

Transcription: Stancil Webb

Today is Wednesday, May 4, 2011. My name is James Crabtree and this afternoon I'll be interviewing Mr. Stancil Webb. This interview is taking place at his residence and it is support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thank you very much for taking the time to let me talk to you today. It's always an honor. The first question, sir, is just tell us a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went in the military.

Stancil Webb: I was raised in Limestone County, Texas, out on a little bitty farm. I remember the '20s and '30s. I was there.

Do you have fond memories of it or bad memories?

Stancil Webb: Well, in 1926, my dad bought a brand new Model T Ford. I remember that real good. It had curtains on it and all that kind of stuff. I also remember the '30s when there was no money. And I do mean no money. But we made it. We raised the stuff we ate. We processed all our meat and all that stuff.

Did you have a lot of brothers and sisters?

Stancil Webb: My brothers and sisters were much older than me. I had a brother that was 21 years older than me.

That is a lot older, sure.

Stancil Webb: And a sister that was 20 years. Then I had a couple of sisters, one was six years older than me. Just lost her this last January. And one was 10 years older than me.

So you were the baby of the family?

Stancil Webb: Yeah, I'm the spoilt one of the family, of course. Anyhow, I remember the '20s. I learned to Charleston when I was about eight years old. My sisters, of course, was older, they taught me that. I remember the '20s. And I also remember the '30s. And I left the farm when I was about 20 years old, and I haven't farmed since.

What did you grow on the farm?

Stancil Webb: Well, cotton and corn, of course. But we grew all kind of vegetables. I was raised where there was sandy land. Of course, we grew potatoes. We even made our own syrup, ribbon cane syrup. And, of course, we had chickens, we had eggs, we had a hog, we had meat, had cows, we had beef. But we didn't have any money. But we ate, you know. That was just the way I was brought up. Still like to, I learned to fish and hunt when I was small. I still love it. If my legs worked, I'd be doing it right now. I lived in Houston for 40 years. I was known as an electrical troubleshooter. We worked on everything you could think of. Not everything, but we worked on a number of things. 'Course I helped build the first police radio station in Mexia, Texas. I wasn't the backbone, I just did the work. We had a gentleman that knew how to do it. And anyhow, we had to go to operate it, you had to have a license, of course. We even had to have an FBI check back in those days to do that. Went before the FCC in Dallas to get our license. I didn't stay operating it. I didn't like the operation part of it.

To go back a little bit, sir. You said you left the farm when you were 20. What year was that, do you remember?

Stancil Webb: Well, figure it out. Must have been about 1940.

1940. So before the war had started?

Stancil Webb: Right.

Do you remember where you were when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

Stancil Webb: Oh yes.

Tell us a little bit about that day.

Stancil Webb: I was working in Beaumont, Texas when I heard it. I was married at that time. Yeah. Of course we heard that the war had . . . You're talking about December the 7th?

Yes sir. Pearl Harbor Day.

Stancil Webb: Right. That's where I was at. Beaumont.

Did you hear on the radio?

Stancil Webb: Yeah.

What were your first thoughts?

Stancil Webb: I can't tell you because I don't know that.

But did you have some idea that you yourself might be going to war at that point?

Stancil Webb: Sure. Oh yeah. Yeah. That was in . . . Let me think a minute. 'Course that was December the 7th. I went in the service May the 11th of '42. Right after, you know. That's when I went in.

Did you sign up or did they draft you?

Stancil Webb: No, they drafted me.

They drafted you.

Stancil Webb: Why sign up? I knew they was calling anyhow. I knew it was a matter of time.

From when you got the draft notice, how long was it before you had to go off to basic training?

Stancil Webb: I don't remember but it wasn't very long. It was just real short really.

And so you were married. Did you have any children yet?

Stancil Webb: No.

No children.

Stancil Webb: No children. No.

So where did they send you to first?

Stancil Webb: Oh, out from Fort Worth. What's that camp out there?

Fort Walters?

Stancil Webb: Yeah. Fort Walters.

I was just there this last weekend actually.

Stancil Webb: Stayed there about a, I don't know, eight or 10 days. Then I went to Camp Crowder, Missouri. Stayed there for about, I don't know, couple of months. And then they shipped me to Camp Shelby, Mississippi. That's when I joined the, well, I say I joined. They sent me to the 178th Signal Repair Company.

Okay. Tell us a little bit about that, what that entailed.

Stancil Webb: Well, you probably don't know but, a lot of people don't. 'Course I had the training in Mexia. They knew about all of that, which is good. That didn't matter. And so we repaired radios, telephones, and things like that. We spent about nine months in Louisiana maneuvers because they shipped us from one division to the next. We didn't come back to Shelby.

Why do think it was they put you in that? Do you have a test that showed your aptitude was well suited?

Stancil Webb: I assumed that they knew that I had worked out on that radio station and all. I knew a little bit, not much. Still didn't know much about it anyhow. But you learn enough. If you know a little, if you look, you can figure out how to fix 'em. That's what they was interested in. But they thought you was a . . . People thought if you was in that you wouldn't, you know, you was back, you know. That's a joke. Oh yeah. They was, 'course, I was with ten million more, you know. I'm amazed that some people, 'course it come out in the paper that General de Gaulle had taken Paris. We were there three days before General de Gaulle ever showed up. But he didn't have the power at that time. I don't think he could have taken any city really, more especially Paris.

When did you ship out after you did all your training?

Stancil Webb: Ninth of December.

Ninth of December of '42?

Stancil Webb: Forty-three.

Forty-three? What were your thoughts when you were getting ready to go overseas? Were you excited, worried, nervous?

Stancil Webb: Well, I don't know about anyone else, but I was concerned about it, of course. We went into Glasgow, Scotland. We went over on the Queen Mary and you couldn't land it anywhere at that time. You couldn't land it in England because it's too rough.

So you rode the Queen Mary over?

Stancil Webb: Yeah. But it was already converted into a transport ship. We landed out at Glasgow. We anchored out there and then carried us in in small boats. We went from there to England of course. And Wales there, during, when the blitz came, you know.

Battle of Britain and the buzz bombs.

Stancil Webb: The buzz bombs. Tell you a story about them buzz bombs. We was down close to Southampton, England, and we had went to a motor pool. They had big motor pools where they changed your oil in your vehicles. Me and my buddy had went down there to get the oil changed in a Jeep. And this buzz bomb we heard . . . If you hear one, I don't care, night or day, you know what it is. You learn.

The distinctive sound?

Stancil Webb: You know if it's a Jerry plane or an American plane, just by hearing it. Just the way it is. Anyhow, we heard that thing and it kinda coughed like and we figured it's comin' down. He and I both . . . They had pits where they changed that oil. He and I both, and some other guys, went in that pit. But that thing, buzz bomb, caught up and went about four or five miles and landed in a bunch of trees. And it sheared 'em off, that big around. But as far as I know, no one was hurt at that particular deal. We were in Lyndhurst, England, which is about eight or nine miles out of Southampton, a little town. And we were about halfway between, and they just moved about four blocks of Southampton. Pulverized it. They was trying to get the docks, we assume, and I'm pretty sure that's right. Because they were still in operation, you see. But, I don't know.

What was the typical day like for you when you were in England? Were you doing a lot of training or were you doing a lot of repairs?

Stancil Webb: Well, the company I was with, we went and . . . We didn't call them platoons, we called 'em sections. About eight men to a section. And we was, my company, I say my company, our company was all over England. Scattered out. We were, my outfit, was detached to a signal depot there. And we went all over England, the southern part. We had the southern part. Repairing, waterproofing tanks, radios in tanks, waterproofing radios in platoon boats. We had just, we was at Southampton, down at the port and we had finished up on, I don't know how many there were, four or five boats that we had waterproofed the radios in them boats. And we was gone about an hour when the Jerrys come along and got rid of them boats. They shelled every one of 'em. So, I don't know. And 'course it was a different deal when you get into France, up through there.

When did you arrive in France? After D-Day I imagine.

Stancil Webb: Yes. I didn't go on D-Day. I went about, I think about 15, 20 days give or take, after D-Day.

I'm sure you still saw some of the aftereffects of the invasion though?

Stancil Webb: Yes, I saw it. Oh yeah. Boats, passed boats that you could see sticking up. I don't know how far they went but they went a long ways. You could see. And, but anyhow. Yeah, you see, some days my platoon, section, they transferred us over into French First Army, Fourth Mountain Moroccan Division. We were with the Moroccans when they took Belfort, Mulhouse, France, up through there. Up through that, well, you know where it is.

What was it like being with troops outside of the United States?

Stancil Webb: It's rough buddy. When you come, I knew a few French words, but I did not know any Moroccan words at all. When it got dark, you better dig you a hole and get in it because you could, sign language. We finally made it to where you could do pretty good but we never did learn to speak to 'em you know. 'Fact, we had Christmas dinner with a Moroccan, headquarters Moroccans, there in a Gestapo headquarters. Christmas 1944.

Forty-four. You said in some Gestapo headquarters?

Stancil Webb: Yeah. We had Jerrys just down the street. We knew about that too. But my buddy and I, we needed to take a bath. We found out the water was on. I don't know how it was still on but it was still on in there. It was on the second floor. So we eased up there late, just about dark. We're going, "We need a bath bad." And I do mean bad. And about the time we started to getting' undressed, that small arms fire started coming through them windows. We decided we didn't need a bath. We got out and went down to the basement. Anyhow, I didn't get no bullets, no shrapnel. How I don't know. When we was taking Mulhouse, they started shelling and one block over from where we were at, they just pulverized it. But where we were at, and we was right out in the street, we weren't in no building. Not a thing.

Tell us sir, a little bit about the men you served with, in particular, the men in your section?

Stancil Webb: The men in my section, well, we had a section chief, of course, who was, as far as radio and telephone and stuff like that, he was one among the smart in, I think, in our company. We added two or three others, but he was one among the top ones. But he was a big person. Gilbert Wyckoff. Then there was, let's see, myself, _ . There was three sergeants under him. Two, one or two corporals, and one PFC. 'Course you always take care of your buddies, do the best you can, and they do the same for you 'course.

Everybody got along pretty well?

Stancil Webb: Oh yeah. We got along great. We had no . . . Not in our section. The guys, they got along real good, you know.

What about higher up? Did you have much interaction with officers or your senior enlisted?

Stancil Webb: No. Oh, we had a little lieutenant who thought he was Little Lord Pomeroy, but we eased around him. The captain was Joseph _ Burns. Of course, I had known him at Shelby when was he was a lieutenant. He was an educated person. I don't know how old Captain Joe was. He was probably 40, give or take. He had a degree in, found out, a degree in electrical and also in mechanic. Smart man. He wasn't the type of military person that you would see. Like

some of the old, I say old, some of the people that was in the service before the war. He wasn't that type of person. Anyhow, everybody that I know, that I can think of, everybody liked Captain Joe. He didn't, all that anger stuff, holler, nuh-uh. When he lined up, but I think I knew, or I thought I did anyhow. That when Captain Joe told you, you better walk the line. Yeah. He was that type. Now if you met him, and he told us, 'course it was overseas, says, "You don't have to salute me." You know, he said, "Unless there's an officer with me that you do not know." He said, "He might be from the Inspector General's office." He said, "Then I'd get eat out and I don't care for that." So, he was, I think Captain Joe was a real smart person. I really did like him, you know. He was nice, he was straight, all that stuff. I don't know.

So were you all together then when you were with the Moroccans? Were you all together?

Stancil Webb: No, it was just my section. We lost one man while we was with the Moroccans. Then it just left seven of us.

So Captain Joe and the rest, they were parceled out?

Stancil Webb: Captain Joe, the people that had always been, like the cooks. And we had a motor pool. I don't know how they do it now. But there was three guys in the motor pool and they could change out a engine in a car quicker 'n most people can fix a flat. I'm not joking, and they'd do it right. But they stayed, they was always in the back, but we did not know, most of the time we did not know where they were. I don't know how Captain Joe kept up with us, or know where we're at, but he did. 'Course just before the war ended, we all come back. We was in Tulle, France at the end of the war in Europe.

Did you have an idea, at the point, that we were going to defeat the Germans? That things were going well?

Stancil Webb: You never get the idea. I didn't. There's things you seen and you knew but you always knew that any minute, you know, 'cause they could pop up. Talk about the services the way it was then and the way it is now, they're not fightin' the wars, they just skirmish. But the people gettin' killed are just as dead. We finally found out, and I don't know of any general that put this out, but we finally found out when you move forward, you don't leave nothing back there. You ever hear of Saint Lô, France?

Yes sir.

Stancil Webb: You should have seen it at one time. They was nothin' standing that I can remember. One building, one part of a building, about eight to 10 feet long and about six feet high. Everything else was flat. And that's the only way, if you're going to go to war, buddy, go to war. And if you're not, stay at the house. That's the way I feel about it. I've seen a little of it. All they're doing up there now is a politician that's gettin' rich. Some of 'ems already rich, some of 'ems worth millions of dollars right now. And they still want that money. They're not runnin' this nation. They're collecting money. It's been going on, not just the last decade, it's been going on for a few decades. And, it's a crazy, mixed up, as far as I'm concerned.

Tell us, sir, where you were when you learned that Germany had surrendered. Do you remember that day, V-E Day?

Stancil Webb: Yeah.

Tell us about your memories of that day.

Stancil Webb: We were in Tulle, France. We had, the company had come back, I don't know why. I can't answer that question, but we had come back to the company there and we had an ol' French garrison that was about half blowed up, you know? But we fixed up enough of it that we were there, we went there in that camp when we had those, we had buildings, I remember that too. Oh yes, I remember that. I'll tell you about my captain, you asked me about him.

Yes sir.

Stancil Webb: After we found out it was over, of course, everybody, and I'm not taking up for myself either. But a lot of 'em went out and got oiled up with whatever they could find to drink. Well, the captain did the same thing. So about midnight I don't know how come he, I had some buddies, you know, you always have, and I knew some of 'em liked to drink pretty much so I thought, "Well, I'll go see what I can find." So I get in the Jeep and I go looking. I find the captain, and ooh, he was tight. I thought a minute and I said, "Come on Captain Joe. I know where we got some good cognac." Which I told him a little story, I didn't have it. We get him in the Jeep and I take him back to camp because he was really, really drunk. And I get him, "Get in bed, you need to." I got him in bed, James. He laid down. I thought, "Well, I can go," you know? I started out and I heard him, he's getting up. So I just went back, got him, put him back in bed. "Now you go to sleep. I'm gonna stay here 'til you do." And he was my captain, you know. But I'd been with him, he knew me. I was the only Texan in the outfit. He used to . . . I'll tell you another story about him and me.

Okay.

Stancil Webb: He sent me back one time, I don't know where we's at now, but he knew a place, or he was smart. And we needed parts for radios, and he sent me back, I don't know, a hundred miles back.

And this was in France?

Stancil Webb: In France, yeah. Okay, so I stayed a little too long. I got down there and I run on to people, and I could speak a little French and I met, you know . . . Well, when I come back and drove in, so help me, he was walking out there. And he walk up, and I said, "Captain Joe," I said, "I kinda got lost." You know what he said? He looked at me and kinda laughed. He said, "Tex, you know France better'n you do Texas." He just laughed.

How long over do you think you stayed? You talking days or hours?

Stancil Webb: About a day.

About a day over.

Stancil Webb: He knew. Like I said, he was a sharp person. He knew about how long it would take, you know, unless I got into some bad trouble.

Did you come back with the stuff that was needed?

Stancil Webb: Oh yeah, I had the stuff. That was no problem. Anyhow, he was a good, he was smart. I think he was real smart.

Where was he from, do you remember?

Stancil Webb: You asked me a question I can't really answer. He was from up north. I was the only Texan in the whole outfit. And, of course, you know my name, Tex. They'd do me by that and that was all. He used to, I don't know why he did it. It was, we needed some stuff for that, where I was tellin' ya we's in Tulle, France, when we all come back. And they had a building there, we didn't have quite a, it didn't have a cover. Some way or another he found out where we could get the stuff to fix it. "Hey Tex." I said, "Yeah." "Go so and so and get so and so." He always, several times, quite a number of times he did that.

Pretty resourceful then.

Stancil Webb: Well, I don't know about that but he, that's what he did. Anyhow, I really liked Captain Joe. He was, he was pretty, I'd say, straightforward person.

When you guys found out that the war in Europe was over, was he the one that told you guys, or did you hear it on the radio?

Stancil Webb: I'm not gonna answer that 'cause I don't know. That I don't remember.

Do you remember if it was a surprise to you that the war was over?

Stancil Webb: Yes.

It was?

Stancil Webb: Oh yes. Yes, great surprise. Of course, then we thought, okay, now we'll get to go home. Uh-uh, in not just a little while we found we was shipping direct to the Pacific, and we'd already been over there. But anyhow, we got that, about the time we had moved a lot of stuff to Marseilles, France, and the war was over there, we had to go down and hunt it up because they just fields as far as you could see of trucks and vans and stuff. We had to find ours. And then we went from there to Liège, Belgium and joined a, I don't know, a depot up there. And we stayed there. When we's with the French Army, I still think about it. We went up through Mulhouse, Belfort, Mulhouse, France and took all them, and I mean we got cut off up there too one time, while we's up there. And then we got some help from the U.S. Army, and they got us loose. Anyhow, we never did, it doesn't make any difference about battle stars, but you see you come back home on points.

That's right, the point system.

Stancil Webb: The point system. It was two battle stars up there, we never, Captain Joe went and tried to find out about it when we's, after the war when we's in Belgium. He never could find anything, and we didn't get 'em either.

So were you still in Europe when the war in Japan ended?

Stancil Webb: Yes. Yes, we was getting' ready to ship. We didn't know the shipping date but we found out it wasn't gonna be too long, but we didn't know exactly when.

Pause in recording.

Stancil Webb: I don't ask because I know it's so much different when I was there that it's unreal.

Yeah.

Stancil Webb: I don't know how . . . See when I was there, we didn't have sleeping bags or nothing like that. That, oh boy, I've never seen snow as deep as it was when we was in France, Belfort, France, at Christmas of '44. You think I'm joking but that snow was deep as that . . .

I believe you.

Stancil Webb: I'm telling you. I could tell you things you wouldn't . . . 'Course, was you ever in England?

No sir.

Stancil Webb: Or was you in France, Germany?

No, I've been to Germany just at the airport flying back from . . .

Stancil Webb: I know you've seen pictures of those towns and all, how narrow the streets, you know, really are. Well, I had come, when we was with the, oh shoot, Moroccans, of course, we run out of , I was with 'em lacked three days of being four months. We run out of stuff, you know. So I went back and when I come back, I made a wrong turn, James, and the Jerrys, there was four of 'em, and they was putting furniture out of them buildings, and they was blocking that road off, that street off. You know, I don't really believe this either but I know it happened. I turned that truck around in that street. And, of course, they seen me coming and I was moving pretty good for that ol' truck, and they ran, and I turned that truck around, and, James, it was gone before they could . . . I didn't hear a shot and I sure didn't fire one because I was driving and I was by myself. I thought about that a lot of times. How did I do that? How did that happen? 'Course at the time I didn't think anything about, but since I've got a few years . . .

Sure, reflect on that.

Stancil Webb: The Lord Jesus Christ must've had both my hands because I wouldn't be here.

That's pretty remarkable.

Stancil Webb: There's no way. I'll tell you, I've seen some, been there. My buddy and I one time, it was in the fall of '44 I believe, we was detached to a infantry outfit. I don't know, a month maybe give or take. And everything was quiet, and my buddy and I said, "Let's go up this away, see where the front is." You know, we knew it was up, we drove up a ways and it was, I can just see that little hill, that's pretty good little hill. So we's in a Jeep so we stopped, we walk up there, we had binoculars, so we's gonna look. So, James, here come a train from some, I say,

north, and, man, I said, “Buddy, we in the wrong place.” And about that time, two, you know what P-38 is?

Sure.

Stancil Webb: Here they came behind that train. And that train was, oh, it is the distance of maybe a quarter of a mile, give or take, eighth of a mile or quarter of a mile where it was at down there over yonder. Well, that first plane dropped a bomb but it didn’t hit that train. But that second one come in and evidently he hit that, he hit that front part of the motor, the engine part, and it blew. And that P-38, I can remember, it went straight up. I mean, it’s sitting like this, of course, but it went up just like that. And I thought, “Oh, we’re gonna lose him.” But he finally got it. And about that time, another one, I guess he circled around, I don’t, but he come back behind, he did this and that one that got the, he waved his wings, and they was gone and so was me and my buddy. We decided . . .

It’s amazing you saw that.

Stancil Webb: We decided, “Wait a minute, we’re a little too far this a-way.” I can remember that real well.

Wow.

Stancil Webb: Oh, I’ve seen a lotta, lots of things happen.

How about the civilians? Did you have much interaction with the French civilians while you were there?

Stancil Webb: Well, we didn’t really have time for that in a way. But after we took, I say we, now I was just a little grain of sand in Paris. But, of course, I guess I was just a kid really, but you wanna see, you know. And there was still some snipers but we thought, “Well, you know, we okay.” But we didn’t lose any men in my company doing this. But the Gestapo had taught them young boys to kill Americans, and they left ’em a gun too. And they’d shoot you in the back and then they was gone. So some way or another, and I can’t answer the question, we found out about it, and buddy, you didn’t walk down a street unless you had somebody that eyeballs was this a-way back there if you was going that way because . . . and after that, and, of course, as I said, we was in the communication system and there was another company, 175th, was older. That’s the first one that I knew of. I don’t know of ’em anymore that was like that, and our company was a spur, so to speak. The same setup but we was like, and we knew a bunch of them and we . . . Of course, we also knew how to fix radios where we’d get where we wanted to go, and we kept in contact a lot of times with them. And they told us a lot of things and we, of course, in return told them. And that’s the way we knew where was a lot of things. I, I say I, my platoon was with General Bradley one time for, oh, I don’t know, 10 or 15 days, at headquarters with him. Now he was a real nice person. We were putting in a remote control for him. The transmitter was about 20 miles, but then he had the controls in his headquarters. And he’d come in in the morning, we’d salute him, but, “Okay men, we have to work. Don’t worry about it.” And I see you step in . . . One of my friends was laying down working underneath a deal, you know, and the general come along, I was over there, and he just stepped over him and went on, you know. But he had a colonel that he, and, of course, his headquarters naturally was back from the front, you know, and we was out there. And this colonel, he wanted us to dress like Class A

dressing like, you know. Man, what's . . . And a couple of the guys was really pissed off about that.

I'll bet. Did you even have your Class A uniforms there in France?

Stancil Webb: If we did, I don't know where they were.

Yeah, I don't why you would have brought them.

Stancil Webb: They might've been somewhere. I don't know. A lot of our stuff was back with the company, you know, and you only carried what you needed. You didn't carry, 'cause you had to move a lot of times. So long story, but anyhow, these two guys, one of 'em finally, the general come along and he told the general about it, General Bradley. And the general said, "We'll see about it solider." Boy, the next day that colonel didn't bother nobody.

That's great. Yeah, that seems kind of out of place to . . .

Stancil Webb: I don't know what the general told him. I don't know nothin' about that except I know that colonel knocked it off right quick.

Yeah, that's kind of foolish.

Stancil Webb: You say you're a Marine?

Yes sir.

Stancil Webb: I hear the story that on the tube the other day that once a Marine, you're always a Marine.

Yes sir.

Stancil Webb: I guess that's kinda the way it is, James, even though it's been what, probably 70 years, close to it, since I got out. You can figure it out. I got out of the service in '46, so you figure it out. I've been out that long. But you still, there's something I believe is there. I still even know my number, my Army number, after all them years. And it, I guess, that's the reason I get so, I guess, upset with some of the things I see on TV about the way things are because they're not gonna win them wars, them skirmishes, until they eliminate 'em. When they start going up through there, James, in them hills and getting them clans in Afghanistan, they're not . . . Where do they think that terrorists come from? They think they grow on trees and they just pull 'em off? I don't think so. Until they get rid of 'em, they still gonna have it. May not be, they may get 'em down to where they halfway control 'em but when they raise enough of 'em . . . They're taught time they can talk, yeah, and when they come out of 'em hills, they still, it may be 10 years, it may be 20, but they'll come back unless you eliminate 'em. Cut the trees down. I have told that and some people said, "Well, you're really cold-hearted" or something. I said, "No, I'm not a fighter, I'm a lover." I go downstairs in the morning, James, I go down kinda early in a way, and it's about 7-8, and mostly women here, and I go down there and get coffee before breakfast, you know. Well, I get hugs from them ol' women, and I'll admit, yes, I like that. They love your neck and everything in the mornings, and, yeah, leave it here. But I guess I've always been that way. I was only married 66 years to the same woman so, she was my rock, yeah.

When you were in Europe during the war, were you able to write back and forth?

Stancil Webb: Oh yes. Have you ever seen a V-mail?

Yes sir, I sure have.

Stancil Webb: Little printed-out deals? I had some of those. We's going through some stuff and I had one. I said, "Here's one your mother wrote me." She said, "What is that Daddy?" And I told her. She says, "I never heard of it." I said, "Here." She has some.

That's great. What would you write home when you were there?

Stancil Webb: You couldn't say where you were or who you was with. "I'm okay. I haven't been hurt. I'm okay." That's mostly what you put down.

Pretty simple then.

Stancil Webb: Real simple. Real simple.

What would she write you?

Stancil Webb: Oh, she learned to write just the real little things, and not in detail because you couldn't put it on there no how, you know? And things like that, but, yes, we communicated. But like when we's with the French First Army, the Fourth Mountain Moroccan Division, we didn't get any mail for months, you know, months at a time.

That's gotta be rough.

Stancil Webb: But nowadays they even have on TV, they have 'em, you know, from Afghanistan and all. So, it was nothing like that now. A lot of people said, "Webb, you want to go back?" I said, "No. I'd like to have it where like the government, our government, could just punch a button and have a man in England there on the tube, a person, you know, and you talk to him." "Well, they say that can do that now." I said, "Yeah, but not like I'm thinking about. I'd like to have it where they could, they could do that anytime, you know?" All that kind of stuff. And they talk about these drones. To me, they don't have enough of 'em, you know? Even get 'em more perfected really.

Tell us a little bit, sir, do you remember the day you came back home from the war and were reunited with your wife? Do you remember that day?

Stancil Webb: Yeah.

Tell us a little bit about that.

Stancil Webb: Well, I got out in Camp, it's in Tyler. I got out Christmas Eve day 1945, and we caught a bus. A lot of the guys, there was people there from different cities here in the state. My friend, I got a friend that lived right down here at Seguin, Texas. You know where that's at, don't ya?

Yes sir, yeah.

Stancil Webb: He's gone now. He's been gone for some time. And he caught a car. They was going to San Antone so they'd come out there, "Anybody's going to San Antone?" And they got four people to go to San Antone, and they was charging 'em 15 dollars from Tyler. And they was charging 10 dollars to Houston, but we couldn't find nobody. There's five of us from Houston. Of course, after you got discharged, "Houston, Houston" or "San Antone," or "Dallas," or whatever, you know. And they would, the GIs would come together 'cause they's trying to catch cars that was going direct, you know. We couldn't catch any. But there was a gentleman there that said, "Hey, I think there's a bus leaving out about 6 o'clock or so out of Tyler going to Houston." He said, "My wife come over and I got the car. I'll take y'all into Tyler." And man, we had them duffel bags, I can just see it, piling 'em all over that front of that car and in the trunk. There's five of us with him, six of us in that car. And he carried us to the bus station. When we got to the bus station, there sit a bus that said Houston on it. Man, we grabbed them bags and get on. The man said, "Oh no, wait a minute. You can't get on now." We said, "Why not?" He said, "Well, it's only loading." Said it would be 20 minutes before we could get on. Boy, that was a long 20 minutes. Anyhow we got on, James, and I don't think, I could be wrong, but my estimation that there was none of the guys had been drinking anything, any alcohol or anything. Of course everybody was just up high, all of us. We got to Kilgore, and you know, they got those, back then they still had them oil derricks right there really in town, you know. They had the lights on 'em. We said, "Hey, look at this. They got electric lights in this place." And the other people that was on the bus, they thought, "Yeah, they're crazy." I guess that's what they thought.

Did your wife know you were coming home that day?

Stancil Webb: Yeah, she knew I was coming but she didn't know when. Anyhow we got to Houston about 12 o'clock, and I caught a taxi. My wife and my sister was living together in Houston. Both of them, 'course, was working. And I caught a taxi and went out there. I got out to the house about, I don't know, 12:30 at night, you know, give or take something like that. And, yeah, I can remember that real well.

And at that point you were ready to get out of the service. You didn't have any desire to stick around?

Stancil Webb: I wanted to get far away from it. Even though I assumed from accounts that I've seen and probably you have too, that some companies . . . See, we didn't have a division or battalion. We was what they call really, that's what they said, a bastard company, because we was all up and down that front, some of us, you know. That's the reason I don't know how Captain Joe knew where any of us was at. But anyhow, yeah, I wanted to get, I didn't want nobody to tell me, you know, you get up at this time or you go to bed at this time, and all that kind of stuff. I just got completely away from it. I never had anything to do with it 'til, James, let me think. We moved over to . . . I just have the one daughter, and she lives here and has been for, oh, 40 years or more. But we moved over to Georgetown, up the road. I mean, I'm too country, I don't like to live . . . I moved clean out of Houston. I lived out in the country back in the '60s. Well, '69 is when we moved out. And anyhow I didn't want to come to Austin or any, you know, it's too hot. I found that little place up there at Troy, Texas. You know where that is?

Sure I do.

Stancil Webb: About that big?

Yeah.

Stancil Webb: We found a house just right out the edge. The last house that was connected to the sewer and all. Then there was a field on that side and a pasture out in front, so we bought that little house, and I think that was in, I'm not gonna say, '92. And I had, when I was in Georgetown, I went up to the VA there in Temple and got a card. And while we was there in Troy, I had a heart attack, and I think 1999, I had a quadruple bypass. Of course, they did it at Scott & White. Temple doesn't have facilities for heart attacks. Of course, I went to the VA and they sent me over to Scott & White, and then I stayed over there, I think, four days or five, I can't remember exactly. And then they put me back, shipped me back over to Temple, and I stayed there for about 15-16 days after that. And that's the first time I'd really had any contact with the government deal at all. But, the doctor that operated on me come in there. I don't remember him when he operated but after the operation I went back for a checkup, you know? Here he come in there and he had on cowboy boots and I looked at him, I said, "Hey, doc, you sure them's your boots?" He looked at me kinda funny, and he said, "Yeah." He said, "I got cows." He had cows, you know? He had a little ranch out in Temple. But the nurses had told me, said, "You was lucky. You got the best surgeon Scott & White has." But I had never seen or even heard of him, James, when he operated on me. And I guess he's pretty good. I haven't had any problems.

That's great. That is awesome.

Stancil Webb: Yeah, and that's been how long? March 25th, I think, 1999.

Well, that's great, 12 years.

Stancil Webb: Yeah, 12 years this past, yeah, 25th of March.

You know I was going to tell you, sir, I think I mentioned this before I started the interview that we have at the Land Office archives that go back several hundred years. We have the land grant that David Crockett's widow received after he was killed at the Alamo, and we have the original register or registro that Stephen F. Austin kept in his own hand. Our goal is to add these interviews to that archive so that hundreds of years from now people can listen to these interviews and hopefully learn something from them. With that in mind, is there anything you'd want to say to somebody listening to this interview decades from now about your service or just something in general I guess.

Stancil Webb: Well, James, a hundred years from now there's no, I have no concept of how this nation will be. But I hope and pray that it's a lot better than it is now every way. I hope the people love each other instead of being cross and down on people. When I came up in the '20s and '30s, everybody that I knew of, they would help you do things. They didn't have money but they would help you, and there's other ways, many, many other ways to help people than to help them with money. And I would like to see in a hundred years from now that the people would be in that kind of mood. I don't mean in the shape that the people in the '30s was like, but in their hearts and minds, that they would be more loving and caring for other people. Today, even people it's I, I, I, and little you. People does not help other people, not like they did when I would come up, when I was small. James, I've lived in three different worlds right here in the

State of Texas. My residence has always been here but I've been in quite a few, I missed three or four states, but I've been in most of the states here. There's plenty of people that's here that they wanna go on vacation to other nations. There's plenty. The United States is a large place and there's plenty here for them to see that they don't know about. And I wish that they would bring the nation up, everybody, you know, not down but up, but up in a loving way 'cause that's the only way. I have friends that tell me that next year, 2012, is going to be the end of time. You've probably heard it. I tell 'em, "I don't know. It's not coming until God says so." You see the Lord Jesus Christ, that's the one thing he does not know. The Lord Jesus Christ does not know when the end of time is coming. So, it's all up to God. Of course, I study The Book some, maybe not as much as I should, but I study it. And Satan, you see, is running this world, the whole world, not just the United States. But you tell me you was 40 years old?

Thirty-four.

Stancil Webb: Thirty-four, oh, James. Wait another 34, you'll be 68. Remember this, try. That ol' man told you to sit and think when you're 68 what you've seen since you saw me. Remember that.

Yes sir.

Stancil Webb: And it will be a lot different, son, than you can imagine.

I'll bet.

Stancil Webb: I don't believe any mortal human being, and that's all we are, the saints, Saint Peter, John and all the apostles, they're gone. They're up there with, they're upstairs. There's none of them here on earth. We're just human beings, all of us. The rich, the poor, and the in-between, nothing but human beings. And, I don't know. I guess I have a lot of different ideas. It's like I was telling ya, I met a lady, I believe, yesterday. I had been seeing her and I told her, I said, "My name's Webb." I said, "What's your name?" And she told me, Pauline. And she said, "I've seen you. I heard somebody speak about you." I said, "Honey, I'm the only Webb there is in this place, and I doubt there's any other." I said, "I know of two more but they're not here. But they're not like me." I have two first cousins that's still living. As I told ya, I lost my younger sister, and I'm the only one out of the family. But I know them, the two first cousin Webbs, but all of us are different. We really are. That's just the way life is I guess.

Yes sir. I want to thank you again for letting me interview you, and this interview too, is just one small way of us and the State of Texas thanking you for your service. From Commissioner Patterson on down at the Land Office, we all want to thank you.

Stancil Webb: Well, I'm just a grain of sand in 10 million that was over there.

Sure.

Stancil Webb: So, I'm thankful that I came back and was not wounded, and was not had any bullets or any scrap iron or whatever. I don't know, James, because, oh, anyhow I didn't get it.

Yes sir. Well, we're glad you didn't. We're glad that we were able to interview you today. In a week or so we'll be sending you copies of this interview too so you can give it to your daughter and any family and friends, that sort of thing, on CDs.

Stancil Webb: That'll be nice.

Yes sir. Thank you very much.