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AN INTERVIEW WITH T. GRADY GALLANT

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TINKER: This is an interview with T. Grady Gallant at his home in Nashville, Tennessee, and the interview is being conducted by Cynthia Tinker and ...

BARNHART: Nancy Barnhart.

TINKER: Okay, Mr. Gallant, we are happy to be here. You were talking about your grandmother?

GALLANT: Yes, what do you want to know about her?

TINKER: You can go as far back as you can remember. Do you know where your family came from?

GALLANT: Yes. My mother's family came from England and they were over here in the 1600's. My father's family came from France and they were over here in the 1600's. So our family goes back to before the Revolution. We have uh, there was one, I don't know how many greats it is, but one uncle on my mother's side was in the Revolutionary War and he was in the Virginia navy. I didn't know they had one. (Laughter) But he managed to get captured by the British. They took him over to England and put him in jail. He got back after the Revolution. We had several others, I can't remember all their names, who were in the fighting in the Revolution. We also have been in many of the major wars in the United States since then. I had an Uncle Timmy in World War I and my great grandfather, Ralls, was in the Confederate government. He was a congressman from Alabama in the Confederate government. He was a signer of the Confederate Articles, and I think he preached in Richmond. He called himself a kind of a part time preacher and he was an M.D [medical doctor]. He graduated from the University of Georgia's Medical School.

TINKER: He was on your mother's side?

GALLANT: On my mother's side.

TINKER: Mother's side.

GALLANT: And his son, Hamilton Ralls, was a Methodist Minister, Methodist Episcopal Church South then, and he had all of the children in my mother's family. And his eldest son became an M.D. He was ... his grandfather, the one that was in the Confederate side, government, was an M.D. So he studied medicine and then went to Europe to study surgery. He studied in Germany, France, and England, three months at a time in each one of those countries. Then he came back, and he was a surgeon.

TINKER: Well, it sounds like if he was able to do that then he must have had some money.

GALLANT: Well his grandfather had some. I don't know where he got it.

TINKER: You don't know where he made his money? (Laughter)

GALLANT: He was an M.D. But you know a dollar was valuable in those days. So he built Ralls Sanatorium, which was a smaller hospital. Then later expanded it, so he had a fifty-bed hospital in Gadsden, Alabama. He practiced there for a long, long time, thirty or more years and then retired. Then the Baptist Church bought the hospital and operated it for a while, then built a new one, more modern, and tore down the old one, so it's not there anymore. But Dr. Ralls, mother's eldest brother, was quite a prominent surgeon.

TINKER: How do you spell his last name?

GALLANT: R-A-L-L-S.

TINKER: Ralls.

GALLANT: His name was A. W. Ralls, and he was in *Who's Who* in the '30s. He was quite a prominent surgeon. He had a system every year. He spent about three weeks at Mayo's Clinic, checking on the latest surgery. Not many doctors go back to school after they get out, but he did. He was called in consultation all over the country. I know when we lived in Florida he was down there for some consultation and visited us. He was quite a great man. He had two daughters and a son, and one daughter is still alive. She's in her, she's ninety-something.

TINKER: Wow! (Laughter)

GALLANT: The Ralls family had kind of a reputation of living until the nineties. Since I'm eighty-three I don't know whether I'll make it or not. (Laughter) But they usually died in their nineties. One of her brothers, Hamilton Ralls, ran for governor of Georgia twice and came in second twice. Before that, he was in the Federal government with Clinton Anderson during the Depression. His job was to go around, check on cotton ginning prices, and try to get them all stabilized and everything. One of his brothers said, "I was afraid he'd get shot," because he would just walk up to somebody and say, "Don't do this, and don't do that." (Laughter) You know. He was kind of a commanding figure. He had a farm in Hogansville, Georgia, which is south of Atlanta. He shipped peaches to New York, and another brother of his, Lacy Ralls had a big farm, shipped peaches, and had about a hundred blacks on his farm. Families, so not all of them were workers. In Hogansville, Georgia.

TINKER: So did you grandmother spend all her years in Georgia?

GALLANT: This grandmother, whose picture is on the wall, died. I didn't know her.

TINKER: You didn't know her?

GALLANT: Her husband married for the third time, his first wife died after two children. The third wife died before he did. He died in his 90's, uh, late 70's. A fine old gentleman, I've got his picture upstairs. Anyway it was quite a family of people who did things.

TINKER: What about your father's side?

GALLANT: My father's side, my grandfather had a man's clothing store. The old-fashioned kind where you came in and got measured and they made them.

TINKER: Where was this?

GALLANT: In Gadsden.

TINKER: Gadsden.

GALLANT: And his name was N. M. Gallant and he had in earlier days taught at some of those schools there in that Etowah county. He has a town named after him, which is Gallant, Alabama.

TINKER: We saw that on your questionnaire. We were saying, "I bet that Gallant, Alabama was named after..."

GALLANT: It was named after a brother of his who had a store there. And they put in a post office there and they decided to name it Gallant because he had an original store. So I went there to claim it. (Laughter) And I told my wife; I'll just take a sword down there. So it has a lot of nice little brick houses on farms all scattered along. There isn't any town. They've got a general store, volunteer fire department. I went to the post office and asked the woman who came to the window. I told her my name and I said I was just trying to see if there are any Gallants here and she said yes, I'm one of them.

TINKER: Oh really?

GALLANT: Anyway, it was an interesting trip. There is a sign and I think I've got a picture in there, I will show it to you. It's of me standing by the sign, Gallant. It's a nice clean little community. The Ralls are not to be beaten; they had two places named after them. There is a Ralls county in Missouri and then there is a town in Texas named Ralls. R-A-L-L-S. And the Ralls, the Missouri branch of Ralls—the reason the county was named for him, he was on his deathbed and some fellow who everybody hated was about to get named senator by the legislature. So he went on a cot, or somehow or other they got him there, and he voted for the fellow everybody wanted and then died a few days later. So they named the county after him. (Laughter) So, oh I thought that was good.

TINKER: That's determination.

GALLANT: That is duty above and beyond.

TINKER: That is. That's above and beyond the call.

GALLANT: So anyway, that is kind of a brief history.

TINKER: Well, if there is anything that stands out that you want to mention.

GALLANT: Well, I, only thing ... the guy on the Ralls end said that three brothers came from England over here and one of them stayed in the south and two others went north and were never heard of again. So it was written by a Confederate publisher. (Laughter) So anyway, that one that stayed here and was heard from again was my grandfather, great grandfather whatever. Anyway, it's an interesting thing. They were quite active people.

TINKER: What do you know as far as your mother and father?

GALLANT: Well, my mother was a registered nurse during World War I. She was registered about that time and was active in the flu epidemic in the town. Anniston, Alabama had an Army camp and still has a military base there. But she nursed over there then when we moved to Florida. Moved to Florida when I was about four and the way we got there was one of her younger brothers drove the Model-T Ford down. He had a pistol hooked onto the steering wheel shaft, which must have been a foot long, and he had goggles with a screen on the side and of course nothing was paved. It was quite an adventure.

TINKER: I don't mean to interrupt you, but how did your mother and father meet?

GALLANT: Well, I don't think they ever told me how they met. They both lived in Gadsden. I guess they, just like anybody in the same town met that way. He had a big family too. He had, I think it was ten in his family, it was ten in hers. So I had a lot of aunts and uncles and a lot of cousins.

TINKER: Were your parents educated?

GALLANT: Huh?

TINKER: Were your parents educated?

GALLANT: Yeah, she was. As I said she was a registered nurse. I guess my father, he sold, he was a salesman. He sold ... he was in the early automobile sales. It was back in World War I. He was in the Army in World War I about two or three weeks because they quit about the time he got in. So he didn't serve long, but he sold cars all of his life. That is why he liked Sanford, Florida because people in Florida bought a car and then traded every year. Of course cars were very expensive. Six hundred bucks, I think, is what they early ones cost.

TINKER: So you remember making the trip?

GALLANT: Oh yeah, I remember those glasses and that huge pistol. They took about three days as I remember.

BARNHART: What was the purpose of this pistol on the steering wheel?

GALLANT: To shoot the various robbers that were on these deserted roads.

BARNHART: Okay. (Laughter)

GALLANT: They were mostly unpaved. No signs or anything. You kind of had to stop and ask. Anyway, we got there safely and Frank, who was the driver, my mother's eldest brother went back on the bus and we stayed there. I never will forget, Sanford looked foreign to me. There was some building there that looked like, Indian, you know a mosque sort of thing. It was different from Alabama.

TINKER: How long did you all live there in Florida?

GALLANT: We moved around in Florida some during the Depression and some in Georgia during the Depression. But I graduated from school down there.

TINKER: Did you?

GALLANT: High school. And went to college from there.

TINKER: Were you all pretty well off?

GALLANT: Well, I wouldn't say—we were about like everybody else. PhD's were trying to mow lawns and get fifty cents, you know, so it was terrible.

TINKER: Were you aware as a child that the times were hard?

GALLANT: I was aware that I didn't have any money. (Laughs)

TINKER: But you knew. I mean were there—did you see people that had money and made you ...

GALLANT: Very few of them had anything much. I mean it was like anything else; some people had a little more than others. But a lot of people who were well educated—now for example, in my high school. Seminole High School was the only high school in the county. There were no black high schools and as far as I know no black schools. I never did see one. There may have been some. The teachers were all Masters and PhD's because in Florida, if you were a teacher and your wife or husband was a teacher, only one could get a job in the county. Because they kind of divided it up. So we had good teachers, and I still remember some of them. But ...

TINKER: What was your favorite subject?

GALLANT: I liked Chemistry.

TINKER: You liked Chemistry?

GALLANT: When I took the—at Emory University, where I went, you had to take an exam to see if you would stay and I was in the upper ten percent in chemistry. So the organic chemistry professor, which was a junior subject, came up to me and wanted to know if I wanted to take organic chemistry. Well, of course I didn't know what it was so I said yeah. (Laughter) I took it and didn't do too well. I did ninety something in lab. We made sulfanilamide and some other thing. But anyway I didn't do—the theory was beyond me. I didn't know what, they never talked about it, so I did ... Like caffeine, I think I remember 1,3,7-trimethyl-2, 6-dihydropyridine or something like that. That's the only one I remember because I like to drink coffee. (Laughter) That's caffeine. Anyway, I didn't do too well there so when I was—after I had been there two years is when I decided that I had better go out and learn something else. So, that is when I joined the Marine Corps. I joined the Marine Corps on September the 3rd, 1941. Which of course was before the war started. I was in the Fleet Marine Force when the war started.

TINKER: How old were you when you enlisted?

GALLANT: 21.

TINKER: 21.

GALLANT: I was—my birthday [was] June 14 so I joined in September so that's a little over 21. In the Fleet Marine Force, we had, I was, the first unit I was in was artillery. Our battalion was at Paris Island, which is where I trained. So we went right from the tents into a barrack and into artillery, which I had never seen one in my life. So they thought I was educated. We had good officers. Captain Evans was actually a graduate of VMI [Virginia Military Institute], really a highly qualified officer. They thought, “well hell, he has been to college he ought to know how to do this.” So I got to be instrument corporal, I think that is what they call it and aim the 155-millimeter howitzers. Shoot a 90 lb shell. You know these big things that look squat. I did that and had an assistant for backup. In the Marines, everybody has a backup 'cause you will probably get killed. Can't think of his name right this minute. He was a real nice guy. The way I got out of it, and it wasn't intended, we were out going to shoot targets. They mounted a 37-millimeter cannon on top of the 155 cannon which has a muzzle like that (gestures) and a 37 (gestures) to shoot at some target out of sight. There is one basic rule in aiming cannons; nobody kicks the tripod for the aiming. We had a 2nd Lieutenant; I had never seen him before kept pacing back and forth. It takes a little while to aim a cannon and in one of his turns he hit the tripod after telling me to, “Hurry up, hurry up.” I said, “We will have to start over again because you have hit the tripod.” [And he said,] “Well, go ahead

anyway.” So I had to go ahead anyway since that was an order. So we fired that thing and it was a long pause. So I thought, “Well we hit them.” Then this car came back, a staff car, and I have never seen so many officers, colonels getting out of one car, it looked like the Keystone Kops. [Featured in silent film comedies. A group of incompetent policemen.] My captain came over and asked me what procedures I had followed and I told him and he said, “That’s right.” I never said that, and this second lieutenant that had kicked the tripod said that I had screwed up and I didn’t say anything. Nobody every mentioned that to me again, but I never saw that lieutenant anymore. So I am afraid that my assistant or somebody who had been watching us told the captain that this guy had kicked the tripod and then told me not to stop. So anyway, I decided, you know, this is dangerous. (Laughter) They put up a notice; they wanted people for a special weapons unit. Artillery had decided, we have these big guns but we need some smaller guns further out to protect us. So, that’s what special weapons did. We had a 37-millimeter, and a tank gun, a 50-caliber machine, a rising sub machine gun, and rifles, ‘03 rifles. We also had a jeep and a truck and, did I mention a 50-caliber machine gun? It was mounted on the truck. So we trained with that. That is what I had at Guadalcanal. I had a squad and a man on that 37-millimeter anti-tank gun which would fire an anti-personnel bullet too that was kind of like shotgun shells.

TINKER: Before we get too far into the war, I was wondering. In school, did you belong to the Boy Scouts or anything like that?

GALLANT: Briefly, briefly. I didn’t understand the Boy Scouts.

TINKER: You didn’t? (Laughter) What do you mean?

GALLANT: Well, I went to a couple of meetings. At one meeting, they had this—we were supposed to guess I suppose, what was in the box. I thought you were supposed to get in the box then look and see and what was in it. So that confused them. I was kind of branded as, you know, some cheater. Then, well I forget other things we did. I went to two or three meetings. My mother bought me a Boy Scout uniform, which I didn’t think fit too well but that’s all they had. I was tall and skinny. Anyway, I stayed a little while. And ... we lived in Florida, we lived on kind of little, well it wasn’t an island, but it was a place where I think we had seven lakes and they interconnected. The big lake was a couple of miles across, a small lake behind our house and across that lake was the golf course. Then on the other side was another interconnected lake and then a little canal. We had to cross a little bridge to get there. So that’s where I grew up. Full of snakes. I carried a rifle every time I went out. In fact, we even shot a snake in the lake one time, my uncle and I. But I never did get snake bitten. I thought that was unusual.

TINKER: Yeah.

BARNHART: You were lucky.

GALLANT: Because I was walking through the sagebrush one incident and I heard this “rattle, rattle, rattle.” We had rattlesnakes and moccasins and also had these little

colorful, I can't think of the name of the snake. But a chicken had pecked at it and it was dead by this time. It was dead by the snake. They had killed each other. But anyway, I heard this rattling in the sagebrush and I'm through it and I had my rifle so it sounded like it was right over there so I fired four or five times in there and it quit. The rattles did. So I went home. I must have killed him but I didn't try to find it.

TINKER: You didn't try to find him? (Laughter) It wasn't worth it to find that rattle?

GALLANT: We killed a big one in the backyard, my uncle and I did. I saw him first, he was a good long rattlesnake and I went in the house and told my uncle. We got a shotgun, went back and the snake wasn't there. We knew he was back in the—so we finally found him and killed him and my uncle said, "Well, we will just skin him". So we did. I had the skin and it was about as long as that bureau there. (Gesturing) That was a great skin, I thought. I don't know what happened to it.

BARNHART: Did you keep the rattles?

GALLANT: Oh it was all there you know everything except the head.

BARNHART: Any alligators?

GALLANT: Yeah, I used to catch small ones. One time I had two really fine specimens about a foot long. They have sharp teeth, alligators do, the little ones. And I had put them in my mother's bathroom ...

BARNHART: (Laughing) Oh no!

GALLANT: So she went in to take a bath and here were these two alligators. (Laughter) I was ordered to get them out of that tub. I did, took them back to the lake, and threw them in. I guess they're still there.

TINKER: Did you get in big trouble for that?

GALLANT: No, I didn't get in trouble. She was, she was ...

TINKER: She must have been awful patient.

BARNHART: A very understanding mother.

GALLANT: I think she was too tired to fool with it.

TINKER: 'Cause she was working all the time. Were your mother and father very—do you remember them talking about current events around the house?

GALLANT: We had the radio. In those days, the radio was like the television, it was on. I had a German Shepherd named Prince who had bitten somebody downtown and they

had given him to me. He didn't bite anybody while I had him. I taught him to sing. The Ford Sunday Evening Hour had these sopranos on there, yodeling and carrying on and that dog would listen to that and keep right with them. It was really amazing. (Laughter) He'd sit in front of the radio and sing right there. So he was a musician dog. He was smart. I taught him to dive off the diving board. We had put one up there at the lake. I could dive in and float face down with my arms out to the side and he would jump in and get my arm and pull me back in. I thought that was good for him to know that. I taught him to climb a ladder; he could climb up one story. He was just a good dog.

TINKER: You had your own Rin Tin Tin didn't you?

GALLANT: Yeah I did, that's where I got the idea actually, Rin Tin Tin. Anyway, one of the neighbors came up years later and said that my German Shepherd was eating his chickens. He'd turned into a chicken thief. It's so exciting to a German Shepherd to chase chickens, especially when they catch 'em. (Laughter) So I said, "Well you can't stop him, you have to tie him up." He said, "I'm gonna shoot him." And I said, "I don't even know where he is, but if he does it, I can't help it." I guess he shot him. I never did see Prince again. Prince was a smart dog, there's no doubt about it. But, talking about my mother's nursing career. She could nurse in any state in the union because of Florida's reciprocity.

TINKER: Did she ever talk about why she wanted to be a nurse?

GALLANT: I guess it was because it was, you know, it was a good profession and she knew her brother was a doctor and all of her family did well. Like any preacher's family in those days there wasn't any money but they all were successful ... very successful.

TINKER: And you said ya'll listened to the radio. Did you—do you remember listening to FDR?

GALLANT: Yeah, I remember I cried when he said, you know, his first talk about, "There's nothing to fear but fear itself." It was a very moving speech. And of course there was some fear because we didn't know what would happen next. I really liked him. He was my favorite president.

BARNHART: Did ya'll have a garden that you ate out of?

GALLANT: We had a cow and my father bought a couple of piglets, small pigs, two of 'em. And so they rummaged around one of the lakeshores. They like to dig in that. This house that we lived in had a barn and I would hit a bucket or whatever and make some noise and they would come running to get fed. My father said that the meat costs about four or five dollars a pound. (Laughter) Those pigs were eating and we weren't eating them. We had a cow and some chickens; we had a lot of chickens. White giants, what they called the name of the chickens. And there was one rooster who had spurs that must have been as long as my thumb. (Laughter) When he got old, he got tangled up in his spurs and would fall over. (Laughter) Anyway, he didn't want any of the younger roosters to mate with the hens so he would try to chase them down and they could outrun

him because he would get tangled up in his spurs. He was a fine ole—as far as I know he’s still alive. (Laughter) We didn’t eat him; he got old and tough.

BARNHART: Have you been back to Sanford since Disney came in next door? Has that whole area changed?

GALLANT: In Orlando. Yeah, I went back two or three years ago. The first time I went back it had been about forty-five years, to a class reunion. Then a couple of years ago, we went back to get with my class group. It wasn’t a reunion it was just everybody gettin’ together. Enjoyed it. I’ll tell you about Florida. When we first went there the pavement, the road from Sanford to Deland was paved, but after Deland it was a sand road to Daytona. And we went over there. The first time we went over there, you drove along in the ruts and there was not much traffic. If a car was coming toward you, you pulled out so that just one wheel was in a rut and they pulled over to where just one wheel was in a rut and you passed. Both of you waited to see if the other got back in the ruts and then you went on. So I saw Sir Malcolm Campbell break the world speed record on Daytona Beach and that was back in the early 30’s. He was a famous race driver. I, we went to Daytona when I was in high school. We went frequently over there, it didn’t cost anything. And uh, we could go—when school was out. Two weeks after school was out, everybody went over to Daytona for a week. It was really a nice way to, now I think they charge to get on the beach. New Smyrna always charged but Daytona didn’t. I think Daytona has the best beach. I have seen a lot of beaches; it’s the prettiest beach, really. It was a lot of fun. There was a place called Santa Landa Springs. It was between Sanford and Orlando. It was some sort of spring that, they had built a swimming pool there and in the spring and all the ice-cold water. You could go there and swim. Then there was a place where the soil had fallen down; they claimed it didn’t have any bottom. But I’m sure it did. It was just a round swimming hole with trees around it. You could jump in there but there was nothing to stand on, you had to know how to swim. So the first time I went there my mama was there. I jumped in and I couldn’t swim, so I was thrashing around. My mother was talking to somebody. Somebody else threw an inner tube out there, so I got in that and got back to shore. So I decided that I would not jump in anything. (Laughter) I got to be a pretty good swimmer.

TINKER: When you were in college, were there other young men joining the military? I mean, were you aware of what was going on in the world?

GALLANT: Yeah, I was quite aware. I used to listen to Hitler speak and this American, I can’t think if it, whether it was Calvin Borne, or who, would translate, you know, he said so and so. Hitler made a lot of speeches.

TINKER: So did you join though thinking that we were probably going to end up in war?

GALLANT: I thought we were going to fight the Japanese. I didn’t—I thought and everybody else did too, that France had a great army, and they did have a great army but they had corrupt politicians. So that’s why France was defeated. They had people like

ones running now who don't know anything. So anyway, I had decided that the Marine Corps was the best trained. And they weren't great big; they were trying to get 30,000 strength when I went in. Of course, by the end of the war they had less than half a million.

TINKER: How did you hear about the Marine Corps?

GALLANT: Hmm?

TINKER: How did you first hear about the Marine Corps?

GALLANT: Well I saw a movie about marines one time. I forget the name of it; it was kind of a comedy sort of thing. Then I saw a drunk marine in Jacksonville coming out of a bar and I thought, boy you know, he seems to be enjoying himself! (Laughter) And that was the extent of my knowledge about the Marine Corps. And I had a friend whose father had been in World War I as an officer, he had been on General Pershing's staff. I asked him. He wanted me to join the army, he was going to give me a letter to get into officer's training. I said I don't want to be in the army, and I didn't. I didn't like it. So I went to—we had to go to Jacksonville, Florida first. They gave you a preliminary inspection and see if you were sane or insane. I was sworn in at Savannah, Georgia by a Marine officer. And for some reason, everybody always gave me the orders; I had the orders on me for about eight or ten of them, the people with me, so I had to carry the papers. We went on a bus to Parris Island from Savannah. It was a long trip.

TINKER: When you first got there?

GALLANT: It was the end of the—it was a closed camp then. They had guards on it; there was a little bridge you had to go over. They had guards there. You couldn't leave. And the bus pulled up, this was at ten o'clock at night when we got there. This voice said, "You bastards, get off the bus." (Laughter) And I looked around to see where they were and it dawned on me that we were here. So we got off and this drill instructor, Ryekowski, I never will forget his name. He chewed tobacco and he would spit occasionally, big wads. So then we were taken to the corpsman's place. He had to check us to see if we had gotten venereal disease on the bus. (Laughter) Because we had already been checked in Savannah. So we hadn't and we went to the—they had a big tent camp. They had barracks there but that was for the personnel already there. Then the recruits went into the tents. We got to the tent and its sides were all rolled up and its beds were all in a wad and we had to undo all that under the instruction of the drill instructor who had a loud voice and we couldn't do anything right. It took us about an hour and a half to do all these things. Put up the mosquito nets, place was covered in mosquitoes and get in that. So we finally did, it must have been 11:30 or 12:00 o'clock. I thought we would get the day off tomorrow, obviously. Then before daylight, I heard all of this crumping, and "crump, crump, crumping" around, and this guy said "Get up, get up" and he picked the end of his foot up and hit the end of my cot which slid across the tent floor and out the back. That got me up! And he was doing that to everybody, so everybody was up and we had about fifteen minutes to get dressed, get shaved, brush our teeth and head

for breakfast. We marched down there and ate. I thought “These guys they act like animals.” They passed then, and they don’t do it now, but then they had long tables and the recruits sat at each side and there was an NCO at the end to see that nobody got in a fight. They would pass these huge platters, great big things, bacon piled up, well you would reach in with your hand and get a handful of bacon. Well, by the time it got to me there were about two pieces. And they had cereal in these little boxes where you opened them up and poured the milk in there and eat out of the box. I thought, “Boy this is subhuman activity.” I wasn’t hungry anyway. So we then went out and they started giving clothes and all that rigmarole and shots. The next day I was right with them. (Laughter) I was hungry as I could be. When we got to the rifle range, which was sometime later, they had a terrible mess hall. They just broke the eggs, it didn’t matter if they were rotten or whatever and fry and have scrambled eggs. And I wondered, “What are these black spots in these eggs?” and the guy across from me said, “Don’t eat that, that’s part of the rotten eggs.” I thought, “I’m going to starve to death.” (Laughter) So, we were there for a week or two, I forget how long and we shot rifles. I will show you this one rifle. We spent a week just aiming and pulling the trigger, not any bullets in there. In fact, the first stage was a .22 rifle, which you did that for about a week, and then they gave you some ammunition and you shot it. Then the .30 caliber, the regular rifle, they did it all again. And they were very intense on you being able to hit what you shoot at. So...

TINKER: You must have done okay.

GALLANT: Yeah, we—well I already knew how to shoot. But I never shot a rifle when you were on the ground, shooting from the prone position. It would move you back a couple of feet, you know, recoil. So I got where I had to crawl back up after every shot because I didn’t weigh much, 136 pounds, and had to move back. So anyway, that was kind of fun. Then you worked in the rifle pits too. Other groups came to shoot. You put the rifle up, put the targets up there. It was fun the rifle range was.

TINKER: Do you remember any, I don’t want to call it abuse, but you know, like the Marine Corps is different now, they can’t ... Was there some slapping around going on?

GALLANT: They weren’t allowed to hit us.

TINKER: But they were pretty rough?

GALLANT: I didn’t get, I got cussed out I guess you would say several times. But on one occasion one guy, in the way you turn your foot and go, I forget, kneeling I guess is what they call it to shoot, three positions, I forget what they exact call it. Anyway, one leg goes out like this and you turn your ankle. A guy couldn’t do that so the drill instructor sat on his back to help him and broke his ankle. That caused a little stir, but as far as I know there was no real, that kind of abuse.

TINKER: How do you think that the Marine Corps got that reputation?

GALLANT: There's some pretty tough people in there. I mean, it's a funny outfit because, for example, in my platoon we had platoons of about fifty people counting the officers. Four squads of twelve and I was in number 133. The ... punishment was interesting because if you had one fellow who wasn't doing right, we had one who was a fugitive from the law and he didn't want to be there, he was just hiding. So he claimed he had an attack of some sort and fell down on the ground. The drill instructor instructed us to just march right over him. After we had done that twice, he was cured. (Laughter) And they sent him to the brig until the sheriff could come and get him. But anyway, we would drill with fixed bayonets sometimes, not all the time. And with a rifle, which I'm going to show you. I'll have to go get it, it's as long as that couch almost with the bayonet on it. So, all this maneuvering that you do in drill, we did eight hours a day for quite a long, well, the whole time I was in boot camp. There was some variations but it was from about dawn to dusk. Then they had a program. After about two weeks in boot camp—there were some people who were still not up to Marine standards, so everybody got punished. I thought that was a good system because you, when you had 48 or so people mad at you (Laughter) you straightened up. Some times it would make a guy who didn't do something right, run around a marching squad which can be a long run. And then we had problems where some of them didn't know their left foot from their right and that's confusing when they say left flank or something.

TINKER: That sounds like a joke, but they really didn't know?

GALLANT: You get a group of people today and tell them to raise their left foot and your will see some different. So they feel it's important in the Marine Corps to know your left from your right because you might shoot the wrong way. (Laughter) So, uh, they would make the guy—you stood there on your left foot, supposedly. The ones who didn't know the difference they had their right foot, they were standing on it. So, there was elimination and then a long lecture on which foot should be left and which should be right and turn around, which one's your left. (Laughter) It was always the right, the left foot was right. So anyway, that was one thing. The punishments and drill were interesting because some guy could even be punished individually or everybody got punished along with him. One guy, Coney, I never will forget Coney. He wasn't doing right so they made him run around a marching platoon and then ... I was standing at attention when evidently, he told everybody at rest, to stand at rest and looking straight ahead and he asked me, "What are you looking at?" (Laughter) And I said, "Well, nothing." And he said, "What does it look like?" And I said, "Well it doesn't look like much it's just..." (Laughter). So we had this long conversation about what nothing looked like and so my punishment was to get 700 blades of grass. On the drill field there isn't much grass, so I finally found some and counting carefully 700 pieces of grass and brought it to him. That night, some other guy got punished and he had to count the grass. Well, he didn't get 700, he got 698 or something. So there's this long lecture on mathematics. You know, "Can't you count to 700?" (Laughter) Anyway, I didn't get punished further for that. But they had some funny things that they did. There were these long questions if somebody was not doing just right. I had one in the book about a country boy, he wasn't, I think he didn't shave right or something. He said, "Does your mama have a garden?" And the boy said, "Oh yes, she does." He said, "Well does she have turnip greens and beets and does

she hoe them?” “Oh yes she does all that.” “Does she pick the beans?” “Yes, she does that.” He said “Then here you are living on the wealth on the land, eating meals everyday and don’t plant anything and out here in the sunshine and this long list. All this he enjoyed while his mother doing all this work. (Laughter) So they also had a program where on Saturdays or Sundays, I guess it was, you had to write a letter home. A lot of them had written. Of course these letters went to the DI and he read them to see what the morale was and everything and they sent ‘em. It was interesting. I forget how many pages you had to write, they told you how many pages.

TINKER: Oh really?

GALLANT: Oh yeah, write six pages and tell her how you are doing and that you are serving your country and don’t look so goofy while you are doing it. (Laughter) You know, they always had some comment.

TINKER: Did you have the church services too?

GALLANT: Huh?

TINKER: Did you have church services too?

GALLANT: Yeah, that’s an interesting thing. I decided that I would, I hadn’t joined the church. So I went down—they had an Episcopalian Navy officer who was chaplain and his daughter lived there on the base too, a real pretty girl. And he made her come to church, I could tell—she didn’t. She stood next to me, so I thought, “This is the prettiest girl I have ever seen in my life” ‘cause I hadn’t seen one in some time. So anyway, she came to the church and I did too for two or three times and I decided that I better join the church, so I didn’t do that until I ...

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE ONE-----

TINKER: Okay, you were talking about ...

GALLANT: Oh, I didn’t join the church at that minute. When I was in the Fleet Marine Force, in a rural camp we called Verona, which was in North Carolina, it was off the main highway back on a dirt road a mile or two. We had built—it was a tent camp. We had built that by pulling down smokehouses, tobacco smokehouses where the drying, I don’t know what they call them, anyway they put tobacco in there to dry. They were made of logs so that is what we built the officer’s club with that. And the colonel who was (inaudible), said “Nobody is going in any officers club until these men have decks in their tents.” It was kind of a muddy place. So we got decks pretty rapidly and then they could go to their officer’s club, which we had built for them out of the logs of the smokehouses. We stayed there all winter and that was the most miserable place I had ever heard of. The only place warm was the mess hall. And they had some fires outside. We had regular marine dungarees. They finally issued long johns but they were given by the citizen patriots. I got a pair, the guy must have been about eight feet tall, (Laughter) and I

took them because I wanted something. And I wore my overcoat and my—we had one marine blanket. A cot but of course cot canvas when it's snowing is cold, I mean dad gum wind. And they wouldn't let us have stoves in the tents because they were afraid we would burn down the camp. But we finally got some stoves and anyhow, I had what they called, some kind of cold I guess, bad cold. They had a name for it. And I was going to stay in my tent that day, so I did. I had my overcoat on and everything and still freezing. I finally went to the mess hall and warmed up and then had to go back to my tent. Anyway, that was the kind of mess that was. We got to go to, what is now New River, we called it New River, I think they call it Camp Lejeune now. Once a week we could go down there and take a bath and get dressed and go to dinner.

TINKER: Once a week?

GALLANT: Yeah, well I had a session at Iwo where I didn't bathe for thirty days. There was no place to bathe. In fact, you'd get shot if you tried. But anyway, we lived there all winter and it was just really bad. The minute that spring came and it was nice to be in a tent and be out in the woods, we went to that main base and to the barracks. And so, we were there for, oh I guess most of the summer. I am trying to think when we went to—it must have been the next winter, no it wasn't neither. Anyway, during one winter period and we went to Virginia and maneuvered with the First Army up there. We didn't have any fires, snow up to our knees, and had wool jackets. You know regular sheep stuff. You would get hot in that and then of course get cold because you perspired. It was—are you at the end of the...

TINKER: Okay. I was just gonna say we took a little break.

GALLANT: And we've forgotten everything we were talking about.

TINKER: Forgot what we were talking about. (Laughter)

GALLANT: Well, I'll tell you where we are, we haven't gotten to any of the battles or much of the training. But ...

TINKER: We're going to.

GALLANT: Oh we are? Whatever. (Laughter)

BARNHART: I was going to ask do you remember where you were when you found out about Pearl Harbor and what were your reactions being that you were already in the military?

GALLANT: Exactly where—yeah, I was in the Fleet Marine Corps. Is it on?

TINKER: It's rolling.

GALLANT: Oh gracious. All right, I was at Parris Island when Pearl Harbor occurred. In the Fleet Marine Force; I was in the artillery, 11th Marines, 4th battalion, M battery, 11th Marines. And I was at what they term the “slop shoot,” which is a marine term for the beer hall that we went too. They furnish a beer place for officers and a beer place for men, separate of course. And I was at the slop shoot and somebody came in and said that the Japs had hit Pearl Harbor. Well, I vaguely knew where Pearl Harbor was but I couldn't have gotten in a boat and found it. But I knew it was a fair distance. We were drinking the 3.2 beer that they sold there. By the way, you could get cigarettes for a nickel a pack in those days; they didn't have any tax on them and you could get a carton for fifty cents. So we had plenty to smoke even though we were making twenty-one dollars a month. We decided to go down to the barracks and see if anybody had a radio down there. Somebody did and they were telling us, we never did hear it, but they told us that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor and that the war was on. We were kind of glad of it because we were tired of all this training process. Even in the Fleet Marine Force, you continued to get trained. So first thing the Marines did was issue everybody live ammunition and then start more guard duty. You had to walk a post there all over Parris Island. We did that and then the next morning, we got the artillery attached to the trucks what was called FWD's they were four-wheel drive, huge trucks with a wench on the front and on the back. And guns, I forget how much they weighed, several tons were hooked on the backs of the FWD's. And rode through Buford, South Carolina and some of the population out waving to us, goodbye and so forth. We went down to some fort, several miles away, an old Spanish or French fort, and spent an hour or two hearing lectures about war, I guess no telling when back in the early part of the country, the history of the country. Soon it had gotten almost dark we hooked up and went back where we were. We went back to the post and Parris Island. Then, we continued. We trained everyday with artillery, not shooting it but placing it and hauling it around and that sort of thing. We got a week I think or two weeks leave for Christmas. When we got back from that, we were ready to go. In June, 1940 ... 2, I guess, yeah, '42, we left New River on trains and Pullmans, dining cars on there. No, there wasn't one then, but we were on regular Pullman cars. We would stop to eat, I can't think of the name of that restaurant chain, they had a restaurant at every station, I think. Anyway we would stop at stations and eat. We traveled all over the country it seemed like. We went up toward Pennsylvania and down and around and, day and night and went through Indian Territory.

TINKER: Were you pickin' up other soldiers on the way or ...

GALLANT: Pickin' up what?

TINKER: Were you pickin' up other soldiers along the way?

GALLANT: Oh no, it's a train full of marines; we didn't have any other soldiers.

TINKER: So you were just going all over?

GALLANT: Oh we were doing that to confuse the spies that were on every corner.

TINKER: Oh okay, that makes sense.

GALLANT: And when we crossed the Mississippi River, there wasn't a bridge there' they had to unhook the cars and put them on a ferry and take them over and that took half the night. We went on westward, I don't know the route we took, but we went through the desert and there was one place where they had a real high bridge, it was a long bridge, and they had a whole regiment of Army guarding the bridge. We went over that. We were practically the only ones they could send to fight the Japanese 'cause ...

TINKER: So, the army is guarding the bridge. Was there a sense still that many months after the attack that people were sort of thinking that there might be another attack?

GALLANT: Oh, yeah. People in California thought there would be and they didn't know who we were when we got there. We went to San Francisco and we were given— General Vandergrift gave us unprecedented leave. You could go sleep on the ship and stay out all day and all night if you could. So there was an Army general in that area who had told the Army that they couldn't go to a bar until five o'clock in the afternoon. They had a very strict thing about it. The Marines had their own MP's and they just dealt with other Marines and we could stay out and go to the bars at noon if they wanted to. So anyway—and the reason for that was General Vandergrift knew that these men were going into battle and some of them may not come back. We had good liberty. The ships were in the Chinatown docks, you get off the ship and you were in Chinatown. The first restaurant we ate in when we got to get off was a Chinese restaurant upstairs, I can't remember the name of it, it is in my book, but I can't remember the name of it right now. It was a nice restaurant and they were very nice to us. We toured around. San Francisco was a beautiful city. We got to all over. It was cheap. The taxi was cheap. Of course, the streetcars were great and they were cheap.

TINKER: Now earlier when you mentioned your special warfare training ...

GALLANT: Yeah.

TINKER: You'd done all that training at Parris Island too, right?

GALLANT: There and New River,

TINKER: So you all went between ...

GALLANT: Anywhere. In the Fleet Marine—yeah, we had done other things. We had had ship to shore landings down the cargo nets and all that.

TINKER: Oh, okay. So you'd practiced all that?

GALLANT: That's an everyday occurrence. One incident we had fired our fifty caliber machine guns at a target towed by a little old plane.

TINKER: Oh, okay.

GALLANT: And we cut the cable with one during the firing. A bullet cut the cable. The poor pilot, you know he was afraid he was going to get shot down. (Laughter) The way you shoot at a plane is you have your tracers and if the bullets look like they are falling into the front of the plane then you are hitting it. But you don't aim at the middle of the plane cause the plane is moving so fast. You aim at the front of it where the tracers are falling in front of it and it's gettin' hit. Anyway, we cut the cable and so ended that day. That was on the beach there at New River.

TINKER: And when you are in San Francisco on your leave gettin' ready to be shipped out, what month was that?

GALLANT: Well, let's see. It must have been—I had a birthday on the way out there. So that was June 14th, so it was the end of June around in there.

TINKER: '42.

GALLANT: We hit Guadalcanal on August 5th, I believe it was.

TINKER: When you left, I guess you stopped off in Hawaii?

GALLANT: No.

TINKER: You didn't?

GALLANT: It took three weeks. We were on a ship called the *Erikson*, it had been seized when the war started. And it was a Swedish ship and had been repainted and so forth, but the engine wasn't too good. We broke down in the middle of the ocean and they finally got it fixed and we caught up with the convoy or else somebody, I don't know who they were, but we were with them.

TINKER: What did you all do to pass the time on the ship for three weeks?

GALLANT: We talked and had deep philosophical discussions such as if a torpedo hits and you see it, 'cause you see one comin', if you jump up before it hits and it hits, you won't get hurt because you are up in the air. (Laughter)

TINKER: You were figuring all that stuff out?

GALLANT: We had one, I dunno, I guess it was a five-inch gun on the fantail, stern of the ship, which they would fire every now and then just to practice with it. And uh...

TINKER: Were there any games you liked to play?

GALLANT: We didn't have that sort of thing. We had mostly these deep discussions ...

TINKER: Just deep discussions ... you must have been with the intellectual group of Marines. (Laughter)

GALLANT: Oh, it was funny thing, in my boot camp there was a friend of mine named Blair whose father was a missionary to Japan and he had lived over in Japan. So the minute the war started, he made second lieutenant.

TINKER: Did he feel a little conflicted about all that?

GALLANT: Nuh uh.

TINKER: He didn't?

GALLANT: No, he was a really smart fellow. The last time I saw him, he was a major. Of course, I had risen rapidly to sergeant. (Laughter). But anyhow, Tiger Blair we called him. And uh, I was talking about the ship, I think

TINKER: Uh huh, about what you were doing on the ship.

GALLANT: The food was absolutely awful. General Vandergrift wrote Washington about it. We went directly to New Zealand and it took three weeks. Well I was about starved to death. I didn't eat much but we couldn't eat the food on that ship.

TINKER: Was there African-Americans on the ship?

GALLANT: No, I didn't see any of those until much later. Of course they didn't have any women Marines then either, in the first part of the war. I ate peanuts and I forget what drink. We had to survive the best we could, the food was just rotten. So, we got to New Zealand and at the dock and they let us have some liberty from the ship.

TINKER: Do you remember where you docked?

GALLANT: I remember going into the dock, I don't know if it had a name. They had a band there to greet us. Everybody in the band was at least seventy to seventy-five years old. (Laughter) It was really kind of funny. And the ship, of course, it was higher than the dock—the covered dock. The top part was—our deck was about even with the third floor. Anyway, going into, I think it was Auckland, you go into a nice harbor it kind of weaves around and you come to a dead end down there, but it's wide enough for ships to pass. You have a pilot in there, who gets on and helps the Captain get the ship in there. But, I was on the deck there and watching all of this, we pulled up to a long pier, whatever you want to call it and they were really nice. All of the young men were in England or Germany or wherever they had sent them. It was pitiful; there wasn't anybody there who was an adult who was under seventy or sixty. So, then they had a movie on at that time which embarrassed us to death. It was one of these Marine movies, those John

Wayne types, where you attack a machine gun nest with a bulldozer and that sort of thing. It was just terrible, but of course they didn't know the difference. They thought that was what we did. But they were really nice to us. You could get a good meal there for a dollar and a half. You could get steak with an egg on top; that was the way they served it, with a fried egg on top, with some French fries and coffee or milk. They had great milk and that was a dollar and a half. And so I decided one night that heck I would try something different, pork chops, I was tired of eating steak. So I ordered pork chops and they had cooked them in mutton grease and that was awful. (Laughter) I couldn't eat it so I knew just to get the steak. They had good beer and they had wine shops with barrels of wine stacked up on top of each other up to the ceiling. The job of the Marine was to try to think of a wine, if you could read it, in one of the top barrels. (Laughter) But they served a good glass of wine. It was cheap, everything was cheap. I searched around to try to find something New Zealand made to take home. I didn't find anything but a money belt and I thought I better have one of those because you get people who go through your pockets while you are asleep. I got a money belt that was about the only thing I got from New Zealand. Everything else was American stuff.

TINKER: Really? While you were there did you see any of the native islanders, the Maoris?

GALLANT: At New Zealand? Yeah, they were not in native dress, they dressed like we do, but they were dark-skinned types. And we went to a teashop, whatever they call them and had a—you ordered a pot of tea, we ordered several pots. (Laughter) They were really nice to us. We were there not too long. We got ordered in to make this attack at Guadalcanal. The ships hadn't been combat loaded so they had to unload all the ships that we had and we had to reload them. Well, the dockworkers wouldn't do it, they didn't work on Saturday and Sunday and didn't work at night and didn't work much in the daytime; it was a big union thing. So, General Vandergrift just ordered the troops to do it.

TINKER: Yeah, cause you were getting in a bit of a hurry by then.

GALLANT: Yeah, by then we knew, you know what island. So they had never seen anything like this, we put up searchlights out there and worked day and night and different shifts. There was always a bunch out there unloading those ships and putting it back together and the New Zealanders had never seen any work done like that 'cause on Sunday in New Zealand you can fire a cannon down the main street and not hit anyone. (Laughter) They're all in church or in their houses. Nothin's open, you can't get anything. They had these cars that burned charcoal fumes evidently, the engine you fired up with charcoal, and they would go about ten miles an hour ya know. (Laughter)

TINKER: So, seeing ya'll doing' all this stuff ...

GALLANT: We had all this—and we were running all these trucks around and everything. It was kind of fun. It rained, it was summertime, I mean wintertime there. We were there in June or July and so we were in the rain most of the time. The people

were just nice people. Then we went from there to Guadalcanal and got there August 7th. We had good luck; it rained while we were en route. Pretty good storm type rain and the Japs didn't have any planes up or anything 'cause nobody can be out in the rain. Anyway we got there and it wasn't raining the day we arrived. And the Navy started firing on the island and the Japs all took off and went over, I don't where but I think to the right 'cause we were going this way. (Gestures to the left.) So when we landed, we had these—you seen these whaling boats that people whale, that kind? That's what we landed in. You had to go over the side. There wasn't any drop down [ramp]; that was later. So we got off of that and I didn't see anybody except there was one dead Marine there not far from the shore. He was the only one I saw, no Japs or anything. They had all taken off.

TINKER: So when you landed you weren't being—you weren't under fire?

GALLANT: Nuh uh, 'cause they thought it was raiding party and they all took off and thought they would come back. So one machine gun outfit heard a lot of rustling in the grass and killed several wild pigs in a burst. (Laughter) But before we could get much off the ships, I know there were a couple or three tanks near where we landed. There was nobody in them. I didn't see anybody. We got our truck off and the gun, but looked up and must have seen seventy or more bombers dropping bombs all around the ships. And there was a big circus kind of going on in the air with all this dog fighting and everything with our planes, the Navy, the aircraft carriers and all. I thought, "Well if they come along the beach here and kill all of us, they've got"—they didn't attack the beach. They were worried about the shipping. So, our planes ran 'em off finally and it was a big fight. And meanwhile, the Japanese were sending some Navy vessels. They were coming to run us off. So our transports and the Navy ships left and we still had air cover the next day from the aircraft carrier but they left so we were there for five days with no shipping there and no airplanes and the Japs were riding up and down outside shooting at us and dropping bombs day and night. They had what they call Washing Machine Charlie because it sounded like a washing machine.

TINKER: How far inland were you at this time?

GALLANT: We were just beyond the airport. The airport wasn't in three or four, I don't know, I'd say less than a good mile in there. We didn't have much territory.

TINKER: So it took you ...

GALLANT: We just had the airport and security areas around the airport.

TINKER: And you'd done that in about five days.

GALLANT: Yeah, by the fifth day, we had already lost four cruisers. We had a sea battle out there, which we could see. My squad could. The flashes, we thought the flashes from the sea battle were our ships sinking Japanese ships when it was that they sank four cruisers. One of 'em was an Australian cruiser. Had a big sea battle out there, which was a defeat for the Navy.

TINKER: Right.

GALLANT: So, the Navy disappeared and we had no air cover, no Navy and I am sure Washington was wondering, you know, what to do with those folks. But General Vandergrift said, “Well, you know we’ll just go up into the mountains if we have too.” So that’s what we were going to do. But we kept the airport and after a week or two we got some planes in and the Navy started creeping back some. But the battle there was two things. One was against disease because Guadalcanal rot was a super athlete’s foot and it would spread rapidly on the feet and fortunately I didn’t get it until just before we left. I had a little spot. But I have seen people that had to be carried off and put on a ship because they couldn’t walk. The feet just rotted off. And malaria, which was, they had every kind there is, and a very vicious thing. I didn’t have that until I left. But you couldn’t protect yourself. Everything in the tropics, I discovered, in the Pacific is either ripening or rotting. (Laughter) That’s just the way it is. And our gun position was on Lunga Point, which was a little thing that sticks out, a little bit and we were kind of in the middle. On our right side, the gun pointed toward the ocean. On the right side was a creek type river that the first battle, Lunga River, was fought. General Cates, he was a Colonel then, was in charge of that fight. On our left, about a mile down, was Matanikau River where several major battles were. And the reason we were stuck there and pointed out at the ocean was they were afraid the Japanese would come in and land. Then they could’ve wiped us out, but they didn’t do that. They were too stupid.

TINKER: How many days were you fighting before you actually came face to face with any Japanese? How long were you there?

GALLANT: I don’t know how many days, but we caught the Jap who had come from their lines and walked through our lines and came up to our gun position; we got him. He looked like a high school kid.

TINKER: And he just walked up?

GALLANT: Yeah, he wasn’t armed. Of course, we couldn’t speak Japanese so we had a fellow who was religious in our group, Amburgie. He still thought the earth was flat. (Laughter) He was worried about the Japs’ theological posture. I said, “They don’t give a damn about theology, they wanna kill you.” So anyway, he was worried about him, so we called headquarters and told them we had a Jap up there waiting for them. So the colonel came up there. We had a number of officers and men who could speak Japanese. He came up to grab him, he got him, put him in the Jeep, took him back to headquarters and he is the one that told them, “Well, we have a big group who wants to surrender.” And so they believed it, which was beyond belief ‘cause we wouldn’t have believed a word he said. So the colonel, or lieutenant colonel I forget which, got a group together, a lot of our intelligence people, and went over to Point Esperance, I think is what they called it which was to our left—as the gun aimed out toward sea—several miles. We could see it, it came like this. And they didn’t—one guy, at first, they gave us orders, we are going to bring in several hundred Japanese prisoners and don’t shoot at them. So I told my men,

“Let’s swing this gun around and put a canister in it, because I don’t trust them.” So, we did.

TINKER: What gun are you referring to?

GALLANT: 37-millimeter antitank gun. The canister is kind of a mini shotgun shell, it has ball bearings in it and you can cut grass with it. It spreads out like that (gestures) and it’s devastating to people. So we had that ready in case that several hundred that they were bringing in decided that they didn’t want to surrender. Nobody came and of course we always had people up all night. The next day we heard that everybody got killed but this one guy who swam back. He was an Indian. So we learned from that not to believe anything a prisoner says. A big disaster as far as we were concerned. A lot of our intelligence people, the people that could read Japanese and all that, were wiped out. I don’t know that they ever found the bodies. What happened was, I understand when they landed and got off, you know, looking for their prisoners, the prisoners let them come in a little bit and then ...

TINKER: Wiped them out.

GALLANT: So that was one of the lessons that the officers learned.

TINKER: Before we were—you mentioned, I mean he is a colonel at this time, you mentioned Colonel Cates. We were talking about him before the interview. What was his reputation like among the enlisted?

GALLANT: Everybody liked him. He was a great officer.

TINKER: He was very respected?

GALLANT: Yeah, he was. He reminded me of a French Foreign Legion Officer. He was a good officer and had been a good officer in World War I. He had been wounded several times and gassed two or three times. Here is the kind of officer that he was. In World War I, he had a group that he took to Paris for the Fourth of July parade, and of course nobody had any money. And he did, so he gave each man some money so they could have liberty. Now you tell me what officer would do that now. But they were about twenty-five of them or so and he gave them to have liberty. Of course, the money was pretty valuable because it didn’t take much.

TINKER: Right, that’s true. Now on Guadalcanal, were you directly under his chain of command?

GALLANT: No, he was a different. Colonel **Tedrom L. Valley** was my Colonel. He later became a General. He was one of the top artillery people. We were still in artillery although we weren’t back with the artillery, but we were their guards in case they got ...

TINKER: So you weren't artillery but you were attached, you were technically attached to one of those guns.

GALLANT: Right, we were a unit that was out, actually with the infantry is where we were. But we were set up to fill in the spaces that were empty ...

TINKER: The gaps. Okay.

GALLANT: Yeah, at Lunga Point. Lunga Point was a place where they would bring in wounded or whatever off of ships. They brought in one, we hadn't been there long and his skin was all hangin' off and everything and he was kind of semi-conscious. A corpsman came up and gave him a morphine shot and we got him in a jeep and sent him back to headquarters where the hospital was. I don't think he would have survived because his skin was just hanging everyway. He had been through the oil, you know and boy it was pitiful. Anyway, it was four months and eight days of constant aircraft action, bombing, shellfire from the sea, bein' shot at by battleships, cruisers, submarines. We fired on a submarine, I thought he might be close enough to us to hit him, he floatin' along out there.

TINKER: Did you try? (Laughter)

GALLANT: Yeah, with our anti-tank gun. We fired three or four rounds, I don't know, he was out a mile I guess. I don't know whether we hit him but it made him mad enough to fire back. (Laughter) So he fired back and hit a coconut tree near our dugout. After we fired a few rounds I said "He's going to shoot at us." So we got in our dugout and he hit this coconut tree and these damn coconuts all rained down. (Laughter) But we didn't get hurt. But it was so close; it was about as far as from here to the couch (gestures) where he hit the tree. We had all of these fumes, cordite fumes and everything. It was terrible.

TINKER: What were your movements like during those four months? Your battle positions?

GALLANT: We moved around some. The first day or two we were across the end of the airfield. We were protecting the airfield. And I think, the third day we moved toward Lunga Point but we weren't at it. We could see the ocean and see these flashes where the sea battle was. After that we moved to the major whose name was Vile. Major Vile came and told us that we had been defeated in that sea battle. He also told us something that I am sure he wasn't supposed to; that we were reading the Japanese naval codes. We knew what they were going to do. It tickled me because I figured if we knew what they were doing we could make ...

TINKER: Make it quicker.

GALLANT: So the next day we moved to our position at Lunga Point, which we moved left all the time. After a week or so we moved down some. Then we moved down again to Matanikau River where one of the major battles occurred and several other skirmishes.

TINKER: So you spent most of your time around—can you spell that Lunga?

GALLANT: L-U-N-G-A

TINKER: Okay, so you spent most of your time there or the other?

GALLANT: There and Matanikau River and Matanikau had a real heavy battle there and the Japs tried to get their tanks across but our artillery wiped them out. And the Japanese thought we had an automatic cannon, you know going “boom, boom, boom” but they were firing so fast. There were four cannons, four guns. The company, we had four and then another company had four, so we had sixteen there, I guess. But it sounded like something automatic. Anyway, they knocked them out. It was just constant getting shot at by something.

TINKER: What was your sleep like?

GALLANT: We had, we tried to—I had one guy named Amburgie and he wasn't well, I didn't think. He went to sleep on watch. Well, that's dangerous business. Some guy came up and woke me up and said “Amburgie is asleep, he is supposed to be on watch.” So I went up to see where. He was stretched out by the gun there sound asleep and I took his bayonet out and put it across his throat and told this other guy, “You just get on his watch, just leave him alone, you be the watch.” So when I got up, Amburgie was finally awake and I said, “Did you find your bayonet?” and he said, “Yeah.” I said, “Well you're lucky you didn't have it through your throat.” So, he got goofier as time went on and I told one of the guys to take him back to the hospital and see what's the matter with him 'cause he seemed to want to sleep all the time. So they had an air, they were always having air raids at the airport, cause the Japs was trying to hit the airport. And Amburgie got in his hole and went to sleep. A Japanese shell, here's Amburgie's hole (gestures) and the shell hole was right like that and it didn't wake him up. Major Viles said “There's something wrong with that guy.” (Laughter) So they sent him I guess to New Caledonia, he had sleeping sickness, encephalitis and lethargica. Poor thing, I felt sorry for him. I don't know if they ever got him cured or not. He was an odd one. Now, we—it was just constant, there wasn't any rest. There wasn't day or night. You stayed up as long as you could and stayed awake then went to sleep, somebody else was waking up and they took it. There wasn't any day...

TINKER: Were you living on C rations or K rations?

GALLANT: Actually we had to steal some things. We got some Japanese stuff. They had cans of pineapple, fish, and all that. One of my friends thought he had a great find and took his bayonet and jammed it around to open the can, opened it up and all these fish heads' eyes. (Laughter) And I said, “What do you want that for?” You couldn't read the labels. So I ate a lot of pineapple. We had a lot of coconuts, we had plenty of coconuts. One time, the Marines back at the main, where our guns were, sent us cooked food, in a can, you know how they do, and we ate that and decided that we didn't want to

fool with this everyday. So anyway, they came and got their cans and we didn't see 'em anymore. We had some New Zealand stuff that we picked up. The New Zealanders canned bacon, which we thought was great. You take a strip of bacon and fold it over and can it and they had a pound in there. You just pull 'em out, open 'em up and cook them and it is just fine. So we had some canned bacon. We had canned butter; you stuck a bayonet in the top and poured it out because it was so hot there. It was in the 90's all the time. We had a mold. You know people worry about mold now, we had a mold problem. Mold started here and even as you watched as it went up, so what you did was hit it like that and it would open up ...

TINKER: You're talking about on your skin or on your shirt?

GALLANT: Yeah, you didn't want it on your skin. So, we had problems with mold. If you didn't—we were close to the water so we could jump in if we had nerve enough to get in the water ...

TINKER: Right.

GALLANT: But we had put down barbed wire across, oh, about a block there in front of our guns, there were four anti-tank guns, and scattered a big space in between. So we could get in the water and get bathed off a little bit. One started shooting one time when I was in the water and the shells were dropping about as far as from here to the street. They couldn't quite reach me. I was naked and cleared that barbwire without a scratch. (Laughter) Anyway, you never know. Anyhow ...

TINKER: What about the smell? What stands out in your mind the most as far as how the island smelled?

GALLANT: Well, before we landed the wind was from the island. It was a very odd smell, I guess it was Japanese, I don't know. But it was an oriental type, I don't know how to describe it, it wasn't like any flower or anything, but it was odd. It may have been the wood they were burning or something but it was a strange smell. They ate, of course they had their bags of rice and everything there. Some guy ran across a bag there toward the front and they had a bowel movement in the bag of rice and I said, "Don't do that, it just ruins the rice." So anyway that sort of thing went on. We, I'm trying to think of ... if we lost, we didn't lose anybody by getting shot, we had one guy who went crazy. We had to use a camouflage net to catch him. We just threw it over him.

TINKER: What was he doing?

GALLANT: Just running around and hollering.

TINKER: Just running around and hollering?

GALLANT: Yeah! I tell you it will get to you and if you don't believe me, get in your backyard on August 7th and don't come in until December 15th and let somebody shoot at you day and night.

TINKER: So it just happened out of the blue?

GALLANT: Well it just gets on, they get worse, they get what we called "the gooney bird stare."

TINKER: So you could see it coming on?

GALLANT: Well you can see the eyes. And they get really kind of disoriented. Where they act like they don't know exactly—I'll show you a picture of that.

TINKER: Okay, and what were you—would you go tell your commanding officer when you saw somebody with the gooney bird stare?

GALLANT: No, we didn't do that, you handled all that yourself. The commanding officer, I didn't know what they did back there. We had a lieutenant of course for our four guns, and I think I saw him twice on the island. He came down and inspected the guns one time and his name was Fieldtois. We had Fieldtois, Pregno and Vile.

TINKER: You've got some names in your outfit, I tell you.

GALLANT: All nice guys. But I mean, he stayed with one of the guns but not with mine.

TINKER: So you just wait and see if somebody sort of came out of it?

GALLANT: If somebody got sick, we tried to get 'em back to the airport.

TINKER: But like this guy that was running around? That was extreme?

GALLANT: Well, we turned him over to them. We couldn't handle it. And like Amburgie, we couldn't handle him because you would tell him to do something and he would go and try to do it and go to sleep. So I mean it ...

BARNHART: When something happened like this, the gooney bird guy, what was the other people's attitude? Did they think he was just a chicken and going to the back? What was their attitude towards him?

GALLANT: Toward the guy that was having, well they felt sorry. We tried to keep him from getting killed. I heard of some cases where they would run into enemy lines and let them shoot him. No, you tried—Marines take care of each other. You don't leave; Marines don't leave their dead or their wounded. They bring them out. And so you're not supposed to—in an attack you don't stop and help somebody who's shot or anything. A

corpsman is supposed to do that. And you don't stop and do that with the dead. On Iwo, the dead were everywhere.

TINKER: You couldn't stop.

GALLANT: It was just, I tell you. We haven't gotten to Iwo yet.

TINKER: One more thing about Guadalcanal since you said nobody in your unit got shot. I mean ya'll must have been ...

GALLANT: No, we weren't under that kind of fire.

TINKER: I was thinking, you all must have been really bonded.

GALLANT: Well, we were.

TINKER: Because you didn't have any replacements coming in or anything like that?

GALLANT: Well, not 'til later. One of the regiments came in, I can't remember right this minute which one. Anyway, we got more Marines after awhile, I forget exactly when, but we did get more people and the Army came in later. And they mixed them with Marines because they didn't know how to fight Japanese. We didn't either when we first got there, but you learned pretty fast. By then we had fighter planes that would get up there; the trouble was that they would intercept the bombers. The Japs just had one navigational device and that was in the front plane, the rest of 'em they didn't have any parachutes either. Our fighters would go up, intercept, and have these fights and the bombers would drop their bombs wherever they were, which was in our area. They had not gotten to where they were supposed—You could look up and a bomb is coming down and it looks like it is coming down right on you. But they're not, they're coming down close but they're not going to hit you. I've have had them come close enough to raise me up off the ground. The battleship firing on you will raise you up off the ground too. It's like a big freight train running right over you, when they fire you have that shake and then as they come over they sound like a train passing over. And then when they hit it's another shake.

-----END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO-----

TINKER: This continues an interview with T. Grady Gallant at his home in Nashville with Cynthia Tinker and ...

BARNHART: Nancy Barnhart.

TINKER: And at the end of the first tape, we were coming to the end of the Battle of Guadalcanal and you're going to sort of wrap that up for us.

GALLANT: All right, we left Guadalcanal on December the 15th and we were happy to leave. The army took over then and my unit was on the *Hunter Liggett*. [USAT *Hunter Liggett*, troop transport] It was a troop transport and we went to Australia and I went to Brisbane and then I think, later to Melbourne. We had Christmas there, it was December.

TINKER: In Melbourne?

GALLANT: Yeah and it was summer, of course. The first summer Christmas I've had. And I think it was on the Queen Victoria Bridge that I drank some beer. (Laughter) Anyhow, it was a nice country. When we got there we had to go into isolation for a week or two, I don't remember which. They put us in an abandoned Australian Army camp which had so many mosquitoes that you could slap a man's back and pull your hand down his back and leave a right broad, bloody strip. But we had a fellow who came by everyday with a milk cart. They had these carts like a big barrel on a two-wheel cart pulled by a horse. The best milk I ever had. Then the officers ordered for us a keg, a barrel of beer. Australian beer is pretty strong; two one-pint canteen cups will take care of you.

TINKER: Take care of you? (Laughter)

GALLANT: And it's really good beer but it's more like a shot of whiskey. We were there two weeks. We had two Marines steal a handcar that is one of these kinds that you pump up and down on the railroad, and took off. I don't know where they went. Later, we got on a train to go to town and the train had the seats go all the way across from left to right, there were doors every seat. You can't walk down the length of the train. You would have to crawl over all the seats. I thought that was kind of inconvenient arrangement. Anyhow, we had some liberty and they gave us some of our pay. We never got all of our pay at once. Anyway, we got some, had some liberty in Brisbane and in Melbourne.

TINKER: While ya'll were there did you already know you were going to Iwo?

GALLANT: No, this was well before that. No, this was December of '42 I guess. That's right, yes, '42.

TINKER: So there were no rumors about upcoming battles floating around?

GALLANT: Oh, well there was still fighting around ... MacArthur [General Douglas MacArthur] was there and they were fighting up, I think, what is it up north of there? New Guinea or someplace, that sort of thing and of course still having problems.

BARNHART: What was the purpose? You said a week or two, of isolation?

GALLANT: I guess they wanted all their mosquitoes to get our malaria. (Laughter)

TINKER: Quarantine.

GALLANT: But I don't know why but that's what they said. The place didn't have any running water, you had to use these filter bags that the Army had and Navy and you dump water in it and it filters some. But we drank beer then while we were there. Anyway, before the end of the year, there was a dance. I went to a dance, I don't remember much about it but I met an Australian pilot there, they were sergeants, and we talked. And I also noticed that our blacks were really liked 'cause they were not treated like they were in the United States. One thing about those towns is that they have men and women's restrooms at the corner. You go down in—they have a nice restaurant there. Anyhow, at this dance, we got to be good friends and he was kind of a short fellow, sergeant. All of their aviators were sergeants. I couldn't tell him I was going anywhere and he couldn't tell me. They had the biggest ship that America had, passenger ship, the USS *WestPoint*. [Initially an ocean liner called SS *America* that carried civilians. It was refitted by the Navy as the USS *WestPoint* as a troop transport during WWII] I think was the name of it. So the next day after I had gotten on board ship and was having lunch, and I looked up and there he was. He was going to America, he was going to England actually, and I was going back to America. So we didn't have any escort, it was a fast ship, so we made it back. I don't know how long it took. So when I got back, I had thirty days leave. Went back to Gadsden [Alabama]. My parents had moved to Gadsden then during the war. Had thirty days off. After that, I went back to California and was in a unit that was teaching Indians to swim. The Navajos had never seen over a bucket of water in their life. We couldn't speak Navajo, they couldn't speak much English. But we had to train them to swim in a week because the commandant decided that everybody has to know how to swim. He was shocked when he found out some people couldn't swim. The Navajos, they had never been in water. So, we showed them how to do, you grab your knees and you will float and if you sink you will come up if you don't breathe. That sort of thing, they all understood that. So the last day they had to swim the length of the pool and over the deep water. And we had these long poles. So they would start and do fine and when they got over the deep water they would realized, heck I can't put my feet on anything and would start sinking. (Laughter) So, you would put the pole out, they would grab it. It was like catching salmon and you would pull 'em in. But they learned elementary [swimming] ...

TINKER: Now were these Navajos, had they already been through basic training and all?

GALLANT: I guess they had, yeah, they were in the Fleet Marine Force, but I don't know whether they had been in combat or not.

TINKER: While you were away in battle, did you write regularly to your family? Did you write many letters?

GALLANT: Uh, I think I wrote two or three. We had a—they developed a system then, you don't have any postage, you know that's all, you write your name on there. So I wrote several, I didn't write many. We couldn't write about what we were doing and we couldn't write about even where you were although they knew in the States where we

were. They called—it was funny when we first landed, we were United Nations Organization troops had landed and the Marine Corps didn't like that. (Laughter)

TINKER: Still don't.

GALLANT: So then it changed to the Marine Corps and the people knew pretty well where we were then. The New Zealanders, of course, were thrilled to death that we were there.

TINKER: Did your parents write you very much?

GALLANT: Huh?

TINKER: Did your parents write to you very much?

GALLANT: They wrote to me some, yeah, but I wired them when I got back to San Francisco, to tell them I was there and no lead in system. (Laughter) It takes five days to ride a train across the country so that's ten days of your leave, so you just have twenty days. So anyway, I stayed and enjoyed it. Went back to California and trained the Navajos.

TINKER: What did your parents think about you when you got back? Did they think you had changed?

GALLANT: They were just glad I was back. They never did act like I was a hero or anything.

TINKER: Did they ask you much about it? Did you talk much about it?

GALLANT: I think my mother had read a good bit about it and all that. But we didn't talk about the war much.

TINKER: Did people in town ask you about it?

GALLANT: I didn't know anybody in Gadsden. (Laughter) I'd grown up in Sanford.

TINKER: Well, I figured if you wore your uniform ...

GALLANT: Yeah, you had to wear that. That was required except when you were in the house. Anyway, I got back and then was in California for that period. That's where I met my wife, in California.

TINKER: Where did you meet her in California? Yeah, we want to hear this story. (Laughter)

GALLANT: She lived in North Hollywood, Teasdale Avenue. Anyway, in Oceanside where they had a hotel and a bar, I met a woman named Elsie Ball. Elsie was the wife of an Australian scientist and she had come to America because they had a little ten-year-old girl and they were afraid Australia was going to get attacked. She was staying with or knew Mike's mother [Micheal Ann, his wife] who was a registered nurse and worked in a Doctor's office then. She said "You must come up and meet Mike." Well I thought, "Well I don't want to meet some damn boy." (Laughter) So finally, a week or two later, I told my friend Stroud who was a great big guy, had hands that big (Gestures), more or less my bodyguard. (Laughter) I said, "Let's go up to L.A. and see Elsie." So we went up there. Elsie said, "Oh, I am glad you came to see Mike." And Mike appeared and she was a really pretty girl, so I was glad I had came to see Mike. (Laughter) Her name is Micheal Ann Gallant and it is M-I-C-H-E-A-L, not A-E-L. Whichever is right, she is on the wrong. She's on the wrong spelling of it. Anyway, she was I think in like in high school there, and I was twenty-four I think then. And so anyway we got to know each other there and I would come up occasionally.

TINKER: And her mother was a nurse too?

GALLANT: Yeah. Mm hmm.

TINKER: And your mother was a nurse? So you all had a little bit in common, didn't you?

GALLANT: Her mother wasn't working much. She had a friend who stayed there with her. We'd come up, Stroud and I would, and cook lunch on Saturday. Because we were glad to get something good to eat.

TINKER: What about your wife's father, what did he do?

GALLANT: Uh, he was a miner, but he was killed back when she was a child.

TINKER: Oh really, so?

GALLANT: She's from Montana.

TINKER: Oh, okay. So her mother moved to California. Did they have family out there? Was that why she ...

GALLANT: No. Well, they were going to California when the war started and everybody was coming east so they didn't have much traffic problems. (Laughter) Anyway, she worked for Fox Studios part time. She was a messenger, carried messages. So, she was there.

TINKER: Did she get to meet any movie stars?

GALLANT: Huh?

TINKER: Did she meet any movie stars?

GALLANT: Yeah, she knew some. Well, she went to school with some of them. She went to North Hollywood High. O'Connor, she knew him and several of them in her age group that went to school at North Hollywood High, so she knew several of them. Was quite a pretty girl. So, I left. I forget how long I was in California, over a year.

TINKER: Oh really over a year? Well, you weren't teaching Navajos how to swim that whole year?

GALLANT: No, I was on the moving target range there later. That was a railroad track with a flatbed thing with a target on it and it operated electrically, through a third rail thing. On a hill over here (Gestures) was where the tanks and all got up to shoot the target and they shot 37mm at it instead of their regular size. The target went around like this (Gestures with hands) it was a nice set up, probably cost the government ten million dollars ya know. (Laughter) They had seized the land from some guy who had worked on a newspaper 'cause we drove out on the target range and back in the woods was a stream about as wide as this (Gestures) and about that deep, about two inches, three inches deep. He had put a little dam there and had a little generator to get electricity and in the house were a lot of mats from newspaper pages and a couple of shells had gone through there. He didn't live there anymore.

BARNHART: Good thing. (Laughter)

GALLANT: They had bought all that and so that was part of the range. Anyway, I worked there for some months. I don't remember how long. And we operated the train, the target movement. There was a tower there where you could see the whole train and you operated the little target from there. You could see how fast and how slow, whatever.

TINKER: Did they put you all back in the training though before you left to go to Iwo?

GALLANT: No, not till—well, we did some training when I got there. But I mean they always do that to get you back in shape.

TINKER: But there weren't any special preparation ya'll did?

GALLANT: No, no special thing. I took four or five people to Maui, that's where the Marine 4th Division had its base.

TINKER: Yeah, now at Guadalcanal, you were attached to the 1st [Marine] Division, right?

GALLANT: Yeah, but I went to the 4th Division when I went back.

TINKER: So when you were in California ...

GALLANT: When I got sent back overseas, I was in the 4th Division. I went to the 4th Division. They were at Maui. So I've been in the 1st and 4th Divisions. But I consider the 1st Division my division. The 4th Division was General Cates' Division and ...

TINKER: And they were originally out of California ... right?

GALLANT: They were—well, what happened was when we were coming back from Guadalcanal it wasn't our whole unit, the 1st Division. There were 600 of us, all NCOs but no communications people, were sent back to mix in with them. Well I was fortunate enough not to be mixed in. I stayed in California. There were about three of us who stayed in California while the rest of them went to the east coast and joined the 4th there, so they were NCOs for the 4th. Anyway, I joined them in Maui and they were getting ready, I didn't know it at the time. All the guys I brought with me, I think it was six or eight of them were mixed in with the unit. One guy was named Middleditch.

TINKER: His name was Middleditch? (Laughter)

GALLANT: This guy he was a great big fellah and he was always bragging about his power with women, and I thought, "This guy is a nut and I won't last long." Well, he was tellin' how much his girlfriend loved him and how he could boss her around and everything. So, we had been there about a week, he wasn't in the same unit that I was in, but he was in the area. When they issued rifles, he got his and shot himself, killed himself.

BARNHART: Oh my gosh!

GALLANT: It's a wonder he didn't kill everybody in the row 'cause he shot himself and the bullet went down the tent row. (Laughter) I don't know how far, because a Springfield rifle bullet will go a mile.

TINKER: Yeah, how—did he do it on purpose?

GALLANT: Yeah, he committed suicide. He got one of the Dear John letters. The girl who was so infatuated with him said she had married this guy and so he killed himself. So then because I had brought him with me the chaplain said you and, I forget the other guy's name, will have to handle this. So I had to get the squad and went out and dug a grave. On Maui, a grave is five feet two inches deep. It has to be no deeper than that. So we had a crew digging that and ...

TINKER: Was there a special Marine Corps cemetery already there?

GALLANT: I don't know, it was a nice cemetery, but I don't know whether it was a government cemetery. I'm sure they dug him up and brought him back later.

TINKER: They just made you all do it since he came with you?

GALLANT: Yeah, that's right. So we did that and then they had the dead march going "boom boom" all the way through this little 'ole town. Then we had to bury him and get the casket out and get him in the hole and do the flag and everything to be sent back to whoever ...

TINKER: Do you remember where he was from?

GALLANT: I don't know where he was from. I didn't like him.

TINKER: What did everybody think after he shot himself?

GALLANT: Well, that was not all that unusual. I imagine there had been more suicides than his. He was such a blowhard that you wouldn't think anything would happen. They usually last forever. (Laughter)

TINKER: Um hmm, yeah he didn't seem the type that would do that.

GALLANT: No, he never did get any further than Maui. So anyway, that was that. I can't think of the name of the corporal that I had with me...I can't think of it. Anyway, after that, we went to Iwo and that was not—when you go over the equator the third time, you, I went over it four. It's not a happy trip, but I knew a little more about than I would have otherwise. So, we trained a little bit on Maui and then when we left everybody on the ship knew we were going to Iwo Jima because the Japanese woman who broadcast ...

TINKER: Tokyo Rose.

GALLANT: Yeah, they had told us we were.

TINKER: That was nice of her.

GALLANT: (Laughs) Yeah, I hadn't heard her but I figured what difference does it make. And Iwo was an eight-mile square island, which isn't very big. We were landing on a two-mile front. Suribachi to the left and a plateau, Motoyama Plateau on the right.

TINKER: While ya'll were sailing there, I mean while you were going over on the ship ... were you thinking of, were you afraid of dying? I mean were people talking about ...

GALLANT: No, nobody talks about it.

TINKER: Were you having long conversations?

GALLANT: No, at least not with me. (Laughter) But you don't think about it because it's ridiculous to try, you can't prevent it. I mean, a bullet's going to get you if it does.

TINKER: So most everybody you were around were just ...

GALLANT: Well, you know, Marines don't as far as I know don't, I know I didn't. We went down, got there and parked over the horizon from the damn place and went down the cargo net into the landing craft. And we had our 37 millimeter up in the front and everything. Bouncing around that thing and that went on for about thirty minutes while everybody got ready.

TINKER: Were you in the first wave?

GALLANT: Third.

TINKER: Third wave.

GALLANT: Amphibious tractors are usually first and then the second. So, they were stirred up by the time we got there. Going in, when we finally got closer to where we could see the island, it was like a Christmas tree with lights flashing everywhere. And I thought, "Goddamn, nobody can live through that." And smoke coming up from our bombs. We had battleships there and they had knocked out some of the big weapons on Suribachi and over on to the right where we were going to land. The closer you got the more lights you could see. Of course, nobody—they had bombed a couple of times but they never did bomb enough on any landing. They think if they drop a bomb "well we've killed everybody," but that's not—bombs don't kill you very easily.

BARNHART: Especially if you're in caves.

GALLANT: It's hard to kill somebody in a little hole the size of that couch (Points) from twenty or thirty thousand feet. So anyway, of course, the person in the hole doesn't think that. (Laughter) But anyway, when we got to the ... beach, which was about as wide as this room is, there was a slanted thing about forty-five degrees and a flat place and another forty-five degrees and another flat place. So we thought that three Japs had done that but later they decided that the waves had done that. And I'll tell you one awful thing, 'cause the whole thing was awful, but one thing that stood out 'cause it was the first thing I saw. The ramp went down and the coxswain hadn't gotten us close enough, so we pushed the gun out and it went out under the water, you could see this much of the muzzle (Gestures). So then we got out and water was up above our knees and the undertow was very strong. We left the gun there and got to the beach. Ordinarily, when you hit the beach you run forward. Well running forward there's this white thing going along here and I happened to look over to the left and there was a chest and undershirt there and I looked over to the right and there was a jeep with a tire burning in front, nobody in it. And as I jumped over this white thing, which I realized was an intestine, there was the officer, his head was this way (Gestures) and feet toward the back of the Jeep with no left leg and no left arm and of course, he was dead. The driver, I think the thing landed in his lap, the driver; that was his chest. There wasn't anything else. No head, no arms, no legs just the chest. The intestine which had blown up, all the pieces were gone, but the driver's part and intestine was coming along there were the only remaining part.

TINKER: That's the first thing you saw.

GALLANT: And the officer who was seated here next to him, the driver, and his left side was blown off and he was thrown up in the air and turned around. That's the way it happened, I finally figured it out. Anyway, I jumped over that and I thought, "Boy this is going to be terrible." I went over the first block and nothing there and then the top one to see what was up front. Not a living soul. And that's the modern battlefield, you don't see anybody. No Marines, no Japs, no nothin'. And I told the corporal, I said "What do you see?" and he said, "I don't see nothin'." Ahead of me about the width of this house, were four Marines with rifles pointed toward the enemy. I told the corporal, "I'm going up there and see what they have to say." So I ran up there and plopped down by the one on the right and I said, "Hey, what are you guys doing?" Not a word. I looked up and there were bullet holes in all of them. They had all gotten shot by a machine gun across the back. I thought, "Well I better go back where I was." (Laughter) 'Cause I didn't know where the machine gun was. So I went back and told the corporal I said, "Those guys are all dead up there." So we looked around, went down the beach a little bit, about maybe the length of this house, and flopped down. To my left were a bunch of stretchers with wounded people. The Marines took the wounded people to the beach so that a craft could take them out. We had a couple of hospital ships there. And these guys all laying on stretchers. Well, the Japs started dropping shells at the end of one of the guy's stretchers. He was faced toward the island, inland, and his head was toward the sea and he was on this stretcher. There were other stretchers all around him. The Japs were dropping shells right at his feet. I was about from here to there from him (Gestures) and I thought "Well, that ought to have killed him." No, he raised up, started hollering and carrying on. It was horrible. They kept droppin' about three or four minutes. Well it took about six—he kept raising up. And I wondered "Why didn't he come on?" Then I tried to figure out how can I get him pulled back? But there was another stretcher in back of him and I would have had to move three or four stretchers to get him out of where he was. Meanwhile, he wasn't trying to get out. He seemed to have strength enough to raise up and holler but he looked like he could have rolled off, but he wouldn't, he stayed right there, and finally he just dropped over dead. I don't know, I guess a piece of metal got him. The great thing about Iwo Jima was—it's like if you shoot a bullet into a pile of peas, there isn't going to be a lot of things blowing around. But if you shoot a bullet into granite or limestone, they will shatter into everything. Over there the bullets either went into the soft rock and stayed there, I guess you would call it lava type stuff. Or they went into what was amounted to the size of black-eyed peas, cinders. So when a shell dropped down, it would go down in these cinders long enough so that when it blew up it went like that. (Indicates straight up) Unlike if you hit rock it would go like that. (Indicates skipping off) So that saved a lot of lives. Anyway, it was a horrible thing. I don't know if we need to go into detail about all of it. There was dead people everywhere and Japanese. First dead Jap I saw there, there were two of 'em in a shell hole and a flamethrower man had taken care of them and they were burned. One of them had, size of a basketball, a blister from his rectum from the heat of the burning oil. Laying there looking like that, no clothes, all burned off. The other guy he was just burned up. Just awful sorts of things like that which, uh ...

TINKER: Were you ever engaged in hand-to-hand combat?

GALLANT: Didn't see 'em.

TINKER: So you never saw any?

GALLANT: No, with that volume of fire from both sides, nobody has time for standing around.

TINKER: So it was just constant shooting?

GALLANT: You're either under something, or flat on the ground or you're shooting or—the gun we finally got out of the water about an hour later. The Japs hit it with a shell, knocked the sight off, made it useless. They had every inch of that land targeted, they had shot it, and knew where they could just turn their gun mortar or whatever and hit that spot. That's how they hit that Jeep. And the jeep was pretty close to some rocks and, I mean, it was a blind shot that was perfect. So they were shootin' like that and there were bullets in the air. I had a guy—I was talking to some private and a lieutenant back over here was in a little group. This was about dusk one night, and he got shot in the leg and they were all gathered around him. And I was talking to this private and he said, "I got a bullet wound, should I stay here?" and I said, "Hell no go get with the lieutenant because you can lose your hand." So the bullet that went through his hand had gone through the lieutenant's leg. That kind of thing was going on. I was seated, facing the ocean thinking, "How can I swim back?" when I heard, take your fingers and click like that, a bullet, I didn't realize it at first, it came off this ear. I thought, "What in the heck can that be?" About that time another one, I knew what it was; some sniper had me. And he was a good sniper 'cause it came right by me.

TINKER: Could you almost feel it going by your head?

GALLANT: If you thump next to your ear that's what it is. It sounds just like that. I thought I better drop over in case he tries again he'll get me keep movin'. Anyway, I got up and went over to a shell hole and got in it. That kind of thing was going on all the time, you have to move around.

TINKER: Was that the closest—did you have any other near misses like that that you recall?

GALLANT: On Guadalcanal, I had—these are all strange things. I had been standing with my shirt off, it was hot as the devil, talking to a couple of privates and they were standing about like that. (Gestures) I was here and a friend of mine named Harriman was going to clean a rising sub machine gun which was no count. They had to be absolutely clean to be useful. If they get a little dirt on 'em you can't ... we were gonna clean it, we were testing those things. He got the clip out and was going to turn it up you know how you do and pulled the trigger to make sure there was none in the barrel. And there was

one in the barrel, a .45 caliber, and put a line of little burns right across my chest. It looked like somebody had taken a poker and scrapped right across my chest. I grabbed my chest and said, "He got me." (Laughter) Famous last words and the two privates they didn't know what happened. So finally I got nerve enough to look down there to see if, I figured if it had gone through like I thought it had, I'd be dead, but the thing had come right across my chest. Scared Harriman to death, so I made him give me a cigarette, which was rare.

TINKER: That's pretty close.

GALLANT: It's close enough.

TINKER: That's about as close as I've heard of I believe, actually leaving a burn across your skin.

GALLANT: It left a little red thing right across ...

TINKER: It was right across your chest or you upper abdomen? Right across your chest.

GALLANT: It scared me a little bit but I thought, "Well it didn't kill me so it's alright." He was a good friend of mine. He got malaria, I can't think of the type it was, but the type that reoccurs and I don't reckon that he lived much longer after he got home.

TINKER: The kind that you have the rest of your life?

GALLANT: Yeah, the kind that keeps coming back. I can't think of the name of it.

TINKER: I can't either. I've heard of it.

GALLANT: It's kind of like cancer.

TINKER: You have to take medication for it the rest of your life.

GALLANT: Yeah, I don't know what you take. He wrote me that he had that. My kind was a benign tertian type. I've have had two or three recurrences of it over the years. I asked one of my uncles who is a doctor about it and he said, "Well, you may not ever get rid of it unless you move to the North Pole and live in a big change of climate, it'll come back." So I've always thought if I had an operation that it might come back, but it didn't. It's an odd disease. You get ice cold, freeze, shake, and all that and then you get burnt up.

BARNHART: You talked about in your book, *The Friendly Dead*, about them spraying because there were so many bodies and flies, about them spraying with the DDT. Well, years later when they came out with how dangerous DDT was and they banned it, what did you think since you were sprayed?

GALLANT: Well I didn't care. It was better to have it there than to be breathing—it was bad enough to smell what was there.

TINKER: Was this spraying on Iwo?

GALLANT: Yeah the planes went over and sprayed it, the enemy too. I mean everybody got sprayed. I don't know what the Japs thought when the black spots started. But it kept down the insects. Of course we had so many people that were dead and laying around.

TINKER: They couldn't bury 'em?

GALLANT: And pieces. Of course, they didn't get everything as a rule. The graves registration people would come up on the front line and ask if you had any friendly dead. That's the reason it's named *Friendly Dead*. You'd say yeah or no or tell them where somebody was. We were in a position by one of the Japanese bunkers. One of them came wandering in and said, "Friendly dead?" and I said, "Yeah, there he is up there on the bunker." This guy had had both legs blown off; he had an entrenching tool in his hand and had frozen this way. And so, I said, "His foot's over here," it was over behind us around a rock. So I guess you ought to get that too, so they did they got his foot and him and took him off. That kind of thing. They dug the graves on Iwo nine feet deep, which is much deeper than they usually do. Put rows of cots or stretchers along and put the body in there and the dog tag, and he's wrapped in a blanket. The engineers made a map of this as they went along and when they got the section filled then they pushed all that over. Then they could put the crosses up in the right place. I think they went back and dug everybody up on Iwo and brought 'em home.

TINKER: Another Marine, the Navajo code talker I was telling you about that was on Iwo, mentioned that. Because he was talking about—he didn't know how they could tell who was who when they went back to dig them up.

GALLANT: Yeah they had it measured and everything.

TINKER: When you were in the middle of that, I mean, were you all thinkin' about all of the bodies? I mean, you just didn't have time to absorb all that, did you?

GALLANT: You don't worry about that, you're just glad it is not you. It's kind of irritating in a way, because they are in such odd positions a lot of them. They'd be just seated there looking like, you know...

TINKER: Did you feel like sometimes it was almost like they weren't human? Because they were in such odd positions, it is almost like they weren't real.

GALLANT: Yeah, it could be unreal things but it could be just about the same. They—some of them got killed, well the picture in the book there shows one of them with a bullet in the head, went through his head, went through his helmet and head. But a lot of

them, it was real disastrous. Like this guy I mention earlier. And then some of them would be in a normal position, you would think they were alive and they weren't. It was a real oddball thing. One occasion a guy got hit and split open by a piece of shell, I guess, I don't know what it was. It just cut him all the way open. Of course, he was still alive and the corpsman got him in a jeep and took him down. They had a hospital place down there, it wasn't a hospital but where they worked on 'em. I imagine they saved him because they can do, if the guy gets there soon, they do emergency work on him and then get him out to the hospital ship which is right out shore. They can do that.

TINKER: Did you lose any of your buddies there? Or any good friends?

GALLANT: No, I really didn't have any. I didn't know those people very long. I had some friends but nobody got killed that I know of that was in that group. But we were—the use of the anti-tank gun in a situation like that is usually to defend the infantry line—guys have to sleep sometime. You can't leave the line and go somewhere to sleep. So, somebody behind you shortly watches for any attack and you can get your rest, go to sleep and get up at 7 a.m. The order on Iwo every morning was to advance at 7, attack at 7. So it was kind of a routine thing.

TINKER: I asked you about the eating on Guadalcanal. What were your main food sources on Iwo?

GALLANT: On Iwo? Just rations. I don't know what kind they were but they didn't have any much that was good. Of course, we didn't have a chance to take a bath or anything. I'm sure that the sailors on the ship we got on were glad when we had a shower.

BARNHART: (Laughs) Probably.

GALLANT: It's bad enough, when you're not in that kind of condition, but if you're in that kind of condition for thirty days, it's bad.

TINKER: Did you see any Japanese POW's while you were there?

GALLANT: I saw a beautiful rifle there. I was right on the front line, just a little back against kind of a hunk of dirt. Beautiful rifle. Absolutely clean. I thought, "Boy some sniper's got that staked out." and I didn't go anywhere near it. I would have, I sure wish I had. They had beautiful rifles.

BARNHART: The story in your book about the donuts, is that true?

GALLANT: Yes I ...

BARNHART: That was hilarious.

GALLANT: I wanted to kill that guy.

BARNHART: They brought up donuts and the lieutenant ate 'em all.

TINKER: Well I don't know this story, you'll have to tell it.

GALLANT: Yeah some people. To be frank with you; I thought some of the lieutenants in the 4th Division weren't as top notch as those in the 1st. Because the ones in the first usually had been in the Corps a while and they were from good schools. Of course they started drafting people by the end of the war, the Marines did. You don't get top quality people by drafting. You would get some but you would get a lot of others too. The Marine Corps is such a professional type outfit. I mean, they don't look on themselves as draftees because they're not. 'Cause they tell you get in the Marine Corps, well, you asked for it, we don't want any complaints. (Laughter) So anyway, it's a great outfit, the best military outfit in the world, I think. But you can certainly get killed in there and you have to just decide, "I am not worried about that."

TINKER: Well, what happened towards the end of the battle?

GALLANT: Well, at the end of the battle they had a ... the job, they declared it and the army came in and took over and the combat troops left.

TINKER: I didn't even ask you about the flag raising.

GALLANT: Alright, well the flag raising day, which was the fourth day.

TINKER: The fourth day.

GALLANT: I was on the right and of course the mountains were on the left, my left (Gestures). Some guy said to me, "They had raised a flag on Suribachi." And I said, "They have?" and he said "Yeah." I looked over there and I couldn't see anything. He said, "Well they say it isn't very big." and I said, "Well it must not be, I can't see it." He said, "I can't either."

TINKER: How far away do you think you were?

GALLANT: About two miles or two and a half miles.

TINKER: About two and a half miles?

GALLANT: Later, maybe an hour or so later, I looked back up and there it was and I thought, "Well why couldn't I see it when I looked before?" Then I found out that they had raised a second one. And then the book that you mentioned shows the first and second. And I talked to General Petross, who was commander at Parris Island years later, I went down there. He had been there, he was Colonel then and they had ordered him to find out who had raised the flag. See, everybody dispersed after that, some of 'em got killed. He said he wasn't absolutely sure they had everybody right. They were from

different units and some of them, I think two of them, got killed. Some of 'em say that the reason that the Indian became an alcoholic was that he didn't want ...

TINKER: The fame.

GALLANT: So I don't know. Well, it's a funny thing because going up there to do that nobody got shot at. They went up, put the flag up and nobody got shot at. Which shows, you don't know what's going to happen in battle. You would have thought you would have to fight your way every foot. But it was a great thing and it shows the valor. My—I had proposed in my book that they make that a monument, the island, it's going to blow up someday and disappear anyway, a monument to the dead on both sides, Japanese and Americans. An eight-square mile monument out in the Pacific. But then Johnson gave it back to them, President Johnson, he gave the Japs Iwo back.

TINKER: What did you think about that?

GALLANT: I don't think he—he should have sold it to them if they wanted it.
(Laughter)

TINKER: If they wanted it that bad.

BARNHART: We worked too hard to get it to give it away.

GALLANT: That's right, but I don't know, it's going to blow up.

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE-----

TINKER: Okay, so we'll wrap up Iwo and get you on the ship.

GALLANT: They had a barge about the size of; I don't know how to explain it, a big flat thing. The sea was not calm; it was going up and down about eight feet. So we got on the barge and there must have been about two hundred of us on there. I decided I would wait. We got up to the ship and it was going down to the water level and then way up to, almost to the rail. I thought, "Well if they get excited and start tryin' to"—they didn't even use a rope ladder. So, I waited, I was one of the last three, I think. You just stood there and when it got to the peak, you grabbed the rail and when it dropped down you were up there. That was the way we got on the ship.

TINKER: Was that really how you got on the ship? You waited until the wave lifted you up?

GALLANT: Why sure, it lifted the barge up and then you grabbed the rail and the barge dropped down. So, we got on that way and of course, the odor must have been vile because of our condition. I noticed it certainly was, because the Captain had allowed fresh water showers immediately. (Laughter). I thought we must ...

TINKER: You must have been bad.

GALLANT: We usually had to use salt water. The troops do, I guess the officers use fresh water. But anyway, it was a great feeling to get in that hot water. We got cleaned up and a good meal and we were on our way and got back.

TINKER: Were you feeling pretty happy then or were you feelin' ...

GALLANT: I was glad of it, yeah, I was glad of it. Because my enlistment was almost up. We got back to Maui, I don't know when we got back but we were going to be in the Japanese Invasion. My enlistment, I think it was September the third when my enlistment was up, which was just after or just before the Japanese surrendered. So, they broke up the 4th Division and sent us back to New River and that's where I got out.

TINKER: You didn't think about staying in?

GALLANT: I had joined to stay in. I was going to stay thirty years, in fact that wasn't long enough. And I thought to myself, you sign up for four years and then they make you write four and write four. I thought, "That isn't long," but it's a long time four years.

BARNHART: Especially during war.

GALLANT: Yeah, and so I decided that wasn't for me. One reason is the military, of course, is a very disciplined sort of life. That is, you're not free. A lot of the things you have to do, you don't want to do and you have to do it anyway. A lot of the trips you make, you don't want to make. In peacetime training is absolutely, totally boring to me. You do things that don't amount to anything and you know it. (Laughs) You take a gun out and just point it and nothing. So, in the Marine Corps, you have fairly good liberty time. I think you used to get off at four o'clock and go to town, but going where you don't want to is not for me. That's just not my type of life even, as an officer.

BARNHART: Let me stop you for just a second. You were talking about as an officer; you went to Quantico to become an officer ...

GALLANT: They sent me, I didn't want to.

BARNHART: But then you said you didn't want to. Had you already made the decision then, after Guadalcanal that you weren't going to be a career?

GALLANT: I wanted to stay out of the officer's cadre because they were losing a lot of lieutenants and that's what I would be and secondly, I wasn't going to make a career of it. I had a chance to sign up, you know, as a reservist and I'd have been called in the Korean War. Of course, by then, I had a wife and three children. I know a fellow who did, he didn't go anywhere, he went to New River, or Camp Lejeune and was there during the three years of the Korean War. He lost his business, his wife divorced him, and you know that's what happens.

TINKER: So when you got back to Camp Lejeune and you had decided not to reenlist?

GALLANT: I had decided long before, that second sniper decided for me. The funny thing is that Captain Evans, who was my first commanding Captain, signed my discharge paper. So I thought that was great, he survived it. They asked me when I was getting out, you have to sign and all, if I wanted to be in the reserves and I said, “Hell no, I don’t want to be a reserve in anything, fire department or anything.” Anyhow, I got in journalism.

TINKER: What made you decide—how did you make that transition?

GALLANT: I went to Emory and studied, they had journalism courses then.

TINKER: There wasn’t anything that had happened along that way that made you think, “Hmmm, I’d like to be a writer?”

GALLANT: Well yeah, I had done some writing kind of in high school. I wrote a column for a local weekly thing. I had worked around newspapers ...

TINKER: It was something you’d dabbled in but ...

GALLANT: Yeah, I wasn’t afraid. So I took journalism at Emory, and I think I took every course they had. They were teaching radio, newspaper, and some TV. That was when TV was real early but TV writing.

TINKER: Had you and Mrs. Gallant gotten married by this point?

GALLANT: Oh yeah.

TINKER: So you’d run back out to California to get her, huh?

GALLANT: No, she went to the University of South Carolina.

TINKER: How did she end up at South Carolina?

GALLANT: Evidently, she was following me. (Laughter)

TINKER: Okay, I see. (Laughter)

GALLANT: Anyway ... I went back to Gadsden to get started. I had a job, I can’t even think of the name of that corporation now, but they had papers in Cleveland, Tennessee and in Miami, Oklahoma. I thought, “Hell, I don’t want to go to Miami, Oklahoma.” I’d never heard of it. (Laughter) I’d never heard of Cleveland, Tennessee either but I went there and was editor of the Cleveland Daily Banner, which I think, had a circulation of four thousand.

TINKER: Would you have been able to go back to Emory without the GI bill, do you think?

GALLANT: Yeah I was on the GI bill when I went back.

TINKER: I know, but if you hadn't had that?

GALLANT: I don't think I would have. I would have just gone to work in a newspaper.

TINKER: Yeah, but because you had the GI bill you thought ...

GALLANT: Yeah and I was married then, too. So anyway, I stayed there nine months with the Cleveland Daily Banner and then got a job with the Chattanooga Free Press then, and covered Polk County and Bradley County and extended down into North Georgia and did a lot of that.

TINKER: So what were you writing about at that time?

GALLANT: I covered a lot of court trials and covered a major down in Alabama killed his wife. They had a big trial about that. And some north Georgia criminal things and East Tennessee, a lot of that. They're killin' people all the time in East Tennessee.

TINKER: Oh yeah, we do that. (Laughter)

GALLANT: And I covered Gatlinburg, when they were first starting that.

TINKER: Really? That's where I am from.

GALLANT: Yeah, I've got a picture, I forget the name of that hotel, they had good pancakes. It was a big hotel.

TINKER: Was this in the 50's or 60's?

GALLANT: It was back when they weren't known as a resort like it is now. This is back when they first built the incline thing.

TINKER: Oh, the tramway?

GALLANT: Well, you ride in a seat.

TINKER: Ah, the chairlift, I bet you that was in the 60's or maybe the 50's.

GALLANT: It probably was. Anyway, I got a ride on that and it was huge then and stayed a day or two and learned about what they were trying to do.

TINKER: I bet you stayed at the Gatlinburg Inn.

GALLANT: Maybe it was. An elderly fella and his wife, they ate breakfast with me. They had good pancakes, I remember. (Laughter)

BARNHART: At least you remember the pancakes.

GALLANT: Well they were nice, everybody was nice. But Gatlinburg hadn't gotten to be a big tourist thing. And let's see what else. I covered a lot of murders, I covered crime in East Tennessee and I got tired of that because you get to where you're afraid to go out of your house, covering crime and all.

TINKER: You're hearing about the bad stuff all the time.

GALLANT: Well you see it. I did a lot more detective work than a lot of the cops did. I interviewed witnesses. I'll give you an example. One woman, her husband was murdered, and this was Cleveland, Tennessee. I heard that a man had been murdered. I went to the Sheriff's office, I knew all of them and I said, "I hear somebody got killed," and they said, "Yeah, he got murdered." I said "Well, what happened?" And they said, "Well his wife's down at the funeral home you can go ask her there." So I went down there and she was coming out of the funeral home with her friend, some woman. I told her who I was and said, "I understand that your husband was killed." She said, "Oh yeah. I've got to go home". So I said, "Well I'll take you home. I just want to see what happened." She agreed, now this is strange, people won't do that anymore. Took her home and I said, "Where did all of this happen?" What had happened was, she had washed some sheets and they were hanging on the line in the back. The back door neighbor was cleaning up leaves and burning 'em. And that was blowing, the wind was blowing ...

BARNHART: On her clean sheets. (Laughter)

GALLANT: So she said, she told him "Don't do that till I've got sheets out." He said, "I can burn my own leaves." So she told her husband and he went out there to tell him "don't do that." And with that, they got into an argument and the man burning the leaves took a 2x4 and hit this guy over the head with it and killed him and kept burning his leaves. Anyway, they arrested him and he was in jail by the time his widow was out there. So I said, "Well where is the board he got hit with?" She said, "Here it is." And she held it up and I said, "Hold it just a minute and I'll take a picture of it." So I took a picture of her holding the weapon. (Laughter) So anyhow I left. They finally got him to trial, it was a big—I wanted him executed but I don't remember what happened to him.

TINKER: That is a sight.

GALLANT: That's how dumb things are. I've covered things where the guy got killed for, you know, ten dollars or less, or an argument over a bottle of beer or something. It's just amazing.

TINKER: You think that made you cynical about people at all?

GALLANT: No, I don't think many of 'em are worth anything anyway. I mean really. You just think about it carefully.

TINKER: Oh, I agree. (Laughter)

GALLANT: I mean it's not really ...

TINKER: So you were already pretty uh ...

GALLANT: I had already seen a lot.

TINKER: In tune with human nature before you had seen all this.

GALLANT: So anyway, a lot of interesting cases. One trial I covered in north Georgia, the elderly woman, well in her fifties, she wasn't all that old. She had two little children, one that could just stand up and one she had to hold, may have been three, anyway, small children. She had shot her husband who was asleep in front of the fire, on the fire hearth and had the door open. Anyway, she didn't miss so she killed him and in Georgia they arrested her for first-degree murder of killing her husband. Bobby Lee Cook, who's quite famous, they claim that Matlock is Bobby Lee Cook. I knew Bobby Lee Cook, he was a young attorney then—this has been fifty years ago, I think. So, I covered the trial and Harold Self was the prosecutor there. He would stand at the far end or back of the courtroom and shout his questions and in Georgia—

TINKER: He did? (Laughs)

GALLANT: In Georgia they take one juror at a time in the box and ask them a question. In Tennessee they put them all in there. They do other things that are different in Georgia. Anyway, they got the jury and Harold Self prosecuting told how she had left the door open because she was going to kill him and then shot him with a shotgun and that was it. So Bobby Lee Cook got up and put her on the stand. Well in Georgia, if you're an accused, you can get on the stand and say anything you want to. The jury can believe it or not, you don't take any oath or anything. So she got on the stand and told that he had often beaten her up when he was drunk and she was afraid he was going to do it again. She was a frail lookin' woman. Had these little children there in the chair on the stand. And Bobby Lee Cook asked her if she had planned and put the door open because she was afraid he would wake up and kill her. So the jury, they summed up and Harold said how vicious and mean the murder was and Bobby Lee Cook saying how it was self-defense. They didn't even get out of the jury box; they declared her innocent, not guilty. So ...

TINKER: You're kiddin'.

GALLANT: He's a good lawyer, I tell you; it was a very effective defense.

TINKER: Yeah, having the little kids sit there.

BARNHART: Seein those little kids sittin' there how ...

TINKER: Well, they still do that defense now.

GALLANT: Well she didn't have to be sworn either. So it was great and Harold Self, he didn't care. Anyway it was interesting. I covered Von Braun [Wernher von Braun was a German-American rocket scientist who originally worked for the Nazis in Germany. Following WWII he was brought to America during Operation Paperclip.] in Huntsville and they had a Nickerson trial down there, this guy was named Nickerson. He was an army officer. When, it sounds strange now, but when the first started making missiles, the Air Force wanted them 'cause they fly through the air and the Army wanted them because they're artillery, they fly through the air. They had a big fuss about it and this guy Nickerson sent some secret documents, they were marked secrets to *Rockets and Missile* magazine just like the Pentagon papers. They wouldn't print them and sent them back to Colonel Midarus who was the commanding officer. Then they indicted and had a court martial for Nickerson who had done all this, sent secret papers. I covered the trial, it lasted several days. I talked to Von Braun, who said they were stamped secret but they weren't all that secret; wasn't, you know important. I talked to Nickerson and I said, "What do you think they'll do with you?" "Ah, there'll just be a tap on the wrist, they won't do anything." So I wrote a story saying that he discussed a tap on the wrist when it was over and so forth. Well, the next day the defense attorney was mad as a hornet and wanted to know who had lied like that in the paper. One of the prosecutors came and wanted to know which of the reporters had written it. I said "It was me," I talked to him and he told me that and that a radioman was standing there taping the thing. He looked like Gildersleeve [Famous character from a late 1940s radio program], the radioman did. I found him and said, "Where is that tape where I was talking to Nickerson?" He said, "They told me to erase it." I said, "Who told you to erase it?" and he said "Nickerson's attorney." (Laughter) I thought to myself... So Nickerson's attorney never talked to me. Anyway, they convicted Nickerson and the army sent him to South America down there where there's Panama and he was down there two or three years. Then he and his wife were coming back, driving back to the states, and they had a wreck that killed both of 'em. [Near Alamogordo, New Mexico] But that was, what was going on when they were arguing about who had the missiles. So it ended up with NASA having the missiles. Anyway, it was interesting stuff and I covered it ...

TINKER: Can you tell us anything about Von Braun?

GALLANT: Yeah, Von Braun. I interviewed him when the Russians put their little *Sputnik* up. I said, "Look why haven't we got our thing up?" He said, "Well, we could have had it, but they wouldn't authorize it. We knew we were right together on the thing."

TINKER: Who did he mean by they?

GALLANT: The Russians, oh uh, Washington, Eisenhower.

TINKER: He meant the White House and ...

GALLANT: Eisenhower didn't understand the space program anyway. So anyway, I think that was probably all right because we then surged ahead. We had a lot of cooperation after that on missiles. A guy named Ernst Stuhlinger, [A former German military officer who worked with Werner von Braun for the U.S. Army and NASA.] who designed, this is back before we had missiles going, space platforms and things like that, he had served on the Russian front after he had served with Von Braun. I said, "Why did they send you to the Russian front?" He said, "The army just told me I had to go." I said, "Well why did you fight for them?" And he said, "Well it's my country, you know, it's like your President telling you to." You know, most people don't think of that. A lot of those Germans they had to do it because the government ordered them to. Anyway, he was a real smart little goat and still alive, I think. Von Braun, of course, died. His wife was a right nice person. He wouldn't let anyone interview his wife. I saw her a number of times, she'd be talking to some friends.

TINKER: When you were moving around from paper to paper, were you wanting to move from paper to paper, or were they calling you with offers to come and work for them?

GALLANT: Usually, well with the Free Press, they were going to move. The Free Press and the Times were together, but separate functions. Well, they broke up and McDonald who I liked, he was the publisher. But there wasn't any future with the Free Press other than I had pretty good latitude about what I covered. But as far as any job of any importance, all of his relatives had those. He was going to move off to another building and all that. So, I wanted to stay with the Times, which was a more prestigious paper. A better paper then, I thought, as far as general coverage was concerned. So I went with them. I wrote a column for 'em and was backup city editor. I had the city desk during the weekend and all. I was in charge in the summer of all the students, college kids that came in to work. That sort of thing. I did a lot of work. I wrote three columns a week. And then they started the Chattanooga Post, which was an afternoon newspaper. I was city editor of that, we had a separate staff. Advertising people got screwed up and the Free Press sued 'em and won the case. So it cost. Leroy got all of his debts paid with the money he got from that. The Times had to drop the Post. So I went to the News Observer in North Carolina. I was city editor there. I was there for about a year. I didn't like it. It's gone, been sold now. I came back and the Banner gave me a job here [Nashville, TN]. I was chief political writer and wrote a column with the Banner.

TINKER: Now what year did you start with the Banner?

GALLANT: I think it was '72.

TINKER: Were you there until you retired?

GALLANT: Uh well, who was the German man who owned it? I can't remember his name.

TINKER: A German man owned it?

GALLANT: Yeah, the Banner, the Nashville Banner.

BARNHART: Oh I, it started with an "S" didn't it?

GALLANT: Yeah, but I can't, I'll think of it in a minute. He sold it to Gannet, who owns it now or did own it. Not long after that, I thought that I would leave so I went with the state because there wasn't any future there. I worked for the state comptrollers officer, information officer there for thirteen years. Which was good, because I got a pension there so we had a little bit of money.

TINKER: That's true. So you were at the Banner how long? Ten to fifteen years?

GALLANT: I was at The Banner about two or three years, not very long.

BARNHART: A very short period of time, according to your bio.

GALLANT: Well that's right.

BARNHART: '71 to '73, out of Writer's Directory.

GALLANT: Yeah, that's about right.

TINKER: And you covered all the state politics?

GALLANT: The Comptroller of the Treasury is elected by the General Assembly, not appointed by the governor. He more or less represents the General Assembly. He is staff to the General Assembly. In other words if some Republican wants a speech written he can ask the comptroller to have a speech written. So I wrote a lot of speeches for Republicans and Democrats and went with the Democrats on the bus on some of their campaigns, that sort of thing.

TINKER: When you took that job, did you know you were going to be writing speeches?

GALLANT: It didn't matter to me, I could write speeches.

TINKER: You were just going to write anything.

GALLANT: Pretty much. So anyway, Ned McWherter [Governor of Tennessee from 1987 to 1995] was the head of the, I'm trying to think of what branch, he wasn't the senate. That was Wilder. But McWherter was Speaker of the House and I wrote speeches

for him when he ran. I wrote a lot of speeches and I wrote a newsletter for the state government people and just pretty much what they wanted written, I wrote.

TINKER: So you were working there—was it ...

GALLANT: I was working there when Ned was—I left. I worked there through several governors. I worked there through Dunn and uh ...

BARNHART: Blanton.

GALLANT: Blanton. And let's see, somebody else...

TINKER: What did you think about Blanton?

GALLANT: I thought he was a crook because it was obvious. (Laughs) I mean there wasn't any doubt.

TINKER: Was it obvious to everybody?

GALLANT: Yeah, he offered me a job as his press secretary, but I didn't take it for the simple reason that I had seen some of his relatives roaming around. They were all crummy people.

TINKER: What was the family that got the World's Fair to Knoxville? My mind has gone blank.

GALLANT: Oh, I know the one you are talking about, it starts with a B?

BARNHART: Butcher?

TINKER: Butcher.

GALLANT: Butcher, yeah.

TINKER: Do you know any of them?

GALLANT: I knew him but I didn't work with him. He was ...

TINKER: Did people talk about him though, around Nashville?

GALLANT: Has he died? I don't know what happened to him.

TINKER: No, I don't think he is dead.

BARNHART: He just kind of disappeared off of the face of the earth.

TINKER: I think he's still hidin' a little. (Laughter)

GALLANT: He may be. (Laughter)

BARNHART: Could be.

GALLANT: Anyway that was an interesting period there, thirteen years of that. I knew Lamar pretty well, I knew Blanton some. He kept wanting me, before he got elected, to be his press secretary. I didn't think I wanted to do it. When he got elected, he tried to get me to be his press secretary, but by then I knew more about him and I didn't take it.

TINKER: So the men that were governor, did you sometimes look at them and think, "Well, they're a pretty okay governor but I don't like them as a person." Or if you liked them as a person and thought, "Well they're not that good a governor?"

GALLANT: Well there've been several like that. Well, it's like any other large corporation where there are all kinds of people. There are some eight balls up there and then there are some that are really fine people. It's much like a cross section of life in that state. Most people are different in different states. When I was in Georgia as a young person, Talmadge [Eugene Talmadge. Governor of Georgia from 1933 to 1937 and again from 1941 to 1943] was governor and it was kind of a free-for-all, all of the time. (Laughter) He was quite a character. Then his son became governor, Herman. I always liked Herman. Anyway, politicians are like anybody else. Some of them are competent and some 'em aren't. I don't like the governor we have now, but he's competent. As far as I am concerned, he's just a damn Yankee. (Laughter) Really, he's not part of this culture.

TINKER: But he seems to be doin' an okay job.

GALLANT: They say he is, so far he has not got crooked enough to mess us up. Give him another term.

TINKER: That's what we did with the one before. (Laughs)

GALLANT: That's right the second term is the dangerous one.

TINKER: That's the dangerous part.

GALLANT: So, anyhow.

BARNHART: Actually, I had an article here that you wrote about, are we ready for an eight year governor?

GALLANT: Did I write that? I don't remember ...

BARNHART: Well, it had your name on it, but anyway, there was another article that I did want to ask you about that was rather amusing, written in '74, that "Cursing is a Lost Art".

GALLANT: Yeah it is. Now that's a good subject. (Laughter)

TINKER: Now that's a good subject. (Laughter)

GALLANT: In the Marine Corps, cursing is an art. I mean it's really got rhythm and beauty to it. But the ordinary curser doesn't know enough words to really make it good. It's nasty some of them. A good curse is bad, but really good and Marines are good at thinking up things.

BARNHART: I thought it was interesting where you said they don't ever use the same word twice. (Laughter)

GALLANT: That's right. I know some that can talk for fifteen minutes like that and never use the same word. Uh, that sounds like one of my columns. I wrote one for Easter, I don't know if you have that one.

BARNHART: No I don't think I have that one.

GALLANT: I think it is a pretty good column, I don't know whether I've got it upstairs.

BARNHART: All of the ones I read had a lot of humor in them. You make a good point but you do it in a way that people can laugh.

GALLANT: And not feel mad about it.

BARNHART: There was one headline, whether or not you wrote it, I don't know. The headline is called "The Fox Moves in with the Chickens". It has something to do about Watergate I believe.

GALLANT: I don't remember that one.

BARNHART: "It's difficult to pursue happiness when one has to worry about government constantly." (Hands him copy of article)

GALLANT: Yeah.

BARNHART: Actually, I cut your name off a bit there where you started that column. And I noticed, when you were with the Free Press, did you use the name Thomas then or was there another Thomas?

GALLANT: At one time, I used Tom.

TINKER: Were you trying to hide?

GALLANT: Huh?

TINKER: Were you trying to hide? (Laughter)

GALLANT: No, there was a fellow—I started in the Marine Corp, I had to use Tom because you use your first name and last name. So when I went to the Free Press, I used it, Thomas on the job. But there was a man there [In the Marine Corps] named Tom Gilliland and nobody could keep us straight. I did that for a year or two, I didn't realize it. He told me he was getting my mail and everything so that's when I decided to change it to T. Grady, which is what my grandfather called me. And I did my book with that. Because we got this problem with the Gallant family; my father was Thomas Grady Gallant, I'm Thomas Grady Gallant and my son, eldest son, is Thomas Grady Gallant and his son is Thomas Grady Gallant IV. So there are several of us. He is Thomas III. He's an attorney. He has done all right. Thomas IV has been out of Vanderbilt for two or three years. He's working for his father. His father has several businesses. He's got one that reprocesses water. So he's got a place that does that and he has a business that cleans up construction sites for somebody that builds. They are doing that now for the Whelan Company, I think it is ...

TINKER: Do any of your kids or grandkids write?

GALLANT: Huh?

TINKER: Do any of you kids or grandkids write?

GALLANT: Well, I have a granddaughter who is at the University of Montana getting a Master's Degree but you don't learn to write by getting a degree. It's really a mental process. You can teach somebody the spelling and how to write a decent sentence. But the thought pattern is with the individual concepts. And so, many people who call themselves writers couldn't write a decent letter because their brain is fixated on trying to make something interesting.

TINKER: So is she wanting to be a writer?

GALLANT: She started out wanting to be a poet, which I think is the end of the road for any writing, but anyway. (Laughter) She's out there teaching something and gettin' her Master's in, I guess they think they can teach people to write. I don't know, she had a scholarship, real smart girl. I've got a granddaughter, my daughter's daughter, who got a Master's at the University of Massachusetts. And she had gotten a degree at the University of Tennessee in—not anthropology. Anyway, she gave me that skull, (Points to living room wall) that's a cow's skull. When she was in that I thought we were going to have another scientist in the family. She got her Master's in Policy or something, anyway some sort of policy damn thing. So she got a job immediately in Boston, (Laughs) so I'm not worried about it. Then there's another one who's Elise, my son's

daughter, who got a degree at the University of Georgia in trade or commerce, international trade. So she got a job almost immediately with the Republican National Convention and worked there several years and left. She was in charge of meetings and getting things set up. And she—I found out that she’s working for some psychiatrist group, Psycho Male something, it’s a strange thing. They don’t do anything but have meetings. She’s been to South America and everywhere else with them. And ... another daughter of my son got her Master’s at the University of Washington and she deals with teenagers who are off the beaten track.

TINKER: So none of your kids or grandkids wanted to go into the military?

GALLANT: They are back dragging. They won’t even talk about it. They’re so scared of me because I had been, you know they don’t hardly talk to me much.

TINKER: Did you talk to your kids much about it when they were little?

GALLANT: No, I didn’t talk about it. Except I told their father, “Get him in the military.” (Laughs)

TINKER: That’ll straighten him up. (Laughter)

GALLANT: Yeah, well they all done well in college. Thomas IV who graduated from Vanderbilt and his brother, Hamilton graduated at UT and another son, Christopher is at UT. Then the two daughters I mentioned have graduated. My daughter has a girl, I made that picture in there of them. (Points) People say, “Why aren’t they smiling?” and I say “Because they were mad as hell at me.” (Laughter) That was made out of a blue bathrobe with fluorescent desk lamp for lighting.

TINKER: That’s excellent.

GALLANT: I was a pretty good photographer at one time.

TINKER: When you were covering stories, did you have to be your own photographer?

GALLANT: A lot of the time. The boss wouldn’t send two people to do one story.

TINKER: They couldn’t afford it.

GALLANT: I learned to do it and I would rather do it my own. I processed my film too.

TINKER: Yeah it looks like you know what you’re doing. That’s a really good picture.

BARNHART: The daughter who did the bust (He had pointed out a bust in the living room done by his daughter before the interview started) is she in some sort of art?

GALLANT: That was a newspaper artist when I was at the News and Observer. I was city editor of that. He was cartoonist for that. This bird here, they had a book burning at Winston-Salem—no Rocky Mountain. They banned some books at Rocky Mountain so he drew this picture, or cartoon. He was a cartoonist. Huffaker was his name. It says, “Out darn spot, out I say!” But anyway, he was a very good cartoonist. I thought he did a good job. I kind of agree with that guy. He looks like that guy running for Democratic ...

TINKER: Kerry?

GALLANT: Yeah, he has the same shape face. (Laughter) That long [face], so I think they could use him now. I will show you some other pictures here. I guess they’re all in there on the wall. There’s my daughter’s picture. She’s a little older than this now. Lacy, she was named after her uncle.

TINKER: You have nice looking kids.

BARNHART: Beautiful.

GALLANT: Oh yeah she’s a very pretty girl.

TINKER: Well, what did your wife and kids think about moving around?

GALLANT: Well, I don’t think they—they couldn’t do anything about it. They wanted to eat and that’s what we had to do but they went with me. By the time we moved to Raleigh, they were all in college, they weren’t little. Come in here and I’ll show you these pictures.

TINKER: Okay, we’ll pause this.

GALLANT: Alright.

-----Tape Paused-----

TINKER: Okay, we’re gonna ask you about your books.

GALLANT: Ask me about ‘em.

TINKER: Well, just the basic question, like, when and why? When did you get the idea for the first one and why?

GALLANT: When I was in journalism at Emory, they asked, “Why do you want to be a journalist” and whatever. I said I wanted to write a book about the war. Of course then nobody believed that anybody that said that could do it. So anyway, I went to work for newspapers and about fifteen years after that, I figured, “I can write a book now,” so I did. I wrote *On Valor’s Side* and didn’t have an agent or anything. I sent it to the editor of Doubleday, the manuscript, and about three months later I hadn’t heard anything, so I

called and talked to a secretary up there. I said, "I sent you a manuscript," and told her what the name of it was and she said, "Oh yeah, I know about that." I said, "What are you going to do about it because it's been a long time." She said, "Well, probably can let you know next week because it's before the editorial board, and then it has to go before the board," whatever board they call it, that provides the money they are going to spend on it. So I said good and one day my wife called me at the paper and said that you've got a letter here from Doubleday. I thought well, hell, it's a rejection. So I thought I would wait and go home and look at it. She wanted to open it, so I said open it and the first sentence was, "You have a publisher." Which was good. So, I have a publisher and they sent me the contract and I signed that. They decided that I ought to change the name. I had named it, *They Were Not Ashamed*, which I thought they might read. So anyway, I found a good name, *On Valor's Side*, which is in one of Homer's things. Named the chapters and all that and sent it back. Then they sent me the galley proof and I had lawyer sign it. I had used the real names of people and they said "you ought to change those, it might embarrass somebody." So, I had to go through it and change everybody's name. If you don't think that was a job, my wife helped me with that.

TINKER: How long did it take you to write your manuscript?

GALLANT: Eight months. I was working also so I would come home. Well, fortunately I ...

TINKER: It must have been just pouring out of you. I don't think that is a very long period of time.

GALLANT: No it isn't. I didn't have to do the long research that people do when they write a book. I already knew all this.

TINKER: Well, what was your aim in writing?

GALLANT: I wanted to tell what enlisted men did during warfare and during training.

TINKER: And you just wanted to tell the truth and honor the enlisted man.

GALLANT: I told what I saw. So anyway, it was like what I went through. And I had some reviewers saying that, you know, he is a naïve author. I think most people who go in military from school are a little bit naïve. So anyway, I didn't care because that was the way we were.

TINKER: That's who was fightin' the war.

GALLANT: And we believed in our purpose and we did it. So anyway, I was—I think they told me they had gotten seventeen or eighteen thousand manuscripts and they had taken I think two or three of that bunch and I was one of them. They did a good job, I think, because they had advertised in the New York Times and had they ads around in other places, I'm sure.

TINKER: What year did it finally come out?

GALLANT: She'll have to read it, I don't ...

TINKER: What year was it published?

BARNHART: 1963.

TINKER: '63.

GALLANT: '63. So then, I told them I wanted to write one on Iwo Jima; but I didn't get started on that for about a year or something like that. It was a very difficult book, because, really, it was just thirty days or less and all that death and destruction. So, of course, this one has training period and Guadalcanal and the other one there wasn't any training period. So it's not as long and I really struggled with it. It was not an easy book to write.

TINKER: Did you set out to write with a different style? Were there writers that you looked up to?

GALLANT: I just wrote it like I write. (Laughter)

TINKER: You don't feel like anybody influenced you?

GALLANT: Well maybe somebody, I don't know. I've read so much that I may have—but it's mostly based on what I learned from writing in journalism. Some of these novelists use all this flowery stuff. That isn't the way. I think clean, sharp writing is the best writing. You put it down like it is and don't use big words.

BARNHART: The second book is almost like it's two books combined in one.

GALLANT: Hmm.

BARNHART: Because there is very—or at least I perceived it that way. There is very factual [content] interspersed with this, almost like a novel. It reads like somebody who was there but doesn't read so much, because you don't use the "I". Obviously, you do in this one so this was more of a memoir, *On Valor's Side*?

GALLANT: No, I didn't use any names because I felt like it shouldn't be done. I described people that I knew there and what happened to a lot of them and some of it happened to me. But I just kept that sergeant or corporal. So they would kind of ...

-----END OF TAPE TWO, SIDE TWO-----

TINKER: Okay. This continues an interview, tape three, with T. Grady Gallant and Cynthia Tinker and...

BARNHART: Nancy Barnhart.

TINKER: And we're just talking about your books.

GALLANT: *The Friendly Dead*. I was going to say that *The Friendly Dead*, we didn't use any names, personal names. If I used one, probably, I've forgotten it. Anyhow, you have said it read kind of like a novel, well the book of the month club put *The Friendly Dead* in its catalog. They didn't make it a selection or anything, but it was part of the catalog listing and more or less indicated it was fiction. But it wasn't, and of course it says so in the book that it wasn't, that it isn't. *On Valor's Side* was pretty much recognized because it had names, most every newspaper in the country reviewed it and it got a lot of publicity. Doubleday helped promote it too. But *The Friendly Dead* doesn't have the appeal that *On Valor's Side* had because the subject matter of *The Friendly Dead* is not an appealing sort of thing. It's just what happened. I know one outfit they were kind of mad about it because it didn't sound like the war they had seen in the movies. People don't understand war and they don't know what it is so it's hard to ... They have a concept they think they know, based on what they saw some movie actor do. But that's not the way it is. It is very dreary, hard thing. It's a ... you are in a world of your own, you are in a world within you. It's not a group action in that sense, like a party is. It's the individual thinking, "Should I move over there or move that way or this way?" Sometimes he moves the wrong way and gets shot or killed or steps on a mine. I mean, everything is dangerous. You don't pick up something because you like it, it might blow up. Of course, there are a lot of people who talk about collecting souvenirs in battle, which is ridiculous because a lot of it was booby-trapped.

TINKER: So you didn't see much of that going on?

GALLANT: I didn't see any of it going on. I've got a hand grenade that I got at Iwo but I got a flack jacket, vest sort of thing at Guadalcanal because it was there by where the gun position had been. There wasn't anybody in it. It has six metal plates, one on each side and they used it to avoid shrapnel coming down when they were shooting it. You just don't do that sort of thing on the battlefield unless the battle is over. Then, you know, they did in the Civil War. When the battle was over there were people out picking up stuff and going through people's pockets. But you don't do that in modern battle. The strange thing about modern battle is you don't see anybody in a normal battle. You could see people I'm sure in Baghdad, but where we fought, it was a battlefield and not a city or anything. You don't see them; it's not the vision of Napoleon's troops marching you know, it's just not that way. It's kind of like hunting a rabbit or skunk or something. So anyway, it's a lot different from what people see. And when you watch these news reports, that's not the battle as a rule because a photographer would be stupid to be standing out there. Nothin' they'd like better than to shoot a photographer. So he's kind of at the tail end of it, or far enough away where they don't see him. It's not like being there, kind of like it but, not exactly like it.

TINKER: Okay, well.

GALLANT: You going to quit?

TINKER: I guess we will. (Laughter) I think we've ...

GALLANT: Well, I want you to come back and see us.

TINKER: We appreciate it and appreciate you welcoming us into your home.

BARNHART: I enjoyed meeting you very much.

GALLANT: I enjoyed meeting you both! Of course I knew her I just didn't recognize her. (Laughter)

-----END OF INTERVIEW-----