probably nervous and what have you, and really didn't understand what he was supposed to do.

How about did you ever observe any of the air battles over the island?

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah. You could see 'em. One in particular was when Lieutenant Swett shot down seven planes in 15 minutes, his first flight, and there was a bunch of -

What was his name?

Dan Abrams: Swett. It was April the 7th, I remember it well. There was a bunch of, we had some ships in and of course the torpedo boats were, stayed at the loggy, and they'd come in together because the PT boats were giving them hell and they come in there to get 'em, and so a bunch of dive bombers come in. They had some fighter escort, but when Swett went in, he went in low and got three dive bombers, and then he got hit and turned around and come back in and got four more, and then got shot down there by our own aircraft, our Air Force, because he was flying right over the fleet. But he survived and he won the congressional medal of honor. It was his first flight into combat.

And he got seven planes.

Dan Abrams: He was just, I think he was 21 or 22 years old.

Did you observe the action?

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, we could see it. The sky was just full, it looked like a bunch of flies. I don't know how many, there must've been 100 or more planes in the air right around there then. It seemed like they got about 40 of them that day if I'm not mistaken. But there must've been 120 or 130 all together up there.

So it was very difficult to tell which side was succeeding and which one wasn't.

Dan Abrams: No, you couldn't tell because there's so much smoke coming down, you didn't know whether it was yours or theirs, and they was that far away you couldn't tell. Only thing you could tell was the zero was so much faster, you could see him climbing up and come out and come back down under, but on that you could see the fighters, but you couldn't tell the difference in the dive bombers. They come in low and of course the aerial up above that was fighting above, well you could see them tangling up there and of course we're all standing out there hoopin' and hollerin', and we're thinking every one of them that's going down in smoke is theirs, it's not ours, you know. No, it was pretty exciting. They came up with a night fighter there, and this one night why it went up and we knew it was there, and we expected it. We knew when it took off, and at that time, we're between Charlie instead of at that time it was cuppin' 'em and they was coming in low. They wasn't coming in high, they came in straight and what else, and this night fighter, we knew he was going up, so we were all sitting there watching. We could hear him, and all of a sudden, bam, we seen the tracer and what have you and he blowed one of them out of the sky. You'd have thought we was at a football game and they made a touchdown, boy everybody laughed, it was funny, but that was the first night fighters, and so they didn't know we even had 'em, or we didn't either.

Did you observe any of the planes crashing near you?

Dan Abrams: You mean shot down by the enemy? No. We had a lot of them come in, they was bummed up, you know, they would crash on their own landing, but not the ones that was over the water, if they went down, well they all went in the water. None of them ever landed, went down as far as I know in the jungle. There was, I didn't observe it, there was a P-40 that was shot down over the lines back there one time, but the pilot bailed out.

I understand you met some of the famous pilots that were there on Guadalcanal.

Dan Abrams: I met Joe Foss. He was one of the greatest guys in the world, and of course there was another guy there by the name of Bower. Bower was killed. Then there was Smith and there was Gaylor. Now Gaylor is still alive. He lives up here in Dallas. There was Bower and Foss and Gaylor and Smith, and Blanche I believe was the other name. They all got congressional medals of honor before the island was secured.

Yes, and Joe Foss ended up being the highest number of victories of a Marine pilot there -

Dan Abrams: No, Pappy Bowington was awarded that, but Foss was, Bowington got sick on the ground in China that he was, that he had destroyed, but not in combat. I met Bowington after the war was over. He was home in Louisiana, and I was down there. We pulled on in there with the gas shortage, and I was having French fries and they came down and they told me who he was and I introduced myself to him, and told him I'd heard about him and what have you, and boy I mean to tell you, he was very belligerent. He was very much of a smart alec.

That's what they said.

Dan Abrams: And he got the congressional medal of honor for, see, he was shot down over Rubal, and he spent the rest of the time in a prison camp and he came out fat, and that was the only man that was ever a prisoner of war that came out fat, but he did.

OK, the ones I remember receiving the medal of honor as pilots in Guadalcanal were Joe Foss, John Smith, Gaylor, and Jeff DeBlanc.

Dan Abrams: Well now, he received it but he was later killed.

Yes, I know he was.

Dan Abrams: And Gutter is still alive. And then there was another boy there by the name of Karl. Yeah, Marion Karl. I think he got the medal of honor after the island was secured. They just, the ones that were before the island was secured, but I think it was five of them got the medal of honor. That was before. Then after that, well there was Swett. Now Karl was a real good lookin' young guy. I mean he had a lot of class.

Did you know that he was just killed not too long ago?

Dan Abrams: No, I didn't know.

Yes, he lived in Florida and somebody tried to rob his house and he was trying to defend his wife and he was killed by the robber.

Dan Abrams: Well I'll be damned, no I didn't know it.

I think that was about a year and half ago.

Dan Abrams: Well no, I didn't know that, and I didn't know that Gaylor was still alive until about three or four months ago when this article come out in the Dallas paper about him, and he's still alive and he's in there. Well it came out when Joe died. They talked about them being together a lot, and they both were medal of honor winners.

So which of these gentlemen did you meet?

Dan Abrams: Joe Foss. When we came back to the States the first time, we came back and we were assigned to Santa Barbara which we didn't know, and we went in there and Joe Foss was the CO of our squadron. He had the headquarters squadron, he was CO there. He was training a bunch of new pilots. And so us guys went in there and I don't know whether it was on purpose or what it was, but there was 18 of us that was together that we all went to Santa Barbara, and none of us knew at the time we left, was going to leave, that all of us were going to go back to Santa Barbara, and we didn't know that Joe was going to be there. We got about whatever we wanted to do while we were there before they shipped us out to the east coast. But no, gasoline was limited and all that, and we had two cars between us, and we'd pull into the hangar and fill 'em up with gas, and of course we thought we was getting by with it, you know, everybody was stealing it, and sure enough Joe came in there one night and we was filling them up and he just said how you doin' boys, and walked out, turned around and walked out. He knew we was doin' it, you know.

He later became governor of South Dakota.

Dan Abrams: He become the governor of South Dakota and not only that, he was the commissioner on the American football league.

He was also a president of the NRA, did you know that?

Dan Abrams: No, I didn't. When I was in Kansas City one time right after that football deal, and of course he was governor then, but when he was elected to football, and there in the Mulebock Hotel and there he stood, and stopped and shot the breeze with him a little bit, and then when Tom Broshaw's book came out about last generation, the greatest generation, well he had Joe's that he was in Phoenix, and I called him and we said hi and bye, more or less, and I asked him if he was still drinkin' and chewin' that cigar, and he informed me that he was not, that he was a born again Christian I guess.

Is that right, wow. OK –

Dan Abrams: But he was one hell of a guy. I mean he was great. Well all of those guys were great, everybody that I met was. We had a boy by the name of Kirk, when at first when we got F4U's, his name was Kirk -

That's an airplane.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, the gold winged airplane.

That's the successor to the Wildcat.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, that was the one that came in and replaced the Wildcat. And we'd gotten those in and Kirk happened to be one of them that came in with them, and he was a daredevil and a good lookin' guy, and I mean a lot of guts, and they'd been up on a strafin' run or something up in New Georgia, up by Munda, and when they come back by if they had anything, any ammunition, they'd fly, the Japs were building a strip there, they would strafe it, and so Kirk, he came down and strafed and he decided hell, I'll just see about layin' it on. He dropped his damn gear and came down there and made a touch and go on that, and darned near got court marshaled over it. He thought I'm not gonna land but I'm gonna show those Japs I can fly, I guess. He'd run 'em off the runway and come in there and touch, and yeah touch down.

That's a daredevil.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, sure is. And a brand new airplane and what have you and just new and just testin' in out and then he pulled a stunt like that. He broke his leg in ___ down in Australia and they said they made out the first night he got down there with one of the nurses, so he was OK.

OK, now let's go back to Guadalcanal, because we still got a lot to cover and we've already been talking for some time. How long were you on Guadalcanal?

Dan Abrams: Well, we left there in May, so there about six months.

So you were there from October until May.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, we left out of there the 5th of May if I remember correct.

Did you know of some of the things going on on the land fighting on Guadalcanal?

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, see it wasn't that far out. No, we'd go up through the lines, and of course there was a lot of, there was four ships that was beached where they'd tried to reinforce and we'd go up through there, and of course we'd come up behind the lines there and my gosh, there were dead Japs there that was swellin' up and burstin'. Of course it didn't take long in that heat if a guy was killed, the heat would swell up, and then them maggots would come from somewhere. But our bunch if any of them got killed, why they got them out as fast as they could.

But you saw all of this yourself personally.

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, and very sickening.

I can't believe how you weren't just terrified all the time you were on that island.

Dan Abrams: I don't think, I just wasn't, I mean I didn't know any better I guess. But you know really we didn't expect to come back, really. I mean we didn't have any idea what was going on, and we didn't even know we was gonna be relieved. We knew that we'd all was rumor their ship, that's what we're going on leave on, but nobody, there was a lot of cutting up that went on. We always had somebody that was a comic, always had something funny to say.

Did you get any of the diseases while you were there?

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, I had dingus fever and malaria, yellow jaundice, I had it all. When we came back to the States, I weighed 120 pounds, yellow as a dog, sick as a dog. In fact I had malaria so bad that I got that year before we come back, come out, why cover up with everything you had and the heat, and freeze to death and just be wringing wet, but still just be freezin' to death. And to this day I can't give blood. Once it's in your system, why it's in your system. I didn't know that.

Did you ever have any reactions from it?

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, for a long time, long time. At times yeah, if I get real tired or something, I mean and I'm pretty active. I was putting up a bunch of hay here in square bales one hot July day a couple of years ago and all of a sudden it came back on me. I thought that's what it was, it could've been, but I got so hot and next thing I know I've got a terrible chill. I come here and naturally it's a 100 and something degrees out there, and come in and covered up, got in bed and thawed out. I was just shiverin' and shakin'. And it leaves you so weak after you got rid of it. My mother didn't recognize me when I came home the first time.

Is that right. I assume living on Guadalcanal was nothing you'd ever want to do again.

Dan Abrams: No, nothing, I mean that was, my military career, the military time that I was in there, that was the worst, I mean the living condition. Surprisingly, it was probably more casualties from the disease -

Than from the combat.

Dan Abrams: Because everybody, I don't know of anyone that was on the canal didn't get malaria. It seemed like everybody had it, and you'd take quinine and admorin and all that stuff, and you know, getting back to what you, boy you had to, something had to be wrong with you.

A guy would just get a leg bruised up or what have you, why hell, you still had one, you could still go at that time because there wasn't any replacements.

So you were on the island for the full time between October of 1942 and May of 1943.

Dan Abrams: It was either that or November, I can't tell you for sure.

OK, so you were there the whole time though. Once you got there, you stayed there.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, once I got there I stayed there until I left.

And your job was mostly in transportation while you were there?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, mine was mostly transportation. But haul people around, help whatever needed to be done, guard duty or whatever. You really didn't have a job other than what they assigned you to. If they needed some help on planes, you went down and worked and helped 'em as a mechanic or whatever, if they needed the help why you went and helped.

What did the pilots think of the planes that they had at that time?

Dan Abrams: Well, that's the best they had, you know, the F4, and they was all proud of it. When the F4U's of course they came out, man, they was really proud of it because the first thing they did when they got there was contest Army P-38, and they could just fly circles around the Americorps P-38, and they really enjoyed it, and then when they got that Corsair, it could outmaneuver the Zero.

But they didn't have those on Guadalcanal.

Dan Abrams: The F4U?

No, right.

Dan Abrams: The Corsair?

Right.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, they came in in February of '43. There was a few of 'em there. That's what Kirk came in with, but that was after the island was secured.

Yes, right near the end of the fighting.

Dan Abrams: But of course they were flying patrol, after they cut off Rabal, they bypassed Rabal, so they was flying to Rabal all the time.

But the broth of the battle was done –

Dan Abrams: It was over.

Wildcat pilots –

Dan Abrams: Yeah, in fact, Swett, in April when he shot down those planes, he was flying a Wildcat. Very few, there wasn't enough planes in there, but there wasn't any of them qualified to fly the F4U, the ones that was there, the ones that finally came out – when the F4U's came out, they came there with the pilot.

So I assume you were glad to get off the canal?

Dan Abrams: Was I glad? Why you bet we was happy, every one of us.

You thought you were going to be there forever I would imagine.

Dan Abrams: We did not know because we were supposed to have been relieved, you know, and the Army transport that was supposed to relieve everybody, why it sunk in Espirito. I think it was the 77th Army battalion that was supposed to come in and relieve the Marines, and the ship came in against a mine there in Espirito and sunk there with all the equipment and everything they had, so they had to reorganize. But everybody on the canal pretty well, of course there was Army there, too, now, a lot of people don't realize that, but no, we didn't get all the credit. There was Army there, but we was wonderin' had just been there so long and malaria and what have you, we were just shells, you know, we were not worth anything.

OK, where did you go after Guadalcanal?

Dan Abrams: Well, we went, see I came back to the States, they shipped us back. We went on leave and then we came back to Santa Barbara, and that's where Joe Foss was. Then we was there a couple of months and they shipped us into, 18 of us, they kept us together, and we went to Newbrungorth, Carolina, and there we went out to a place called Pollicksville and formed a new squadron there, Squadron 313.

And what was Squadron 313 flying?

Dan Abrams: It was a fighter squadron.

And your job was still transportation?

Dan Abrams: No, no, at that time they made me a blank captain. I went down there, and no, they didn't know when I got there that I wasn't a ____, I never did go to mech school, and so I was just assigned an F4U as a crew chief. I got it started, turn her up and worked on it and did everything else.

On a Corsair?

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

Without any training?

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

How did you do that?

Dan Abrams: I was an old farm kid, hell, I fixed old tractors and everything else out there in the Panhandle, so that was no big sweat for me.

So you became a crew chief on an F4U Corsair without any mechanical training.

Dan Abrams: Sure did.

Did they know that?

Dan Abrams: No. Later they did, but see I come in there with mech's and the bunch that I was with and when we got there, why they just, my rank, they just assigned me to a plane. And I knew how to start 'em and all that. It wasn't no problem, I knew that.

Nobody ever asked you if you had experience or training?

Dan Abrams: No.

On handling the mechanics of a Corsair?

Dan Abrams: No sir, never was.

And you did it.

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

You're quite a gentleman.

Dan Abrams: I just went on like I owned the damn thing.

How long did you do that?

Dan Abrams: Until we moved to the west coast. I went out to El Centro and when we got out there, they made me line chief of the squadron, so I was over all the planes that came in. I graduated from crew chief. They made me a line chief over the line, I took care of the line. I was sure when the planes come in, they were serviced and if there was any complaint, I'd send 'em in to engineering and they'd fix whatever was wrong with 'em.

And these were all Corsairs?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, they was all Corsairs.

So you became kind of the guy who made sure that they were ready to go.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, I was one of the, yeah.

And how many planes?

Dan Abrams: I believe there was 18 in that squadron. And it was just a training squadron, they was 313, and I didn't get along with the engineering chief. I turned the plane in and he'd send it back out and say there wasn't anything wrong with it. And we got into El Centro one night and I

jumped his ass, and we had a little scuffle, and the CO found out about it and called us in and told us we were saboteurs, it was like we were drilling oversized holes and putting undersized rivets in the planes, and said we needed to do something with this and asked us if we wanted a transfer, and I said where, and he said well, they got a deal at 122. I said you bet, I'll go to 122. 122 at that time, the squadron at that time was in El Toro, and boy I was gonna be good duty. I'd heard about how good duty that was. 122 was a shipping out unit going back overseas.

And what planes did they have?

Dan Abrams: Well, they didn't have any. It was just a bunch of pile-ups that they was getting together. We was giving them trouble, so they just gathered up a bunch of us and shipped us overseas without anything. That was the deal in 122, and I thought I was going to El Toro, and wound up there in Miramar, and next thing I knew, we were getting ready to go to San Francisco to ship out.

So 122 was a bad guy's group.

Dan Abrams: It was just, you talk about black sheep, we were just a bunch of screw ups, I mean that had screwed up and actually troublemakers in a way, because we was a bunch of smart asses, thought we knew it all, and they decided that since we knew so much they'd just see how much we did know, and so they shipped us overseas and busted us, busted me.

And when was that?

Dan Abrams: In 1944. This was in January I think it was.

January 1944, you left the States.

Dan Abrams: No, we didn't leave the States until March. We moved from Newber North Carolina to El Centro around Christmas time. We stayed there until it was March when we went back overseas.

So in March of 1944 you went back overseas. Now you left Guadalcanal in May of '43, so you had almost a year out of action.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, we had 8 or 9 months in the States.

I'll bet you were glad to be there.

Dan Abrams: Well, but you know, we were getting bored and we was anxious to go back, I mean we felt like we needed to.

Were you as anxious to go back the second time as you were the first time?

Dan Abrams: Oh no, not really. In fact we was forced to go really, the way it was. I wasn't expectin' to, but it didn't bother us once we started to go.

But you weren't quite as gun-ho the second time.

Dan Abrams: No, never did get that gun-ho again. Of course hell, we didn't know a damn thing. And of course going back the second time, we knew that we wouldn't be going under conditions that we'd been in before because we'd heard about the conditions how they were and what have you, and so we went right back to New Caledonia, and we got to New Caledonia and that's when we went into 254. It was a squadron of R4D's which is like the old DC-3. It's a cargo plane, you know.

Also called C-47?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, it was the old C-47. We called 'em R4D's.

So you finally got to a unit in which you were in twin engine airplanes as opposed to fighters.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, we went down there and then we was assigned to -

And what was your job?

Dan Abrams: I went down there and plane captain on one, they assigned me to a plane.

And what was your job?

Dan Abrams: I was the crew chief. I flew with the airplane. I was the engineer on it more or less. I was the crew chief. I took care of the plane all the time. That was my responsibility.

And were you on them for the rest of the war?

Dan Abrams: I was on, yeah, we changed at the end we got R5C's which was different. In fact that was the last ones we had, but the R4D was so dependable.

Yeah, R5 was a four engine transport plane.

Dan Abrams: No, it was two, it was just an upgrade. It was made by Curtis and the other, the old R4D was a Douglas.

OK. So you were stationed on Caledonia, you were now crew chief.

Dan Abrams: Well, we was on just long enough to leave, and then that's when they started us up to the islands and we went from, we were there just getting the squadron together and getting ready to go, and it was B and one BMD. Anyway, it was 254, it was transporter. And I was called Scat. What we did was all the planes, we was doing was all in cargo and personnel, and evacuation and what have you. It was just a transport group.

And where did you move up the line?

Dan Abrams: We worked our way up. We left New Caledonia and stopped in Espirito, and then we went to Appamama, which is a little island, and no, we went to Funifuti and then Appamama, and then back to Beti, which was Thrawa. B-E-T-I. It was actually Thrawa. It was the island of Thrawa where the battle, it was a causeway from that back over to Beti. But they built an airstrip on Beti, so that's where we went to. Then we was flying back between

Appamama to that quadrant, the Marshall Islands was just being taken in, or Gilbertson, what have you, so we was flying back and forth hauling supplies, personnel and what have you.

Were you flying them from the supply areas up to the front line areas?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, wherever they needed it, whenever any of the new personnel came in that needed to go up there, well we'd haul 'em up there, and anybody was hurt, sick, and what have you, we'd evacuate 'em.

Were you ever attacked by Japanese planes?

Dan Abrams: No.

Did you ever see any?

Dan Abrams: While we was in the air? No. We didn't. We flew low and we didn't even have parachutes or nothin', no firearms or anything. We were pretty well, they're not going to bother something like that, it can't hurt them really if there was any there. The Navy and Marines that were stationed on those islands, they pretty well had control of the air.

So you didn't have fighter escorts or anything while you were flying.

Dan Abrams: No, the only time that we ever had a fighter escort was when we was escortin' the fighters. We escorted a bunch of fighters there at the end of the war from Iwo Jima to Okinawa. There was two flights that was there. It seemed like we took 60 planes up. It seemed like it was 30 B-51's and 30 F4U's.

Your purpose of doing that was to provide the navigation for them?

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

OK, so then the rest of your time I would assume you felt safer than you had the first tour.

Dan Abrams: Oh, it wasn't no sweat. I mean it was a walk in the park. I mean no, I felt in good shape. I wasn't concerned about anything. I never was in a landing or anything like that and I seen a lot of gore like on Iwo there was so much and we hauled so many casualties out, and what have you, and there were so many when we were there dead and what have you, that was the worst one. Now there on Guam, there was still fighting going on there and Tinian and Saipan, but we were never involved in it other than - no hand to hand.

You were flying in and out while the battles were going on.

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah, we was going in and out, yeah.

Bringing in supplies and taking out the wounded.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, we was doing that.

How did it feel to be involved in that when you had plane loads of wounded and taking them out.

Dan Abrams: Well, you really thought you was helpin', you knew the guys was in the front lines and what have you were getting the blunt of it, and you really felt like to bring some home, although they were wounded, could bring 'em home alive and visit with 'em coming in. That made you feel well, and that you could get in and supply, get the stuff in there. Like on Iwo, we couldn't land up there at first. So we dropped parapacks, and then when we did get in, why we was taking out casualties. A funny thing happened there on Iwo, this little, not a padre, what did we call him, a preacher – what would he be -

Chaplain?

Dan Abrams: Chaplain, yeah. We was loading a bunch of casualties one day and he was standin' there with a .45 strapped on him, and someone said something to him about what was he carrying a .45 for, and he said God's pretty busy, I thought I would try to take care of myself.

A smart man.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, but no, there were some horrible things that you'd see how bad some of them were cut up and beat up and out of their mind, what have you. That Iwo was a tough son of a gun. I had a real good friend, he was a navigator, Stubby Mar, him and I flew together an awful lot. Yeah, a real good buddy was 3rd Marines, and then we gathered up, and went down and had to bake us a bunch of bread, and we got all the bread there back and forth and picked up all the canned pork and beans and loaded them up and took 'em up to them and dropped 'em off, because they didn't have anything to eat all but rations. There on Guam, that was the best duty I had because me being a master sergeant, by that time I had gotten my gear back together, and our plane captain, and the CB's had their camp right behind our revetment which was probably about 400 or 500 feet behind us.

Revetment being – a shelter you put the plane in.

Dan Abrams: You dug a big, it's kind of a big horseshoe deal with embankment that you back the plane in so it wouldn't be, like they drop shells or something, why just protect her is all it was. And the CB's, boy, they always had good groceries. So I'd never eaten our chow at all, we'd just go across the strip there and go over there and eat with CB's and they always had good grubbs. I don't know where they got it, but they darn sure had it. They could provide. They had everything. We made a deck for our tent, so they told us, said go down and cut some coconut trees down and well they'd saw 'em up for us. They had a saw mill. So we went and got some and they sawed us some planks, and those guys were something else, too. They didn't get the respect they should've had. Like up there on Iwo, they was running those dozers, filling up those holes, keeping those runways open and what have you, and one of them getting knocked off and another one just get right on and keep going.

So you have a lot of respect for the CB's.

Dan Abrams: You bet you. Most of them were older guys and they were more or less your protector. I mean go over there like us guys, we'd go over there and they called us son, most of 'em, and up to 35-40 years old, and they would make sure that they knew we was going out on flight, well hell, they fixed us something to take. They was real good to us and I had so much respect for 'em.

OK, so the rest of your tour in the Pacific was basically flying in supplies to troops in combat and taking back wounded and what have you to safer areas.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, very much so.

And taking care of your plane.

Dan Abrams: Yeah. My last flight was from Iwo to Okinawa, and we escorted a bunch of fighters up there. In fact, we went over Okinawa and went to Ishima and dropped off something, I don't even know what it was, and the fighters went in and landed, and got over there and found out that Ernest Powell had been killed on Iwo Jima. You knew of him?

Oh yes, Ernie Powell the famous correspondent.

Dan Abrams: That's where he was killed on Ishima. You hear that he was killed on Okinawa but he wasn't.

I was stationed on Okinawa for a year and a half and I went out there to Ishima to see that.

Dan Abrams: Well you know, we landed there at Yontan when we first came in, the airport there in the middle, and that night that we started out, started back and we lost our IFOF, which is Identification Friend or Foe, and we lost it and we had to come back in, and when we did. Well we drew fire, and that night we were there was one of the worst shellings that they'd had there on the field, and the next morning we got our two Japanese prisoners and come back to Guam, that was my last flight overseas. And we did not, didn't have 'em handcuffed or nothing.

Was that your first encounter with Japanese soldiers?

Dan Abrams: Right, yes, face – I mean where you could see 'em, where you could touch 'em.

How did you feel?

Dan Abrams: No problem, they were so scared and what have you, and no, we didn't do anything and set 'em back there in the back of the plane and didn't even strap 'em in. And they could've at any time taken over or tried to. Of course I'm settin' there with a .45, too, so and Stubby's got one, and they'd be ready to get out. I don't even know their rate or rank or what it was, but it seemed like they was worth taking back. And we started to land at Guam and they acted like they had been there before, so they were bringing them back for some reason. They had captured them. Very few of 'em, we didn't capture very many.

Right, they would commit suicide.

Dan Abrams: They didn't want to go. And I don't think that we'd been as easy on 'em, we was called barbaric, you know, something else, and the way what we did, but if we'd have known what went on in Koragador and the death march, it'd been a hell of a lot different, too. But we didn't know that until after the war was over. And two of my real good friends were captured. They come back home and one of 'em lived three months after he got there, and the other one, I never did hear him talk about anything. He was just quiet and still. I don't know whether he's still alive or not, but I doubt it. And then my cousin, he was captured there on Koragador, and he was in the 4th Marines, and he didn't live but about six months after he got out. But this one boy,

Merle Miller was a kid that come home and he couldn't stop eating. I mean he was just, and his stomach got so out of proportion and he looked like he was pregnant. He was miserable and he said he was ashamed of himself that he got captured. He felt like he'd let everybody down. Nobody felt that way about it, but he did. They all complained, my cousin did on him, they shouldn't have ever surrendered. They should've kept going.

So how did you like flying? How did you like being up in the air all the time?

Dan Abrams: Oh, I love it. In fact I'm a pilot myself now.

Are you?

Dan Abrams: Yeah.

You still fly.

Dan Abrams: Not anymore. I sold my plane about 10 years ago and haven't flown since. No, I come in and got my pilot license right after and I started flying.

So you flew up to age 75.

Dan Abrams: Oh yeah.

Terrific.

Dan Abrams: No, it was last year. They had a flight show here down here, and I went and took one up here a year ago just to see if I could still do it.

Is that right.

Dan Abrams: Yeah, but it was just a little plane though. It was an 82, Cessna 82, 182.

What type of plane did you have?

Dan Abrams: I had a Skylane, a 182. Then the company had a three-pin and a Navajo, but no, and no problem for me either because hell, while I was in the service there was an old kid by the name of Cowboy Hooks that when we was in North Carolina he took a liking to me and he'd take me up in an SNJ and he'd let me fly. So I could fly really when I got out, but I didn't have a license.

SNJ is the Texan or –

Dan Abrams: Yeah, having been Texan ____.

I was lucky to fly one of those myself in the back seat.

Dan Abrams: Well you know, the old SBD and those planes, you had to crank them to start 'em. I mean they had a crank, had a nurser, but the SNJ, why they finally got an electric starter on it. That was a good little airplane. They used it a lot for towing targets.

Now when was your last flight in the military in the Pacific?

Dan Abrams: I think it was May the 5th of 1945 I believe.

May the 5th of 1945.

Dan Abrams: I believe it was May the 5th or May the 7th.

OK, and then where'd you go from there?

Dan Abrams: I come home. You mean where did I go from there? Well that was May and then I came home on a leave because you know, at that time we thought that we was going to go into Japan. And so they thought, we was sent, sent us back and we was really planning to be deployed again, and then all of a sudden the war was over and I got out.

So you were back in the United States when the bombs dropped.

Dan Abrams: Yes sir. We flew out, well we came in one night, they called us one night on Guam and they needed some blood plasma in Saipan and so we loaded up and went up to take it up and there was the B-29's were just coming back in. We lined up on the B-29 strip to land and a B-29, I don't think it missed us a foot going over the top of us, and we were supposed to land on another strip, a different strip on the left, but we'd lined up on a B-29 strip, and I don't remember how long that operator, Captain Corfer, the captain, I don't know how long he eat on his butt but he really did. He said those planes could no way, they're out of the fuel and they had to come in and you hit in front, and Corfer says I know, I know, I know. The first time, but things like that, how lucky you were that you didn't have a crash. We made a landing in Wetok one time, and they turned a bunch of B-24's just as we got ready to take off and we take off and they turned up right across the runway, and we bounced off the ground two or three times, and I think bounced over one of 'em, I'm not for sure, but we thought we blowed out a tired and we was going back in to Appamama, and of course we called in for crash landing, and of course here comes everybody they were waitin'. You always wanted to see somebody crash, you know, gonna crash, well everybody wanted to see it. And sure enough we let the gear down and what have you and flew over, and they said no, it looked all right, and sure enough we hadn't blowed it out. But I always thought about well them bastards out here are watchin' us kill ourselves, you know.

That's right, part of the circus.

Dan Abrams: But I didn't, after the Canal, I really, I enjoyed the service and if I'd have known then what I know now, I would've never gotten out. I mean I would've stayed and retired because at that time, you didn't have a permanent rate. They give you a temporary, so I was temporary master tech, but for me to stay in, why they would offer me a permanent staff, and I said nah, I think I'll go. After I got out, why sure enough I met a gal and we got married and next thing you know I've got a family on the way, so I never even give a thought about going back in, but some of the boys did and most of them retired later, in pretty good shape. That was lasted like I would have been where they come out colonels or majors or something with good retirement and what have you.

So you came back then from the Pacific when?

Dan Abrams: We got back in June of '45.

And you never went back.

Dan Abrams: Nope. Well I've been back several times, yeah, on business.

So you were in the United States at the time of the dropping of the bombs and the surrender.

Dan Abrams: Sure was, yes sir.

And I imagine you remember those days.

Dan Abrams: Very well. I mean the whole country, I mean everybody, they were jumping up and down, and of course the announcement was this will be the end, I mean the war is going to be over right now. This has done it. So yes, everybody was having a good time and everybody was, and especially us guys that was thinkin' possibly we were gonna have to go back, you know. But everybody was happy. It was over. I mean other than some of the people, the civilians, a lot of them didn't want the war to get over. They had the best jobs they'd had in a long time.

So that's true, nobody thinks about that, but that's true. Before the war, nobody was working. During the war, everybody was working and people I assume were still concerned that if it ended, that would be the end of the good jobs.

Dan Abrams: And of course everybody had a job. Everybody wanted to work. And they were making more money than they'd ever made. When I came back, why instead of going back to Oklahoma I went to Liberal, Kansas, and we formed a VFW there, and there was one of the girls that had been a nurse there in the Philippines, and surprisingly the women there put her down because they said aw, she was nothing but a whore, you know. Hell she was fraternizing with the Japs. Well if she had, she was forced, and so she finally, us guys well hell, we stuck up for her and all that, but she finally couldn't take it because nobody would accept her so she finally just got up and left. It's sad.

Isn't that a shame. What a horrible shame that we would treat somebody that way.

Dan Abrams: That's right, and she had gone through hell and she had scars on her where she had been beaten and mentally she was hurtin', had to be.

War does some terrible things to people even after it's over.

Dan Abrams: Sure do. You just look at what's going on now, and you wonder how some of these kids are affected coming there.

Absolutely. OK, so you were then mustered out in November.

Dan Abrams: I got out in November either the 3rd or the 7th, I'm pretty sure.

How did you get to Texas?

Dan Abrams: Hitch-hiked. Oh, come to Texas? Oh, I didn't come down here until '66. Yeah, I was up in Liberal in an oil field, working up in an oil field, and the Miller & Miller auctioneers were in Fort Worth, and we had shut down them drilling rigs and needed to sell 'em, and they asked me if I knew anybody to do it, and I called Miller & Miller and they came down and sold the drilling rigs and I went to work for 'em. And so I moved down to Fort Worth, and I've been in Texas ever since. A daughter, and I've got my son, he's in Houston, and my daughter, she's right down the road from me, and I've got good little grandkids and what have you, in fact just had a birthday party for one of 'em the other day.

Is the wife still with you?

Dan Abrams: No, we got a divorce, their mother, we got a divorce oh heck, 30 years ago, and so I've been single ever since. I'm just a damn renegade more or less, but I've spent lots of times overseas over in Saudi Arabia and Iraq over there on oil companies and auctioneering heavy construction equipment and what have you. Then I got ulcers and I wound up in the hospital down here I guess San Antonio, wherever Scott & White is. Anyway I wound up there and they cut my stomach out and sewed me back up and told me I had probably about a year to live and that's been 20 years ago. So I've been, I have to stay real active all the time. People don't believe I'm 85 years old because I'm active all the time, do something all the time.

So you're doing some farming now?

Dan Abrams: I'm painting cattle and bailing hay and everything else. No, I go to the VA hospital here in Waco and he retired just the other day, a Pilipino doctor, and he couldn't believe, he kept telling me that I was too old to do what I was doin'. But he said don't stop, it looks like you're doing pretty good.

All right, what we're going to do is finish up here in a couple of minutes, and what I want you to do is kind of, I'm going to ask you about looking back, how did the military service affect your life, and all these things, but I want to take a break because I have to do something real quick so I'm going to put it on pause, and I'll be back in a minute and we'll start again, is that OK?

Dan Abrams: OK.

All right, we're back on now and we're kind of like finishing up the interview and there's a couple of things I'd like to ask you about. One of them would be that looking back, how do you think the military service affected your life?

Dan Abrams: It completely turned my life around. It made me a different person, completely made me a different person.

Tell me what it did for you.

Dan Abrams: Well, I was just a country kid out there in the Panhandle, starving to death in the dust bowl and what have you, and I came into the service greener than a gourd, you know, and I had no knowledge of what was going on. I got in there and seen different lifes and different opportunities and what have you, and I just had a sophomore education, and more or less I've educated myself through it, and then made myself pretty successful at times other than being dumb enough to get beat up by a bunch of ____, but other than that, it's really affected my life, it affected my outlook on life.

In a positive way.

Dan Abrams: Positive, very positive. And I'm still a Marine, it doesn't matter.

We all are.

Dan Abrams: And I'm always proud of it and always will be, and I think right now, I want this on record, right now I think if we'd get a hold of Ollie North and see if he wouldn't run for president, he could get this thing straightened out.

Good for him, good thinking.

Dan Abrams: No kidding, it's not too late, if we'd get him and this Chuck Henkel up there and America ruin independence, I believe they could make it.

They certainly have the right attitude, don't they.

Dan Abrams: Oh, I'll tell you. I have all the respect in the world for Ollie North. They did him wrong.

OK, do you find yourself thinking about the war years very often?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, quite a bit. My brother, he was in Korean, and him and I visit quite a bit. We talk about the funny things that happened, you know, nothing about what happened there, and then as far as I'm concerned, he had it a hell of a lot rougher than I did, other than when I was on the canal, but he was there in Korea. And him and I would get together, but we don't visit with anyone else in the family about it.

What were your greatest memories of your military service?

Dan Abrams: Boy, you're asking me a question now.

What were the memories that you think most about that were meaningful to you?

Dan Abrams: Well, one of the memories was when I got to boot camp. That was one memory wasn't the greatest memory, but I got there and got the shock of my life. I didn't expect 'em to hear the one and of course they got that square needle they're gonna shoot you with and all that good stuff, and I had real good curly black hair and they just cut all that off, so that was a shock. But I believe a memory that was more than any, we had landed on Roy the day the President Roosevelt died.

You landed on where?

Dan Abrams: Donna and Roy, it was in the Marshall's, and we was escortin', we was takin' a plane back from Injubi to Honolulu, and we'd landed there, and that's the day that we got word that President Roosevelt had died, and everybody was so gung-ho over the President at that time, and man, he's one of the best, and it really set a bunch of us back. So that's one memory how vivid it was. Other than I guess it got run over after we got back to the States, and run out of the bar and run out in front of a car in Santa Barbara and they run over my legs and we was all

drunk, and a kid by the name of Blake come out there and he said speak to me, Abe, speak to me, and I said I can't, Blake, and he said oh he's dead, he's dead. Hauled us to the hospital and got beat out for actin' silly. But other than, I had good memories, I had real good memories. I had some sad memories. We were getting ready to leave the canal and there was a barber there that had a short in, I don't know what he spoke to me, I think he was a cook or something, but he was also a barber, and he had a short in his clippers, and everybody would walk by, why he'd ask somebody to hand me his clippers, and a kid by the name of Andy Anderson, we were getting ready to ship out and leave the canal, and he asked Andy to hand him his clippers, and Andy took hold of 'em and got shocked, and it killed him right there. So that was something because he was one of those guys that was happy go lucky and all that. And of course it was sad to hear that kids you'd gone to school with and what have you that had been killed, and things like that. And it hurts you when you hear about one of your good buddies went down. But you don't forget it, but it's always in the back of your mind.

Is there anything that you would most like to forget about those years?

Dan Abrams: No, really it was an experience that I don't really want to forget. It's things that bubble up and that you re-live, but like you might wake up at night in a sweat or something, but you go back when you were real sick or something, like wake up with a sweat, might see a vision of when you was real sick there and kind of going out and couldn't see for sure. You're delirious in a way. When we had malaria so bad and jungle fever and all that, your mind wasn't all together, but not anything, no. In fact, I enjoyed my service, I really did, and I wished I'd have stayed in, and every time I see a Marine, it's semper fi, you know. We always have to stop and shoot the breeze regardless of whether a private or gunner sergeant, captain, major, or what have you, and everybody is so sociable it seems like. You never run into a Marine that you don't stop and visit.

OK, is there anything else you'd like to add so that future generations will have a fuller understanding of what your generation went through?

Dan Abrams: You know, I don't know, it bothers me about the generation now. They don't show no respect for the patriotic, or they're not as patriotic. I'm not talking about the ones that's not in the service, I'm talking about the ones that's not in the service, condemning the troops when -

Like the City of Berkeley trying to keep Marine recruiters out of the city?

Dan Abrams: Yeah, and another thing, right down here in this area here, when you get to lookin' at when they'd send in, you hear the death reports, you see a lot of Rodriguez's and Garcia's and Poncho's and Ramone's and what have you that's been killed over there and it bothers me, what really bothers me is they can't recognize that these boys are illegal aliens but they are in the service and they're fighting for their country, and then get back over here and they don't get the benefits they're supposed to have. That bothers me. And I think they should, and why they've got, the way they're planning this now, they've got to go back to Mexico and wait seven years before they become a citizen. That don't sound right. It seems like there ought to be something changed there.

I know Commissioner Patterson is very much trying to be at the forefront of the work to get those benefits available to them.

Dan Abrams: They should be. There's three boys that's left here. All of them graduated from high school, of course a recruiter come down and I visited all three of them and I told them I said boy, you can't go into a better service, and all three of them have come back. One of them's already a staff sergeant and the other two are corporals or sergeants or something, and the minute they get back they come see me. And they're all good kids. I mean, and all three of them are illegal, all of them are wetbacks here. But they went in the service and done themselves up proud, and it hurts that these kids that are servicin' over there, that they can't give them every benefit, any of them, and anybody that don't support the troops, and they may not support this war, but not support the troops, I can't see people that not. There's very few people that don't support the troops, very few, but there's a few. I definitely do not think we should've gone into Iraq by being over there and seeing that country and working over in that country, Iraq and Iran and Saudi Arabia and Libya and Omar, and I've been to all of 'em, and I know that there's good people over there. I just think we made one hell of a mistake going into Iraq. I can see going into Afghanistan and doing what we're supposed to there, but we should've stayed. I said before we went in there that would be the biggest mistake we ever made, and that's my opinion.

That's OK, but like you said, no matter what your opinion about the war, we gotta support the troops.

Dan Abrams: You betcha. The troops have got to be supported and very few people don't, and some of these people that say that we're not supporting them, that's not true. I'm gonna say almost 99 percent of the people do support the troops. They may not support the war, what's going on, but they definitely do support the troops and it shows right up there in Dallas. The boys that are coming through, hell there's people meets 'em every time, boys and girls coming through. When their shipment is coming in, they know it's coming in and there's a crowd of people to welcome them, which is great.

OK, Mr. Abrams, on behalf of Commissioner Jerry Patterson and the Texas Veterans Land Board, I sure want to thank you for your service to the country and I want to thank you for taking the time to give the interview so we can record for posterity your experience, and it's been a real honor and a privilege for me to talk with you, and share some of your experiences with you. I hope maybe someday if I ever get a chance to get near Frost that I can stop by and say hello -

Dan Abrams: Well I appreciate it, but you know, it's just like this thing about that, I don't feel like that we done anything other than do what we're supposed to do and come home alive, and none of us are heroes. We were just all of us did what we was asked to do and we done it, and it's a privilege to do it. If I was younger, I'd still be back in there.

I really believe you would be.

Dan Abrams: I would because I'm still gung-ho, very much so, and I appreciate talking to you, but I didn't know it was gonna take two hours.

Well, remember when we first started and I talked to you the other day, you said well, you know, I haven't really got that much to talk about.

Dan Abrams: I haven't had any.

Well I've never found one of you good gentlemen who didn't have enough to talk about, and believe me, if I had the time, I could talk to you and bring things out about your experience for five, six hours.

Dan Abrams: Well, there's a lot of things that would come up that would be so funny, so many funny things that happened, and like a kid getting in a fight, two guys get in a fight over the Civil War, and stuff like that, and there's funny things and I try to remember all the funny things and a lot when a bunch of us get together just veterans, we don't talk about what the war was, we talk about some of the silly things we learned and things we should've been court marshaled for and stuff like that, like stealing beer and what have you, like there on the canal when General Patch come over and took over, ____, why he was an Army general, and there was an ice plant there on Guam, and we'd go down to get ice which is a slab that the Japs made and we'd put it in the lister bag and we went down there one day and there was a cream can there, five gallon cream can, so we just stole it. We figured it was milk. And we brought it back up here and took it into the mess hall and Sergeant Godowski, he was mess sergeant, and we told him we had some milk and he opened it up and there was fresh strawberries, and they were supposed to have been for General Patch.

I bet you didn't take 'em back.

Dan Abrams: Oh hell no, we didn't take 'em back, and he just forcin' 'em out you know, as we came in, everybody came in to eat, well they got some strawberries. But oh, we'd have been court marshaled if they found it out.

Well again, I really enjoyed talking to you, and consider it an honor and a privilege to do that, and hopefully maybe someday I can meet you personally.

Dan Abrams: Well, I'd like to do that, I really would, I'd appreciate it.

All right sir, well do you have anything else you'd like to say or any questions?

Dan Abrams: No, I just wanted to bring Ollie North in, Ollie North see if we can't get him started, but he'd get things straightened out.

Start the campaign. And remember it always starts with one man.

Dan Abrams: Yes sir.

OK, Mr. Abrams.

Dan Abrams: OK, semper fi.

Semper fi to you, sir.

[End of recording]