

Charles Spadaro

Interviewer: Okay, we're at the Nevada State Veteran's Home in Boulder City, Nevada. Today's date is May 3rd, 2006. We're interviewing Charles.

Charles Spadaro: Spadaro.

Interviewer: Spadaro. My name is Shannon Berndt and our cameraman is Ed Feldman. Let's start off by jogging your memory a little bit and tell me a little bit about what you were doing before you were in the service.

Charles Spadaro: Before I went in the service?

Interviewer: Before you went in the service, yeah.

Charles Spadaro: I was a civilian.

Interviewer: Were you married?

Charles Spadaro: No.

Interviewer: No. Were you going to school? Were you going to school, to college?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, college.

Interviewer: Okay and where were you living? Where were you living?

Charles Spadaro: Upstate New York.

Interviewer: Upstate New York.

Charles Spadaro: The capital.

Interviewer: Oh, the capital. So you enlisted into the Marines?

Charles Spadaro: First division.

Interviewer: First division, okay. How come you decided to enlist into the Marines?

Charles Spadaro: Well, I was with another fellow and he wanted to go into the Navy and I wanted to go into the Army so we settled for the Marines.

Interviewer: You both went into the Marines then?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: Cool. When, tell me about your first days in service. How was it?

Charles Spadaro: First what?

Interviewer: Your first days when you were first in the Marines?

Charles Spadaro: Well, I was, I was in South Carolina. That's where I trained. And, then from there I went to where...

Interviewer: You trained in South Carolina and then you went to South Pacific?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: You went to Guadalcanal?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, Guadalcanal.

Interviewer: Okay. Let's see, you joined the services in 1941. Was that after Pearl Harbor had been bombed?

Charles Spadaro: No, before.

Interviewer: It was, oh, it was before?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So you and your friend were just being adventurous before there was a need. What was your job assignment in the Marines?

Charles Spadaro: Job assignment?

Interviewer: Yeah, what did you do, were you?

Charles Spadaro: I was a rifleman.

Interviewer: A rifleman?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay. So, if you were a rifleman did you see combat then?

Charles Spadaro: Oh yeah, four years.

Interviewer: Four years.

Charles Spadaro: In the South Pacific.

Interviewer: That's a long time.

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: And Guadalcanal was it your?

Charles Spadaro: Guadalcanal, yeah.

Interviewer: Was the only place that you were at? In the South Pacific was Guadalcanal the only place you were?

Charles Spadaro: That's the first. We went there from Camp Angus, the _____ (00:03:14) islands.

Interviewer: Okay, did you have many casualties in your unit?

Charles Spadaro: Pardon?

Interviewer: Did you have many casualties in your unit?

Charles Spadaro: In my outfit?

Interviewer: In your outfit did you have many casualties?

Charles Spadaro: Oh yeah, yeah, quite a bit.

Interviewer: What's your most memorable moment that you can think of, a good memory that you have, something that really stands out in your mind from that time?

Charles Spadaro: Well, it was quite, all those campaigns added up pretty good. I can't think of anything that was so special.

Interviewer: Well, what about the food? What kind of food did you have to eat?

Charles Spadaro: Pretty lousy.

Interviewer: You had, did you have C rations?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, K rations too.

Interviewer: C rations, okay. What's the difference between a K ration and a C ration?

Charles Spadaro: A K ration was like a little carton like a... C ration was like canned stuff like at World War I. They had C rations then. We were getting that, too.

Interviewer: You were still getting stuff from World War I?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you have free time?

Charles Spadaro: Free time?

Interviewer: Yeah, free time where you would, could go into a town or visit the countryside?

Charles Spadaro: No towns, it was a jungle.

Interviewer: Oh, okay. So did you ever have free time to just goof off, play ball, or do anything like that?

Charles Spadaro: Do what?

Interviewer: Free time to?

Charles Spadaro: No free time.

Interviewer: No free time just?

Charles Spadaro: Just war.

Interviewer: Just the war the whole time. What about mail? Did you get mail on a regular basis from home?

Charles Spadaro: Did I get married?

Interviewer: No, mail, packages and letters from home?

Charles Spadaro: Oh yeah. We'd get a few, not too many, but a few.

Interviewer: Did they have to catch up with you places?

Charles Spadaro: Huh?

Interviewer: Did they have to catch up with you from where you were?

Charles Spadaro: Well, it took a little time, yeah.

Interviewer: What about when holidays came around? How did you celebrate those?

Charles Spadaro: Just like anything else: war.

Interviewer: Yep, no other. It sounds like you experienced it for a long time. How about when you left, the day you left the service and you were told you could go home? Do you recall that day?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, yeah, that was a good thing. See I was the one that was so _____ (00:06:20) I developed points. So many points made you qualify for discharge.

Interviewer: Oh really?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: So many months you would get points or how did that work?

Charles Spadaro: It was more like years.

Interviewer: Years. And how many points did you have to get before you could go home?

Charles Spadaro: Oh it was like, something like so many and then, as far as points. I don't know how he kept track of that.

Interviewer: Yeah. Did you make a lot of friends?

Charles Spadaro: The whole division.

Interviewer: The whole division, do you keep in contact with them now?

Charles Spadaro: No, most of them died, killed, and I had a few friends.

Interviewer: Where were you, were you still over in Guadalcanal when the war ended?

Charles Spadaro: No, we came home then because see at the points was how long you were overseas and amounted to points and so many months so many points, and...

Interviewer: Where were you when the war ended?

Charles Spadaro: Huh?

Interviewer: Where were you when the war ended?

Charles Spadaro: When the war ended? I was just discharged finally. The points that I told you about accumulated and it did me a lot of good. So I got out.

Interviewer: You got out. What did you do after you got out of the service?

Charles Spadaro: I went home.

Interviewer: You went home?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah.

Interviewer: Did you get a job?

Charles Spadaro: Finally, yes.

Interviewer: What was our job?

Charles Spadaro: When I got out?

Interviewer: Yes.

Charles Spadaro: It's been so long.

Interviewer: Did you meet somebody and get married?

Charles Spadaro: No, not right away.

Interviewer: Not right away?

Charles Spadaro: No. So what else you need?

Interviewer: Are you a member of any of the Veteran's clubs now--the VFW?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, we joined different ones: VFW, Overseas Service. Is this all being taped?

Interviewer: You're a long ways from New York. How did you end up in Boulder City?

Charles Spadaro: Oh I was a civilian then.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, I got a job with a company called House of Fabrics and, you know, it's been so long. It's hard for me to remember. And this company I worked for I went and opened up stores, retail stores, fabrics, a far cry from what I was used to.

Interviewer: Yeah, I remember we used to have a House of Fabrics in Las Vegas.

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, there used to be one here. We had quite a few of them--about 600.

Interviewer: Oh. So that's, you did that after the war, you worked at?

Charles Spadaro: Oh, after I was discharged, yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah. And so, where did you meet your wife at?

Charles Spadaro: California.

Interviewer: In California. Well, that's just about all I have for you to ask unless you have anything you would like to add, any memories jump into your mind, any comments that you would like to make?

Charles Spadaro: You mean about the war?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Charles Spadaro: I think everybody else went through the same thing.

Interviewer: Yes.

Charles Spadaro: I was glad to get out.

Interviewer: Well, you were there a long time.

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, four years.

Interviewer: Yep, four years is a long time to be in a war. You must have saw a lot of things.

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, a lot of action.

Interviewer: Well, I don't have anything. Do you have anything that you want to add?

Cameraman: Can you think of any other places that you were in the Pacific besides Guadalcanal?

Charles Spadaro: Oh yeah, several. Peleliu, I don't know if you remember that. We took a beating there. We lost a lot of men there. I was lucky.

Interviewer: You were, very lucky. So when you would get done with one island then you would go to another island or?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, they called it island hopping. That's how come we won the war.

Interviewer: Yes, because of valiant men like you.

Charles Spadaro: Huh?

Interviewer: From valiant men like you. It says that you had a combat related injury. Did you ever get wounded?

Charles Spadaro: Not in the sense of being wounded. See, things like that.

Interviewer: How did that happen?

Charles Spadaro: Well, in combat.

Interviewer: What would make a mark like that?

Charles Spadaro: Huh?

Interviewer: What would make a mark like that?

Charles Spadaro: A knife.

Interviewer: A knife?

Charles Spadaro: Yeah. We don't talk about that.

Interviewer: Oh. Well, I guess that's all I have for you if you...I thank you very much for sharing your memories with us.

Charles Spadaro: I wish I could have done better.

Interviewer: Oh, you did great. You did great.

Charles Spadaro: Where you folks from?

Interviewer: Down in Henderson at the library.

Charles Spadaro: What?

Interviewer: The Henderson Library.

Charles Spadaro: The Henderson Library. Oh, that's nearby.

Interviewer: Yeah, it's not very far away.

Cameraman: Yes, we work together.

Charles Spadaro: Are you married?

Cameraman: I'm not.

Interviewer: No.

Charles Spadaro: No.

Interviewer: No, I have kids his age. My kids are his age.

Charles Spadaro: Your kids are his latest?

Interviewer: His age.

Charles Spadaro: His age? Oh.

Interviewer: I'm a lot older than he is.

Charles Spadaro: You don't look it.

Interviewer: Oh, well, thank you. Alright, well, thank you so much.

Charles Spadaro: How did you get this information?

Interviewer: It's through the, the whole United States is taking Veteran's stories and it's through the Library of Congress. So we're taking anybody's story who were willing to share them with us. We'll submit them to the Library of Congress and then they will publish them and put them on the internet, put, store them in archives and things like that.

Charles Spadaro: Oh, that's very interesting.

Interviewer: Yeah, and we appreciate your willingness to share with us.

Charles Spadaro: Huh?

Interviewer: We appreciate your willingness to share your story with us.

Charles Spadaro: I don't. I'm not that crazy about sharing it.

Interviewer: Well, I kind of got that feeling but, you know, we're willing to listen to whatever you want to tell us, as much or as little, so.

Charles Spadaro: So you're out of Washington originally?

Interviewer: Well.

Charles Spadaro: D.C.?

Interviewer: Yes, it came from Washington D.C. but we didn't live there, no.

Charles Spadaro: I don't have any interesting stories for you.

Interviewer: Well, I've asked all my pertinent questions, so.

Charles Spadaro: I'm just lucky to come back alive.

Interviewer: That's right. That's, you were very lucky.

Charles Spadaro: Yeah, sure were because a lot of them weren't so lucky.

Interviewer: Yes.

Charles Spadaro: That's the sad part.

Interviewer: That is, that is. Alright, well, thank you so much.

Charles Spadaro: I hope it gives you some credit.

Interviewer: Oh it will, it will. Thank you.

Charles Spadaro: Alrighty.