

## **Transcription: Edward Bowman**

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*Today is Tuesday, January 15, 2013. My name is James Crabtree, and this morning I'll be interviewing Mr. Edward Bowman. I'm at the General Land Office building in Austin, Texas, and Mr. Bowman is at the Clyde Cospers Texas State Veterans Home in Bonham, Texas. This interview is being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thank you again very much for taking the time to talk to us. It's an honor for me and for this program.*

**Edward Bowman:** Glad to do it.

*Yes sir. Sir, the first question I always like to start off with is please just tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went into the military.*

**Edward Bowman:** All right. I was born in Fannin County in 1920. August the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1920. Then I lived here three years in Fannin County then my daddy's folks was from San Saba County. We moved to San Saba County and we stayed there five years. The first year I went to school was at Alvarado, little ol' country school, for two years. Then I left there and went back to north of us there and went to school there at \_\_. I was in the seventh grade when we come back to Fannin County.

*Were your parents farmers?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes sir.

*Did you have any brothers and sisters?*

**Edward Bowman:** I had . . . See, I was the oldest boy, and then I had a sister, two sisters, and one brother. Eileen was one of my sisters, and Verne and Lauren. One of my sisters died when she was 12 years old of pneumonia. They couldn't take care of it then but . . . And I come back to Fannin County and we farmed out north of Leonard then for about . . . Well, I was born north of Leonard, but we farmed in north Leonard for 17 years on some land Daddy rented over there.

*What type of crops did grow?*

**Edward Bowman:** We had cattle and we had wheat and baled hay. We had a hay baler and we baled our own hay. So my daddy got hurt in the last year I was in high school, tore his leg up, and so I had to quit school. I lacked two semesters from graduating, and I had to stay and go farm. So I farmed about 40 acres in cotton and 30 acres in corn by my mother and daddy. My mother and sister sold it but I planted it and done it all for my daddy.

*I imagine that's a lot of hard work.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes sir, but I had to do it because we couldn't afford to hire anybody to do it, and I knew how to do it so Daddy says, "I'm gonna turn it over to you." And we done real good. We stayed there until 1940 I guess it was, yeah. And then we moved north of Dodd City.

*Dodge City?*

**Edward Bowman:** Dodd City, east of Windom and Bonham, and stayed here. Then I started going to school at Bonham to be a radioman, and so I put all my time in Bonham so they wanted me to go to San Antone so I went to San Antone and went to school down there to be a radio technician.

*That was in the military?*

**Edward Bowman:** Uh-huh.

*So you entered the Army? Is that correct?*

**Edward Bowman:** \_ down there in San Antone whenever they signed me up.

*Were you drafted or did you volunteer to go?*

**Edward Bowman:** I was drafted and I went out that day and told the lieutenant out there, I said, "I'm thinking about gettin' married but I don't wanna get married and have to go right in the service." Two days later I got my notice I was drafted, and I said, "Hey, you told me you'd take care of me." He says, "I am." Said, "I'm sending you to Athens, Georgia, to college."

*Okay.*

**Edward Bowman:** And so I went down there and learned to be a operator for radio, while I worked with radar. So I learned to be the operator there and then repaired everything like that, and took care of all the electricity . . .

*Now was this before or after Pearl Harbor that you were drafted?*

**Edward Bowman:** This was before.

*Before. So you were part of the peacetime draft then.*

**Edward Bowman:** Right. I went in . . .

*In 1940?*

**Edward Bowman:** I got married July the 10<sup>th</sup>, and August 19<sup>th</sup> I was in uniform.

*August 19<sup>th</sup> of 1940?*

**Edward Bowman:** '42.

*'42, okay, so Pearl Harbor had happened.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes.

*Okay. Were you working on the farm in 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed?*

**Edward Bowman:** I was going to school.

*You were going to school. Did you think at that point there was a pretty good likelihood you were going to be drafted once the war started?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes. And I didn't try to turn it down or nothin'. I said, "I'm gonna do my part."

*Sure. Was going into radios, was that something you wanted to do?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes, I did. And I had an easy outfit to be with. There's 82 in my platoon, and we had 12 radio radar operators. You control planes \_ and everything, and I was in the radio part, and I took care of that.

*I imagine it was a pretty good school, I mean learning all of the details behind how that works.*

**Edward Bowman:** It was.

*How long did you have to spend in the school environment?*

**Edward Bowman:** Well, three months is while I was at Athens, Georgia. I was in college there with them. So my wife come down and stayed with me. We just got married, so like a honeymoon for us.

*That was in Georgia?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah.

*And was your wife from your hometown? Was she from Fannin County as well?*

**Edward Bowman:** Fannin County, yeah.

*So you spent the three months there in Georgia learning how to be a radioman. What are some of your memories of that time? Anything that stands out in particular?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, they didn't allow you no shows or nothing like that on Sundays, and everything was cheap there. We had rooms, it was a dollar a day, and maybe we had coal to burn, and we'd have to go buy a sack of coal and bring it up to your room. It was a dollar for a big sack of coal.

*Did you live on base?*

**Edward Bowman:** No, we rented an apartment. They paid for it. So they told me I was supposed to live there since I was married and brought my wife down there, but they rented the apartment.

*Sure, that makes sense.*

**Edward Bowman:** Me and my wife had a wonderful time, and stayed there 'til November.

*Of '42?*

**Edward Bowman:** Uh-huh. And I went back down to Tampa, Florida, MacDill Base, and stayed there, oh, about three months. And I come home for furlough, and when I got home, they give me a three-day pass to go home on, 15 days furlough, and give me two days to get back. So I had a little vacation during that time, and when I come back, well, they sent me to MacDill Field.

*Did your wife get to go to MacDill with you?*

**Edward Bowman:** Uh-huh.

*Okay, well, that's good.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, she stayed with me there. And then they put me . . . I first started with the 34<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division there in Tampa, Florida.

*Okay.*

**Edward Bowman:** Then from there, when I come back from vacation, they sent me to MacDill Field.

*MacDill is still there. That's the big . . . MacDill Air Force Base is a big headquarters now for a lot of the armed forces.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. And then I went back to Drew Field.

*Where was that located?*

**Edward Bowman:** That was in Tampa too.

*In Tampa as well, okay.*

**Edward Bowman:** Those days they had bases everywhere. I stayed there a while and they sent us out to Bartow, Florida, to establish another air base, and I was in charge of the \_ and everything.

*Bartow is more in the central part of the state, isn't it?*

**Edward Bowman:** Uh-huh. I was out there. They tried to get me to stay there and I told 'em, no, I wanted to be with the bunch I's with. And so we was like brothers and sisters, one of them \_ sisters, but it was real nice.

*So Florida was a pretty good place to be stationed even in World War II I guess? You had good weather and training?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, it was. I left Bartow and went back to Tampa, and one of my first cousins was a colonel. We set this airbase up and he come in there as one of the main men, him and his brother.

*He was a full bird colonel?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, and you can imagine what they said about me riding in the back when they were driving . . .

*Sure. Yeah, because what was your rank at that time?*

**Edward Bowman:** E-5.

*E-5, so you were the equivalent of a sergeant, and your cousin was a colonel.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. And both of them got shot down over in Germany, him and his brother. And they never did find them but . . .

*I'm sorry to hear that.*

**Edward Bowman:** They sent me to . . . Started us off in Tampa and we just kept going up as far as you go north, adding troops and everything, and we ended up in Portland, Oregon.

*Okay.*

**Edward Bowman:** That was up at \_ there.

*So they moved you around quite a bit then during your training period.*

**Edward Bowman:** Oh, yes. We trained people and everything too. I was sort of like an instructor after I graduated.

*So you must have done pretty well then in your field with the radios to be able to instruct others.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes, and all followed me, knew me by . . . They called me Big Tex. And if they had trouble, they'd say, "Big Tex, you hear me?" I might be in a foxhole, and I said if they're up there trying to protect us, I'm gonna get to 'em and talk to 'em 'cause if they couldn't . . . Sometimes they'd knock out communications headquarters and call sign of that base was Unholy 1, and they had Unholy 2 pilots, and Unholy 3, and the pilots knew me as just Big Tex.

*So that was kind of your call sign, yeah.*

**Edward Bowman:** And I enjoyed it. We left here November 1<sup>st</sup> and December the 1<sup>st</sup> we landed in . . . Was on water 31 days and nights going over there. And on the way over there, the Japs, picked up a Jap sub and they come around and dropped bomb things around us trying to sink the boat, so we don't know what happened but anyway . . . Then we got into Australia and we didn't never unload there. They sent us on down to New Guinea, and that's where we unloaded the ghost. Had 3,000 men on that one ship.

*For about a month, 31 straight days. That's a long, long time.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, huge. Imagine what happened when everybody vomited and . . .

*Sure.*

**Edward Bowman:** And I posted guard on the ship so I . . .

*I'm sure you were eager to get off the ship after spending that long on there. There's only so much you can do to occupy yourself for that long of a time.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. But somebody told me when we got on the boat, he said it was a cattle boat and they fixed it four high for five bunks. And he said you need to get a top bunk and I found out right quick why he said to get the top bunk. So just as I went through the door, I picked my bunk on the front in there and I stayed up there and I found out right quick what it was. Hang your helmet over there and when that ship rearing up and down, well, you're gonna catch something.

*So he gave you some pretty good advice about getting in the top bunk.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes sir, he did.

*Tell us then, you said you were finally able to disembark from the ship in New Guinea?*

**Edward Bowman:** Uh-huh.

*What are your memories of New Guinea?*

**Edward Bowman:** Well, we got there and seen big old coconuts growing up in the trees, and natives come by and we offered 'em five dollars to . . . I tried to climb them coconut trees and I could almost reach 'em, and when you slided down, you skinned your belly up.

*Sure.*

**Edward Bowman:** Then after we had been down to the base where I could get some change money, they told us, "Just go back and offer 'em fifty cents," and they'll tell you just to throw 'em down, they'll you to . . . When you talk but tell 'em no, no. So they'd do anything like that for us, and that's when I got to see John Wayne.

*Really? Tell us about that.*

**Edward Bowman:** Well, he was on that tour with the . . .

*USO tour?*

**Edward Bowman:** And he had the tallest girls, Rockettes.

*The New York City Rockettes?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah.

*Wow. Where did they have a little . . . Put together a little place for them to do a show?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, and we sat on coconut logs out there in the hot sun. I seen Bob Hope and I seen Kay Kyser.

*Were they on the same show?*

**Edward Bowman:** No, different shows. But we never seen a white woman 'til Bob Hope come there and brought Patsy Thomas and Frances Langford and all them with him.

*So I bet those shows were very popular then to get a little feel for home and a little bit of entertainment.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** But, Bob Hope, he came to . . . We'd done made three islands. I'd been to from Hollandia, went to \_, Finschhafen, and then from Finschhafen I went to Wadke Island,

that's where we spent most of our time. It was just big enough for airstrip, and that's where we bombed Japan from was there.

*And the airstrip was just a dirt airstrip, right?*

**Edward Bowman:** Gravel, uh-huh.

*What type of planes were you flying in and out of there?*

**Edward Bowman:** The biggest they could get off the airstrip. Well, we lost one plane there because the day before it didn't act right so the pilot cut it down and circled back and then next day they'd done something to it, and it never get off . . . When it hit the water, it blowed up. But, it was a nice place. You could see from one end to the other and plum across it. Just long enough for an airplane to get off the ground.

*So really a small, small little island then. What did you live in? Were you in tents or huts?*

**Edward Bowman:** Well, I'd usually find me something to build something with, and I built me a little building up there and put Bonham, Texas on it. And people come by and stop and wanna know where I's from and everything.

*That's good.*

**Edward Bowman:** Then I left there and went to, I guess, I'm still on Wadke Island. I decided I wanted to be doing something. I was always busy doing something so I built me a washing machine. I took a 55-gallon barrel, made a stand, welded and fixed it. And then I put a 30-gallon barrel in the inside of it before I put the lid on that end, and that 30-gallon barrel was a trash can. I could open the lid up on it and I left a hole up the top where I put water and my clothes in, and I run a shaft through that with a bearing on each end, and that's where I could twirl it, that can would twirl on the inside. Then I took that shaft, run it through out there, and \_ . Jeep wheel with a tire on it, and I got me a truck transmission put out there to shift gears to make that speed that wash machine, wanted to speed it up. Then after I done that, well, I had a P-75 motor, little motors that I used for electricity on the van thing, and I set that thing up there and cranked it, put my wash in there, powder and everything, shift gears, whatever I wanted.

*Wow. You had to have been one of the few that had a washing machine then, right?*

**Edward Bowman:** I was. I took in washing. I's charging 'em fifteen cents, twenty-five cents, I mean, fifteen for a shirt, twenty cents for a pair of khakis.

*That's a good deal though. When your other option I guess would be just using a scrubbing board, right?*

**Edward Bowman:** That's it. We didn't have no PX or nothing.

*Sure.*

**Edward Bowman:** It was a . . . We was safe after we landed.

*That's pretty handy that you were able to come up with a washing machine like that. That's the first time I've heard a story like that. That's a good one.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, I was always building something. My truck had the radio and stuff, would be in there with a little shop in it, and I'd make souvenirs. I'd make a vase with the 105, start up with a 50-caliber shell which was part of the shaft going up, and I'd cut out P-38s and fix them in the die and some of them different ways, you know. And when the sailors come in, they'd say, "Where's Bowman's shop at?" I'd sell stuff while I was there.

*That's interesting. What were most of the soldiers like that you served with? Are there any that you remember where they were from or what they were like?*

**Edward Bowman:** Well, there's one of 'em was from Bonham, and he was with the Air Force. All I've worked with was Air Force.

*Army Air Corps?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. Those pilots, they's in and out. There'd be a bunch that'd come in there and bomb for a while, and then they'd send 'em to Australia or something for rest period, and they'd sent somebody else in there but all of 'em was good guys.

*Your job then was. . . Were you kind of like an air traffic controller in that sense then, that you controlled when the planes, or you're talking to the planes when they're taking off and landing?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes. If they got out of communication with headquarters, well, I could talk to 'em. But I'd talk to 'em if I wanted to. They come in and buzz the airstrip and say, "Tex, I'm gonna grill one for you." It meant they'd shot a plane down. So, it was just . . . To tell you the truth, I really enjoyed it.

*Yeah. What were your officers like? Do you remember any of them?*

**Edward Bowman:** Oh, we had one officer that was . . . We called Big Joe.

*Big Joe?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, he was from Wisconsin. One night he was up there by himself and a kid come down to motor pool and said, "Tex, come on up here." Said, "They got some cold drinks up here." And I said, "What?" Gone up there and somebody blew in there and this is the only time that I ever drunk, and I drank some of that, they said it was wine, I don't know. I got where I couldn't hardly walk, and I had a friend that every time he'd get drunk, he'd call me up and he'd say, "Tex, get up and let's sing." So that night I went down there and I said, "Bill, get up, let's sing." He said, "Tex, where in the heck you get something to drink." I said, "Come on, let's go to the motor pool." Both of us got drunk and we went singing up and down the company area, and the next morning the lieutenant got up and he said, or the captain, and he said, "You boys go in there and eat breakfast, and go get in the bed so we can sleep some tonight." And that's the type of lieutenant we had. He was just one of the bunch.

*That's good. He didn't give you a hard time then?*

**Edward Bowman:** No. He was just one of the boys. I think that's the way that he wanted it. So we enjoyed him and we'd do anything he wanted done. Nobody ever turned him down. So we had a good bunch we worked with. And then we left there and went to the Philippines.

*Okay.*

**Edward Bowman:** And we went in there on D-Day, and got out there and the Jap fleet come in on us, and they didn't know the American fleet was in there, and they battled out there about four or five days shooting each other. That's when the Japs lost their fleet.

*Could you see or hear any of that from where you were?*

**Edward Bowman:** Oh, you could see it all. At night you could see the bombs and you could see the flare at night. And when I was unloading a van, one of the officers up there said, "Tex, we need to get this going as quick as we can." And so I started, all I had to do as far as motor up the power units, and he talked to the planes, and the planes, the aircraft, the pilots couldn't get back to the aircraft carriers, so we loaded 'em with shells and fuel, hand to hand, you know, on sand beaches there. That went on for two days. All the planes hit the beach and when they did, they'd nose over 'cause their tires go down in that sand. But that's when the turn in the war was, right there.

*Sure. How long . . . Where you were, did it ever get bombed by any of the Japanese planes? That airstrip there in the Philippines?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. I didn't. We got bombed at Wadke while we's there. It hit the airstrip, bombed it 'til they couldn't get back to the plane, and so they just call in . . . The pilot was up there flying then and he said they told him, said "Come on to the base." Called it Unholy 1, and they called back and said, "No, we've been bombed." The gasoline dump was hit by the Japs, and we lost all of our fuel there. I guess the closest I got bombed was after we got to Leyte. I was there in the van one morning and a plane come over and he dropped five bombs, and if he had hit the . . . Dropped one more same distance as them others, it hit right on top of my radio.

*Did you have a bunker you could run to, or what did you do when that happened?*

**Edward Bowman:** I had a hole dug under my van. That's where I'd go down in there. I'd go down there if we had bombing or something like that. I guess the only flesh wound I got was we's out watching planes fighting that one night, and we got out of this foxhole and one of 'em said, "Tex, what's your shirt doing bloody?" I said, "I don't know." A piece of that flak had fell from one of them shells, hit me in the chest, and they took me to base the next morning to check it out, and they said, "Well, it's deep in there, not gonna hurt anything so we'll just leave it in there." I've still got that left.

*So when it hit you then, you didn't even know it had hit you, right?*

**Edward Bowman:** Uh-uh.

*It was just some fragmentation from one of the exploding shells?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. Some of 'em said, "What're gonna do about it?" And the captain at the base, I mean the officer up there, he said, "Wasn't nothing we could do. Just leave it in there."

*Did you get your Purple Heart for it?*

**Edward Bowman:** Nope, I never did turn it in.

*Didn't turn it in.*

**Edward Bowman:** 'Cause I didn't think it was anything that important. So I didn't get nothing on it. But I got to see MacArthur while I was there at Leyte.

*Wow. Tell us about that. He was definitely well known.*

**Edward Bowman:** He was the man that every time somebody . . . Was there with us every time. He moved from one island to the other, and after we got to Leyte, he said, "Well, you all are fixing to hit Japan." So he come down, him and five other officers come down there, checked equipment over. See, the radar is where you control the other pilots, on both sides, you can tell where they're at and everything.

*Sure.*

**Edward Bowman:** And so he said, "Boys, we hate to tell you. We fixing to hit Japan." We's already expecting it anyway so. He said, "We'd seen 'em come across the radar." Went to the radio shack, and I said, "Golly, look at the brass come across here."

*Sure.*

**Edward Bowman:** We's sitting in there drinking coffee. I had built me a little full room, I mean, well, it was 20 x 30, out of lumber, crooks and things the ship brought in and they'd give us the lumber, and so I built me a, me and two other boys, built us a cabin. We's on oil barrels.

*You didn't know he was coming in advance, did you? Did he just kind of show up?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. And he come down there . . . We seen him coming. So I'd fixed my yard pretty, and I had flowers growing on both sides of the walkway, and it was looking real nice. The Filipinos would bring flowers down there and set 'em out for me, and so I wanted it to look like a home, and so he come in, I opened the door for him and all, at attention, and we all saluted him, and he says, "At ease." He said, "You all got a coffee cup, I'll have a cup of coffee with you." We poured him some coffee and he sat and talked with us a while, him and his officers, telling us what a good job we'd been doing.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** So he said, "Boys, I hate to tell you this but," he says, "We've got to hit Japan." Said, "They've done all the damage that they can do to us. We've got to do some damage to them." So we talked for a little while, we give him a salute, and everybody walked out and he said, "We'll see you later." But he done told us he didn't want no prisoners. He said the way they done us in World War, in that death march, and I had a friend that was in the death march.

*Bataan Death March?*

**Edward Bowman:** And he said, "We haven't got time to mess with no prisoners." And we didn't take nobody.

*Well, and the Japanese too, a lot of times they wouldn't even surrender either. They would just keep fighting.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. Only at Wadke, they had a \_ mixing some of it up but they had bathrooms up there, and I always got a pair of pliers in my pocket, and there's five or seven men that worked together, radio and stuff, radar, and we went up there and we was hoping to get some pipes out of there and we'll make a shower. Boy, about that time, they got down on that building and went shooting, we started running out of there and I run under a clothesline and knocked my helmet off, got behind a coconut tree and they kept shooting. I guess they run out of shells. When they did I grabbed my helmet and started running down through there and one of those boys said, "There ain't no way they shot you." Said, "There was a snake couldn't even blow you \_ you did." And so we was just a good bunch of guys that enjoyed working together.

*That's great. Yeah, good unit cohesion and camaraderie.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah.

*When General MacArthur came to visit you, I'm just curious, what type of uniform was he wearing? Was he wearing the khakis? Do you remember?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, and some sewed-on patches on it. Nothing only but the patches. He didn't want nobody knowing who he was. And he was a nice talk guy as you had ever talked to. He talked to us just like we's common people.

*Yeah, that's great. He's definitely a great general. I read the book on him that William Manchester wrote called American Caesar. It's really a great book, and he was definitely a great general. So that's really neat, sir, that you were able to meet him and have a cup of coffee with him like that.*

**Edward Bowman:** That's right. I felt to be honored to do that.

*Yeah, that's really something.*

**Edward Bowman:** He praised us for being so good and as far as . . . We was jumping islands, five islands we jumped.

*You were in the Philippines when he came and saw y'all?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah. It was in Leyte.

*Leyte, okay.*

**Edward Bowman:** And our radar van was set up out in a rice paddy, and the only way they could get fuel to us out there was bring it in on amphibious tank, and bring barrels of fuel for that electric truck, big thing to operate on them disks and thing on the motors, that big ol' radar outfit was big, took two big trailers.

*Oh, sure, and that, when you think about it, radar was really in its infancy when you were using it because I know from what I've read at Pearl Harbor, they had radar but they didn't even . . .*

*Folks didn't even really know how to use it necessarily or didn't completely understand it so, when you were using radar, it was really kind of the first wave, the very first folks.*

**Edward Bowman:** It worked out real good for us. They could pick up, pilots could pick up radar, I mean, Japs coming in, and we always had something to intercept 'em.

*Sure, you think about that, without radar you don't know when and where they're coming but then you get that radar and it's, boy, that's the best warning mechanism you could have.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, you knew how far they was from you and everything.

*Do you remember roughly what month and year it was that MacArthur came and saw you?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes, it was in, let's see, it was four days before the atomic bomb, the first bomb was dropped.

*Okay, so then it would have been probably in the summertime of 1945? Maybe July or August?*

**Edward Bowman:** Because I left there in December . . .

*Of '45?*

**Edward Bowman:** I left there in November. No, it wasn't. It was December 'cause I got home the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December.

*So he told y'all that the attack on Japan is going to happen, and that sort of thing, and then about four days later . . .*

**Edward Bowman:** \_

*And so about four days later was the bombing.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yep.

*How did you learn about that?*

**Edward Bowman:** On the radio. The pilots that dropped it, we was aiding with some of the other pilots on the other place, and they said, "Well, we got 'em this time."

*Wow.*

**Edward Bowman:** And then there was the second one, that's when they surrendered.

*That had to have been a great feeling to know that the war was going to be . . . When you heard it the first time, you had to have thought the war would be close to ending . . .*

**Edward Bowman:** That's right.

*And then after the second one when the Japanese surrendered, tell us, sir, what that was like, when you and your fellow troops learned that the war was finally over.*

**Edward Bowman:** There wasn't a gun on the island that wasn't shooting in the air. Use them \_ guns and stuff like that, them red tracers. It looked like there's lightning up in the sky. And hollering and whooping, and it was something else.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** Everybody was enjoying it, and I have some girls that's working here now, there's some from the Philippines, and they take care of me like I's a king.

*Yeah, because people in the Philippines definitely, they know the history of what happened with Japan, so that's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** And they always come by to see if I need anything before they go off work, and they said that their mother and daddy were there and said that their mothers and daddies had to go up into the mountains and stay up there. They like starved 'em to death. They killed all their chickens and calves and cows and everything. They raped the women, and \_ got there, and I guess one of these girls working down here now said she's down here working because the Philippines is not building back fast. Said she's from Luzon, Manila, and said they had a hardware store there and it won't even pay for itself, her mother and daddy run it. I still hear from her, do a lot of stuff from her.

*I know in the Philippines, MacArthur is definitely a hero too because he famously said, "I shall return." And then he made that beach landing where he waded back ashore. I think in a lot of ways, he might be better remembered in the Philippines than he is even here in the United States just because those folks were occupied and they knew what it was like to have to deal firsthand with the Japanese.*

**Edward Bowman:** That's right, yep. And he was a good man. And all the officers that he had with him was just like talking to us. They were just commonsense men and they knew what was going on and they didn't brag about nothing that they hadn't done.

*I liked how when the Japanese finally surrendered aboard the USS Missouri, General MacArthur made sure that General Wainwright was there to see that, and Wainwright, of course, you know had stayed behind and had, you know, almost died himself. He looked like a skeleton when they finally liberated the Philippines, and Wainwright had felt so horrible, he felt like he had failed because he had to surrender but he didn't have any choice, and so for MacArthur to have him there on the Missouri when the Japanese surrendered, I thought that was a good fitting thing to do.*

**Edward Bowman:** That was great. Yes, it was.

*During all this time, sir, when you're on these different islands, did you have a chance to get any letters from back home or be able to write to your wife?*

**Edward Bowman:** Oh, yes. My wife was pregnant when I left, and she had a baby five months after I got overseas, and I didn't know, she wrote and told me when it supposed to be due but it was a month old before I got a letter because the mail there . . . Sometimes we made some pretty fast moves, but after we got to Wadke Island, it slowed down.

*I'll take a wild guess, eventually it would catch up to you if you were lucky.*

**Edward Bowman:** And there wasn't no telephones or nothing like you talk to now.

*Oh, absolutely. So you learned that you were a dad when you got a letter from your wife about a month later.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, she said, "We've got a baby." But she wrote me every day and I'd write every day if I had time.

*That's excellent.*

**Edward Bowman:** 'Course mine was free but sometimes we'd be moving . . . The first when we left the . . . Finschhafen and then Hollandia . . . We wasn't there but about a month on each island, getting some more troops together to make another move, and we just . . . They tried to keep the radar back out of range of, you know, troops and things because back then that was an expensive item.

*Oh, sure. Yeah, you didn't want to . . . It was a valuable item too in that what it did for planning and for safety so, yeah, you didn't want to lose the radar.*

**Edward Bowman:** We wasn't there on Hollandia but . . . Had pulled the trucks and things across this river, and we got this last one back across the stream, well, this ol' boy, Caterpillar, he said, "This is it." He said, "Supper ready." And I was on the other side of that stream, had no idea, and it's dark, had no idea what is going, and I told him, I said, "That's my bunch, I've got to go with 'em." And he said, "Well, you can't go." Said, "I'm fixing to eat." And I said, "I'm fixing to see if I can get across here with the chains on that truck and everything." When I drove off in it, it come in the seat because this truck's fixed to run in water, and I had chains on all the wheels and I just kept digging it, and I had it in full bored, dragged it and the front end just come up out the water. Everybody said, "You drive it through that water?" And I said, "I'm a Texan. I'll try anything."

*Yeah.*

**Edward Bowman:** Then they bombed that night, and we all had our trucks sitting there and sleeping bags tied between 'em. We hollered red alert, and I was in that sleeping bag, couldn't find my zipper, and I torn it, tore the zipper up, run down there where the ditch was, and after they said all clear, I'd run down there barefooted through them stickers and I had somebody get my shoes to get me back up there. You do things that you don't think about when . . .

*Oh, sure. That's right.*

**Edward Bowman:** But I told my wife when I left, she said, "I hope you come back." And I said, "I'll be back. Don't worry about it." I was determined.

*That's great. So when the war finally ended, then I know they had a point system in World War II to determine when you got to come back. Did they use a point system for your unit to determine when you get to come back?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yep.

*And I imagine you'd been over there long enough, then, that . . .*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, I'd been there three years.

*So you got to come back, you said, in December of '45, and you got home just right before Christmas.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, the 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup>, and then I lived three miles north of Dodd City, and the bus come by and brought us. It was three in the morning when he got to Dodd City, and nobody had cars then. And so I stopped there, he put me off there where the road goes through Mother and Daddy's, and he said, "I'd take you down there but these country roads, these old buses might break down." So one of my neighbors hollered and said, "What's going on out there." I told him who I was and he said, "Come in and have a cup of coffee." So I had a cup of coffee and it was around five, and I said, "I'm going home." And he said, "Ain't nobody around here take you." And I said, "I still got two legs and it's three miles to Mother and Daddy's house." Most of the time I was in full run 'cause I was in good shape. I told 'em, I said, if somebody seen me coming down the road and yelled and told my wife, said, "Yeah, here comes a soldier." And of course we run together and we enjoyed it, being back home and then my little daughter, she's . . . We didn't have much to start with but everything worked out, and we ended up with seven kids, four girls and three boys.

*That's great. So you got home really early that morning then though, like five in the morning?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes.

*That's great. I imagine that had to have been wonderful Christmas.*

**Edward Bowman:** Oh, yes, it was. And to come home, and my daddy was working grocery store up there for Christmas, and he's needing somebody to load fruit and stuff into people's wagons, so I went up there and loaded fruit for seven dollars a day from seven in the morning until 10 at night.

*That's excellent. And you were out of the Army at that point? You were discharged when you got to come back home?*

**Edward Bowman:** They tried to get me to reenlist and I wouldn't do it. I told them I wanted to come back and I farmed ever since then.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** Worked for General Cable up there for 30 years in Bonham and in water and soil conservation, and made your wheat and oats and whatever you had to do. So I'm just the type of guy that I can't be still. I'm 92 years old, and I farmed all my life and enjoyed it.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** I still got my farm, it's out here.

*Excellent.*

**Edward Bowman:** South Windom.

*That farm you have, is that the one that your parents had?*

**Edward Bowman:** No.

*Okay, it's a different farm.*

**Edward Bowman:** I come back and farmed one year at Ector, and I bought a brand new tractor. FHA worked with me on it. And it was a two-row tractor. I got 1200 dollars for a brand new one. And I farmed with it then and next year they wanted me to buy some land, and I said, "I can't afford land." And he said, "I know where there's 110 acres at Windom for sale." He said, "You can afford this one." I said, "Well, let's figure up and see." And me and my wife come and looked at it, and she said, "I'd like to live out here." So I asked him I said, "Well, how much the payments have to be?" And he said, "482 dollars a year." I said, "482 dollars, you mean a month?" "No, I mean a year." I said, "I can take it. I can handle that." So me and Dad paid for it, and, of course, I got a discount from \_. Another 80 acres come up for sale, and I went and looked at it. Well, I \_ so, said they wanted to sell it, and they said they'd take 3000 dollars for that 80 acres. So Roy Owens who was the banker at Bonham, I went and told him about it. He said, "Write 'em a check." And so I ended up with about 200 acres.

*Wow, that's great. That's excellent.*

**Edward Bowman:** And I cleaned it up, built me a new home on it, and my wife said she didn't think she'd ever have a new house but . . . I got a brick home that I built, and I helped the people build it was working at the cable plant and I helped the carpenters build it. Three months it took when we had the key to go in the house.

*So all seven of your kids grew up on a farm with y'all?*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes sir.

*Are any of them farmers now?*

**Edward Bowman:** I got three boys that's farmers.

*That's great.*

**Edward Bowman:** And I got one daughter down in Mulberry Bottom, and she married a farmer. So, it's still in the family.

*That's good to know.*

**Edward Bowman:** I was 92 whenever I stepped . . . Started to get up on my four-wheeler, I mean my golf cart, to go to the garden, and so started to get on my golf cart and stroke hit me on

the right side and when I fell, I broke my ankle on the left foot, and I haven't been able to walk much off of it since.

*Well, you sound like you're doing great though. You sound good, and your memory is real clear.*

**Edward Bowman:** I do?

*So that's a blessing.*

**Edward Bowman:** I told 'em that I could still remember when I went to school, different schools I went to. All that farming and all that stuff, I can tell you, my life story, it'd be a long one.

*Well, sir, I appreciate you sharing some of your story with us today because we have archives here that go back to the 1700s. We have the original land grant that David Crockett's widow received after he was killed at the Alamo, and we have the registro which is the big register that Stephen F. Austin kept of all the settlers that first came to Texas. So what we're doing with these interviews is we're saving these to add to the archives so hundreds of years from now, long after you and I are gone, hopefully people can listen to these and study them and learn something from them, something maybe they didn't see in a history book, an actual story, an actual spoken word of the veteran. So it's a very valuable program and we're honored that we were able to get your story for it. We'll make sure to send you a bunch of copies of these on CDs and that way you can give them to your kids and grandkids and that sort of thing as well.*

**Edward Bowman:** I appreciate it.

*Yes sir.*

**Edward Bowman:** I enjoyed talking to you.

*Yes sir, and also, sir, if you have any photographs you'd want us to put on our website, we can make copies of that too or perhaps the folks there at the Bonham Home can scan copies of it and email it to us and we can put those on the website as well. It's always nice to put pictures with the story if we can get them.*

**Edward Bowman:** Well, see, they wouldn't let us have a camera when we's over there. World War II, we didn't have, they wouldn't allow no cameras.

*Well, maybe if you have any pictures from your wedding or from when you got home or any photos in uniform or anything from that time period, we'd always love to get those, get a copy of them.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yeah, I've got some of those.

*We'd love to get a picture of it.*

**Edward Bowman:** Some of them was in Florida. That's when we got married and me and my wife had moved to Athens, Georgia to go to school. I've got a picture of it in my room up here right now.

*That's great. Maybe the folks there at the Cospers home can figure out a way of maybe making, scanning that and emailing to me, and they've got my contact info. What I'm going to do when I send out these CDs in a week or so, I'll make sure to put my card in there for you as well, sir, so you got my phone number and address and everything as well.*

**Edward Bowman:** I'll work with you any way you want to do it.

*Yes sir. Again, sir, it's a real honor to be able to interview you and on behalf of Commissioner Patterson and everybody here at the General Land Office, we want to thank you for your service to our country. It's just a very small way of being able to tell you thank you.*

**Edward Bowman:** I've got a picture of my farm, and I brought it up here and let everybody see it, and they say, "Oh, you've done wonderful with that farm."

*Oh, absolutely. To have that many acres, that's great. Well, sir, again I really appreciate it, and we'll be in touch again soon.*

**Edward Bowman:** Okay, thank you.

*All right, sir. Have a good day.*

**Edward Bowman:** Yes sir, thank you.

*Yes sir, take care. Bye bye.*