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Place of Interview: Clear Lake City, Texas

Interviewer: William J. Alexander

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and
University of North Texas Oral History Collection
Captain Edwin DuBose

Interviewer: William J. Alexander February 21, 1997

Place of Interview: Clear Lake City, Texas

Mr. Alexander: This is Bill Alexander interviewing Captain Edwin DuBose for the purpose of obtaining his personal recollections of his involvement in World War II for the Admiral Nimitz Museum and the University of North Texas Oral History Program. This oral history interview is taking place on February 21, 1997, in Clear Lake City, Texas.

With that, what I'd like to do is find out where you were born and when.

Mr. DuBose: I was born in Waxahachie, Texas, on August 8, 1917. We lived in Texas for most of our lives. Then I went to college at Texas A & M [College, College Station, Texas]. Until I got in the Navy, I had always lived in Texas.

Mr. Alexander: When did you graduate?

Mr. DuBose: In 1941.

Mr. Alexander: Okay.

DuBose: Just before the war, yes.

Alexander: When did you go in the Navy?

DuBose: Well, I went in the Navy right out of A & M. That's a military school. It's an Army ROTC [Reserve Officers Training Corps] school, but I didn't come in A & M until it was too late to get an Army commission, so I applied for a Navy commission, and I got into Navy that way.

Alexander: Okay, in getting a Navy commission, because you had your four years of college and applied for it, where did you go to school for them?

DuBose: Well, that was kind of strange. I went in the Navy as an engineer and volunteer specialist because I was an engineering major at A & M. Then, as soon as I got in the Navy, I set my mind to go to sea, so then I had to go to the deck engineering school at Northwestern [University, Evanston, Illinois], at Midshipman's School. I came out with a combination DEUG, which meant that you were a qualified line officer.

The first school that I went to was at Cornell [University] in Ithaca, New York. We took diesel engineering there. That was before I went Midshipman's School in Chicago [Illinois].

Alexander: Yes. That's when you did your work at Northwestern, you said.

DuBose Yes.

Alexander: Did you get your diesel engine certification after you were a midshipman?

DuBose: No, that was before I was a midshipman.

Alexander: So, when did you finish off with your midshipman work? In what year? Was that in 1942?

DuBose: That must have been in 1941, yes, that I finished the Midshipman's School.

Alexander: And you were assigned where?

DuBose: I was lucky enough to get to go to Melville, Rhode Island, to the MTB [Motor Torpedo Boat] Squadron School there.

Alexander: Okay. Tell me how got in that. Did somebody just say, "Hey! This guy goes [here], and this guy goes [there]."?

DuBose: No, no, not at all. [John D.] Bulkeley came through, and he made a big, hell-bent-for-election speech, and he got about 2,000 volunteers out of that class. So, then you had to go in and interview with Captain [John] Harllee and John Bulkeley, and they just picked, out of that group, I think, thirty people. They were picking mostly athletes--college football players and things--or rich, influential men. I was lucky (chuckle). I don't know how I got in. I was the last one chosen.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

DuBose: I told you about that coming up on the elevator.

Alexander: (Chuckle) That's right. Tell me about that. Bulkeley was ranked as what at that time.

DuBose: He was a lieutenant then.

Alexander: A lieutenant.

DuBose: Yes. He had just returned from the Philippines, and he had been awarded that Navy Cross. I don't think that he had the Congressional Medal of Honor then, but maybe he did. I'm not sure.

Alexander: But he had already won the Navy Cross. This was all before...

DuBose: No, this was after Pearl Harbor.

Alexander: I know, but was this after Corregidor?

DuBose: Yes, yes.

Alexander: Okay. So, yes, he's won the Navy Cross for his heroics at Corregidor.

DuBose: And I think that they awarded him the Congressional Medal of Honor after that, but that was later.

Alexander: I see. So, let's see. Where did he send you? Where did you join him?

DuBose: I didn't join Bulkeley. He was just around soliciting for his PT Squadron Training Center up there at Melville.

Alexander: Oh, he was in charge of the training center.

DuBose: No, he was just in charge of recruiting people. Commander [William C.] Specht was in charge of the training center at that time.

Alexander: So, you reported to the training center.

DuBose: Then I went to the training center. That's right. I was in the fifth class up there. To put it in perspective, I was in the fifth class, and [future commander of PT-109, and President John Fitzgerald] Kennedy, for instance, was, I think, in the seventh or eighth class. This was one of the early classes--the fifth class.

Alexander: How long were you there?

DuBose: I think that there was a two-month course, it seems to me. Then right out of that class, I was assigned to MTBRON 14 [Motor Torpedo Boat Squadron 14]. That was a Higgins boat squadron out of New Orleans [Louisiana]. We went to New Orleans and accepted the squadron, and they gave it [the squadron's complement of PT boats] to the Russians [the Soviet Union]. So, then we stayed over in New Orleans and got the next squadron of newly-built PT boats, which was Squadron 15. That was the one that we took out to the Mediterranean.

Alexander: Well, now, I want to back up a little bit here. The Higgins boats were being made in New Orleans.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: And the Higgins boats--and the crew for them--became a squadron, you say? Is that it?

DuBose: That's right.

Alexander: And then they sent that squadron to Russia?

DuBose: The sent Squadron 14. We turned it over to Russia. We took it up to New York [City], and the Russians came aboard, and we signed it over to them.

Alexander: But you were in the crew that was taking it up to them.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: Okay. That's where I was confused. I knew that we didn't send any men over to the Soviet Union.

DuBose: No. We decommissioned it [Squadron 14] in New York and came back and took over Squadron 15.

Alexander: Okay. So, then you came back to New York. You didn't go back to New Orleans first.

DuBose: Yes. We went back and got Squadron 15 in New Orleans.

Alexander: Were those Higgins boats, again?

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: Okay.

DuBose: They were new boats coming off the line, and we accepted them and tested them. We accepted them right there at Lake Pontchartrain, is where it was.

Alexander: But the Higgins boats, were these going to be your combat boats?

DuBose: Yes, that's right. The ones that we were going out in would be Higgins boats.

Alexander: This was in 1942.

DuBose: In 1942, right.

Alexander: Okay.

Dubose: And we were originally scheduled to go out to the Hawaiian Islands, of all things, so they sent us down to Guantanamo [Bay, Cuba] in order to move us down even further to Panama City [Panama] and load us on ships to take us to the Hawaiian Islands. About that time, the secretary of [whomever does the things] decided that we were going to go to the Mediterranean. So, we turned right around and went to New York from Guantanamo and loaded on tankers and went to Africa. We offloaded there at Gibraltar--Casablanca [French Morocco], and then Gibraltar.

Alexander: Where are we with the fighting, then, in Africa?

DuBose: Well, at that time, the *Afrika Korps* had just been bottled up in the Tunisian Peninsula.

Alexander: Oh, okay.

DuBose: So, our first base was in Bône [Algeria], North Africa. We were assigned, then, to what they called...the British [motor torpedo boats] and our PTS were assigned as a force to interdict the sea lanes and to keep the *Afrika Korps* and the Italian [equivalent] from going over to Sicily. They were trying to go over to Sicily to reinforce their army there. Well, we accepted that responsibility for patrolling that strait [the Strait of Sicily] between North Africa and Sicily. The British called it

"RETRIBUTION." It was retribution for Dunkirk [for their humiliating retreat from Belgium in 1940]. So, we were successful in not allowing any Afrika Corps troops to cross over to Sicily. They were all finally surrendered, and they were put on LSTs [Landing Ship Tank] and sent back, a lot of them to the United States.

Then we moved our base from Bône about another 100 miles over further east to Bizerte [Tunisia]. We established a permanent base there at the Karuba airfield, which was first French, and then it was finally an Italian seaplane base. It was perfectly suited for PTs.

Alexander: Oh.

DuBose: So, that was our main operating base, then, for the rest of the war.

Alexander: Let me ask you something here. It's me, I suppose. We're talking about Higgins boats, but we're talking Higgins PT boats.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: Of course, because the Higgins people...

DuBose: Higgins made landing craft, too, but we were in PTs.

Alexander: Okay. I wanted to be sure that we had that clear on here because a lot of people think that Higgins boats were just landing craft.

DuBose: No.

Alexander: Okay, the Higgins PT boats. Go ahead now, please, because I just wanted to clarify that.

DuBose: Well, then we staged at Bizerte for the invasion of Sicily, which is just across that strait there. When they invaded Sicily...well, before we invaded, of course, we patrolled all around the island and harassed any shipping that we could find and landed agents and all of that sort of thing. Then, when they had the invasion of Sicily, we were the screen there to keep the E-boats away from them. Then we went around and made our base over at Palermo on the northern shore of Sicily, and we operated out of there after the landing.

The German army at that place in Sicily was successful in getting across the Messina Strait and going into Italy.

Alexander: Okay.

DuBose: So, that started a year-long campaign. They drove them [the Germans] all the way up the Italian Peninsula--the Italian mainland--there.

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: And it took them a year to drive them up north.

Alexander: What was your assignment?

DuBose: Well, at that time, you see, they [the Germans] were supplying that whole Italian Campaign by barges along the Italian coast. They were 150-foot-long F-

lighters. They were diesel-powered with iron hulls and were heavily armed, and they'd come down and bring in supplies at night. They were protected, then...they had a series of mines along the outboard side of them, and the big [American] ships, like, the destroyers and cruisers, couldn't come in to attack them because of the [German magnetic] mines. So, they assigned the [wooden-hulled American] PTs and the British coastal forces to cut off that line of supply. So, we operated out of Palermo, and then later on at La Maddalena [Sardinia], to interdict that line. Of course, they also had what they called flak-lighters, which was a 150-foot steel barge that had 88-millimeter guns and dual Bofors guns, and they had 20-millimeter guns and all of that. They were used for antiaircraft and anti-PT boat vessels.

Alexander: The crews were what? Italian? Were they German?

DuBose: They were mostly German. See, at just about that time, the Italians all quit the war. They changed sides at just about the time that we got up as far as Salerno. That's the day that they quit down there.

Alexander: I see. Okay.

DuBose: But this was mainly a German operation. They had some Italian vessels, but they were German crews. They also had some destroyers that were part of the protection force out there for the barges. We were

pretty successful because the German high command sent out a message that said: "If you don't knock out that base of PTs at Bastia [Corsica], we're going to lose our battle of the supply line." So, they sent over Stukas [German JU-87 dive-bombers], and we had a heck of a raid up there at Bastia, but they never did stop us there from knocking off that supply line. We finally shut it down, really, I think.

Alexander: Well, how did you...let's see. These Stukas...where did they catch you? Did they catch you? Well, you were probably...

DuBose: No, we didn't have time to get dispersed. We were in port, and the first thing that we knew, they were hanging right over us. They dropped those chandelier flares, and then they'd come right down through the flares. But they didn't do much damage because they didn't hit anything. We went through a lot of air raids--all kinds of air raids--but we never did have any real damage.

Alexander: That's amazing.

DuBose: It is amazing. It was scary (chuckle), but they...

Alexander: Oh, it was scary. I would think so.

DuBose: (Chuckle)

Alexander: (Chuckle) It would scare me.

DuBose: It's funny, but the thing that interdicted that traffic was that the British had brought in some of

what they called LCGs--Landing Craft Gun--and what they did was take an LCI [Landing Craft Infantry], and they put two big cannons on there. They were 4.7-millimeter, which is a fairly sizable cannon.

Alexander: Oh, yes.

DuBose: They were manned by Royal Dutch Marines, but they didn't have any radar. They were very slow, and they didn't have any radar. They were just blind. We were assigned to go out with them, and we would go out and locate the enemy and give them a range and bearing [to fire]; and then they'd throw a star shell [illuminating flare] over the convoy, and then they'd wipe them out. They destroyed more F-lighters and flak-lighters.

Alexander: These were the PT boats.

DuBose: Well, no, the LCGs did.

Alexander: Oh, the LCGs did.

DuBose: Yes. But then we were assigned to screen the gunships and to keep the [German] destroyers out. So, they'd send me up north, since I was the screen commander. As the destroyers would start down, we'd go in and attack them and turn them around. Luckily, they turned around and left.

Alexander: Now, you were screen commander. What is a screen commander?

DuBose: Well, there was just a three-boat division.

Alexander: Okay.

DuBose: Then we would go up north and screen there and locate the incoming traffic and report it back to the LCGs. Then, if the destroyers came down, we'd attack them and send them back.

Alexander: Okay.

DuBose: We did that three times, I think, and we turned them back twice.

Alexander: You're a screen commander.

DuBose: I was division commander of the screen, is what it was, yes.

Alexander: Okay. I'm just trying to get that straightened out. You were the screen commander of the division or division commander of the screen?

DuBose: Yes. Well, our division served as the screen up there, and I was division commander.

Alexander: Okay. And what was your rank now?

DuBose: By that time, I was a still a lieutenant (j.g.) [junior grade], I guess.

Alexander: Okay. You had just gotten to be a (j.g.). The last that I had heard, you had just gotten to be an ensign. You had been promoted by now.

DuBose: Yes, that's right--longevity (chuckle).

Alexander: (Chuckle) Okay.

DuBose: But then the whole task force commander was a British officer, and he was riding on a PT boat that stayed

with the LCGs. He was the one who was telling the LCGs the ranges and all of that sort of thing.

Alexander: Oh, he had access to the radar [on the American PT boats].

DuBose: That's right, so then we'd go on, and after we had made our attack, then we'd proceed on somewhere else and look for some more targets. On three different nights, we found more than one target. Those targets would be as many as...oh, I think that altogether we probably sank fifteen of those big barges or F-lighters.

Alexander: Would there be one powered boat--a powered vehicle--that was pushing more than one barge?

DuBose: Well, they weren't really barges. [Editor's note: Unlike barges that are pushed or towed by towboats on the Inland Waterway system in the United States, individual European-type river barges are self-propelled. They are also used in intercostal trade.] They were like Landing Craft Tanks. You remember. We used to ride those things.

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: They are 150 feet or so long, and they had diesel power. They all carried weapons. Every one of them carried a lot of weapons, and then if it was a flak-lighter, they didn't load it up with cargo. They just put more guns on there.

Alexander: Oh.

DuBose: And, boy, they were miserable things to run into, those flak-lighters.

Alexander: I'll bet.

DuBose: And then they didn't have much draft, so you'd fire torpedoes at them, and half the time the torpedo would go underneath them or miss them.

Alexander: You didn't have a whole lot [of target] to shoot at.

DuBose: No. No, we didn't do much to them. They told us right early in the game: "Don't you attack a flak-lighter! You've had it if you do, because they'll go right in there, and they'll chew you up!" And they would, too.

Alexander: Yes, but could you identify a flak-lighter from any of the other ones?

DuBose: Only after they opened up firing (chuckle).

Alexander: (Chuckle) That's kind of my luck, too.

DuBose: When they'd open up, then you could turn on smoke and, you know, hide yourself--drop over a smoke pot--and they would always shoot at the smoke pots (chuckle). You'd drop the smoke pot, and then you'd turn off this way [gesture], and they'd just...

Alexander: ...shoot at it.

DuBose: ...shoot at that smoke pot for an hour, if they wanted to.

Alexander: (Chuckle) Okay. That's interesting. How long did you

do this duty over there?

DuBose: We were there for two years, more or less, in the Mediterranean. I think that it was eighteen months from Africa to Southern France, and then altogether I was two years over there.

Alexander: In where?

DuBose: In the Mediterranean.

Alexander: Yes, two years.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: So, you went in there in 1942, and you came out...

DuBose: We went in April, 1943.

Alexander: Oh, you went in April of 1943. That's right. Okay

DuBose: Then I think that it was all over in August, wasn't it? In 1944? Something like that. [Editor's note: American PT boat operations in the Mediterranean ceased on May 4, 1945. From that time on, those PT boats and crews were being prepared in Oran for transfer and reassignment for duty in the Pacific Theater via New York City.]

Alexander: Well, in Europe.

DuBose: Southern France was when they...

Alexander: Well, that was in May [that the war in Europe was over] of 1945. That's when the war was over.

DuBose: Yes. Well, they were successful in southern France, when the war was over in Europe. That was where they put the Army into southern France.

Alexander: Well, yes. Of course, the main invasion of France was on D-Day [the Normandy Invasion]--June 6, 1944.

DuBose: That was over the [English] Channel, yes.

Alexander: Yes, and then the invasion of France took place ninety days later, didn't it? Or very close to that?

DuBose: Yes, close to that.

Alexander: I'm sure that you were involved in that landing, were you not?

DuBose: Right. We did the same thing. We had a base then up in Bastia, see--way up north--and it's right across from Elba. We operated for the invasion of southern France out of Bastia and out of Calvi on the other side of the island [Corsica] and up through there.

While we were there, we participated in the invasion of Elba, which was right across--twenty miles away from us. We could sit there and watch them [the Germans] take off and land airplanes on Elba on a good [clear] day.

We were involved in that landing and also in the landing down at Anzio [Italy] and in the landing down there at...the big landing came out of Naples at Salerno.

Alexander: Oh, at Salerno. Okay.

DuBose: Yes, we were involved in the Salerno landings. After Sicily we went up on the Salerno landings.

Alexander: When you were involved, what were you doing?

Screening at that time, too?

DuBose: Well, we'd go in there before the landing ever took place--a long time before--and we'd scout it out and land agents. Then we'd disrupt any traffic that was there.

Alexander: Land agents.

DuBose: Yes, we landed these agents. They'd go in there and get intelligence.

Alexander: Scout?

DuBose: Yes, they'd scout. We'd drop them off and pick them up.

Alexander: Did they ever tell you who they were attached to?

DuBose: Most of them were Italian civilians that they had drafted into the thing.

Alexander: Oh, okay. I thought that it might be a G-2-type [military intelligence] thing. There was a lot of that in Africa where the 6th Army, under General [Walter] Krueger, had trained scouts. He thought that he was going to keep them over there in the Pacific, but they took one his battalions and sent them over to North Africa.

DuBose: Well, the only troops that were landed like that was up there in southern France where we landed fourteen boys. They were from the OSS [Office of of Strategic Services, a precursor of the Central Intelligence Agency]. They were from the Office of Strategic

Services.

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: And they went in to blow up a tunnel up there.

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: And they [the Germans] caught them and executed every damned one of them.

Alexander: Oh, geez!

DuBose: And right after the war, the general who signed that execution order--General [Anton] Dostler...they executed him at Nuremberg for that crime.

Alexander: At Nuremberg for that incident.

DuBose: And he really wasn't the who should have been hanged. The orders had come down from [Nazi German Chancellor Adolf] Hitler: "While you're there, just shoot them!" So, they did.

Alexander: Did you land those fellows?

DuBose: Our squadron did. I didn't personally, but I was aware of it. We went back twice to pick them up, and we never did. They were already caught by then. There were a lot of stories about how they got caught. No one really knows, I guess.

Alexander: Yes, unless you got the people who caught them.

DuBose: Well, I guess what happened was that they [German troops] found them up there, and instead of putting up a fight, well, they [the Italian OSS men] just surrendered. Then they decided that they'd have to

execute them, and the local authorities [reference to the Nazi sympathizing and collaborating Vichy French authority] didn't want to do it. They kept dragging their feet and asking to delay the execution. General Dostler finally came back and said that he had already appealed the verdict, but they were to be shot, so he shot them. Two hours later, there was a reversal of the execution orders that came through...

Alexander: Oh!

DuBose: ...that said: "Don't shoot them!" They were mostly native-born Italian Americans.

Alexander: Were they?

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: They spoke the language.

DuBose: They spoke the language, but they were in American uniforms. They weren't in civilian clothes.

Alexander: They were in uniform?

DuBose: Yes, so that's why they shot them.

Alexander: No, they shouldn't have shot them--not by the rules of the Geneva Convention. They were the enemy, but they should not have been shot.

DuBose: But they were pretty desperate--Hitler was pretty desperate about that time--so I guess that he just said, "Kill 'em!"

Alexander: Yes. You never what that crazy man was going to do, anyway.

DuBose: No.

Alexander: Did you serve all of your time, then, over there, or did you go somewhere else?

DuBose: After I got through in the Mediterranean, I went back to Melville and stayed a very short time there. Then I got an assignment to go into another Higgins squadron down in New Orleans. I went down there, and they'd turned that one over to the Russians.

Alexander: For Heaven's sake.

DuBose: So, then I went to Washington [D.C.], and they said, "Well, if you'd like, you can pick a squadron in the Pacific." I looked them over, and Squadron 33 was a very impressive squadron, and they said, "Okay. You can have that one. It's time for him [the current squadron commander] to come home, anyway. So, then I went to Squadron 33.

Alexander: And now what is your rank?

DuBose: At that time, I was a lieutenant.

Alexander: A full lieutenant.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: Senior grade, excuse me.

DuBose: Yes, senior grade, I guess. I had two bars.

Alexander: Right.

DuBose: But most of the guys in the squadron were lieutenants. We all came up on longevity, you know. We were all being promoted together.

Alexander: Well, that's the way they did that. That's the way that the Navy has always done that.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: They'd pretty much always based on your seniority.

DuBose: On your seniority.

Alexander: Sure.

DuBose: You didn't get into [peer review board] selections until you were about to be considered for promotion to the rank of commander, I think. That was the first time that they went into a selection board.

Alexander: They get more nit-picky there.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: Well, they don't with an [United States Naval Academy] Annapolis [Maryland] class. They all went on through.

DuBose: Yes, they all went on through pretty well.

Alexander: They get promoted pretty much at the same time. That's all pretty much cut-and-dried [standard operating procedure]. Were you USN [have a United States Navy Regular commission] or USNR [have a United States Navy Reserve commission]?

DuBose: I was USNR.

Alexander: Okay

DuBose: For all of my time, yes.

Alexander: You're the first one that I think that I've talked to.

DuBose: Well, I started to change over and go USN, but then I decided that I stay home and go to work. I stayed in

the Navy Reserve, so they called me back for Korea. I went back over there and spent two years.

Alexander: Back on active duty.

DuBose: Yes. I was on a destroyer. I was the executive officer of a destroyer.

Alexander: Which one?

DuBose: USS Blue was one of them, and the other one was the USS Carpenter.

Alexander: Do you remember their bow numbers?

DuBose: The Carpenter was the DDE-825, I think, and the Blue was DD-744 or something like that. [Editor's note: The USS Blue was commissioned originally with the designation as DDK-825, a submarine hunter-killer destroyer. The vessel was reclassified as DDE-825 for service during the Korean war.]

Alexander: Both of them were Fletcher [-class], then?

DuBose: Well, the Blue was a Fletcher-class, but not the other one.

Alexander: How about the other one?

DuBose: The Carpenter was a big ship.

Alexander: Oh, that was that bigger class.

DuBose: They had the weapon Able on there, which was the first underwater rocket. That was put on there for antisubmarine warfare. It was controlled by sonar, radar, and all of that equipment in there. It had integrated circuits, so you could lock-on to a

submarine, and then you could fire that missile. About 900 yards was our range. It was experimental. I don't think that we ever fired more than once or twice, but it was the first undersea battery that I ever heard of.

Alexander: They tell me now that you can fire out of a present-day vessel at about 10,000 yards or maybe even more. I don't know.

Going back to your service in World War II, where did you serve out of when you got over there? You said that you went to the Pacific.

DuBose: I went to the Philippines at Iloilo, Panay.

Alexander: In the Philippines. Okay. We're now in 1945, are we?

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: Okay, yes. Was this the early part of 1945?

DuBose: Well, the early part of 1945 was when I took over the squadron, and, of course, in August, they dropped the bomb. [Editor's note: In accordance with the terms of the Yalta Agreement of February 11, 1945, and the subsequent Potsdam Declaration of July 26, 1945, the Allies insisted that Japan must accept terms of unconditional surrender. On August 6, 1945, following a barrage of messages demanding immediate and unconditional surrender, the first atomic bomb was employed against Hiroshima, Japan, without any official Japanese response. On August 9, 1945, a

second atomic bomb was employed against Nagasaki, Japan, again without any immediate response from Japanese officialdom. On August 12, 1945, the Japanese responded that they would consider a surrender with the proviso that their emperor remain in power. During the period from August 6 through August 14, 1945, American warships and aircraft continued to be exposed to suicide Japanese *kamikaze* attacks. The battleship Pennsylvania was torpedoed on August 12, 1945, at Buckner Bay, Okinawa. Twenty men were killed, and ten were injured. She was sent to Apra, Guam, for repairs sufficient to make the return trip to Puget Sound, Washington. The largest B-29 raid of the war against Japan was launched on August 14, 1945. Following the destruction of their last oil refining plant, the Japanese agreed to the Allied terms of unconditional surrender on August 15, 1945. The formal surrender was signed aboard the USS Missouri on September 2, 1945, in Tokyo Bay.]

Alexander: Yes, but between the time that you got there and August was pretty busy at times.

DuBose: Well, there wasn't any enemy activity there. We were training there, and they equipped us with 5-inch fin-stabilized rockets, which was what we should have had been using in the Mediterranean. It was a rocket launching tube. I think that we had eight of them on

each side. We had sixteen of them, and they had effective 5-inch shells in them. You'd aim them with a reticule just like it was a 20-millimeter. They had the same trajectory as a 20-millimeter.

Alexander: As a 20-millimeter.

DuBose: We got pretty good with them. We fired 20-millimeters to see how much we could hit [firing] with that reticule. You could hit a drum.

Alexander: Gee.

DuBose: If we'd had those things in the Mediterranean, it would have been something else.

Alexander: It would have been a whole different deal (chuckle).

DuBose: We would have been the heavy guns.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

DuBose: But that's what we were doing. We were putting those on and calibrating them and getting ready to invade Japan. They were going to pull us up to...we were going to be towed up off of Honshu island by a destroyer. We were going to be fully supplied with gasoline and water and everything, and then they were just going to cast us adrift up there. We were supposed to be the *kamikaze* guard...

Alexander: Oh, geez (chuckle)!

DuBose: ...and they said that they'd come back for us when they could (chuckle).

Alexander: Oh, God (chuckle)!

DuBose: So, we weren't looking forward to that one at all.

Alexander: Oh, geez! Oh, man!

DuBose: We were very happy when they dropped the bomb. We can't understand why anybody would object to it now.

Alexander: Well, that's why we're doing this. We want people to know that what has gone on in World War II history is accurate, and done by people who did it. That's so important. So, you trained to do that. Did you get into any more combat during that period of time?

DuBose: No. The only thing that we did was that there were some Japanese on an island over there at Negros, I think...

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: ...and they gave us permission to go over there and bombard their camp fires. We went over there at night.

Alexander: Using those rockets.

DuBose: The rockets.

Alexander: So, you were doing target practice.

DuBose: We were doing target practice on their camp fires.

Alexander: Can't you imagine what happened to those Japanese?

DuBose: I don't think that we hit them (chuckle). We probably didn't.

Alexander: You probably didn't (chuckle). You probably just scared them.

DuBose: But it was good practice for us to see what kind of a backfire that you got on those things and all of that.

Alexander: I'll bet that it scared the hell out of them, anyway.
Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

DuBose: No. The only thing that I did over there in the Pacific that was interesting was that we took [General Douglas A.] MacArthur in on one of his "I shall return" missions.

Alexander: Oh, did you?

DuBose: That was kind of interesting. He had already been back once, when he went ashore there at Leyte.

Alexander: At Leyte.

DuBose: And he waded in, and he said, "I have returned!" and all of this. So, then I got a call to go down 200 miles back to the headquarters, and when I got there, they said, "Now, this is so secret that you can't write it down! You can't tell anybody! You can't tell your executive officer! You're going to pick up MacArthur at [this] spot in the ocean at [this] time and [date], and you be there with two boats! Don't write it down, now!" They were still careful about MacArthur. That was before the war was over. So, I very carefully went down there and met him, and we took him on an all-day tour up to Cebu City...

Alexander: Really?

DuBose ...and went ashore with him. He started that "I have returned" business, and they all just went crazy in Cebu City. See, they didn't have good communications

in the Philippines then, so he had to go out and tell them.

Alexander: Well, they didn't know that he had done it yet.

DuBose: And he was the greatest guy, you know. He had such a bad reputation, but he was the nicest man that you ever saw. We spent all day with him. The sailors would come up and ask me: "Can I ask the general to take his picture." So, I'd ask the general, and he'd say, "Why, sure!" He put on his cap and his corncob pipe.

Alexander: The whole bit, yes.

DuBose: And his sunglasses.

Alexander: Well, that's what you'd expect MacArthur to have on.

DuBose: Yes, and he was a very, very nice man. They paint him as being such a bombastic man, but I thought that he was very nice.

Alexander: Your opinion is extremely important in this thing.

DuBose: Well, the people who had that opinion of him probably didn't ever know him at all.

Alexander: Of course not. They never met him. There are those people who did, but might have said that, but this is your opinion, and that is so important.

DuBose: No.

Alexander: And you said that this was for all day.

DuBose: We picked him up in the morning and brought him back that night. As we were leaving Cebu City, he said,

"Well, there's a little island of lepers over here."

Do you know about it?

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: So, we went over there, and we took them all of our supplies that we had on our boats and left them there on the beach. The lepers wouldn't come down and touch you. They'd just watch you from wherever they were.

Alexander: From the woods, yes.

DuBose: Then, when you left, they'd come out and pick up what the food. But he had known them when he was there in the Philippines before, so he thought about them.

Alexander: That was very nice, wasn't it?

DuBose: Yes. He didn't get any publicity for that. See, there was nobody there taking pictures of him.

Alexander: He didn't have his camera crew with him or anything like that. What about his staff?

DuBose: We had four or five big [high-ranking] generals there. We had General Krueger, [Robert L.] Eichelberger.

Alexander: Eichelberger, oh, that's 8th Army. My God! You've got Krueger, who's 6th Army, and you've got Eichelberger, who's 8th Army. Oh, geez!

DuBose: (Chuckle)

Alexander: That's all the armies that he [MacArthur] had!

DuBose: You can imagine that that was a pretty secret mission. They didn't want any *kamikaze* coming after them.

Alexander: (Chuckle) Oh, God! Can you imagine what would have

happened if anybody had known about it. That's heavy duty, when you get those three guys right there.

DuBose: Yes, it was.

Alexander: Yes, you've got all of the "brass" [high-ranking officers] that you need. Now, that's another thing that's an awfully important and an awfully nice thing for to have had happened to you...

DuBose: I was lucky, yes.

Alexander: ...and in this particular case, and this is something that will be nice for your family to have of this recollection. Anything else about that day that you want to put in here?

DuBose: Well, there was something, but it's kind of crazy.

Alexander: Well, tell me.

DuBose: A heavy swell was running that day, so we went up alongside this cruiser, and the cruiser was sitting still, of course. We were riding up-and-down, and when MacArthur walked out, of course, everybody snapped to attention. All of them were saluting and everything. We were at the crest then, so he started to step over onto the boat. When he did, the swell dropped down, and everybody (chuckle) grabbed hold of MacArthur and jerked him back on board. And, sure enough, it just didn't faze him a bit. Then the next time that the swell came up, he just jumped on board.

Alexander: Yes, he really was fearless.

DuBose: Oh, absolutely. No doubt.

Alexander: They say that he was fearless, no doubt. Well, that's interesting, because he could have gone right into that "drink" [the water] between the cruiser and the PT boat.

DuBose: Oh, wouldn't that have been fun [facetious comment.

Alexander: (Chuckle)

DuBose: (Chuckle)

Alexander: You would have been famous for the wrong thing.

DuBose: Yes, I would have been very famous for nothing.

Alexander: For the wrong thing. Well, is that pretty much your story?

DuBose: Well, I had one interesting run-in with [General George S.] Patton that might be interesting.

Alexander: By all means!

DuBose: When we were in the Mediterranean, we were up there in Bastia. One morning...we had had been out on patrol all night, and the sentry came down and woke me up. He said, "Hey, there's a general up here who wants to see you!" So, I got up and went over there. George Patton was there, and he had on his shiny helmet and his guns, and he had a staff car there in Bastia. I couldn't believe it. He said, "My name's George Patton!" He said it just as loud as he could: "What are doing in here? The enemy's right over there!" I said, "We were out there last night, General. We

sleep in the day and then go over there at night." He said, "Oh, okay. Give 'em hell!" What he was doing was that he was setting up the Germans to make them think that he was going to invade [Italy] out of Corsica.

Alexander: Oh, he wanted to be seen there.

DuBose: He wanted to be seen. They flew that staff car up in a plane just so that he could ride around in an open staff car with his helmet and his pistols...

Alexander: Yes.

DuBose: ...and tell everybody that he was George Patton.

Alexander: All of the Germans knew exactly what he looked like.

DuBose: They had spies all over the place there, so they knew immediately.

Alexander: Yes, that's what it was.

DuBose: So, the Germans moved--according the story I heard--two or three divisions up off [outside] of Bastia, then, thinking that he might be coming across there.

Alexander: They were afraid of Patton.

DuBose: Yes, they were.

Alexander: Now, you say that "the report was...." Why do you say that, again?

DuBose: Well, there was a lot of intelligence coming up from Corsica into Italy. After the war, we found that out.

Alexander; I see.

DuBose: The British were tapped in to all sorts of

intelligence.

Alexander: So, you were not aware of that, of course, at the time.

DuBose: Not then, no.

Alexander: No.

DuBose: Except that we saw that there were a lot of guns that had showed up on the shore over there. The next time that we went over there, they had a real bunch of weapons on the shore there.

Alexander: Artillery-type?

DuBose: Yes, artillery. They would sure take us under bombardment, if we got in too close.

Alexander: Oh, the Germans had done this.

DuBose: Yes.

Alexander: I see. They were going to protect that whole area, then.

DuBose: That's right. They were going to be sure that he wouldn't land along in there.

Alexander: That's where they thought that he was going to come.

DuBose: Yes. That was interesting. I think that was borne out in later stories, too. I don't know.

Alexander: That's interesting. And you were the guy that he talked to.

DuBose; Yes, I was (chuckle). He asked me: "What are you doing in here? Don't you know that there's a war on?"

Alexander: (Chuckle) That sounds like Patton, doesn't it?

DuBose: (Chuckle)

Alexander: He had asked for the commanding officer. Was that probably who he had asked for?

DuBose: I guess so. He came up and said, "Who's in command here?" I happened to be the senior officer in command of that base then.

Alexander: Sure.

DuBose: So, the sentry came to wake me up, and he said, "Hey! There's a general up here who wants to see you!" (chuckle)

Alexander: (Chuckle) He didn't happen to say who he was, huh?

DuBose: He didn't know who he was (chuckle). Maybe he did. I don't know.

Alexander: (Chuckle) Oh, it's hard to believe. Well, I so glad that you remembered that for this tape. I'm going to ask the question again. Is there anything else that you'd like to say?

DuBose: No, I don't know of anything right now. That pretty well does it, I guess.

Alexander: It's an excellent memory, and I want to thank you on behalf of the Nimitz Museum, and also for the people who will come in all those years later from now and will be reading these transcripts and saying: "These things all come together and make a lot of sense."

DuBose: Well, I just did this thing for [a presentation at the Admiral Nimitz Museum Symposium] tomorrow. I'm going to try to do it tomorrow in ten minutes (chuckle).

Alexander: Well, that's why I get you longer than that. Thank
you so much.