Transcript: Raymond Muzquiz

Today is Friday, June 29, 2012. My name is James Crabtree. This afternoon I'll be interviewing Mr. Raymond Muzquiz. This interview is being conducted by telephone. I'm at the General Land Office building in Austin, Texas, and Mr. Muzquiz is at his residence in San Antonio, Texas. This interview is being conducted in support of the Texas Veterans Land Board Voices of Veterans Oral History Program. Sir, thank you very much for taking the time out of your schedule to talk to us. It's always an honor to be able to interview a veteran, especially a Korean War veteran such as yourself. The first question, sir, would you tell us just a little bit about your childhood and your life before you went into the Army?

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, I joined the Army when I was 16 years old. I was going to graduate from Tech High School in May of 1951, but a lot of my friends were a little bit older than I was. I played football and I looked older than I actually was. The draft was going on. Some of 'em were volunteering, some of 'em were being drafted, and I didn't want to get left behind. I wanted to join the Army and go with them. So, well, I told a fib about how old I was. How I was born on March 14, 1934. But I produced a birth certificate that said I was born March 14, 1933.

How were you able to get an altered birth certificate?

Raymond Muzquiz: How did I do it?

Yes sir.

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, it was very easy. I went to a stationery store that was at Broadway and, no, not Broadway. Yeah, Broadway and Jefferson. There used to be a stationery store there by the name of Paul Anderson, or Anderson. I went there and bought a brand new fountain pen and didn't put ink in it. Then I walked over to the . . . I didn't have a car. I walked over to the Health Department and ordered a birth certificate and they gave me the . . . While the lady was filling out the birth certificate, I asked her if I could fill up my fountain pen with her inkwell. I drew the same kind of ink that she was using to fill out the birth certificate. And, after she handed me the birth certificate, they only cost a couple of bucks at that time, I walked back over to, I think it's Paul Anderson stationery store, and bought a bottle of ink eradicator. Comes in a very, very small bottle with a little brush on the end of it. And I very carefully, very meticulously, erased, or blotted out the four. And then I took out my ballpoint pen with the same color ink, and I made it a three. And then I went over to Fort Sam Houston. No, I went over to the arsenal and I joined the Army.

No one ever questioned it, did they?

Raymond Muzquiz: Told my dad and my mom that all my friends were being drafted and that I wanted to join the Army and go with 'em. Otherwise, they were going to draft me anyway and I would have choice of duty stations if they would sign permission for me.

As a 17-year-old.

Raymond Muzquiz: At 17 years old, I was only 16, but even at 17 years old, you had to have your parents' permission.

That's right. Did your parents know that you had changed it?

Raymond Muzquiz: After signing the permission slip for me, then I walked back over to the arsenal and I joined the Army.

Did your parents know that you had changed the birth certificate?

Raymond Muzquiz: Oh, of course not. I didn't tell 'em that.

They just thought you were going in at 16?

Raymond Muzquiz: I just told 'em I was gonna be drafted anyway just like they were. I said, "I'm gonna graduate from high school in May, but I wanna join now so I can go with my friends. Because if they draft me after May, they're gonna be gone and I'm gonna be serving in basic training with people I don't know." So they signed the papers for me and I went back over to the arsenal and joined the Army.

How long did it take before you were on your way to boot camp?

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, I spent three days, the first three days of . . . I guess you could call it processing at Fort Sam Houston. They issued uniforms. They submitted a battery of tests. They gave me a physical examination and all kinds of shots and vaccinations. And after three days, I boarded a troop train with about, I guess, 50 or 60 other GIs. And one sergeant was in charge of the boxcar. Everything was by troop train at that time. And I went to Fort Eustis, Virginia. That's the home of the Transportation Corps. The Army. And I wanted to be in the infantry 'cause, you know, everybody was very patriotic in those days. There were a lot of patriotic songs after World War II. You know, "Yankee Doodle Dandy," and all that stuff. So I wanted to be a hero like Audie Murphy. And I started basic training just a few days after I arrived there at Fort Eustis, Virginia. And in those days, basic training was divided into two parts. The first part was eight weeks of infantry basic. The second week was . . . The second eight weeks of advanced infantry basic. So after the first eight weeks, they weeded about half of us out, and they said, "You have to go to specialty school." And I told them, "Well, my other friends are going to the second half of infantry school and I wanna go with them." And I was told, "Well, you can't go with them." I said, "Why?" They said, "Well, you scored too high on the entrance exam. You're overqualified to be in the infantry." So they sent me to 21 weeks of railway telegraphy school. Fort Eustis being the home of the Transportation Corps. They used the American Morse Code. So I learned the American Morse Code.

Was that hard for you to learn or was it something that came naturally to you?

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, evidently, in the entrance exams, I remembered that they threw in all kinds of questions and all kinds of little code questions. I mean all kinds of little characters and some American Morse Code characters. And evidently, I scored quite high. That's why the selected me. There was only about three of us that were going to different specialty schools, that went to the American Morse Code railway telegraphy school. Twenty-one weeks, I believe it was.

That's a very long school.

Raymond Muzquiz: Yeah, it was a very long course. It takes a long time to learn that American Morse Code. The American Morse Code is the code they used in the frontier days, you know. It goes by wire, not wireless. And in those days, you know, they had a lot of troop trains running all over the country. And in Europe, and so forth. I graduated pretty high in the class, and I think after I graduated, I graduated as an intermediate-speed railway telegrapher. After we graduated, we were told that half of us were going to Europe and the other half were going to the Far East. To Japan and Korea. And I thought they were gonna . . . One of the instructors that told me that they used telegraphy in Europe more than they did in the Far East. And that I would more likely go to Europe. I didn't particularly wanna go to Europe but I didn't have any choice. They said, "Half of you are going to Europe, half of you are going to Japan and Korea." Well, I thought they were gonna pick out so many people randomly from the list. But they didn't. They just went right down the alphabet. A through M went to the Far East. To Japan and Korea. And N through Z went to Europe. So a couple of days later, I boarded a troop train again and we came down the east coast, down to, through San Antonio. And I got off at the SP Railroad Depot here in San Antonio. I had like a five-day delay en route. They called it a five-day delay en route. It was actually a furlough. And five days later, I had to meet the sergeant again at the SP Depot, and board another troop train, and go up the west coast to Fort Lewis, Washington, which is just below Seattle. And spent maybe a day or two there. Then they called us all out and we boarded a troop ship. The troop ship we boarded was the USS Marine Phoenix. The USS Marine Phoenix, when they laid the keel in the mid . . . Sometime in the mid or late 1930s, it was going to be a luxury liner. But when World War II started, they converted it to a troop ship. The upper decks had swimming pools and tennis courts and shuffleboards and all kinds of luxury stuff. We boarded that troop ship. I think it held . . . It was a one-stacker. There was about six or eight thousand troops and a couple of thousand military dependents on the upper decks. They were segregated from the troops in the lower part of the ship. Well, the thing that happened was having a name like Muzquiz, most people think it's a Polish name, not a Spanish name. And when they called us out to board the ship, you know, there's always a few people left standing there. And they called out, "Anybody . . ." You know they boarded us in groups of 40 or 50, something like that. And as you go on, you know, you salute the officer of the deck and ask for permission to go on board. It takes a long time to board. And then they always call out, "Anybody whose name we didn't call out, raise your hand." There's about a dozen of us standing there that they didn't call out. So I raised my hand, along with the other guys. And then they checked us off and they said, "What's your name?" And I said, "Ray Muzquiz." "How do you spell that?" And I spelled it to him. "What's your serial number?" I gave him my serial number. "What's your date of birth?" Gave him my date of birth. "Okay, here you are way down here. I found you on the list. Okay, permission to go aboard." So I went aboard. We sailed. I think the end of that day, we sailed. It took 19 days, the northern route through the North Pacific. And that was a beautiful trip. You know, it was like going on a luxury liner. I've often told my friends, "I've taken about four or five cruise ships all over the South Pacific and the North Pacific and it didn't cost me a penny. They even paid me to be there." So all the time I was on that ship, the whole 19 days, it was like a sightseeing tour, you know. There were several of us that were, you know, 17, 18, 16 years old. I had already turned 17 years old. I spent most of my time, you know, chasing flying fish that would jump on the deck. Admiring the whales that trailed the ship. You know, they used to dump their garbage out the fantail. And looking at the porpoises. And a couple of us younger, more adventurous types, like myself, finally found our way to the inner circles of that ship, up to the upper decks. And here's a bunch of young looking, nice looking

teenage girls, military dependents going to Japan. And we found our way up there and they opened the door for us and let us in. So we went up there and we went swimming with 'em, and played shuffleboard and volleyball, and all kinds of stuff, until the officer of the deck discovered us.

I'll bet.

Raymond Muzquiz: And then he chased us back down and then locked the gate. You know, they chewed out those girls and then we couldn't get up there anymore. But we got away with it for two or three days.

That's great.

Raymond Muzquiz: Every day I would check the . . . You know, with 5,000 or 6,000 troops on board, they used to post long lists of people on the bulletin boards. And our only duty was to check the bulletin boards to see if we, to see what duty we drew that day or that week. Whether we drew KP in the kitchen or deck duty or latrine duty, to clean the bathrooms, or scrub the deck, or what have you. Well, every day I would check those lists and my name was never on those lists. Never. So I had a ball on that ship. I even volunteered to work in the kitchen two or three days and peel potatoes. I volunteered to do deck duty. I mopped the latrines. I cleaned the troop quarters downstairs, just to have something to do. The rest of the time, you know, I spent on deck trying to catch flying fish, and looking at the whales and the porpoises, and so forth. During the war, you know, our ship was zigzagging across the northern route of the North Pacific, and we were under escort. I think we had a destroyer escort on both sides of us. You could barely see 'em on the horizon but they were always there.

Why was your ship zigzagging on its way to Japan?

Raymond Muzquiz: Why was it zigzagging?

Yes.

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, there was a war going on. I guess they were afraid it might be torpedoed or attacked. That's they typical tactic for the Navy to do, you know. It's just a slow zigzag pattern that they followed.

Sure. I understand why they would do it to avoid submarines. I just didn't know why they would do that in the Korean War because the North Koreans, I don't believe, had any submarines.

Raymond Muzquiz: You know, but this was 1951. The Korean War was going on hot and heavy by then. Anyway, 19 days later, we docked at Yokohama, Japan. And the same routine in reverse. They called out all our names and we de-boarded and went ashore in groups of 50 or 100, or whatever. And then there was several dozen of us left standing. And the same procedure. "Anybody whose name we didn't call, raise your hand." Well, I'm one of the ones that raised my hand and they couldn't find me on the list. They said, "Where have you been? We thought you had fallen overboard or gone AWOL or missed the ship in Seattle, Washington. At Fort Lewis." I said, "Well, hell, I've been here on board all the time. Ask my sergeant. Ask the compartment sergeant. He knows I've been here." He said, "Well, you never reported for duty. We had you on KP duty. We had you on latrine duty, on deck duty, this and that." I said, "Hell, I volunteered to

do all that just to stay busy. You can ask the officer of the deck. He even chased us off of the dependents' portion of the ship upstairs where the swimming pool is." So finally, he kept looking and looking and looking, and he finally found my name because he asked me for my date of birth and my serial number about three times. They had spelled my name . . . Instead of Muzquiz, they had spelled it Wuzquiz, with a W. Well, how in the hell am I gonna . . . I wasn't looking for Wuzquiz, I was looking for Muzquiz on the . . . I checked it every day. And he said, "Well, okay, here you are." So we got off of the ship, finally, there at Yokohama. That was our jumping off point to go to Korea. So I learned later. I didn't know at the time. At Yokohama, we spent, I think two weeks, and we took advanced infantry basic. We went through the obstacle course, you know, on our hands and knees, with real machine guns firing overhead. We went through the artillery range, where they fired live artillery rounds over you. And, all kinds of advanced infantry basic. So I thought to myself, "Well here's, this is gonna be my chance to be in the infantry after all this advanced infantry training." So two weeks later, we boarded some Navy liberty ships. The World War II liberty ships. And crossed the Sea of Japan. I think it was a seven-day trip. There were, oh, six or eight thousand of us. We made an amphibious landing at Inchon, and I reported . . . That's where I joined the 1st Cavalry Division. I had been assigned to the 15th Replacement Company at Inchon. The 1st Cav Division was in reserve, taking on replacements and ammunition and being resupplied while other infantry outfits were on the front line fighting. You know, Seoul was still on fire. So after I got to Inchon, all of the guys that I came in with were going to their . . . Were boarding troop trucks and leaving for the front to join their outfits. Four or five days later, I'm still there, you know. I'm about the only one still there and the war is going on hot and heavy, and the fighting is gettin' pretty close to us there. There at Inchon, they had already established a beachhead. That wasn't the initial invasion, you know. MacArthur had made the initial invasion the year before. Eight or nine months before. The port had already been secured. So four or five days later, all I'm doing is walking guard duty. Two on and four off. You know, for three days, two hours on, four hours off. And the most interesting thing that happened to me . . . Of course, they warn you, "You work in the guard duty on the outer perimeter. Be on the alert. Don't let anybody approach you without a password." And they give you the password. And the sergeant of the guard takes you and posts you, and when you do guard duty, you walk like about, oh, 50 or 40 yards in one direction, you do an about-face and go 50 or 40 yards in the other direction, and you cross the other guard that's covering the other 40 or 50 yards. One night, in the middle of the night, here comes the officer of the guard checking on us. Not the sergeant of the guard, the officer of the guard, brand new second lieutenant. And, of course, we're walking guard duty with an M1 rifle at port arms with a fixed bayonet, the way we're supposed to. That's the way they taught us to do it. And I heard something. It was getting dark. I heard ruffling in the brush and I challenged him, you know. The typical challenge in the Army is, "Halt, who goes there?" And he's supposed to answer me in a certain way, you know, like so and so, officer of the guard. And I said, "Advance and be recognized. What's the password?" And he was a brand new second lieutenant. He started stuttering and he couldn't remember the damn password. So I poked him in the chest with my bayonet. This was the winter of 1951. It was colder than hell over there, like about 30 degrees below zero. Luckily he was wearing a real heavy field jacket and a sweater and all kinds of stuff, but I did break the skin. Well, he called his sergeant of the guard after I did that, after I recognized him. After I did that, he remembered the password, and just about that time the sergeant of the guard came up there and reprimanded him. I never heard a sergeant reprimand a second lieutenant. That sergeant did to him because . . .

That's good.

Raymond Muzquiz: He couldn't remember the password.

That's right.

Raymond Muzquiz: So I was relieved and he posted, the sergeant of the guard posted my relief, and the lieutenant, the officer of the day, the lieutenant of the guard, he said, "I want you to go back to the CP. I'm gonna report you to the captain," the captain of the guard, "because you stabbed me with your bayonet." So I had to follow him to the company CP over there, and he went in there and he tried to get me in trouble. And I told the captain what had happened, and the captain looked at the lieutenant and then he looked at me, and I said, "You know I had my trigger . . . I had my bayonet in his chest and I had my finger on the trigger, and I had already clicked my safety off," you know. On an M1 rifle, the safety is inside the trigger guard. You just push your trigger finger forward and it goes click, and you're ready to shoot. I came within a split second of shooting him, and I hate to use the language that he said but he said, "You shoulda shot that son of a bitch, shoulda known better." He said, "You did the right thing, Private Muzquiz." I was just a private. He said, "Lieutenant, sit down over there." He said, "Mr. Muzquiz, go back to the barracks and get some sleep 'cause you're gonna go back on guard duty in two hours." And that was one of the most interesting that happened to me then.

Well, that's good. I'm glad the captain . . .

Raymond Muzquiz: Three of our days later, I'm still there doing guard duty.

I'm glad the captain, you know, saw that you were in your right to do that. I know in the Marine Corps, there's 11 general orders and they joke that the 12th is to walk your post from plank to plank, take no guff from any rank. So it doesn't matter what rank they are. You have a job to do as a sentry . . .

Raymond Muzquiz: You know, I came within a split second of pulling the trigger and shooting him, and if I'da shot him, I'm sure I would have killed him.

Oh sure. Point blank.

Raymond Muzquiz: A few days later, everybody was boarding the troop trucks again, and I'm still there doing guard duty. So I went to the sergeant, and he said, "Well, I don't know. I'll go ask the personnel officer why you're still here." Everybody's boarding the troop trucks and going to join their outfit. So he came back and he said, "Well, the officer, the personnel officer is trying to figure out what to do with you." I said, "Well, what do you mean what to do with me?" He said, "Yeah." He said, "Your MOS is a railway telegraphy, telegraph operator." He said, "Well, guess what?" I said, "What?" He said, "Well, we ain't got no railroads that are operational in Korea that use American Morse Code telegraphy." He said, "So he's gonna call Army Corps headquarters in Tokyo and find out why in the world they sent you here." So, it just so happened, so I continued doing guard duty. A couple of days later, a crew from the 13th Signal Company came by and they found out that I was there, and they told the personnel officer that most of them were Army reserves and draftees, and they had worked for the railroad in World War II, and they were International Morse Code operators and railway telegraphy, and they knew both the American and the International Morse Code. So they took me to the 13th Signal

Company, and they had all worked for the railroad in civilian life before they were drafted during World War II. And when they were drafted during World War II, they converted them from the American Morse Code to the International Morse Code, so they told the personnel officer that they would take me and teach me the differences. There's very little difference between the . . . There's only like about seven or eight characters of the alphabet that are different between American Morse Code and International Morse Code other than the sound, you know. International Morse Code is a continuous tone, and American Morse Code is a click click click sound. But it doesn't take long to learn it. They took me and I worked in the radio shack with them up on the front lines where they had their radio trucks, and within about, oh, it took me about a month to get used to the sound of the International Morse Code and become proficient at low speed. So I kinda did like about OJT for about a month, then I got up to speed, and then I started working on my own in the radio shack. That's how I got to be in the 13th Signal Company. And I spent the rest of my time over there in Korea working in the radio truck. I made staff sergeant, and I was in charge of one of the what we called a jump team.

That's pretty quick to have made staff sergeant that quickly, right?

Raymond Muzquiz: Yeah, I was barely 18 years old.

That's pretty amazing. So that was, what was that like?

Raymond Muzquiz: The attrition rate was pretty high during the Korean War.

Did they pay you as a staff sergeant?

Raymond Muzquiz: Oh yeah.

So you were, what were you, like an E-6?

Raymond Muzquiz: No, at that time they didn't have . . . At that time the staff sergeant was an E-5.

E-5, okay. But still, that's pretty impressive.

Raymond Muzquiz: Yeah. Now a staff sergeant is an E-6, but back then during the Korean War, they didn't have the three-stripe sergeants. They did away with them after World War II. So during the Korean War, you went from a corporal . . . Well, they had, when I went in, I was a recruit which was, I think, and E-nothing. You went to a private E-1, you went to a private E-2, and then you went to a private E-3. A private E-3 was a PFC, and an E-4 was a corporal. An E-5 was the staff sergeant. They didn't have the three-stripe sergeants during the Korean War. They did away with them after World War II for some reason, I don't know why. So I was a staff sergeant.

Let me ask you, sir, a little bit about Morse Code. I think it's impressive that you knew that. How many words, when you were at your most proficient, how many words a minute could you do?

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, I was proficient at 35 words a minute. We had three different radio nets over there in Korea. Japan was an occupied nation. The 1st Cav was the division that McArthur had chosen to be the Army of Occupation, so the radio net that we used to communicate back to Tokyo with, to Army headquarters, McArthur had already been relieved by

Truman and replaced by General Ridgway. And we operated our radio net back to Tokyo at a high speed, International Morse Code of 30 to 35 words a minute. Down to battalion and regiment level, we operated like at about, oh, 15 to 18 words a minute because those guys didn't have the experience or the schooling that we did. I had to go to . . . When we came back from Korea to Japan, in order to keep my rank, I had an MOS as an intermediate-speed railway telegrapher, in order to keep my rank as a staff sergeant, I had to go to 21 weeks of high-speed radio school at a little island called Etajima, Japan. It was the southernmost island of Japan. That's where the Japanese naval academy was during World War II or before World War II. I spent 21 weeks there going to school, and during those 21 weeks is where I learned, you know, radio theory and how to tune our receivers and transmitters, and a little bit about radio theory, and how to increase my proficiency. I was proficient copying up to 35 words a minute. I could copy in spurts, you know, a little bit higher. And I could use a J-37 hand key to send with, pretty fast also.

Do you still remember Morse Code?

Raymond Muzquiz: I used to practice a lot. Are you a radio operator?

No sir. I was just curious because I know it seems like, to me it seems like it would be something that would be very hard to be able to pick up and grasp.

Raymond Muzquiz: It takes a lot of practice, a lot of practice.

I'll bet because you're just dealing with dots, the sounds of dots and dashes, right?

Raymond Muzquiz: Yeah, dots and dashes. But you don't learn it that way. If you learn . . . You know, you pick up a boy scout manual or something like that, you'll see the ABCDEFG, you'll see the alphabet. You'll see so many dots and so many dashes but you don't learn it that way in the Army. In the Army when you go to radio school to learn the International Morse Code, they do it verbally. They say, "This is an A," and they'll send it to you, di-dah, real fast. "This is a Z," dah-dah-di-dit. "This is a Q," dah-dah-di-dah. And so forth. They'll send you five letters at a time real fast. I mean, like about 35 words a minute, and that's the way you learn it. And you'll keep copying those same five words for about three days, and then they'll teach you another five words for another three or four days. And then you never look at the alphabet because when you're copying, they want you to recognize the sound so you can write it down.

Sure.

Raymond Muzquiz: You can't be counting at 35 words a minute, you can't be counting dits and dahs. You'll never learn it.

It has to become instinctive to where you know the sound, you know the letter when you think about it.

Raymond Muzquiz: Yeah, it's just like language, you know. When you have to stop and spell every word that you talk and think about how you make . . . You say talk, you have to make an L or A or an L or a K, you'll never get anywhere. You don't learn it that way. And after they starting mixing up all the letters, they'll throw in some numbers. Then they'll throw in some Z and Q signals which are code signals meaning something to a radio operator, like ZBO.

When you learned Morse Code, once you learned it, is it kind of like reading in that you wouldn't forget it, or was it something you had to constantly practice to stay proficient?

Raymond Muzquiz: You never forget it. I still have my J-37 practice key that I can sit down and send code, practice to myself.

That's great.

Raymond Muzquiz: As a matter of fact, after I got out of the Army, I had a ham radio operator's license so I had my own radio station for several years. I did quite a bit of sending and receiving. I still have my radio equipment here in the garage on top of a filing cabinet. It's all outdated now because I haven't been active in that but I can still copy the code.

That's great.

Raymond Muzquiz: It's a lot of fun, a lot of fun.

When you transmit the letters, you have to leave a little bit of a space, right, between the next letter? How long is that gap because to me, to somebody that doesn't know Morse Code, when you hear it, it just sounds like a whole series of dots and dashes just running together.

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, the space is very, very, very short.

So you have to train yourself to hear that space.

Raymond Muzquiz: If you're a low-speed radio operator which is like around 10 to 12 words a minute, the spaces are a little longer. If you're a 35 words a minute for a high-speed radio operator, they're very, very short, but you don't count the spaces either. You just recognize the words, the characters and the words. All the words are five-letter code groups. You don't . . . I can copy plain text but it's harder to copy plain text like . . . You know, somebody can pick up a newspaper and bang out International Morse Code from an article in the newspaper, and you have a harder time reading what is being said than you do a five-letter code group because the five-letter code group is just harder to copy, it comes through faster and you have to . . . In order to copy 25, for example, if you're proficient at 35 words a minute, that means you're copying 35 five-letter code groups per minute.

So every word had a five-letter code.

Raymond Muzquiz: Every word has five letters. In the Army, when you communicate with another radio operator, whether it be down at battalion level or Army level or division level or regiment level, if you send them a code signal, you say, "You have a ZBO1." ZBO is, "I have a message for you." One is, "I have one message for you." The next indicator is, like 500. It's, "I have ZBO1 500." That means you have one message for him of 500 words. And then you start spitting out. Well, you've got to be able to retain, in order to copy 35 words a minute, you've got to be able to retain at least two five-letter code groups in your head at one time before you write down the next one, and it takes a lot of training and experience to do that.

And then also you mentioned the testing. You have to have the aptitude for it too. I think there are probably some people that even if you tried to train them might not ever be able to pick up how to do that. It seems pretty complex.

Raymond Muzquiz: That's why it takes so long to learn that. One of the most interesting things that happened to me when I was in Japan was . . . I don't know if you . . . For a long time we were sworn to secrecy for so many years. There was a radar observation point in Japan called Wakkanai. It was an Air Force radar observation point, you know, on the island of Hokkaido, the northernmost island. It's winter like about nine months, ten months out of the year. It's always snowing and it's always frozen. And the Air Force had an observation tower over there where they had their radar antennas underneath those camouflage white domes, you know, where they would track the enemy submarines cruising the Sea of Japan, and enemy ships and so forth. So one day they selected about, oh, I think about eight of us. We were all staff sergeants, high-speed radio operators. And we were briefed on what to do. They said there was gonna be a Navy submarine cruising the Sea of Japan charting the waters of the Chinese mainland. And if that American submarine got in trouble, we were going to be monitoring several frequencies. So what the Army did was they scheduled two battalions to hold maneuvers in the mountains right outside of Hokkaido, on Hokkaido right outside of Wakkanai, and they were having war maneuvers, playing games up there. And our communications officer made arrangements with the Air Force to borrow a room inside of their observation point there where they had those antennas. And we went over there and set up a whole bunch of very sophisticated receivers. You know, we had the top of the line receivers. They were Collins receivers at that time, C-O-L-L-I-N-S. We had a whole bank of Collins receivers, like about six or eight of 'em, and they had three radio operators in a little ol' room that must have been like about eight feet by 12 feet. There were three of us on duty there all the time. We were monitoring like about four different frequencies at one time, but to make sure nobody would miss anything, there was three of us on duty listening to four different frequencies on those receivers. The game was that if the submarine got in trouble, they were supposed to broadcast a distress signal that was a coded signal. It was a very brief signal, very, very, very fast, very, very faint, very distinct signal. It was a coded signal, and we had to memorize that signal. That's what we were looking for. We had a code book. Every so many hours, that submarine would emit a little burp. We had to memorize what that signal meant. That signal meant, "We're down there, we're running silent." That's where the saying came from. "We're running silent, we're running deep." What they were doing is they were charting the coastline of China and Japan. We did that for about two weeks, and they never got . . . I think the way they did it was, they never put up their periscope. I heard later from a dependable and reliable source that what they did was they floated a little bitty antenna on a little balloon or something like that . . .

A buoy.

Raymond Muzquiz: That just barely broke the water, and that's where the signal came from. They never raised their periscope. They were running silent and running deep. That was, you know, 60 years ago.

Sure, yeah, that's high tech.

Raymond Muzquiz: So every time we heard that signal, we had to keep a log of it. And then our communications officer would come by and verify that. We had to acknowledge the signal. We knew that they were still there so they would know that we were still there listening. And according to our code book, if we received their little burp on a certain frequency at a certain time, we would answer them with a certain signal on a different frequency at a different time, and they would know that we were still there listening for 'em in case they got in trouble. Well,

that went on for about several weeks. One day, after I was discharged, after that assignment was over, that was supposed to have been secret for so many years because the Air Force was flying observation planes over the Chinese and Russian coastlines. They would accidentally overfly the coastline and a couple of 'em got shot up and maybe a couple of 'em got shot down. They would do that on purpose in order to distract the MiG fighter planes that were flying along the coast looking out for their submarines all the time, to draw the MiGs away from them.

Yes sir.

Raymond Muzquiz: And that's why a bunch of those Air Force observation planes got shot up and maybe a couple of 'em got shot down a couple of times.

Well, sir, we're almost out of time but I really want to . . .

Raymond Muzquiz: Years later, after I was out of the Army, and I served 10 years on the police department here in San Antonio, and six years in the narcotics bureau . . .

Yes sir.

Raymond Muzquiz: And then I went to the U.S. Marshall Service and I was a district supervisor, the Western District of Texas. We had offices from Waco, Austin, San Antonio, Midland, Pecos, Odessa. We even had a magistrate in Big Bend country, and our biggest field office was in El Paso. It was over a thousand miles from one end of the western district to the other end. One day out of the clear blue, they were trying some, during the Vietnam era where you had all those protestors going on and our ex-attorney general, I forget what his name was, was defending Father Berrigan . . .

Yeah, Ramsey Clark.

Raymond Muzquiz: Yeah, Ramsey Clark. They were having that trial of Berrigan, and Ramsey Clark was defending him. I was at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Well, I was assigned to go to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, because the federal judge over there had been . . . I was a security specialist. I was in charge of court security and personal security and judicial security and witness security here in the western district. They sent me on a special assignment over there to take over the judge's personal security because his family had been threatened and he had been threatened, and we had a detail like, they sent like about 30 or 40 deputy U.S. marshals from all over the country over there, and I had to go over there and write up an SOP for 'em, and post 'em and brief 'em, and so forth. Well, it just so happened, just for the hell of it, I still had my ham radio license and my little J-37 battery-operated code key, and I put it in my briefcase just for the heck of it. I reported to the marshal's office over there like I was supposed to. They had left me a marshal's car at the airport where I flew into Harrisburg, and I got in the car and I drove to the federal building, and not ever wanting to be late, I got there like about an hour or an hour and a half early, and the GSA guards had to unlock the building after I identified myself and showed them my orders. And they let me into the marshal's office and everything was dark in there. And they said, "Well." They turned on a little light for me. They said, "Well, usually these people on the special assignment over here are all posted on the security details that you're gonna be supervising. Nobody's gonna come into the office until about 8:30." And it's about 7 o'clock. I sat down at a desk and I'm just sitting there going through my notebook with just very dim light, and I opened my briefcase to review my notes and start writing an SOP for the

different positions where I was gonna post these deputy marshals on the judge's security detail. I took out this J-37 hand key and I tuned it up, I adjusted it, and I started just off the top of my head sending code, just nothing in particular, just kind of like talking to myself in Morse Code. Well, I was sitting with my back to a door to my left-hand side, and I saw a shadow walking into the squad room. It was this big squad room. There was about 15 or 20 desks in there, dimly lit. And I see this guy walking in right in front of me and I'm still practicing with my code key, and all of a sudden, just about 10 feet away from me, he stops. He comes to an abrupt halt and he turns around and he said, pardon the language, he says, "I'll be god-damned. I was on that submarine." I had unconsciously sent that little recognition signal on my code key, just off the top of my head. And he turned around and walked over to the desk, turned my code key around and sent his recognition code back at me. And I said, "Well, I'll be damned. You sure were." I never even laid eyes on the guy. I didn't even know who he was. It turned out that he was an inspector with the witness protection program, the U.S. Marshall Service. He was a marshal also. I had never laid eyes on him before in my life until that day.

That's a great story, sir.

Raymond Muzquiz: That was a pleasant surprise. Introduced ourselves and, you know, made small talk for about five or 10 minutes, and then he had to go on my assignment and I had to go on mine, and I haven't seen him since. That was probably one of the most interesting things that ever happened to me.

Sir, I really appreciate you taking the time today to share with us some of your memories of your time in the service. On behalf of Commissioner Patterson and everyone here at the General Land Office, we want to thank especially for your service to our country. We're very thankful for that. As I mentioned before the interview, in about a week or so we'll be sending you copies of this interview on CDs along with a letter and certificate from the Commissioner. So we'll have that to you soon. You've got my number, sir, so feel free to give me a call any time.

Raymond Muzquiz: Okay, will do.

Yes sir. Thank you very much. Have a good weekend.

Raymond Muzquiz: Well, thank you very much for calling and a happy weekend for you also.

Yes sir, take care. Bye bye.

Raymond Muzquiz: Yes sir. Goodbye.