

RACE AND ORAL HISTORY IN SAN DIEGO PROJECT

“The Reminiscences of Roque Camacho Pangelinan”

University of California San Diego

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PREFACE

The following oral history is the result of a recorded interview with Roque C. Pangelinan conducted by Julia L. Duggs on May 18, 2018. This interview is part of the Race and Oral History in San Diego Project.

Readers are asked to bear in mind that they are reading a transcript of the spoken word, rather than written prose.

Narrator: Roque Pangelinan
Interviewer: Julia Duggs
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Length of Interview: 1:07:00

JD: Today is May 18, 2018, and I'm at the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club. This is an interview with Roque Pangelinan. This is being done on behalf of the Race and Oral History in San Diego Project at UC San Diego. And I'm Julia Duggs.

(00:18-00:36) [Transferring mic from JD to RP]

RP: Hello? Do you hear it?

JD: Yeah.

RP: Okay.

JD: So tell me about your childhood? What was it like growing up?

RP: Okay, let me first introduce myself. My name is Roque Camacho Pangelinan. I was born January 27, 1939 at Yona Village, Guam. About my childhood. Growing up my childhood. Uh. I was five years old when my dad passed away. Then at the time in 1944 we had the Japanese War. We marched to Mananggon Concentration Camp, and I was about five years old with my brothers and sisters and my mom, and we got kinda had a hard time because we don't have anything to carry with us. The only thing we carry was our small clothes, bag, little food. Nothing really. As the war ended, I grew up in Yona Village. I went to St. Francis High School. Not high school, but grade school. I graduated from there in '54. There's nothing much going on when we was young because don't have any TV, we don't have any cell phone, or any other gadget that kids have today that we don't have then. But whatever things we have we kind of play with it. As I grew up, I joined the Boy Scouts [of America]. Two-one Yona. I joined the Guam militia band. That's about the only thing we do. Sport-wise. The only sport we had was baseball, maybe softball or football in high school. But other than that, my growing up was kinda limited because the village is small, and there is nothing other thing that we could have. And I'm glad that the war's over, and I'm here talking to you now.

JD: So when did you join the Navy?

RP: I joined the Navy July 16, 1958. Let me tell you a story about how I joined the Navy. There was seventeen of us kids that graduated from high school. We went to went to uh the naval

station to take the civil service exam. Twenty of us passed—twenty of us took the test, and seventeen of us passed it. And the only drawback about passing the test is that they told us that it was going to take about six months to be hired, so I'm not going to wait six months. So the seventeen of us decided since it was close to the recruiting station, we went straight over to the recruiting station. And we took the test. Every one of us passed it. The only thing we didn't do yet was the physical. So we did that in about a week. We passed the physical too, so we met the recruiting we met the Navy. So I never did tell my mom that I joined the Navy. I told her I went to take the civil service exam. So July 16, we all swore in and took an oath to protect our country. So January 17, we left Guam. 1958, January 17. Here we are talking to you now--after back what?—thirty, forty years back then? And here I am talking to you. I retired from the Navy July 31, 1988. Thirty years of service.

JD: What sort of factors shaped your decision to join the Navy, like why did you join the Navy?

RP: There wasn't really a factor. The only choice we had was either: be a bum, wait for the civil service to call us back in six months, or join the military. And at that time, I got my draft card to join the army, and I don't want to be in the army. So I decided to join the Navy, and here I am now. Retired thirty years later.

JD: What were your positions in the Navy? What did you do? Where did you go?

RP: My position in the Navy? I was a supply chief. I was the only supply guy on one of the ship. I do stock control. I do order for the ship, food wise. I became master chief.

(05:28-05:35) [INTERRUPTION]

RP: As I was, as I was advancing through the Navy, I was the supply chief. I was supply officer. I did inventory. I buy food for the ship. I handle about thirty people. I was the command senior chief for the ship. And other collateral duty that the CO [Commanding Officer] entitled me to do.

JD: Tell me more about your experiences while in the Navy.

RP: My experience in the Navy. You know, the experience I had in the Navy, I never did practice it while a civilian because I never worked as a civilian. When I retired from the Navy, I just retired. I retired from the Navy when I was about fifty-nine years old. So I can enjoy now. I never really worked a civilian job. Yeah.

JD: When you served, what was it like to be Chamorro serving in the Navy?

RP: Being Chamorro serving in the Navy. You know in the September of 1950 they got the Organic Act of Guam. That's when we become US citizens. Automatic. We didn't have to take a test or we didn't have to go to the channel that other American citizens have to go to. We just

automatic became American citizen under the Organic Act of Guam of 1950. So yes, that's the way we are.

JD: What was the highest position you held in the Navy?

RP: Enlisted-wise, I was Master Chief with E-9. And then I took the officers test and I got promoted to Chief Warrant Officer too. I was enlisted and an officer. So I retired and I went back and retired as an E-9, Master Chief Store-keeper. That's the way I am now.

JD: Do you want to tell me the story about the young men that would come to you for advice?

RP: Oh this is kinda funny 'cause when I was the Master Chief, I was the senior guy in the supply department. The difficult mind that I been on the ship or shore duty. Whenever I come to my office, we have maybe about seven, eight, nine other enlisted guys that come in my office, asking for information. They want me to look at their evals [evaluations]. They want to know what I can do for them. Or they want to know how can I interact with them. And I ask them, "Why don't you go back and see your chief or your officer?" but the response that I got from me for me was, "You could talk to us and we're have trouble talking with my chief or my officer." So that kinda make me feel good like I'm helping them out. So I took that and I'm very proud. And out of the twenty or thirty guys that I talked to, every one of them advance to where they at. So I'm glad about that.

JD: Did you make any lasting relationships with the people you met while serving?

RP: I did. Some of them that I stationed with or just met, they give me a call every day or every other day or sometimes like before I left the house for this interview, I got three guys calling the house. They want me to meet them at some other place. I told them I got another commitment, so when I'm done with this, I might go see them. But they call me up at the house once a week or whenever we go to the casinos, I meet them and we talk. So to me, it give me a great feeling that I'm helping somebody.

JD: What do you guys talk about?

RP: Oh talk about back when we were in the Navy, just how we're doing and what we're doing now. And they always ask me when I retired from civilian work. And I tell them that I never work civilian. I retired from the Navy, and that's it.

JD: How did the Navy shape the decisions that you made for your family? Did you go around with your family moving?

RP: That's kinda funny cause when I met my wife in '62, we don't get married until 1965. There were three years that we just want to know each other. She wanted to quit high school, and I told her no. I'm not marrying somebody that don't finish high school. And she kinda look at me she

say, "You're crazy." She say, "I want to get married." "No, I'm not getting married. You go finish your high school then we get married." And you know what I'm glad she did that. But other than that I kinda enjoy seeing her progressin' and seeing everything that I did with my kids and her doing that and I'm very proud of that. Yeah

JD: What was it like for them like growing up—your children—what was it like for them growing up like in a Navy family? Would you say like that's a thing, like having a Navy family?

RP: Yeah no they were kinda glad because they get to see other places and they get to meet other cool kids. Three of my kids graduated from high school in San Diego. Two of my other kids graduated some other place. One graduated in Washington D.C. The other graduated in Virginia. So they enjoy going around. They enjoy meeting other people. They enjoyed the comradery as a military family. So they learn from that. And also they learn from talking to different families. And they grew up with their kids, with their friends, or whoever they meet. I'm kinda glad that they get the experience to go see other places. If I retired in Guam, they would never see other places because probably I would never get out of the country probably couldn't afford to send them all over the place. But since we're here, you can just take your car and drive to wherever you want to go. But in Guam, your drive to one village. That's it. That's the end of it. That's the end of the trip, so I'm kinda glad that I got my family to let grow here in the States instead of the island. I'm not--I'm not knocking the island down 'cause no matter where I'm at that island is my island and that's where I grew up and I always cherish that. But I want to see my kids see other

places than the island. None of them never been to the—none of them stayed on the island except for my oldest son who was stationed there twice. I was never stationed in Guam, but he did—he was stationed there twice.

JD: So one your kids are in the Navy too?

RP: One of my—my oldest son was in the Navy and my youngest son was in the Marine Corps. Both of them retired like I am. I'm retired—all of us are veterans. My oldest son retired twenty years. My youngest son retired twenty-one years. And I retired 30 years. So we are all retiring. Both of them are still working now. I'm not working. I'm enjoying my retirement.

JD: Are you happy that they made that decision to go into the military?

RP: I'm pretty sure—I'm going to knock on the table—I'm pretty sure that they joined—but there's one thing that I always tell everybody: I never talk military at my house. I come home, take my uniform off, took my civilians clothes off [on], and be my dad. And when I go to work, I put my military clothes on, went to work, and be at military. But I never talk military at my house. They decided. My youngest daughter took them to the recruiting station and that's how they got in. Because of my youngest daughter. And I don't know what she tell them or I don't know what the conversation is, but I'm kinda glad that they make that decision. So now they're both retired like their dad.

JD: So when did you like move to San Diego? I know that you were stationed in San Diego.

RP: The first time we were here in San Diego was '65. But we never stay. We went back to Hawaii until 1977—May 1, 1977. We move back to San Diego. We bought a house, and we stay here ever since. We went to Guam in 19—in 2000 for my mom's funeral, or actually for her birthday, but she passed away before her birthday so we end up doing a funeral. But we stay here in San Diego since 1977 up until now.

JD: What was is like moving to San Diego, like that transition?

RP: We moved here because of the military. You know they uprooted us. We got orders. You're gonna go to San Diego. So we have to go. I cannot say no cause that's part of my orders. That's why the reason we go to San Diego. My orders from the military—from the Navy—said you're going to be stationed in San Diego, so you're gonna be there. So I told my kids, “Hey you guys want to go to San Diego?” Said yeah, okay, so we left and here we are in San Diego ever since.

JD: What—can you describe any differences between the island and living in San Diego?

RP: The big difference that I see being in the island and being here is you got more opportunity here than the island. In the States. You can go see other places. And you can do a lot of things.

With the island, you don't have a lot of things to do. For example, if you want to go to Talofofu, you go to Talofofu and that's the end of it. You go to Inarajan, you go to Inarajan. That's the thing because almost all of the village are all the same—almost the same. Whenever they have in one village, the other village have. In the mainland, in the U.S., if you don't like San Diego, go visit Arizona. If you don't like Arizona, go visit Texas. If you don't like Texas, you can go to Alaska. If you don't like Alaska, go to Canada. If you don't like Canada, go to the East Coast. That's the big difference. There is more opportunity to see than whatcha got on the island. I'm not knocking down the island 'cause that's where I was born. And I will always cherish that 'cause that's where I started my root, from the island to here. That's where I am now.

JD: Did you like traveling around?

RP: Uh yes, every year my wife and I travel. We got this reunion, my ship reunion every year. My first reunion was in 2008, and I asked my wife, “Do you wanna go?” My wife said, “No, I'm not going 'cause I don't know anybody.” Said okay. So the next year, it was in Las Vegas, and low and behold I ask her, “Do you want to go to Vegas?” “Hell yeah, I'll go to Vegas.” So we go. Ever since Vegas, we travel every year. She always look forward to any other place. I think she's seen more states than any of my kids. And she enjoyed it. And even my kids, when we go to Virginia, my two daughters were there, my son was there. We went to Oregon, my daughter was there. So every time I had a reunion, some of my kids followed me, which I'm kinda glad they

did that. So they get to see other people. So they really enjoy. That's one of the things that my wife looking forward to every year.

JD: Have you been to Hawaii often since that's where Jane was from?

RP: Yeah, my wife is from Konia, a little town in Hawaii. I got married there. On our 50th anniversary, we had the family there. And also at the same time, I had my 50th anniversary, we had the ship reunion. So we got a double double jeopardy. We had the ship reunion, and we had the family uh marriage my uh 50 year anniversary. So come 2020 or 2025, we're gonna go to Hawaii to renew our vow. So in about three years from now we will be in Hawaii again. And all my kids are looking forward for that too.

JD: Cool. How long have you been a member of the Sons and Daughter of Guam Club?

RP: I am life time member. I am a life time member—so is my wife—a life time member. So I started here in the club since 1988—I think—or 1976 or something like that. Way back then.

JD: After you retired?

RP: No, before I retired. That's when I started coming to the club. And then when I retire, I come here every day. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. That's why I met you. Monday, Wednesday, and Friday, I met Julia.

JD: Why do you come so often to the club?

RP: This is where you find your old class mate, your old buddies, the old friends from different villages. We want to sit down and talk about the past. We talk about how it is growing up and you know what, for some of the Chamorro that are not here, this is the only Chamorro club anywhere. They don't have any Chamorro club in Guam, which is the island. This is the only Chamorro club out of the whole world, so we're proud that. And in fact, the pavilion that they got back there, I built that pavilion, I helped built that pavilion. So I'm part of that legacy back there. So they're making buku [a lot] money out of that pavilion. And I'm proud that we did. And we built that pavilion in 1977.

JD: Can you describe what else the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club means to you, like when you bring your family here—

RP: Oh we bring the family here. We have the casino run here. We pick up the casino run from here. They got the fiesta. There's nine villages in Guam. I think there's nine villages in Guam. So every year we got a fiesta year. So this is where us Chamorro get together to discuss about what's

happening here, what's happening in Guam, how's the family doing back there. And we kinda reminisce about the old days. But started a fiesta here too, so this is part of our legacy. And the thing that I'm very proud of is Sons and Daughters of Guam Club is the only Chamorro club in the whole world. And I'm proud of that.

JD: So when you say reminisce about the past, do you mean like reminiscing about the past here in San Diego or back in Guam?

RP: Back in Guam. And also here. For some of us retirees that retired in '77 or '78 whatever year you retire, you get here and we kinda talk. And to top it off, I think every year, we got the veterans to get together. The veterans from different organizations that joined the service that retired. They have that here. So the next time that they have the veteran's gathering, I'll let you know.

JD: Sounds good. In your opinion and in your thoughts, what does it mean to be a Chamorro?

RP: To be a Chamorro? Oh that's a tough one. 'Cause you know, we left the island and we see different places. And our heart, to me, my heart is still back there on the island even though I left. And growin' up and living on the island and seeing all the things that the island don't have that kinda make me like if what I see here is back on the island, then probably I would live on the island—or probably I would—but the opportunities that we have is what I gave to my kids 'cause the opportunities are limited back there on the island. Once you enlist in work—once you

establish yourself back there and you cannot leave the place. That's the only thing you have. So the difference between the island is more opportunity here in the States than what you have on the island. But my heart is still with the island. No matter what I go or no matter I do, that's where I grew up that's where I started my life. I enjoyed and I cherished it because we thought knowing what's back there and knowing what is here, make you feel great.

JD: Why do you think that there is—in comparison to the mainland—why do you think there are so much less opportunity in Guam?

RP: See, the island is small. And I think at one time as I was growin' up—I think at one time they were thinking about the island becoming a state like Hawaii or Alaska. But being a small island, the two things that you need to have in order to be a state is that you import and export. And I don't think Guam have those. I'm not so sure whether they can do it. Maybe tourism, yes, but other export and maybe import, but export I don't think they have it. I mean I'm not knocking the island because the island is the island, a small island. It's not their fault. It's not—I can see it maybe changing whoever running the island. It's up to the people running the island to make that island prosper. But as far as the difference between the States and the island, I think the island is too small for what the States are doing.

JD: Yeah and then on top of that there's like you were saying that there's a lot of military bases on the island. Do you think that has any impact on like the—

RP: Yes, I think before the military, I don't think the island would survive. The military is the biggest economy thing on the island. Maybe I'm wrong and maybe I'm kinda exaggerating. But as I was growin' up—and not because I was in the military—but seein' how it is in Guam, they're kinda struggling. All the families are—all those kids and all the families have the opportunity to go outside the island. I don't think some of them don't have that opportunity. Or some don't have the resources. I'm just kinda glad and I'm just fortunate that joining the military make me see how it is between the island and being outside the island. So I appreciate that.

JD: How did you, or I mean did you go about teaching your children and grandchildren what it means to be Chamorro, like any cultural traditions?

RP: I do. The first thing I taught my kids was I'm a Chamorro. You're a Chamorro because of me, but like they all say, if you're born in Hawaii, you're Hawaiian. If you're born in China, you're Chinese. If you're born in the States, you're American. If you're born in Tahiti, then you're a Tahitian. I mean that's how it is, but as far as being a Chamorro and all that, I'm proud to be a Chamorro. That nobody will ever take that away from me. Or no body would take away—and my kids understand that, and I try to teach my kids the Chamorro but they don't want to learn the language and I'm not gonna push it. Yeah because when I was growin' up, my high school teacher and all the educators told me, “You're gonna learn English. When you go home, speak English. Don't speak Chamorro. Speak English.” So I did that. But when we came to the States, the Chamorro educator come through in San Diego and said you gotta learn how to speak

Chamorro. I say, “Wait a minute—when I was growin up, I was told to speak English and now you're telling me to speak Chamorro when I'm here in the States?” Now I mean I'm not knockin' it. It's good to learn other languages. And I tell my kids “You want to learn Chamorro?” “Yes Dad, but I'm not gonna be in Guam. I'm not gonna ever go back to Guam.” So I said—At least they understand the language. They may not speak it, but they understand it. And they learn certain things and I teach them that. Something that my wife want to teach them, the kids, is Tagalog. They don't want to learn Tagalog, but they understand a little bit.

JD: What is that language?

RP: Tagalog. Filipino. I'm not knocking my kids for not learning the language. Because I don't want to force them, if they don't want to learn any other language, aye, they're the ones gonna suffer, not me. They're the ones that gonna say I wish I could learn that. I could speak Spanish 'cause I took Spanish in school. But when I said, “When can I speak Spanish?” but low and behold when I come here in San Diego, there's a lot of Spanish. There's a lot of Mexicans. And sometime I say man I wish I learn—I speak a little bit of Spanish, but only a little bit just to understand. For me to really learn the language, that was a second thought. But other than Chamorro, I speak Chamorro at the house. And they understand it. When I scold them, I scold them in Chamorro [Laughs]. You're laughing.

JD: Why do you do that?

RP: Yeah you know, when they get bad, I cuss them out in Chamorro [Laughs].

JD: So they know those words [Laughs].

RP: Yeah they know those words. Yeah. But other than that, I speak Chamorro once in a while in the house and they understand it. But I'm not gonna force them to learn the language. If they don't want to learn the language, aye, they're the one that gonna live with it, not me. So you know, the opportunity is there if they want to take the opportunity, it's on you, not on me.

JD: Why do you think that they didn't want to learn Chamorro, or you know like more fluently?

RP: One of things that they told me was "Dad, I'm not gonna live in Guam." But I said "Yeah you're not gonna live in Guam, but you're gonna meet someone Chamorro here." Said "Well if I don't want to learn Chamorro and if I don't understand what they're saying, then talk to me where I can understand." And I didn't knock them that. Even me when I talk to them in Chamorro. They say "Dad, what are you saying?" And I explain it to them, so they will understand what it is. But I speak Chamorro in the house a lot of time.

JD: Do you ever speak Chamorro at the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club?

RP: Oh yeah, every day. Just like when we're sitting there, we talk Chamorro we talk in the language. That language will never die on us. It's gonna be with us until the day we die. So that language, we understand the language. We speak it even in military. Whenever we met Chamorros, we speak our language. Like I go to another ship and there's Chamorro, I make sure I talk to him in Chamorro.

JD: When you were in the Navy?

RP: In the Navy, yeah. We talk our language. Same thing with the Filipinos and the Mexicans and the Spanish, whatever. They talk their language. So yeah, we practice it wherever we go.

JD: Did that give you a sort of like instant—I don't know—bond?

RP: Oh yeah—

JD: With other Chamorro?

RP: Oh yes. Even when you first say you're a Chamorro, I will try to speak Chamorro, but I know you don't understand Chamorro, but maybe you understand a little bit. But I'm not knocking it. That's how your parents brought you up so I give them credit. I admire your parents for teaching you whatever you need to know. And I'm not knockin those kids that don't know

how to speak Chamorro or don't know how to speak Spanish. Hey, if they don't want to learn, hey, that's on them.

JD: Some people have talked about like the Chamorro language fading away or quote unquote dying. How do you feel about that? Like because it's not being passed down to different generations.

RP: Well, there's yes and no on that. Because like I just said, when we first growin' up they want us to speak English, so we speak English. And now that we speak English and Chamorro, the Chamorro language, we're gonna have it. But the new generation, they get away from that. The only thing that they know is English. And I'm pretty sure that that's what they're teaching back on the island. Now they're trying to bring the Chamorro back—the Chamorro language back. But some of the kids don't want to learn that. They want to speak English. When they want to go home—even when they go home, they hardly speak Chamorro. They speak English. Even my grandmother—I was surprised that my mother know how to speak English. She understand it. And I look at her and say, “Man, that's a lady.” I admire that. They're not gonna try to throw away their language. But they're trying to learn other languages, and when I come home from school and I speak to my grandmother in Chamorro, she says, “Boy, talk to me in English, so I can learn how speak English.” So I did that. It's—the island itself has been Americanized now. But they try to get the Chamorro, the Chamorro language, but the kids, the younger generation now, they don't really want to learn how to speak Chamorro. They want to know how to speak

English because every piece of paper that you see, it's all in English. Just lately, they'll maybe put Chamorro questions on there so they can understand Chamorro, but I know it's dying. But there's nothing we can do. I mean not necessarily nothing, we can do a lot of things. But if the kids don't want to learn Chamorro, you cannot break their back on that. It's on them. They're the ones that gonna continue on, just like my kids. I told them if you don't want to speak Chamorro, that's fine but I will talk to you in Chamorro. And if you don't understand, I'll explain it you. That's the parents teaching the kids. 'Cause that comes from the family and the house too. 'Cause when they do in the house, the family, the parents, the kids don't want to speak Chamorro, then it's that. You cannot fall back on the parents. I'm not blaming the kids; I'm blaming the parents cause they're not teach—I'm not saying teach your kids how to speak Chamorro because if they don't want to learn, no matter what you do, they're not gonna learn it. Maybe that comes to you too.

JD: So earlier you just said that Guam is Americanized. What did you mean by that? Can you describe what that means?

RP: What I mean by Guam is Americanized. Take a look at all the billboards that you see on the island. The only time that you see Chamorro language up there is when it comes to election time. Other than that, it's all English. Everything is English. And the new generation now is—they learn everything in English. They don't learn to speak Chamorro unless they go to church. Then maybe hear the church sermon in Chamorro. But other than that, it's all English, or maybe Tagalog, or maybe Spanish. Whoever the priest is, they speak their language. But as far as the

Chamorro language, it depends on who you are confronting. Like I know you don't speak Chamorro, so I'm not going to speak to you in Chamorro. Probably you understand some of the words, but I speak to you in English, so you understand. We can communicate. But as far as communication in Chamorro—but if you don't understand Chamorro, we cannot communicate. And communication is the biggest thing that you're gonna have. Without communication, we're lost. And I learned that from my English class [Laughs].

JD: Yeah I'm sure you needed that to be in the Navy, right, and take the civil service exam. What other traditions Chamorro traditions are in your family?

RP: Oh cooking red rice, chicken kelaguen, adobo, cooking potatoes. All the Chamorro cooking—my kids want to learn that. And that's the funny thing, every birthday party or every big occasion, the first thing my kids ask me, “Dad, can you make fried rice?” And I said, “Why me? Why don't you make the fried rice? I teach you how to make—” Said “but Dad no matter what we do, it never come to how you fix fried rice.” I said “Yeah, but you're doing it.” “No, Dad, you're fried rice is better than us cooking it. So can you cook fried rice for us?” Oh, kadu, chicken soup, chicken kadu, my wife will make the chicken kadu, and they'll eat it, but when I make the chicken kadu, they devour the kadu and they empty it. Sometime my wife says “What's the difference in between my kadu and you're dad's kadu?” “I don't know what Dad's doing, but it tastes better. And Mom, I don't want to make you feel bad, but Dad's kadu is better than yours.” I talk to my wife and say “Hey, whatever they say let's just take it as the gospel. I don't

want to argue about chicken kadu.” Every occasion we have, they want me to cook ‘cause I can cook. I mean I’m not a cook, but I can cook.

JD: Do you cook for any holidays?

RP: Oh yes, every holiday every birthday I cook for them. Sometime my kids say “Dad, you don't mind if you cook?” And I look at them and say “What do you mean I don't mind? What if I don't want to cook?” But they say “Dad, you cook better than mom [whispers mom] [Laughs].”

JD: Than mom?

RP: Yeah. [Laughs] So yeah that comforting thing for me. Even my niece and my nephews, when they come over the house or when get the family together, the first thing they want to know, “Hey Auntie or hey Nana, is papa make fried rice?” Said yeah “There's a big pot back there.” They're always looking for that fried rice or whatever I cook. If I cook steak, they want to look for that too. I guess I make a big impression for the kids.

JD: Do you make friend rice in a special way? Like the ingredients, what's in it?

RP: Same ingredients. Whatever ingredients the dish other people cook, I do the same thing. But there's something, I don't know my kids--there's something in my fried rice that they don't know.

I even have them line up and say “look, cook the rice, fry egg, fry the bacon, fry the onion. Put it all together.” And I have them stand there watch. And I say okay, next week you're gonna do the cooking, and I'll be there and I show them do this do that. But as soon as they finish, they say “Nana, this fried rice is not the same as Papa's fried rice.” And I walked away. [Laughs] I don't want them to get mad at me. But that's how it is. Every occasion I do the cooking.

JD: Does religion play a role in your family's life?

RP: Yes. We go to mass every Sunday. The Fatima come around the house we get together for the Fatima. We go to the fiesta. We go you know the rosary or the nobena every night. We do that. I encourage my kids to do that. In fact, my son-in-law, my daughter's husband, is going to be a deacon in about a year, which [knocks on table] and I never thought that guy—he's an ex-air force. When him and my daughter first got married, he got nothing to do with the church, but now he is going to be deacon [knocks on table].

JD: Were you raised to be Catholic?

RP: Ever since I was small. I was raised Catholic.

JD: What kind of the things do you do on the island when you were growing up around religion?

RP: On the island, I was an altar boy. They got the Junior Holy Name Society. I was in choir, yeah all that. Any Catholic function that they had in school, I joined. So that's how I keep my religion and everything strong. So that was all that.

JD: What does it mean for it to be a part of your life? Religion, like how Catholicism—

RP: Part of my life? Maybe because my upbringing was always Catholic. When I was in the service, where they have the services, they got Protestant services, Methodist, or Jehovah Witness. I attended those. Because to me, religion is religion. It is just a name that separate or the teaching, whatever the teaching is, but I guess to me, I'm knockin' any other religion because that's what they believe. And I hope they're not knockin' my religion. So being in the military, they always had different minister or priest come and do religious services, and I attended that. I try not to stay away from that because I was brought up that way. Whatever the religion or function was, I would be there. I carry that on throughout my military life and even now.

JD: Could you explain any of like your favorite activities here at the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club that's around like the Catholic festivities?

RP: Yeah the fiesta, Christmas, the Liberation. The Liberation is going to be in July.

JD: What is that?

RP: The liberation in Guam—that we liberate it. So we have a liberation party here. So come July 16, I think, they're gonna have the liberation here. So ask Jess Bataik [Jesus “Bataik” Cruz], the President [of the Sons and Daughters of Guam Club], ask him—the next time you see him—ask him when the liberation is going to be. But I wish you would come and if you want to come, we'll make sure you get a ticket, so you can come and join.

JD: What kind of activities happen during the liberation?

RP: Oh the crowning of the liberation of queen, the royal—see that picture over there, that girl, over there by the wall. She's the queen for this year. The next one is coming up in July. They're gonna shift over. So either they're gonna have the liberation here—you know back there [pavilion]—or they're gonna rent a hotel where they got the big place to celebrate. But every year we celebrate liberation, liberation of Guam. We celebrate it here. We celebrate in Guam, and we celebrate it here.

JD: How do they decide who is going to be crowned?

RP: They do fundraising. And whoever make the most money is going to the Queen. It's a money thing. So if you raise \$25,000 and I raise ten [thousand dollars], you're gonna be the Queen

because I raise twenty-five [thousand dollars]. Now I'll be next in line. I'll be your royal court or whatever. But whoever make the most money for the liberation will be the Queen.

JD: What do they do with the money that's fundraised?

RP: They give a percentage to the girl that—For example, she raised \$35,000, maybe forty percent will go to her and sixty percent will go to the club. They do a percentage, so she get some and the club get some.

JD: Oh okay, so the club can just use it for activities—

RP: For activities or you know whatever like this now, whatever we're got going here. Yeah.

JD: Is philanthropy or like donations—

RP: Yeah, they can do a donation, they give donation. Or they got the fundraising. They got the casino run—casino run for the candidate, casino run for each fiesta group. Or casino run for whatever you're doing. If you can talk to the president of the club, say hey we're gonna have a casino run, can we use your club or can we use your parking lot to do it. And they'll use it. They'll have the bar set. They can go to casino run or go whenever they do it. But they got a

casino run for the club itself. Or for the cancer group or medical group or whatever, they do a fundraising here. In fact, I think this Sunday they're gonna have fundraising for somebody.

JD: For like a family?

RP: Family or fiesta group or whatever. Yeah.

JD: Oh I see.

RP: I'll show you the calendar in there. They got section over there. After this, we'll go down to the club and I'll show you.

JD: Have you ever participated in any committees of the club?

RP: I was the Vice President. I was Chairman of the Board. I was a board member. I was a scholarship coordinator. I was a ticket, liberation ticket coordinator. There's a few of them. I think it's all in here [Points to a paper]. I'll give you this so you can read it. And here too they got my military thing so whatever you want you can take it out and write in your—so you can get an A-plus [Laughs]. But other than that, I'm enjoying my retirement, so is my wife so is my kids. And I enjoy talking to you.

JD: Do you have anything else you want to add before we finish the interview?

RP: Before we finish the interview? I want to wish you good luck and hopefully you graduated with an honor. I graduated. I didn't have the honor, but I always wanted to go to college, and I got my degree. I fulfilled my promise. I want to go to college, and that's what I did. And that's what I told my kids, and two of them already got their degree. The other two are workin' on it so [knocks on table] so I must have done something good.

JD: Where did you go to college?

RP: Southern Illinois University at Carbondale.

JD: And what did you study?

RP: Education and training. Training and development. I think it's right here. Let me see. [Pulls out a paper] It's all in here.

JD: Did like your mom or any of your siblings motivate you to go to college? Like where did that come from? That desire to go to college.

RP: The college? It's me [Points to himself]. Ever since I graduated from high school, I wanted to go to college 'cause the college is next to the high school. But the only reason why I didn't

attend college then was because there was four of us and they were still young. And the thing that my mom always tell me was “if I send you to college, what's going to happen to your other brothers and sisters? What are they gonna have?” What that means is if she spend that much money on me, what's going to happen to them? So I told my mom, “That's okay, Mom, don't worry, I'm not going to go to college, but I will pursue this at a later—” Whatever, so I did that. And so when I got married, I told my wife I'm going to go to college. So you see the military had this college tuition thing. I used that, my GI Bill, that's how I get my college. Through my GI Bill, I didn't pay nothing out of my pocket. It's all out of military's, out of the Navy, so I'm glad I use that, plus I got a little bit to spend other than tuition. So I pursue my college because I always wanted to be—to have a college degree. And I told that to my kids: “Even if you're not going to use it at least you know you did something for yourself.” And now three of them already got their degrees. Two are workin’.

JD: Did you attend their graduations?

RP: Yes ma'am, I did.

JD: What was that like?

RP: It make me proud cause that sitting there and looking at them, I say I must have impressed them [Laughs and knocks on the table].

JD: 'Cause were they—how old were they when you graduated from college?

RP: How old were they? They were young.

JD: They were young, so they were there.

RP: In fact, they were young when I was graduated, and some of them had already got their family. Some of them got family. Yeah. But this picture was taken at the college [points to a photo]. Southern Illinois University that picture was taken. And three of my girls came. My other two boys were still in the service and they cannot leave, so three of my girls were there. They saw their dad getting a degree.

JD: I'm sure that had an impact.

RP: I was proud, yeah. Now my kids say, "Dad, you make a big impression on us." So they do that, and that's what I'm proud of. I'm always knocking on wood [Knocks on table]. So that's I was tellin' you, don't quit school. If you're havin' a hard time, try as hard as you can. Put that hard time away and concentrate on whatever you're doing. My motto is #1, the number one is you, not them. You are the #1. They may be #1 there, or #1 there. But for you, I consider you #1. Just like I told my kids. When I go take my exam for chief, I am the #1. I'm gonna make it. I'm

not worried about this other guy. I'll make it, so #1 is you. Not your dad, not your mom, even though they brought you up. But you're the number one.

JD: Where did that motto come from? How did you come to develop that motto?

RP: How did I get that motto? Sport, tests. Taking the tests, #1 on the test, #1 on doing this, #1 on doing that. And I keep that in mind, and I say if I apply that #1, I am going to be #1, not him, not her. It's going to be me. So I keep that #1 status no matter what I do. I always say you're #1. Try and do your best. Whatever your best is, you're still #1. You may be the last person, I may be the last one, but I'm still #1. 'Cause the person up at #1 and the person in the last one in the totem pole is almost the same guy. It's just the category is different, but you're still #1 because you're up there with the #1. You may be the last person, but you're still #1 with that person. That's how I see it.

JD: Did you teach your children any other philosophies of yours?

RP: The only thing I taught my kids is if you're having a hard time doing things, back off a little bit and analyze what you're doing 'cause there's something that you're doin' that's not makin' you go up there. So whatever that problem that you have, try and solve it. 'Cause you gonna make it. No matter what, once you solve that problem that you're havin', you're gonna make it. The only person that's gonna pull you down is yourself. Not this guy. Not that person. You.

Because you the one that gonna make it. Not them. And if you put this in your mind, then whatever you do, you're gonna succeed in life. You're gonna do it. But if you got this negative mentality or negative attitude, you'll never get you nowhere. You always gonna be down there. So put the negative thought and negative feeling aside, and continue to rise up and do the best you can. Because whenever you do the best you can, that's how you gonna perceive life. Even if—for example—even if your mom and dad would tell you to do this do that—if you don't want to do it—no matter if they can turn blue in the face—if you don't want to do it, you're not gonna get there. But you are the one that's gonna make it. You as a person, you as an individual that seeking life to be more prosperous for you, you are the one making it. Everything else will come in as a guide. They're gonna get you there. But if you don't want to do it, you're not gonna do it. So the help and guide from other people will bring you there, but you're the one that gonna make that decision. Same thing in school. The teacher is going to be standing up there telling you $1+1$ is 2, $1+1$ is 7, $1+1$ is 8, you know it's wrong, so you're the one who is gonna make it correct. 'Cause if you're gonna believe the teacher that $1+1$ is 8, then you know you are as wrong as he is. But if you think that $1+1$ is 2 and you believe it's 2, then you're gonna make it through. But if you believe that $1+1$ is 8, then you know he's wrong and you're wrong, and you'll never make it. And that's how I teach my kid. Whatever decision you make, right or wrong. You're the one that's going to make that decision, I'm not gonna be makin' it for you. But I can get you to make a better decision. And if you don't want to follow that decision, it's on you. Not on me, it's on you.

JD: It's seems like you have a very positive mentality and that probably took you through you're career. Did you ever face any barriers in your Navy career?

RP: Yes. I did. Twice in my military career I almost got put in a bad situation because I tried to advise this person, but he took it the wrong way, and that kinda put me in a bad spot. But we went through the court procedure, the court martial. And I went to explain to the captain, this is what I tell him. This is what I wanted him to do, but he went the other way. So what he did, he ask the person, says this is what he tell you or is that he got you, and at first he kinda hesitate, and the captain tell him “You better tell the truth now or forever. Forever hold your peace.” I don't know if you ever heard that forever hold your peace. So he told the guy tell the truth now because whatever happen here is going to be for life. And he finally came out and told the truth that that's not what—but he just he wanted—I guess he envy me ‘cause every place that I go like I tell him so we can discuss things or trying to help. I think he envy that. And that's how I almost got—I almost lost my career over that. I almost didn't make it through that because of that one person.

JD: Because they wanted to stop you from promoting?

RP: Yes, they kinda envy me ‘cause you know, I'm a minority. Chamorro is a minority in the military. They got more blacks, they got more Americans, or more whatever. But Chamorros are a very small percentage of the military, except for the army. The army got a lot of Chamorro.

That's why in Vietnam, there was more Chamorro dead in Vietnam per capita than any other state. Take a look at it, go and look at that the war in Vietnam. They got more Chamorro dead there per capita—I'm talking about per capita—than any other state.

JD: Why do you think that was?

RP: I don't know. I'm still trying to figure that one out. Maybe because more Chamorro got drafted because at that time, they got the deserter. The conscientious objectors. You ever heard of that word? If you go back to your school, look for the word conscientious objector 'cause it happened in Vietnam. A lot of guys don't go to the draft. A lot of guys don't join the military. They go somewhere else. They go to Canada to avoid draft. This happened in 1958. '68, something like that. That's what happened.

JD: So you said that Chamorro people were minority within the navy. Did it feel like you were a minority?

RP: It feel—'cause it was only a few of us. There's only a few guys join the military—I mean the Navy-wise. And now I think there's more now, but when I was growing up, there was only a few. Because you have to take a test. You pass the test, you make it. If you don't pass, you don't go. So there's only a few us that you know got the—what do you call it?—the gift to be. A lot of them got the—like I said, there was twenty of us that went in, only seventeen of us made it. And

the other three didn't. And we all graduated in the same school. I don't know why he didn't pass it or I don't know what happened, but yeah. As far as the military-wise, the Chamorro are kinda minority. Same thing as the black. The black are kinda hard time before joining the military, but now there's more blacks now. So they're in the same situation as we are.

JD: Do you think it was harder to be in the military or to be in the Navy being a minority?

RP: No, it's hard. If you pass it, you're in. If you don't pass, you'll never make it unless you went another six month or another month to try again. But they give you the opportunity to pass or to retake the test. But I don't know how long you gotta wait. But they give you the opportunity to take the test.

JD: But what about while you are serving, do you face any barriers?

RP: No, no, no. I went aboard the USS Rowan DD-782. And at that time the Filipino was joining the Navy too under some sort of agreement with the—so for about six months, every time I was gonna go someplace they give me this green card. They say, “You're Filipino,” and I say, “I'm not Filipino.” “They say you're not an American.” And I say, “Yeah take a look at my orders. I am an American citizen, and I'm not Filipino. And I'm not having that green card, whatever that card is.” So for about six months, they always tell me I'm gonna have that card, and so I says, “No, I'm not gonna have that card.” So I went to see the captain, and sure enough they find that I'm an

American citizen even though I didn't take the test and I didn't do anything. I never did—it's under the Organic Act of Guam of 1950. That's how I became American citizen. You became naturalized because your mom and dad went through that or your mom went through that. So there's a difference between you as an American citizen as I am because I went through the Organic Act of Guam. And maybe you can take a look at that and find out what the Organic Act of Guam is. You're gonna learn that. That's how we became American citizens.

JD: Why do you think that they were trying to give you the—like they were so firm on wanting to give you that card?

RP: Because they got instructions that any Filipino—or yeah Filipino got have that card because they're not American citizens. But through their whatever privilege or whatever it is to the United States and the Philippines, so much of them are going to be in the military, be in the Navy, so that's part of their thing. So I had to hear it for six months. They try to give me that card, and I refused to get that card because I am an American citizen even though I am a Chamorro.

JD: Do you think that there's any overlap or are those two identities different? Being an American citizen and Chamorro.

RP: No. No. there's no overlap. No.

JD: No overlap? Why do you say that?

RP: You know because you know right after the 1950 thing everybody is an American citizen, automatic, even though they live in Guam. And they're not in the States. I mean even though they're not American per say. But under that Act, the Organic, they're automatic. I don't see any—I mean I know a lot of time they look at me like “you're a Filipino.” “No, I'm not a Filipino.” “Yeah, but your name is Pangelinan.” “Yeah, but the Filipino spelling is P-A-N-G-I-L-I-N-A-N.” That's the Filipino spelling. The Chamorro spelling is P-A-N-G-E-L-I-N-A-N. That's the difference. When I was station in Washington D.C., they thought I was a Puerto Rican. For one year, everybody thought I was Puerto Rican. And I let it ride for one year. Finally I went to the Admiral and said, “Admiral, I'm not a Puerto Rican. I'm a Chamorro. I'm a Guamanian. I'm an American citizen. I'm not Puerto Rican.” And he look at me and say, “Are you sure?” Said, “Yeah, take a look at my orders.” And it did. And he apologized. He thought I was a Puerto Rican too. So for one year I was labeled as a Puerto Rican.

JD: Interesting. Do you think that sort of thing happened often?

RP: No, just that instance. Because you know it's close to Florida I guess or there's a lot of Puerto Rican over on that side. I don't know about over here, but over on that side of the States there's a lot of Puerto Ricans. And they thought I was Puerto Rican. But I play with it. I went along with it

until finally one day I went to the admiral office and say “Admiral, you think I'm a Puerto Rican.” “Yeah, you are.” “No I'm not.” [Laughs] Said “I'm not a Puerto Rican. I'm a Chamorro. I'm a Guamanian. I'm a U.S. American citizen. But I am not a Puerto Rican.” And they look at me and says “Yeah you're right.” And I admire the Admiral because he never pulled his rank. He just became a person like I am. So we talk, we communicate.

JD: Cool. Do you have anything else you want to add?

RP: Uh no, unless you got anything else you want for me to tell you [Laughs] I'll tell you a story.

JD: Yeah, no thank you so much for your time and all of the—

RP: Yeah, any time that you need other clarifications or anything, feel free. I'll help you out in school because I want you to succeed. I will help you. Like I said I always wanted my degree, so I got my degree, and so I want you to have your degree. After this I'll show you that calendar, so you'll see that what the liberation thing. Yeah, I'll show you that. [Shows piece of paper] Okay, you can have this.

[1:07:00 END OF INTERVIEW]