

SPENCER JAMES

SPENCER: My name is Spencer C. James, Jr. and I was a radio operator, radioman 3rd class and that was on the LST 534. What did I do on the ship? The radio operator for one thing and I kept the batteries up the second thing, small stores band the third thing and whatever else was available probably.

LINDA: How old were you when you when you went into the service.

SPENCER: I was 18 when I went in and I turned 19 in the middle of the year.

LINDA: When is your birthday.

SPENCER: July 17, 1924.

LINDA: That was practice start over.

SPENCER: My name is Spencer C. James, Jr. I was a radioman 3rd class on LST 534 and the jobs on the ship that I had I was a radio operator first of all, the battery keeper second of all and small stores man maybe third.

LINDA: How old were you when you went into the service?

SPENCER: I was 18 years older when I went into the service.

LINDA: Where were you? Did you get letters? Were you drafted?

SPENCER: I got drafted, was sent to Albany, got the okay to come out of Albany and away for a week and then go to San , Lake Geneva, not Lake Geneva what is it, the one that turns colors. Lake Seneca. That is like a Camilian that lake will change colors for you.

LINDA: So that is where you did boot camp?

SPENCER: Boot camp yes.

LINDA: What happened after boot camp?

SPENCER: Well after boot camp some of us got a little liberty and then we got sent to radio operators school at Miami University in Oxford Ohio.

LINDA: And then what?

SPENCER: Well Oxford Ohio we graduated got sent to lets see I think it was Salamons, Maryland which is on the end, in side of cape Chesapeake. A lonely place.

LINDA:

SPENCER: No, bugs galore.

LINDA: How long were you there with the bugs?

SPENCER: 2 or 3 months.

LINDA:

SPENCER: It was training, they called it LCI training at that time. And we did go out on an LCI and train a little bit and then after that we got picked and sent to LST 534, Evansville, Indiana.

LINDA: How did you get there?

SPENCER: We took the Pennsylvania from Penn Station in New York rode for about two days and wound up in Terrahauge, Indiana. Now in Terrahauge, Indiana we changed trains. The train pulled into Evansville where we were met and taken care of from there.

LINDA: Let me ask you a question. You were in Maryland or somewhere and you got a letter or some kind of communication that said you have been assigned to the LST 534. Is that what it was.

SPENCER: I believe that is what it was because I don't remember all of it right now.

LINDA: You men had to get on a train and travel from New York to Terrahauge.

SPENCER: The funniest part of the whole train trip was I was in a car where there were no other sailors. When I got off the train in Terrhauge there were 20 other sailors on that train that was going to the same place I was. All had LST 534, which was in the water being worked on at the shipyard.

LINDA: When you got there.

SPENCER: Yup and we lived in town for a little while.

LINDA: Where did you live?

SPENCER: A building with bunks in it, that is all I can tell you.

LINDA: WMCA, the hotel.

SPENCER: I don't think it was the Y. It wasn't a hotel either. It was probably something they had purchased just for this occasion, because there were more crews that were going to follow us. There were couple of ships get built because hus.

LINDA: So on the train to Terrahauge down to Evansville you were the train with some more 534 guys. Do you remember any of the people?

SPENCER: No, I wish I did.

LINDA: Were you are the broom raising. Did you see the 534 do the broom raising.

SPENCER: No, I don't remember what you were saying there because I said it was in the water and people were welding on it at the time and it really was a few days later before we got on the ship.

LINDA: Were you at the launching.

SPENCER: No I didn't even see the commissioning where they put the flags on. I didn't see that either. I don't remember that.

LINDA: Do you remember anything about the shipyard.

SPENCER: As I was saying there were about three other LST's being done at that time. We didn't spend too much time out at that shipyard. We were out on liberty if we could help it.

LINDA: Do you remember what you did not liberty. Did you go to the movies, do to dinner, meet girls, meet guys?

SPENCER: One thing I noticed about cities and towns out in the West, the mid west, where our city here, in Poughkeepsie, New York was at one time 45,000 people and we have a lot of buildings to prove it. You go out in the mid-west and you have maybe half the buildings and the town is about 3 times as big as Poughkeepsie. Strange but I saw it happen..

LINDA: You were only 18 years old. How were you feeling that day, do you remember?

SPENCER: Well I got drafted but just before, we all had to get drafted at that time, but another fella and I tried to get into the Coast Guard and the day we tried to get into the Coast Guard the Coast guard had stopped enlistments. So that took care of us so we had to wait for our number to come up.

LINDA: So you knew basically at 18 knew you were going off to

SPENCER: We knew we were going.

LINDA: Scared at all?

SPENCER: What scared me more that anything was when the doctor hit my knee up in Albany and nothing happened. He kept hitting it. I said well maybe I am out of this and he said you are all right you are in.

LINDA: Too bad.

SPENCER: Too bad. That was at the Armory in Albany. That is where they had all the medical stuff going on. They took it in stages. As soon as you got to

boot camp you got another physical and clothes and most of the clothes didn't fit you.

LINDA: You know when you were in Maryland at radio school and LCI training you had seen ships so you obviously at that point knew you had been around ships

SPENCER: Of course I hadn't even slept on a ship yet. We would only go out for a day and then you would have to go back to your barracks.

LINDA: So the first time you slept on a ship was when you got on the 534?

SPENCER: Correct.

LINDA: Do you remember that day. When you went to the 534 did you look at it and feel in love, or feel scared or say this is my ship I am going to be on for a while.

SPENCER: There were so many things going on welding, and so on and so forth. I guess at 18 you took it with a grain of salt. Nothing else you could do. That was going to be your home and you had no trouble knowing that.

LINDA: How did you get on the ship?

SPENCER: They had some kind of a plank you walked up.

LINDA: After you got on how did you know there to go - your locker room,

SPENCER: They were pretty good at that. They assigned those things right away.

LINDA:

SPENCER: I don't know anymore than that but they do assign them. They assign your bunk bed and your locker.

LINDA: Do you remember the first night before you came on the ship

SPENCER: No but I remember the first night of boot camp. I woke up and said what am I doing here.

LINDA: And wishing you weren't. Who did you report to in Evansville?

SPENCER: I have no idea. Somebody met us and took us there. Somebody met us and took us from there to wherever we had to go.

LINDA: What was it like sailing from Evansville down the Ohio River to the Mississippi? Any special thoughts about that?

SPENCER: It was kind of tough in a way. Radiomen weren't being used. We were being used in the Galley. So we were scrubbing pots and pans most of the way down the Ohio River and the Mississippi/

LINDA: Who was your cook?

SPENCER: The cook's name at that time was Brown He was good. He would give us a little trouble if we didn't get the pots and pans to look pretty good. I was doing the baking pans. The other fellas were doing the spoiled ones. That is the way that worked out.

LINDA: Brown was a good cook.

SPENCER: I would say he was a good cook all the way.

LINDA: Anything special you liked to eat.

SPENCER: Lets not get into Navy food because I don't think Navy food was that great anyway.

LINDA: Now down the Ohio River I wouldn't exactly call that going down with an experienced crew would you?

SPENCER: Now you have to remember you had pilots on board. Your pilots took you down. _____ where the Ohio meets the Mississippi, a new pilot would take you so long down, so many miles and then another pilot would take you so much further. And the fog was tremendous. 2 or 3 days you'd never move sometimes because you couldn't go, you couldn't see where you were going.

LINDA: What time of year was it, February?

SPENCER: I think it was. Then you go down to New Orleans. We went to Algiers. Now they have a great big bridge going across Algiers. We were fortunate we rode the ferry back and board. But that was quite a nice town. The French Quarters was quite nice. I was 19 you know.

LINDA: So you went in to New Orleans to the French Quarters. That must have been a wide-eyed open experience.

SPENCER: I think I went in one time with Parker who was a yeoman. I don't know what happened to Parker but I know I got back on the ship.

LINDA: That must have been fun.

SPENCER: It was hot. We aren't used to the heat. Us Scandinavian heritage the heat is too much for you.

LINDA: The humidity .

SPENCER: The humidity is terrible. It is around Evansville too by the way.

LINDA: I remember. I grew up in Evansville.

SPENCER: Cincinnati was something else too.

LINDA: What happened in Cincinnati?

SPENCER: I used to go to all the ball games. I saw Johnny Double No Hit Vandermeir pitch a few times. I think they were second or third that year, Cincinnati.

LINDA: You were in the service then?

SPENCER: Certainly, radio school. That is where we were. Weekend pass.

LINDA: That would be fun professional baseball. When you said you had pilots were those people on, were they separate ships or boats or were they on the LST?

SPENCER: The pilots were right on the LST. They came right on board and took over right from the Captain and they were in full charge. That is how you got down the river. They are still doing it out there now and they get good money these pilots.

LINDA: Do they? Tell me about the shakedown. Was the shakedown in New Orleans.

SPENCER: No. First of all from New Orleans we went down through the Delta and then we went over to Pensacola. In Pensacola we had, it got pretty cold over there down around 32 and had welders from the South on board welding things. Finishing up the ship for whatever was going to happen. And they couldn't weld that one day. It was too cold for them. Never forget it.

LINDA: Where were they from?

SPENCER: All down there. Right around Pensacola. That was their big job. Big men. I don't know what they weren't in the service.

LINDA: Was it a civil job.

SPENCER: Yeah. Working for contractors.

LINDA: Do you remember the first time you met Captain Olsen?

SPENCER: Not really.

LINDA: What kind of a man was he. Say Captain Olsen was

SPENCER: Captain Olsen was a very nice man. I figure at one time he must have been a quartermaster, chief quartermaster and he made him a Lieutenant in charge of the LST. He was good with the ship. He always looked out for us. If you needed him he was up on the tower. That is all I can say about Captain Olsen. I always liked him.

LINDA: What did he look like?

SPENCER: I think he was short, kind of roly poly and looked like an all Navy man from way back and he was.

LINDA: Kind of crusty.

SPENCER: You could say that maybe.

LINDA: When you got on board did you immediately start making friends?

SPENCER: When I got on board I don't remember what I was making. The first thing you had to do was get all your equipment out, put it on your bed, put it in your lockers and so forth. After that maybe ate. Making friends you did that gradually. Everybody was suspicious of everybody else at that time anyway. We didn't know one fella from another. All different people all thrown together and here we are. This is the crew. Oh boy.

LINDA: But you did learn to bond and stuff right.

SPENCER: Oh yeah. You learned how to work together. You had to do that. You had watches. Everybody stood a watch at some time and if you weren't on watch they had other work for you to do. That was the fun of being a radioman.

LINDA: Always had something to do.

SPENCER: Always had something to do, yeah.

LINDA: Who was your best friend on the 534?

SPENCER: I would say Bob Mitchell.

LINDA: Have to say my best friend.

SPENCER: My best friend was Bob Mitchell on the 534. Another fella named Holt was also a good friend. There was a fella named Mitchgy who is nice, was a good friend of mine. It is a wonder I remember half these names.

LINDA: It was a long time ago.

SPENCER: One or two years yes.

LINDA: What was it about the people you mentioned that made them your friends. Was it because you were in this same kind of area, working signalmen, radio kind of thing and then their personalities were kind of like yours.

SPENCER: You got to be friends with these people because say they were in the communications division, you slept near them, you were with them most of the time. You were on watches with them. They were maybe someplace else but they were right close to you. That is how you met all these people and they were usually about your same age. That is all I can say on that.

LINDA: Who was the oldest person, do you remember? Who do you remember being old.

SPENCER: There is only one fella that I remember and his name was Mace. I think he was in his forties at that time or around 40 anyway. He had to be.

LINDA: He was from Pennsylvania.

SPENCER: Yes, I don't remember what town it was but I remember that. He was a very nice man. He was a motor mac as they called them at that time. He did his job well.

LINDA: Do you remember meeting my dad.

SPENCER: Yes I remember meeting your dad many times. Why did I meet your dad - he was in the small boat at the end of the ladder going down. So we would go out on liberty your dad would bring us in and eventually bring us back.

LINDA: Not in the same condition.

SPENCER: Not in the same condition but I remember one night it was so choppy and he pulled up alongside the ship and the ladder was down and the small boat kept bumping up against the side of the ship bouncing away so we couldn't get at the ladder so he went and took the small boat around to the stern of the ship in the lei of the whole thing and we climbed up the stern ladder and got on board. That was the only way we made it.

LINDA: Somebody told me that my dad could really operate the LCVP. That he was real good about making turns

SPENCER: He learned how to do that fast. There are so many people in these boats out there because you have a whole fleet of LST's there. All with small boats running in and out for liberty. You had to know what you were doing and you had to know where your ship was. there. All with small boats running in and out for liberty. You had to know what you were doing and you had to know where your ship was. You could always get to the wrong ship if it was a little foggy or something.

LINDA: If you went in how would you know what LCVP to get back on. Would it be at a certain point?

SPENCER: Yes he would tell you where he was going to be. I'll be waiting right here on the dock. And he would pick you up on the dock and bring you back. Very interesting that way. In fact I always wanted to run one of these little mounts but never got the chance.

LINDA: Who were so of the other coxswain that you would go in with.

SPENCER: There was Lagos, Laganno, Madeiros, all coxswain and all pretty good coxswains too. I am trying to remember whether we had two boats or four on the LST.

LINDA: You had 4.

SPENCER: I think I had 4 so that is why you had a coxswain for each one of them. But we never took the three up and down. That same boat ran most of the time. And you would swear riding back in it coming from liberty or going to liberty you smell like you are behind one of those big trailers on the road, one of those big 18 wheelers, it was terrible the oil.

LINDA: So every one of LCVP would have a coxswain that was the driver, a motor mac, a gunner?

SPENCER: It depends on where you were whether you had the gunner on or not or he was just a helper to tie up.

LINDA: So if it was just doing liberty

SPENCER: You would have just 2 people on.

LINDA: Now in England the LCPB also carried the troops in right?

Hold this and talk about, show us on there the LCVP

SPENCER: This is an LCVP. This is the one that took us out on liberty if we were out in the bay or whatever and brought us back. These are your gun turrets over here. 40mm, 20mm, this was the tower here. These are all vents. And that is for when you had people down on the tank deck running engines so that you could vent all this stuff up and you wouldn't have carbon dioxide all over. That was what that was all about. Now over here in front of this is a ramp. You go down to this bottom deck and you could vehicles of any kind on top of this at the same time and run them through. This is the con over here.

LINDA: What does con mean?

SPENCER: The connie towers was where the ship has got the wheel and all the necessary meters and so on. That is where the ship was steered.

LINDA: How many people would be in there? Is that where the Captain would be?

SPENCER: 2 or 3. Over on this side and this part over here is where the quartermaster's chart room was. Over here was the radio shack and back in here was where all the batteries were that runs the radios and so forth. During general quarters they were all up here.

LINDA: During general quarters everyone would be somewhere on the ship.

SPENCER: Oh you bet they would.

MATT: Could I ask you to answer the first question again describing where things are.

SPENCER: Okay we will describe where things are here. This is the conning tower where the ship was being steered from. And this is also the conning tower down below it. Up here it is being steered by it is being steered by pipes going down into this conning tower telling the helmsman to turn the wheel a certain number of degrees one way or another. Also in this part of the con as I call it we had quartermasters which would chart your courses and so forth. In the back there was a battery compartment and on this backside over here was the radio operator.

MATT:

SPENCER: These are the gun turrets up here. Did you see these, these are ventilators. In the event that there were any engines running on this ship that would vent all this stuff out. CO2 you didn't want it would kill you. Back here is a 40 mm. These were 20's.

MATT: Show me the back again.

SPENCER: That is a 40, right here. Twin 40. Might have been if there was a twin 40 on the front too.

LINDA The bow doors

MATT

SPENCER: The bow doors are right up here. Now they open up and inside that is a shield here and there is just enough room for a tank or something that could go up or down. That is what that is all about.

LINDA: So the theory behind the LST is that it is flat bottomed

SPENCER: Yes it is flatbottomed and it would go up on the shore but it would let this anchor out here. Now the tide would go out and that thing would sit there sometimes 6 to 12 hours before the water came back. After the water came back in we would pull on this anchor that was out and it would pull the ship off and turn it around and here we go.

LINDA: Who would be driving that most of the time, not Captain Olsen?

SPENCER: The officers were training very well to do all these things. Very good because they were in command when he wasn't there. They had watches to stand just like anybody else. And sometimes if they were up and this thing up here was cold. I can remember wearing peacoats and big jackets in the summer time. And one place we went and these people had these black bathing suits - wool black bathing suits, unbelievable. But that was the channel and it was cold.

LINDA: What do those flags represent?

SPENCER: Right now I can't answer that question.

LINDA: Well I know what the top one was.

SPENCER: Yeah I know that one too but I wish I knew what the others ones were. I am not a signalman.

LINDA: We will have to ask Norris Long.

SPENCER: He will tell you in five seconds. He would tell you.

LINDA: Well that was a very nice description of it. We appreciate that.

SPENCER: That flatbottom, that is the secret of the whole thing but on each side, you have to remember, on each side are great big long halls with doors in them, each one all the way, and you used to enter, you go down here

LINDA: Now you were saying about Holt was sleeping

SPENCER: Oh Jones, he left us and went down to the side here to one of the compartments, hung up his hammock and with the ship rolling and pitching and everything he was just going back and forth staying still right in the same spot all the time. It was beautiful. He got sleep that we didn't get.

LINDA: Sleeping like a baby.

SPENCER: Yes he was, always remember it.

LINDA: Tell us about going through the waves.

SPENCER: Well the waves made the ship stutter. Depending on the force of them. But we were out going across England, we were out in some 65 foot waves, and when you get in some 65 waves the ship is up here and the guy next to you is down here. So you can look down practically through his funnel. The next thing you are up like this and he's looking down yours. That was no fun. I got to admit I never got seasick on this ship. I got seasick on the next ship I was on. I got seasick on the next ship that I was on later on.

LINDA: I am surprised they say these are not supposed to.. Some people got seasick.

SPENCER: Many people got seasick especially the troops if you were ever carrying any of them. From England to France they used to get seasick.

LINDA: They were Army.

SPENCER: Yeah they were Army. Expected them to I guess. Didn't want us to that is for sure.

LINDA: Tell me about the time you said you were going through the channel and you said the ship could have turned over. Remember.

SPENCER: That was that big storm we were going in that I just told you about the 60 foot waves. You were going at an angle into these waves and all of a sudden the engine stopped. All of a sudden you could get pushed over these waves this way. We didn't. Just a few couple of minutes the engine started again and we knew we were all right but that was a real scare. It was scary to me I know. Anytime anything didn't sound right and you knew something was wrong

LINDA:

SPENCER: Not only that. The water was too cold going over. We would never have existed if we had to give up the ship. We would have never made it.

LINDA: Ever think about that.

SPENCER: Yes. I did. I knew if you got down in water that is between 30 and maybe 40 degrees you are gone. Maybe even 40 degree water you are gone at that time.

LINDA: It is one heck of an incentive to make sure you work together to keep everything going right.

SPENCER: Well they need to keep the engines. The motor mags had to do that first. Everything else is second. The radio shack was actually just monitoring stuff at that time. Signals. You couldn't send out anything anyway. They wouldn't let you. You couldn't send out what you were listening and turn your reports in to your officer who was Mr. Sarres. That was about it as far as the radio shack went. You had to learn to set up the machines. You had big tv transmitters, you had to know how to do that. But then you could never send anything. What are you going to do.

LINDA: This is really great. I appreciate this.

SPENCER: Got that. It was sticking to my fingers and I didn't want to get it stuck too long.

LINDA: So you left out of New York and went to England.

SPENCER: We went up the coast. I can remember seeing my Annie as we went by down that way. Up through a little storm off of Norfolk, Virginia, then up to New York and then we went through the Long Island Sound, to Cape Code Canal which was a lovely trip right through there. We were a few days in Boston. And then we took off and went to up to St. Johns Halifax in Nova Scotia and then somebody said you are in a convoy and off we went.

LINDA: When you were in Boston did you go on liberty.

SPENCER: No I didn't. I always regretted that. When I was in Boston I didn't go on liberty. I would have liked. My section was the opposite section at that

time and we were only there a few days. They didn't know when we were going to shove off so we could get off the ship.

LINDA: And then you went to Nova Scotia. Did you go on liberty there.

SPENCER: No. You were right out in the harbor there. What they were doing was forming a convoy in Nova Scotia to go to England. Hi Figoro. All the ships would be out there in the bay and finally take off. Around the turn.

LINDA: How many ships were in the convoy?

SPENCER: Gosh I don't remember. Quite a few. Some of the ships in the back of the convoy were going to Russia. In other words we did over a certain distance outside of Ireland and the ones going to Russia would peel off North and go by the Norwegian Coast and over and we went into Londonary. We didn't stay in Londonary very long. And here we go again we are going down through the Irish Sea, which was a beautiful spot. The greens on the land and everything else was beautiful. We hadn't seen land in quite a while you know. You take 21 days to go over there. That is three weeks of your life. From there we went to South Hampton around Cornwall, went to South Hampton, unloaded the LCT and loaded the pontoons which we were carrying. Know what the pontoons were used for?

LINDA: The barge?

SPENCER: No. They would create the docks over on the beach area. That is where they were assembled and so forth over there. Amazing. From South Hampton I guess we went to Plymouth. It is a beautiful place to be. Gorgeous. And I met the man that used to live next door to me over there. He was an MP. He said now Spencer you come on in at night and we will

make the rounds together. All right. Fine. That afternoon the shipped pulled out of Plymouth so we never got there. So anyway we went back to South Hampton sometime. I was at Cose which is the island off the bottom of the water going to South Hampton. I can't think of it at this moment. It was a Naval Base. The English Naval base was on one side of it. Was it Portsmouth? That was an English base. But Cose is the lovely little island out there where they do all the sailing in the summertime and so forth. I don't know how we got there. Maybe your father took us in the LCVP or whatever they called them and where did we go from there. We went up past London past the straights of and we went up to Harridsport. Now we are getting into June. Now Harridsport is on one side of the river and Harrids itself is on the other side of the river and there is this little place called Batten Quarters or something just up from Harrids and that is where I had the greatest fish and chips I ever had in this whole world right there on night. I was on shore patrol. I don't know what I was doing outside of that. We were looking out for the crew. So finally on June 3rd the English troops came on board. Tanks of all kinds. Cromwells were the little ones, say medium ones, Churchills were the big ones, they had flying L's? and everything else for the beaches. Flying L's were pieces of things and chains and so forth that stopped the mines from bursting under the tank. That is what they were used for there. Especially on the beaches so maybe some of the men could follow them in. So we were supposed to probably leave on June the 5th sometime in the night on June the 5th but we didn't. So now June the 6th we left. I should say the morning of June the 6th early we left. Went back down the straights of Dover and I guess as I understand it we were supposed to be the back up group that Hitler thought was going to invade the Kalei area. But we kept on going. We end up down at the beach in the early evening and we had lots of ships following us. We had a balloon over us of a 100 feet or more to stop us from being scraped. But we came in there that night just at dusk. The Merserschmidt 109 came down and I thought he was going to

rake us but he didn't. You could see the firing coming right at us just right over the top of that balloon. The he hit the British LCP right behind us. It started on fire. . That whole platoon, flotilla all from the African desert. Of course first they had been taken out of Italy and sent home for a week. Some of them hadn't been home in four years. I could always remember the cooks on the ship that night they boarded it gave them steaks to eat. Some of them hadn't seen one in three or four years. So after the Meserschmidt bit we kept going, we just kept going, we had to keep going around in this whole area until the tide went back in all the way so we could land. So we landed early in the morning on Gold Beach. I could show you the exact spot actually. And then we just sat there after we watched everybody get unloaded. Then they marched 2,000 prisoners down the beach. Some LST's were made to take prisoners back. Some LST's also had hospitals on them which I didn't know in the beginning until I saw it over there. Doctors, nurses and everything.

Sorry stop a minute. Hear the bell. That is how I knew he was coming. Did the bell ruin that?

So I think when we left the beach area we go back and we ended up in London. And I don't know if it was the 2nd or 3rd time we made a trip back to London that is when the V1s starting coming over. If we saw a V1 when we ran under water quite a chance to shoot at it. The twin 40's and tried to shoot the thing down. And I saw one, one time come right over going into South Hampton. We didn't hit it. We missed it. We didn't miss it by much but we didn't get it. Another time we were on the beach, it was baseball season. The world series was being played. Now this is early September and who was playing the Saint Louis Cardinals and the Saint Louis Browns which is a good trivia question - how played in 1944. The Cardinals won. But one day in the radio shack I see this thing

and I say that is a V1 where is that coming from? I go out on the conning tower and look up and here it comes going right over the top of the ship heading towards the front lines in France which were only in maybe 6 miles at that time or more, and I never heard it explode so I hope it went back to Germany or wherever it came from. It might have been misdirected from one of the Peninsulas that they shot them from towards England. Because the air took it, it would have turned it around and sent it the other way. It turned. I remember in England one time one was coming right headed toward the ship. The motor stopped. Once you heard the motor stop then you looked. It was heading right towards us. There was a big dock over on this dies. It could have been us but it wasn't.

LINDA: Sometimes some of the stories you guys tell me makes it seem there was this little charm over the 534. There was a lot of near misses.

SPENCER: Well I like to think there was a charm over the 534. We had a lot of albatrosses and so forth follow us and so forth in the beginning when we left. I didn't see too many whales or anything like that so we had to have something up there looking over us. It had to be.

LINDA: The convoy over from Nova Scotia to London weren't you attacked?

SPENCER: Yes we were. Somebody said a torpedo went under the bow. We were attacked I guess it was in the middle of the night. What the Captain did was get up in the conny tower and take this LST and rushed it right into the middle. All the LST's were forming in the middle of the convoy. I took a message up to the Captain from the radio shack. He said I shouldn't have done it that way I should have called on the tube. I said all right. There was a ship going down. There was guy with a flashlight. Stern was going down like this. There was a guy with a flashlight looking for a vest

to wear. Wouldn't have done him any good anyway but he was looking. That was it as far as I saw. We didn't get fired on again. We were lucky. How lucky I really don't know. As lucky as can be I guess.

LINDA: You are here to tell about it. That is pretty lucky.

SPENCER: That's all right. A lot of People had ships shot out from under them. I could always remember some of these talking about the seventh armored forced we had there on board for the invasion. Some of those people five and six tanks shot out from under them. There was one Scotchman that had leather for skin. Just dry. Scotland. He had been in for four years and he told us exactly what was going to happen. They were going to swing around, the whole Army was going to swing around and trap all these people. And they did. He told us that a long time ahead of time. We were going over there one night I can remember the flight of I don't know how many hundred planes. They came along in threes and they _____ just kept coming and coming and you could hear that stuff off in a distance. That night we were pretty lucky.

LINDA You must have been scared.

SPENCER: Well you could anchor at the beach. There were liberty ships anchored at the beach. All of a sudden you hear a terrific boom. If you looked over there quick enough you could see a ship parting. Everything up in the air that was on the deck. Life preservers, everything, these big life rafts everything up in the air and come down hit the ship right and crack in half. Liberty ships were good at that. When you first ran to the beachheads you could see all the especially I say Gold beach you could see all the gliders and so forth that these people came down in. They were all there in the fields.

LINDA: Did you get off at Gold beach?

SPENCER: I got off at Gold Beach. I think it is because Mr. Sarres let me off at Gold beach and three or four of us went into this very carefully looking around because the bodies from D-Day were still on the beach as far as the English were concerned, we went into this little place maybe a few hundred yards and brought some guns back. German guns that they had all put together in a pile. Because you had to be very careful where you were stepping because there were mines all over the place. But we made it.

LINDA: That didn't scare you?

SPENCER: I think at my age I wasn't right with it yet as far as being scared was concerned. I think that is why soldiers have to be somewhere between 19 and 30 otherwise you get too scared to be bothered with it. It is all for politicians anyway.

LINDA: Did you ever have icebergs?

SPENCER: I saw icebergs, yeah on the way over.

LINDA: It doesn't look like the wall was too thick on those LST's. Were you ever afraid you were going to hit an iceberg.

SPENCER: We turned South when we sailed. That is all I could say. When the icebergs were spotted we were headed south to get away from them. We didn't want to be the Titanic all over again.

LINDA: Did you ever hit any icebergs?

SPENCER: No. Went through a lot of ice pushed by the bow once in a while, yeah.

LINDA: When you were at England and all of a sudden the troops started coming over and you knew something was going on, what did you think?

SPENCER: The thing was the first troops we had were on there for two or three days and those guys can eat you out of house and home in 2 or 3 days. What are you going to have after that right? The main thing is to get them going, get your weather good to get the trip, get them over there and take off and come back and get some more. We had the British 7th Armored Force, we had the Pioneers, we had Canadians, we had French, we had what do you call them the Sherwood Foresters, that was one group, English troops, then we got into the American section. We finally had to go back to Weymouth and that is where the Americans starting getting on board. They were all troops. You know later on troops that would help the front line soldiers I don't know how to say this really,

Hold it up Matt, I can't even talk.

We were at every beach over there eventually.

You ready Matt?

All the beaches that we were at, every one of them Utah, Omaha, Gold, Sword

LINDA: Did it make any difference to you whether you were carry British troops, American troops or French troops?

SPENCER: No. Didn't make any difference to us what troops we had. I kind of think a lot of ways and I hate to say it but being an American I think that some of the other troops were a little more polite. They had been through it all. Our guys hadn't been through it most of it so we took an awful lot of back up troops over there.

LINDA: When you got off at Omaha Beach and you saw dead bodies

SPENCER: I didn't see any at Omaha Beach it was Gold Beach where we started

LINDA: I mean Gold Beach

SPENCER: Oh yeah and if you turned over their head they had a little black hole in an eye or over here or over there and that was it. They were British Marines. Young fellas. Nice looking fellas. That was it.

LINDA: Did that make you sick to your stomach?

SPENCER: No you couldn't afford to get sick. Things were happening so fast you didn't really realize what was going on. Some of them didn't know either.

LINDA: Basically the guys that had the one hole there they were dead

SPENCER: They didn't know. It was gone. Nothing left. I saw one guy take a helmet off a German soldier that was down in the redoubt, shake the helmet whatever was in the helmet was gone and he brought the helmet back on board and washed it out. I don't know. That would have gotten me right there. If I was going to be sick that would have been the one.

LINDA: You know in one way you must have a lot of pride knowing that you served in WWII and helped us become the, you know help win the war.

SPENCER: Well I have a lot of pride in helping to win the war for one reason that the Nazis did not get over here because if they had that would have been the end of us.

LINDA: Our lives would have been all different.

SPENCER: Different yeah. A lot of us wouldn't be here. He exterminated too many people. How many millions? We probably didn't know at that time what we were over there doing. But later on with the newspapers reports and everything you find out where you were, what you were doing and so. But we did take a trip up the Seine River one time. Several LSTs went up. We had all kinds of provisions on board, because the red ball express couldn't quite catch up with the tanks and so forth so we were probably carrying a lot of gasoline. Red Ball express was from the beachhead all the way up to the front lines. So to narrow that distance a little they sent us through one, which was a lot closer, hundred of miles maybe closer and unload us and send us back down. And I could always remember seeing in the bank, in the Seine River some of the banks are quite high. I can remember seeing a Messerschmidts tail sticking out of one bank where the rest of the plane was in the bank. That is all that was sitting there and _____. That was a sight. And there weren't any bridges across. They had taken every bridge. Demolished it.

LINDA: They really bombed out everything.

SPENCER: They didn't leave much for anybody anywhere.

LINDA: Did you ever get homesick?

SPENCER: Once in a while yeah. You get those nice letters from my mother I used to get homesick maybe. I say what am I doing here. There are not many people that really didn't. She used to write me a letter a day. Start a new letter every day. She don't know how she ever did that. She told me that.

LINDA: Why don't you read me this one that you copied

SPENCER: If you can stop for a minute I can get the original.

That was from Bob. That was from Bob. Okay I think this is the letter you were talking about. October 8, 1945

LINDA: What was it like to get a letter from home?

SPENCER: Well I got an awful lot of letters from home and I enjoyed every one of them. The news was right up to date. Of course I didn't write home that often and they didn't know where I was or what I was doing or else the letter would be so chopped up from being what do you call it - censored. Censor was a good guy. I see a lot of letters that were censored very well. Now this is a letter from my mother dated October 5, 1945 on a Friday. She says Dearest Son, now I wonder if you will be getting my letters or not. I suppose eventually they do get to you. I am anxious to hear from you and I am still waiting for a letter to come my way. I wrote Louise, Louise is my Aunt, but no word from her as yet. Yesterday I aired your suitcase and put the letters and shoes back in it and put it in the attic. In the afternoon mail of yesterday I had a long letter from Bob Mitchell. It is quite a letter. I will keep it here as long as I don't know first where you are and you can read it when you get home. Here are the highlights in his letter and I know that you will be interested in his all about the LST 534. If I can get a July 7th edition of the New York Daily News I could see the ship. Here goes. On June 18th arrived at Okinowa. On the 19th pulled

into docks to unload on the 22nd and half of the load was off when an air raid was sounded. This was at 8 AM. At 9:27 they were hit on the starboard side by a Jap suicide plane carrying a 500 pound bomb. The bomb exploded under the ship and tore a 50 x 30 hole in the bottom of the tank deck of the ship. The main deck was torn up too. The plane hit right into the electric shop. They went to the bottom in 30 seconds. The ship being in 12 feet of water it didn't go clear under just the bow sank. Total casualties were 4 including 10 caused by gunfire from other ships. None of the crew were killed. Three seabees unloading the tank deck were. On the same noon 2/3rds of the ship went up in flames. The tank deck, all port and starboard sides officers country, the crew quarters and con got smoked up a little. The engine rooms didn't get hurt because they are covered by a foot or two of water on the tank deck.

Excused me just a minute. I can't read that word. Oh okay ready.

On the ship was a cargo of 400 drums of oil and 80 of aviation fuel. It did not explode by some miracle. The crew stayed ashore for 8 days and then came back aboard. The fourth of July they were towed to the area where they are now. The ship will not be repaired for it is too badly damaged. Later on tied up with a torpedo liberty ship to give them electrical power. On September 17th a typhoon came and they had to leave then. No steering so the engines were used. Anchoring by the stern anchor only to get cut by another ship. After colliding with a couple of ships they anchored with the bow anchor. That couldn't be raised without tying up the electrical circuits. They were then burned in the fire. This was around 6 PM. At 11:30 that night a collision was trying to be avoided. Another ship that was helpless in near 100 per mile an hour wind in doing so the anchor chains rods broke. If anything had hit the bow the ship would have folded up like an eggshell with such a hole as they had in it. Then there were nothing to do but beach. Somehow we avoided coral

reefs which ships with full control ran on to. Landed safely on a sandy beach. Said I don't know how or why we missed the reefs because on our stern they were sticking up all over. The place we came through couldn't have been much wider than the ship itself. Something must have been watching over us that night too. The ship is on the beach now and will remain so until it is decommissioned. Probably sometime in October. It is a shell in comparison to what it used to be. Bob has a typewritten sheet of the experience and he is going to send it to me. Isn't this a traumatic ending for LST 534. I felt so queer but interested when I read the letter and now I am thankful that you didn't have to go through that experience. Tell me what you are thinking about this. I went to Bingo last night alone and won 3.35. I am winning anyway and I enjoyed the game. There isn't much more news honey and here is Dad ready to go to work. Robert Butt is back in school and my sister Nan is all right. Keep well sweetheart. I am hoping to maybe see you soon. I am going to get busy now so that I can listen to the Chicago Detroit game this afternoon. So there you go.

Are you hearing it. Yes this game was a very good one but I am a Chicago rooter. Maybe today Chicago will go to town. We are all fine at home. Son I really think Dad is getting a little fatter. He eats well anyway. Much love now, sweet from Dad and Nan and always a generous share from your mother.

I don't know why we have all these things but I had that old satchel in the cellar with all these letters in it. I didn't know what was there until I looked at it one day. We used to keep the big German Helmut that I had in there until I got rid of it.

LINDA: Where did you get a German Helmut.

SPENCER: From McKinster. Friend McKinster, the signalman. Sold me that helmet when we left the ship in New York bound for liberty, thirty days.

LINDA: Wonder where he got it.

SPENCER: I think he took it off a German Sargent at that time probably on V+1. I think that is where that helmet came from. I know Mr. Holt had one. I don't know where he got his but I know he had one. We went, one time we loaded up on the beach at Omaha Beach and we went to Brittany. The whole flotilla went to Brittany with big gun ammunition. What is the name of this place near Brittany, I have to look that up. We have pictures of it. We unloaded there and all of a sudden somebody came to the connen, the conning tower where I was stationed at that time and said that you are going ashore as a shore patrol. I said that's nice. Here is your armband. All right here we go. Here is your gun. Are we getting bullets. No bullets. Didn't have a bullet. So in this little town, this whole flotilla was in there. People were getting off the ship and going through these passageways saying mien, mien, mien, all these different exits. Well they got there. They got out into the street. Nobody got hurt thank god. And they were all over the street going in each house to see what was in there and who was in there. So we got that under control a little bit. At the end of town we walked up this long hill. I had a friend with me I forget who it was now and on the other side two fellas came up and met us and they had Marquise arm bands on. We couldn't talk to them, they couldn't talk to us. Anyway I put a can of tobacco out. They loved it. The old tobacco cans remember? He loved this for his pipe. And he gave me a German Swatzski arm band to keep. I still have it somewhere upstairs. Then we walked back down the road and I said we better get pictures of this place so there was a little store down at the bottom and I went in to get some of these postcards. Other than that everybody got back to the ship. Of course we waded back to the ship up to our knees in water because the tide

had come in so fast. We got soaked but nobody else did. Then they pulled the bow doors up. That was an experience. But that place that we landed isn't too far from St. Michele that is the big castle? off of Brittany. And they get surrounded by water every time the tide comes in that surrounds it completely otherwise you can go out to it but you won't be getting back. Just like the tide went out with the LST. Sit there high and dry so many hours before it can get back out again.

LINDA: Isn't Brittany

SPENCER: That is Brest. They were going to shell Brest of Brittany. They surrounded it. We saw an awful lot of German wounded coming off. Going out to some LSTs there. Not young men either. They were probably AKAK personnel, maybe food personnel. You never know who the hell they were. They were older men. Some of them were pretty beat up.

LINDA: Where were they taking them?

SPENCER: They would take them back to England. Put them on a hospital ship. LST is a hospital ship. Take them back to England. Try to help them.

LINDA: Did you carry some of them.

SPENCER: We didn't. We weren't prepared for that. We didn't have doctors and everything on board. That is when I first realized that LSTs had a medical center right on it. We didn't know that before or at least I didn't. Maybe somebody did.

LINDA: The 534 was basically equipped to do equipment, tanks ...

SPENCER: Oh yeah that was what it was all about. The 534 did all kinds of equipment but we were a little skeptical that time they loaded us up with all those big shells. I remember something, there is a band on the bottom of some of those shells if a spark hit one of those shells she's go off and the LST 534 would have been gone.

LINDA:

SPENCER: Now we can take them all off right?

LINDA: You doing okay.

SPENCER: I guess so. I hope so. I am losing the voice.

LINDA: Tell me about Christmas 1944.

SPENCER: Christmas, 1944. I think we were in 1944 Plymouth getting ready maybe to make the trip back to the United States. I remember we did come back to the United States the end of January. I came home I think it was with Bob Mitchell that night and my upstairs neighbors had left their Christmas tree up for me to see. Now this almost the beginning of February. And he said don't touch that tree. And I did. The tree all the needles were falling off. The tree was gone the next day. She was like some kind of a saint looking out for me and she had left that up and so forth and knew I was coming. And that always gives you a funny feeling. It really does. She was a nice lady. I hope it was a nice warm fuzzy feeling. You aren't sure of much of anything in this life anymore. Most people don't realize that yet.

LINDA: Christmas is an important time for you isn't it?

SPENCER: Not as much as it used to be. I used to love Christmas.

LINDA: Well there you were 19 and it was Christmas

SPENCER: We were in our 20's by then

LINDA: It was Christmas and you were in England and you had been through

SPENCER: I do not remember what Christmas was like over there at that time. I know I used to go on liberty with this fella. He was a first class I don't know what he was. Boatsmate or something. He was a very nice fella. I was looking for his name in your book but I didn't see it there. We used to go on liberty, well there was one movie left that I can remember in Plymouth there is nothing else around there for about a mile. One movie house sitting there. And you had to walk through all these streets. Nothing there to get to this movie house.

LINDA: Must have look weird

SPENCER: Yes I can still see it. They did some job those Germans in Plymouth and South Hampton. One of the nicest visits I had we got off, I don't know if it was your father or not, one of the ships took us into the bottom of the main street in South Hampton and got off the ship, we are walking up to the main street and this boy comes out to me and says you got any gum chum? I said I don't have any gum. Well I'll tell you what he said next. I don't know whether you better print this one or not. He said up your gigi with a rubber hose. That's what he got he was that high. I just stood there for a minute that kind of rocked me. But he had been in the war all these years, I hadn't. Another time we got to South Hampton, I think Bob Mitchell and several other fellas were with us, maybe Mace and we took a ride on a

train. It was beautiful English train all different colored cars and everything. It was gorgeous. They keep clean stuff over there. That is the amazing part. Even the subways were fantastic. And we got off in Winchester. This was a long time before Winchester Cathedral. You heard the song? But we walked by Winchester Cathedral that day. And we walked up on some high ground where there was a park and they had some kind of a show going on there and we went to that. Finally came back and rode back, nice time. It really was.

LINDA: I guess you kind of needed that. You know you are seeing death and you are scared.

SPENCER: Sure had some nice pleasantries when you went on liberty in England. I can remember going in Weymouth one night and we went to the USO to try to get something to eat. Most people didn't have too much to eat over there. And we had a good beet sandwich. That was the menu for the day. Just a plain old beet sandwich. And do you know something it tasted good. Still remember that. That was a nice place. The Portland Bell was a great place. Big neck of land came out around like that and it was high. You could see it for miles. And that is where the Germans were supposed to go in there is they were going to invade at one time. It was very good that they probably didn't. There were pipes with oil and everything else to set the oil on fire if they had gotten in there. All under water.

LINDA: Have you ever been back?

SPENCER: No I would like to.

LINDA: You would like to what?

SPENCER: I would like to go to England, France maybe but nothing could ever be what it was then. Thousands of ships. You would never see that. You would never see the soldiers all over the place. Thousands and thousands. Even thousands of prisoners were lying across the beaches at one time. All would be taken back then no. I would like to get on a bicycle or something and just ride different places. But first of all I would like to go to Cornwall. See where my people came from. Very interesting. See you are really doing that now. You are. We were there but our generation is going, it is not going to last forever.

LINDA: What have you got to say to people who are going to see this 30 to 40 years from now?

SPENCER: Well I just hope they believe. There are many things I have seen on television lately that a lot of people haven't believed. They haven't believed about the holocaust or anything else. And yet that happened. A lot of people would never believe in the German army at some of those beaches there were Russian soldiers fighting with German uniforms on. That is what was happening. They told them if they wanted to live they fought for the Germans. And they took millions of them prison over here in the beginning. Quite a few of them. The devastation I hope never of us ever have to see. But you have to be, the thing I like to say for myself is I try to be truthful and honest about the whole thing and if somebody wants to see this 40 years from now I am still going to say the same thing. I am not going to change my mind. It really wasn't a pleasure being there. You had to be there. You could wind up in a stockade if you weren't.

LINDA: Well think about now that you didn't think about then, the impact of what you were doing. You didn't think about it. You can look back on it.

SPENCER: You can always look back on impact because you don't know what impact you are making. You can push a button on your new computer and if you happen to touch the wrong one you can destroy everything you have on your computer. Its possible.

LINDA: That would make an impact.

SPENCER: Only trouble is you could go back to the day before and resurrect it.

LINDA: What did you think the day I called you?

SPENCER: I was glad to hear from somebody from that ship because I figured that Bob Mitchell would have written to me. And as far as my mother is concerned I don't know where that letter if he sent her one went because I know she would have saved it. So maybe she never got it. I enjoyed hearing from him. It was sort of like a god send coming out of the mist when you called. Here she is. Now your father I remember from the picture. Names numbers I remember, names I don't remember.

LINDA: It has been fun putting this documentary together and talking to the different men and getting their perspectives. But what did you say to Helen when I called?

SPENCER: I remember that Helen answered the phone. She handed that phone right over to me right away and she was delighted and so was I.

LINDA: How did you meet her?

SPENCER: How did I meet her? At another girlfriend's house. They were buddies.

LINDA: So you were seeing this girl and you went over to her house and you met Helen.

SPENCER: She is going to cut that out and thirty years from now she is going to bring that back Helen.

LINDA: What did you think when you saw her?

SPENCER: Well I dated her that following weekend. I took her to a real nice place. She was my kind of gal that's all. I didn't get married till I was 37. I might have worked for IBM but I didn't have any money. I was the poor kid on the block.

LINDA: You were cuddling up with your computer huh?

SPENCER: We didn't have computers then either.

LINDA: What did you do for IBM without computers?

SPENCER: Well you see in 1951 when I started there weren't any computers. They had sorters, I had handled thousand, billions of cards till finally they computers came on and they said we don't need these cards anymore do we. But some people are still using them. You have to have time cards, you have to have other kinds of cards. So lets see I started in the machine accounting unit. I would loved to have been one in the army in France. That would have been fun. Machine accounting unit you know that is all the different machines that come out with your reports. I know a fellow that was with me down there in IBM that did but you know you have to wait for everything. New machines. My dad serviced these machines for 40 something years. Long before IBM was in Poughkeepsie.

LINDA: Is IBM still in Poughkeepsie.

SPENCER: Yup. Still Poughkeepsie.

LINDA: Show me that

SPENCER: Now lets do something. I want to show you something. Are you still running. Here I want to show you something that we should have had for the LST that we didn't have.

LINDA: Somebody must have one of these.

SPENCER: I never saw one. One of the fellas I write to he was a quartermaster, he worked for the telephone company for about 35-40 years especially at Christmas time, and he was one of the guys that got through all this stuff.

LINDA: Hold on one second.

SPENCER: This is where I got all fouled up in this is when you get into the English pounds and these guys are giving you American money. You can lose money on this deal and I did.

LINDA: You have to convert it.

SPENCER: The pound used to be at least double what it is now. I think it is maybe 2 21/2 now and then it was 4. Yeah this is it. Lemery, Everly, there's Everly, McKinster, have a guy named Safford, Pendington, Adams, Morris, Holt, Overstake. Here is another guy. Vilouski, At Hess, so these guys were there all right.

LINDA: So what did you do. Small stores.

SPENCER: You just announced over, small stores you go and get uniforms, shoes, hats, underclothes that these people wore. Because these things do wear out you know. In a hurry. I don't know what they did in the Pacific. You would go off base find out where the small stores place was and then you had to get a ride there, go inside, get all this stuff, pay the man, put it back in whatever you were riding in and get back to the ship. Then try to get squared up in money with these guys. That is another storey. I didn't order that. Right. I didn't order that.

LINDA: How many times did you want to bust one of them.

SPENCER: More than once. Streiker, Jorgansen. Streiker that was the guy that was the signalman. Do you have him?

LINDA: I have his name. I haven't contacted him yet.

SPENCER: He owes you 5.30 in case you do. Smith, Brownell, Mace, then Hoosier, Carr, Mitchell, Ritter, Hill, Kiter, Leonard, and then Dallas of course. Kingerski did you ever get a Kingerski.

LINDA: Frank Kingerski.

SPENCER: St. Lauret. Wilson, Mason, Landhauser, Shirks, there he is. He owes me 16 dollars.

LINDA: What did he buy?

SPENCER: I don't know that was on another list.

LINDA: Some of these guys never paid.

SPENCER: That is very possible that might have happened. Kilkore, Hillsen, you even have Hillsen on here for 4.20. Let's see. Some guy named Hardy wanted shoes for 5 dollars. Safford, and Shirks again he is back here for 14.25.

LINDA: They say he was a gambler.

SPENCER: I am trying to remember.

LINDA: He probably gambled and that is probably why he has all these high faluent things.

Okay do you have anything else you want to say?

SPENCER: Well it has been a good trip in this world. Somehow I am still here. Probably two years after I shouldn't have been. Heart attacks take a little while to get over. The golfing has been a help.

LINDA: Your mom and dad lived to an old age so you probably got old age in

SPENCER: That could be but you never know that. I was very distraught with the fella that something happened to yesterday. I still have to call him to see how he is going to be. He might not be with us. But when you get a little older and you start thinking a little bit you slow down a bit but your mind doesn't really slow down unless you are this stuff or whatever you want to call it because there is enough medicine in this world that you have to take without any of that. I just wish that everybody in the future wouldn't have any more wars. Try to get along together a little bit. That is all I can say. It is tough for people to get along with anything even themselves some

days. It has been a wonderful world. There is nothing wrong with it. I wouldn't mind trying again but I don't think I am going to be let.

LINDA: Something tells me you are right about that one. Matt how do you want to do this.

SPENCER: You can take it back. Brittany where we landed. This is the beach area. We landed up in here. All these people were scrambling between these houses and so forth to get up on shore.

MATT:

SPENCER: This is where the 534 and the 536, fell from the 536 lived right down the street. I used to trade pictures with him. Movie pictures. We used to have to go from one ship to another ship to get movies for the night.

LINDA: Somebody told me that all of the time in the Atlantic you only had one song that you played all the time.

SPENCER: No I was in the radio shack. I played a lot of different songs. Oh yeah.

LINDA: So you landed in Brittany

SPENCER: This is the little village. The road went from, all these trucks would come in and load up and take the stuff over to Brest. All right - ready.

Now I can move it. All right Linda this is the front they call it and Wyemouth. The Portland Bell is way over in here. You can ride for about 15 minutes around that landing to get into here. This is the new play period. Used to go dancing there and so forth even during the war. Okay.

LINDA: You mean if you went on liberty.

SPENCER: Oh yeah you would go there. We used to go to a little place around the corner where they had

LINDA: My dad used to tell me about that

SPENCER: You don't want these. That is Panama City but nobody on the ship got off at Panama City only me later on. You don't want that either.

This is one right here. You could call it, it is just a few miles from Harrids and the port for this Dover Court this is was Harrids Port. And Harrids port was on the South side and Harrids itself was on the other side of this river going back in there. It was beautiful. Okay. - Yeah you are getting dry.

There is one. It is called the promenade in Weymouth. Few sailors and soldiers went through here and promenade. It was a beautiful spot.

This I didn't know was here. Sandsfort Castle. I don't think we can use it. I don't think any of the guys got that far. This is a general view of the Weymouth seacoast.

Ready - Oh that is beautiful. Weymouth was a big town. The view from the North head in Weymouth.

LINDA: Now where would the LST 534 be from this picture.

SPENCER: Over here. Some docks over here. You come into these docks.

LINDA: Where was the 534.

SPENCER: The 534 would have been over here. This was all enclosed. big pile of rocks came out with a light on it. Okay.

Alright you got this. This is called a white horse. This is a Weymouth when the slopes, see it would be to the North of Weymouth. You pulled out of the harbor and you went by this. You see this out in the ship every time you left and every time you returned. It sort of like a nice symbol that you made it back.

LINDA: And you think it is still there.

SPENCER: Definitely it is still there. We will go tomorrow and you will see it.

LINDA: Okay I'll meet you there.

SPENCER: Where did your father go - he went to Great Lakes?

LINDA: Great Lakes.

SPENCER: I know in radio school at Miami University we weren't liked because we were from Samson. We had four divisions at the same school. 23 thru 26. They didn't like us. The fact is that some of the best radio operators came out of that school were under Franklin. Some of them will probably outlive him because you could get killed under Franklin because they had a whole slew of radio operators under Franklin. Aircraft carriers. These people were something else. It was a lovely little town. I met a girl one day that went to college there. She loved it. It had a big clock on the campus. Lovely. We had to walk in two's. They had two corps of women marines there what they called waves and every time we marched and

everything else they made out fine and we didn't. They beat us every time. We got beat every time.

LINDA: When you went on Liberty in England were you liked?

SPENCER: Liberty. It depends on where we were and how many people were out at one time. I can remember being in London, what is the name of the place, near Lester Square, you could go to some of those places and it was so crowded. It was impossible for you to get through or do anything. Impossible to meet anybody or even get a drink. Thousands of GI's and so forth. That's no fun. You have to go somewhere where they are not. That little trip I told you to Winchester. That was a nice event that time. Little did we know that Winchester Cathedral was going to be on the map. It is a nice world but it is getting worse. It is not nice out there. I am not going to get into any politics about it. Here we go.

LINDA: Tell me where you think when see that?

SPENCER: When I see that I think of a lady that, that is my mother and I think of a lady that sat down every morning that I was in the service and wrote me a nice letter. That was more important and still is to me than anything else she ever did. That kept you going.

LINDA: You look like her.

SPENCER: I know. I always wished I looked like her father. He was a nice looking man.

LINDA: Is it okay if we use this picture as you are reading the letter from your mom.

SPENCER: Sure. Why not. That's good.

LINDA: Her name is Helen.

SPENCER: Helen Spencer.

LINDA: What do you just do Helen's in your life.

SPENCER: That is all we had time for.

