

The National Museum of the Pacific War
(Admiral Nimitz Museum)

Center for Pacific War Studies
Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. David Ellis
September 21, 2001

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Mr. Graham: We are at the Fredericksburg High School. It is September 21st. We are having our Symposium here at the High School. This is presented by the Nimitz Museum. Today I will be interviewing David Ellis. David, let's start out by telling us where and when were you born.

Mr. Ellis: March 8, 1918 in Big Spring, Texas.

Mr. Graham: And who were your parents?

Mr. Ellis: My Mother's name was Lillian Cheairs, and my Father's name was James Byron Ellis.

Mr. Graham: What are the names and ages of your siblings?

Mr. Ellis: My Brother was Hall. He was born 18 months after me and my sister is Dorothy, born seven years after me.

Mr. Graham: And where did you go to school?

Mr. Ellis: I went to school in Big Spring. I went to school in Marshall, Texas one year and I went to school, graduated from high school in Shreveport, Louisiana.

Mr. Graham: And where and when did you enlist in the military?

Mr. Ellis: First time I enlisted was in New Orleans, Louisiana, in 1936.

Mr. Graham: Any particular reasons for choosing that branch of service?

Mr. Ellis: Well, I was trying to make West Point. I wanted to go into Foreign Service and go to West Point Prep and they had it available in Panama and that is where I enlisted for and was sent. Served in the 33rd Infantry there.

Mr. Graham: Let me ask you one question. Where were you at and what were you doing December 7, 1941?

Mr. Ellis: I was working a shift as a customs inspector on the docks in New Orleans and a messenger came out and said that you are wanted in the custom house and when I got there they said the FBI has requested your service personally and I worked three days with the FBI following the war. So I didn't just have one day, I had three days of remembrance.

Mr. Graham: OK, let's just go a little bit ahead then. Where and what were your duty assignments and when did you ship out?

Mr. Ellis: You are talking about the war?

Mr. Graham: Correct.

Mr. Ellis: I was sent overseas after graduating from OCS to be in a intelligence organization that was being created in MacArthur's Headquarters. I was sent to Hawaii. When I got to Hawaii I found that the papers had placed me in the Navy, under the Navy Command, instead of MacArthur's command. And as a result of that I didn't get back in touch with the MacArthur people until I was an Intelligence Officer in Korea. In fact I was the Acting G-2 for the 7th Infantry Division in Korea before I ever saw the MacArthur people. They sent a Colonel over who knew my story who said I would have been working with him if all of this foul-up had not occurred.

Mr. Graham: All right, let's take a step back further. Going into Intelligence, let's go back and talk about what were some of the basic training or incidents, etc., that projected you into the Intelligence work?

Mr. Ellis: Well, I had worked for an oil company that sent me to two different kinds of schools, and they used me to make investigations of some of their outlying places, and as a result

of that I learned there is more to being an investigator than just stopping somebody and asking them some questions. And so, when I was offered a job as a result of a Civil Service Exam in the Customs Service, which had Customs Agency Service inside of it, but we were investigators that worked world-wide. I felt that this was a calling that not only would be interesting, but it was one that I had some background information. I had studied law at night, which was something that is useful. I had studied accounting. The oil company had sent me to an accounting school. That is useful in this kind of work and so I just somehow gravitated to doing investigative work. Then the Customs Service gave me some unique opportunities. They sent me to New York for two years of specialized training. The man who sent me there was in charge of the Agency Service and he said some day you will be in this same job. And that someday came. Because I was groomed to be a man that they sent on the tough kinds of jobs that they had. We had like a golden diamond deal one time in which there were allegations made that this was a major outfit in Europe set up by people that were product of World War II that had been trained by the British as paratroopers and ultimately they were Jewish people from Poland. And they did, they were involved in bank robbing and then they set up a deal for smuggling. They had a great smuggling deal and there was gold out of the United States and diamonds in and that case became a concern to the Secretary of the Treasury and five people were picked for this job and I was given the case. Everybody else were trying to catch people coming in. I was given a job of taking an old case and finding out what hadn't been done on it and 72 people, not convicted, they all pled guilty in that case. So from then on I was considered to be an Agent, but you don't get to the top jobs being an Agent. In the Johnson Administration I had a Commissioner who was a friend of Lyndon Johnson. He wanted to reorganize Customs. He knew that I was a favorite of our Congressional Committee, but not a favorite of our Headquarters people. And he took me as the one that

would have the secrets and would help him in the reorganization. First in the investigative end of it, next of the whole Customs Service, and then the implementing. And as a result of all of that, I ended up in Customs in charge of everything but investigations. And kind of left the Government at a time when Nixon Administration was using me to work in Laos, Thailand, and in Viet Nam on things that they did not trust they were getting the right information on.

Mr. Graham: OK. If we could let's go back then now to where your assignment was to General MacArthur and let's move there forward in your career.

Mr. Ellis: OK. When they sent me to the Pacific, the papers that I mentioned were fouled up. I was in the Pacific Ocean area. I believe that was where I was supposed to be and Central Pacific Base Command was the Navy. I was in the Navy and that never did change until after the end of Okinawa. And, in the course of that I served special assignment on Saipan to make a study of the 24th Infantry Regiment, which was black troops with white officers, which was in deep trouble. None of it should have ever happened and I could provide you with a copy of supplemental that would have that story in it if you want it.

Mr. Graham: Good. The Museum would like it.

Mr. Ellis: Then, from there Okinawa was underway. The Battle of Okinawa had been underway for a month and a half and they were losing people and they needed people. They had never gotten the promised people from Europe, and especially officers they were supposed to have. A combat infantry officer's life expectancy in combat, not life expectancy, but availability to be an officer leading troops is five minutes. Did you know that?

Mr. Graham: No I didn't.

Mr. Ellis: Statistically in an infantry outfit, in face-to-face with the enemy, in an attack, the leadership of the platoons and the company, those officers is five minutes in actual

combat. Now that includes wounds that inactivate them and deaths.

Mr. Graham: Would you say that's due to the fact that they are up front and make contact

Mr. Ellis: That is what you are trained to do. I can tell you a story that would take five minutes here of a General that talked to my OCS class that I used not just through the war, but I use today. We were in this class, and in the 8th week they told me I was going to make it. The officers there said "you got it made." In the 14th week everybody is going to make it, and they start telling you how you make people fight, and the bad things that happen in the infantry conflict. In the 15th week they brought in a general. They didn't tell us anything, we were sitting in an audience. And they said we are going to teach you more today in this one person delivery than you are ever going to get anywhere else. They said this is a story of this man. He was like yourself, a new infantry officer, graduate, who was put into combat his first day in the lines, in the trenches, in France. He joined in the middle of the night. He never saw the face in the light of the person who was his Company Commander, but told him in the morning we jump off at 0600 and your assignment is such and such and it is 100 yards down there, down the trench and you get them out of there at 0600 and our objective is a hill, a particular hill, and you should know that the French have the right, is on our right flank. That is about all he knew, but he took that information, he went down there and he found his Sergeant and talked to his Sergeant. He asked to look at a map. They lit a candle and he studied this map, and he said "have you seen anything of the French or talked to the French." He said, "no we don't have anything to do with the French." So, the next morning he was there kicking asses to get them out and over the line and make the attack. And they took the objective that his platoon was supposed to take. They had killed off his Company Commander by then, and the other officer they didn't know where he was, and he was commanding the Company by 10 o'clock in the morning. He had also been

wounded twice, but not terribly, and he sent runners back with messages that I can see that the French have not moved forward. From where I am I can attack the Germans on their flank. If you'll give me the permission to do that and reinforce me, or with people to take my position, I have enough troops to attack them. He got an OK to do that. Now this is a 2nd Lieutenant in his first few hours in combat and he did it. And, not only that, when he made that break it became a breakthrough. In the next position that they took he was shot through the stomach and his guts fell out and he made them rip up a coat and wrap it around him and refused to be evacuated because he said "if we take this next position we've made the complete breakthrough through the lines." By two o'clock in the afternoon they had sent up enough troops, in the rules of war that made him in charge because they were applying reinforcements to things that he had recommended that they had approved to do. He was commanding the equivalent almost of a battalion as a brand new officer. He refused to be evacuated. They finally had to just drag him out of there when they got a Colonel up there to take over, but he was a hero. He got the Medal of Honor. Now that was his introduction. Now this man comes on. Well, you know we are looking at a God there. I don't know about all of the other people in this class. They start out with 220 of you and they graduate a 100. I don't know what the other hundred thought, but I thought "this man is a hero and my ears heard every word, still but there." And then he said, "let me tell you how you can do your job when your opportunity comes to do what you are trained to do, that your country needs." And he said, "it is simply this, you'll always have a minute, or 30 minutes, or an hour, or a day to plan. You spend every minute of that, planning what you are going to do, and planning on the basis of what you are told to do, and then you visualize what can happen because of circumstances that are not in your orders and you plan for that because things will change, they always change, and you always see with this change this is what I can do, but you plan this is what I'm going to try to do,

but if it doesn't work, this is my Plan B. Always plan ahead, every step, knowing that this is the best on the information you now have, you can't foretell the future, circumstances will enter into it that you don't know anything about, but you plan for change and don't let change affect you. Be ready for change because the world moves forward in change just like infantry troops move forward in changes from their last position. This is the way the world is and this is the way you fight." And now I'm going to tell you later on about an assignment that I got that I went through this routine. I did this twice, but I mean one time was damned important. OK.

Mr. Graham: Well, you talked to us and brought us up to where you were in Saipan. Where did you move from there?

Mr. Ellis: I went to Okinawa. That was the orders that came down. I could have stayed there, but they had to put me on orders and they were desperate for officers on Okinawa. When I got to Okinawa, I don't know if it is on this tape, but I went to the man who was making the assignments and got into the 7th Infantry Division because it had West Point officers.

Mr. Graham: OK, tell us more about your experiences on Okinawa.

Mr. Ellis: Well, I had an experience a little bit like the General. Not as magnificent or anything, but I was turned over to Colonel Wallace and he said, "Ellis, I have a letter here that is written by the Colonel in the 24th Infantry on Saipan about you, that is with your file. He said you were the best damned officer he had there, so I'm impressed, and you are older than the other guys and I've already reassigned the others that I got to different platoons." He said, "I'm confronted with a problem here. I have in my "L" Company, leading my L Company, is the most glorious soldier probably in this Division. He a man who has been recommended for the Medal of Honor. He is as great a fighter as we probably have on Okinawa. He isn't worth a damn as a Platoon Leader. He will fight the war for himself, but he doesn't know how to use the men to

fight. Officers have to use the unit to fight for them. You have to be a leader. You have to be in front, but you have to use your training to move the other people forward because it is the mass that takes the other hill. So that is why you are going to get that job and he said I want to tell you a couple of things. On Attu we lost some good people because we tried to take some prisoners. We haven't taken any prisoners since Attu. We are not taking any prisoners now. The Japanese have never been trained to accept surrender or what to do if they are captured. They are not to be captured. They are to kill themselves before they are captured, to take as many of us with them as they can do in the process, and so for that reason we do not take prisoners. There are other people that like to take prisoners. They can take prisoners, we do not. The other thing is that we have never had the supplies in all the time that we have been out here, with the Navy leaving us, we have never had the supplies that we should have had. We have never gone into a battle where we had the right damned uniforms that we should have had. They just never did get there. But this time on Okinawa, we have been treated the way soldiers are supposed to be treated. And included in that is the fact that we not only have our own artillery, but those battleships that you saw when you were coming in here can all be put on any target that we call for. And what that means is if we have the equivalent on-call of 24 battalions of artillery. If you need that to kill one damned Jap you call for it and it will get delivered. Now do you have any questions." And I said, "Yes sir, I heard that the Japs are using a reverse slope defense." I bet you never heard of this.

Mr. Graham: Never heard of it.

Mr. Ellis: I heard that they were using a reverse slope defense on this and the only time that has ever been mentioned in my hearing was I was sitting there smoking a cigarette, talking to a guy that was a veteran of a tank outfit that was run over by the Germans in North Africa. And that Lieutenant told me that the favorite that was used by the big German tank

general was reverse slope defense if the terrain fitted. That is the only time I had ever even heard it and I looked it up and learned that a reverse slope defense is to fight it in a different way. They are using it here, why is it different, and Wallace was a West Point man that they thought so much of that he couldn't pass math in his fourth year that they kept him back with a injured leg and let him come back so that he could graduate. He was a wonderful Commander, Combat Commander. I have pictures of Wallace standing there looking at a battle with my Colonel and the Colonel is ducked down and he is looking over and Wallace is standing up there with a big grin on his face. He loved it. And when I asked him that question, I knew I had made a friend. Just by reading his face. He said, "let me tell you how you fight a reverse slope defense, and it is what is our problem here. This island is composed of a lot of hills and they have had the opportunity since it was their homeland to use the terrain features to their advantage and it perfectly fits a reverse slope defense, which we did not know till we got here and it has cost us a lot of people, learning how to fight it, but here is why it is difficult to fight. Your enemy is positioned on the back side of the hill that you are going to face and when you try to assault that hill, they are not shooting at you, they are sitting there eating their lunch. Your unit is being decimated by flanking fire from other positions that have already sighted in. They know to the foot where you are and they have mortars that are zeroed in on it and they have artillery that already, small artillery and the big artillery is all on it. They can call for it. And the people on the other side of the hill that you think you are trying to take, they are not involved in the fight at all. They are waiting on somebody to take a hill that they are covering, and that is the reverse slope defense." Now, let me show you how you pick it apart, and you have to have great unit coordination, one with another. And then after you get on that hill you have to be aware of the fact that they are going to be trying to not just take your hill back away from you, but those units that have been incapacitated

so that you could get on this hill, if they take that hill back, you are back in the same trouble you were to start with. All of these things you have to be aware of. And this is the way it was. We took off the next morning after I joined it and what we had was a hill in front of us with just exactly what he was talking about. When you got up to the hill then the Japanese on the other side start throwing their grenades over and you start throwing grenades over on top of them, and this is about all you can do. This hill was about 8 feet across from the top we started digging and we eventually got a tunnel through where we could see what we were doing and we could call for mortar fire over there on them, but that was a learning experience and I'm glad I asked the question because I understood what was happening. We were pulled out of the lines the very next day. We went into there and I was with an outfit that had a Company Commander that was his fourth campaign. He was worn out, and I had a Platoon Sergeant that was a glory soldier that I had told the night before -- I said, "I was in the regular Army, I know what a Sergeant is supposed to do, and it is your job to lead this outfit. It is my job to see that you know everything I know and to help you in every way to get all the resources that you should get. The fact that I'm out there with you at the time means that I'm showing you that I'm still with you, but it is your job to see that these people fight because there are some that won't fight, and there are some that will try to fight too much and it is your job to do it and you know these people." Now when we got back they said the first job we got for you is that we got a bunch of new replacements coming in down there, enlisted men. Your Company Commander is laying there asleep, and he was. He slept for a day and a half. So you go down there and try to get as fifty people if we can get them, but get all you can get. So that was the first thing I did the day after we were pulled out of the line. I was cleaner than the other people. I didn't need the baths and de-lousing and all of the other things going on. I was sent down there to get some people. I not only got them, but I went to this guy, just as I had

done for myself, and said -- I want some good people, and some of these guys that are coming off that damned ship, they can't even carry their damned barracks bag. They are dragging their barracks bag. These guys are going to be in combat in 24 hours. They are not ready to fight. I want some real soldiers off of there, and he said, "you pick them out. You tell me what you want here." So I stood there and moved people out and asked their name. A guy gave me the people that I wanted and he was so happy to see somebody paying attention to the kind of job that he had he said -- "How many you got there?" I had gotten my fifty people and he said, "I got five prisoners that they have let out of Leavenworth. You can have them if you want them." I said, "what are they in for?" He said, "all kind of things -- rape, murder, and what not. One of them is for fighting with an officer." He looked pretty damned good on paper to me. He was a Staff Sergeant in the paratroopers, and I said, "let me talk to him." I talked to this guy and he told me, he said, "this Lieutenant whose ass I whipped would have got us killed and they court-martialed him for it afterward, but they court-martialed me for whipping him so that we didn't get killed." And he said, "when I had the opportunity to volunteer for here I did it." I said, "you are in a good outfit. You are not just found of whipping Lieutenants are you?" He said, "no." I said, "well, you'll be in my outfit." So, I got him and I said, "how about these other guys that were with that were in Leavenworth with you? Any others any good?" He said, "one more." I got that one too. So I came back. I got fifty- four people out of that bunch and brought them in, and I got part of them in my platoon. I told them the most important thing you can do, we'll probably be back in the lines in a week, and the most important thing you can do is see these guys over here that are sleeping. Find out what it is they do because I'm going tell you what you are going to be doing, but I'm going to let you have a choice in this. So, what I did was I said that the worst job that we have is the flame throwers because this is a deadly weapon if you get close enough. And,

of course, it becomes the thing that they need to get rid of the quickest, and I need two volunteers for that. So I got two volunteers out of these people for the flame throwers, and I said the next worst thing is the machine guns. You got to knock the machine guns out; they know to knock the machine guns out, and so I need machine gunners. And so I got volunteers for those jobs, and then I got them with the people that were doing those particular jobs and I said let them sleep, but when they wake up you start asking them questions because they are some people you are going to be working with and they can tell you things that will keep you alive. I spent my time doing this, and because I was, you know, I wasn't wore out like these other people were. I was sent on some things. I went up and looked at the escarpment that we were going to be taking where our next position was going to be and I heard my Company Commander talking to a Major and what not about this, and I finally said, "excuse me, is this hill such and such?" They said "yeah." I believe that is it. Well, of course, we were never friends before, and certainly not after that, in front of that Major. But I wasn't going to go up there oriented to take one position and everybody thinking that we were supposed to be taking this one with a guy that is just wore out. This man of mine was worn out. They sent me on two or three other deals. They brought me a fellow and said -- this man is a conscientious objector. He was in a uniform and didn't have any weapons, and back at Battalion they think the photographs we have are not good enough and they are not detailed enough and so he has been sent up here to take some pictures, to draw. He is an artist. So I didn't think much of this guy, but I want to tell you, this guy was as brave as anybody. He just didn't want to kill anybody. It was his religion or something and we went up there and he made some beautiful sketches and then I could give him the coordinates and everything from the map, and hell that was the map they fought when they took that hill that they used -- from this conscientious objector. So I was used in a lot of different ways like that. Now we had what was

called "termite patrol." We knew that the Japanese were bringing people swimming them around our line where we had been relieved from. Not from our Division, but around from another Division and they were being infiltrated into caves that already had equipment and everything in there to them, back behind the lines. They also made a break-through, which I'll come to in a minute. So I had the job of what was called "termite patrol." I would pick soldiers that were fresh and we would go out and do things in these caves and I spotted where there was a hell of a lot of footprints going into one cave that you couldn't see the entrance, but there had to be an entrance. So, after they went by I went up there and kind of peeked around and saw how this thing was laid out and, you know, I could smell that they were in there. These people were cooking and everything else, and so I went back and I told this paratrooper, who was an expert rifleman, I want you when I go back down there with a satchel charge, I want you shooting in that door until I get there. I am depending on you to stop shooting when you see me get close. I am going to throw a satchel charge in there. I told the other people to do the same thing. I had about four guys, plus that paratrooper, that laid down the fire and I ran by there with a 25 pound satchel charge and threw it in and kept running. I ran all the way around the hill, which was about from here to the street out there and got around to the other side, and when it blew it was also an ammo dump. It blew that dam hill out on top of me so I got a lot of bruises and a bad knee, the one that is going to be operated on in a few days, out of that. I wasn't about to leave this outfit if I had to go on a crutch because I was there, I was committed to it, and I was going to do it. All the other things like this finger, and all of those, we just got band-aids and patched them up and they took me up and they wrapped me up. They had some kind of bandages, loose rubberized bandages, and that is how I went back. Then we were sitting on top of a hill and our artillery was down below and the Japanese made a break-through between 184th and the outfit that had relieved us, and they

were carrying with them a cannon. I'm calling it a cannon, but it was some kind of a portable rifle, which had a base and a block and a bore. They had two Japanese carrying each of these pieces and they had to get through. Unfortunately for me, the hill that we were right down below was their target. My guide was a guy that was partially deaf. An older guy with a family like I had back in the States and a good guy, a smart guy and had the respect of everybody. The duty of a guide is that he is the last guy that jumps off when you go somewhere. He sees that everybody else is out of their hole and gone. By whatever it takes. Everybody had his respect. He was partially deaf. I was talking to another Lieutenant there from another Company, Lt Love, who was going to be right next to us when we back on the line. He came up and said, "Lt Ellis, I went out to take a leak over there a while ago and I heard something up on that hill and we don't have any people up on top of that hill." I said, "no we don't." Now that day they had given me a piece of equipment to test. I say they gave it to me, they gave it to the outfit and it comes down to the youngest officer there. I had this piece of equipment. It was a snooper scope. You've heard of a snooper sniper scope? Well this was a snooper scope. It was the same thing, but it was about 50 pound battery, like goes in an automobile, plus a scope like a little telescope. That is all there was to this thing. What you could see was in different colors, like yellow, and you weren't seeing true colors, but you could see at night and so instead of just running out there to see if there were Japs on top of that hill, I got this thing out of my tent. I had never used it and hadn't even read the instructions on it. I had been told about it and was going to use it the next day and study on it and then use it the next night. I grabbed this thing and went out there, and hell I could see somebody sticking their head up and looking around, so I left the equipment there and went back and said get me a couple of concussion grenades. We didn't have any. So I took two grenades out there and when I got close enough I threw a grenade up on top of that hill and as I did this bastard threw one

down on top of me. I just remembered from the day before just how the ground was that there was like a little slip wrench there. When I threw mine I dropped into this thing and his grenade went off to this side of me and went through almost a foot of dirt and went into here. I fell like this and it went into my lung here. I didn't think it was in my lung. My arm hurt. I thought I hurt my arm and I really wasn't hurt bad, but my arm wasn't working. So Lt Love came running out and he said I think you got hurt there. I said, "well we got to get that dam _____? _____ out of here." We went back and got it and brought it out. It was a secret weapon that had already had its first victim and so they got an aid man up there and he said, "there is more to this," and they cut the thing off of me and he said "I don't know how bad but I can stop him so he can talk, but it is in his lung because of the way I tested him out. So he has got to go and be operated on." So that night by stretcher and stretchers on jeeps and in an ambulance I got to one of these MASH Hospitals where I had a wonderful expert Doctor, who chose me not for any other reason than -- I said, "these other guys are ahead of me." I was sitting down there and I was fighting with them. I didn't want morphine and all of that, and he said, "that man that you said was here waiting on you, you'd be dead by the time he'd get out, he doesn't have the will to live. He is not hurt as bad as you are, but I think from what the nurse tells me that you're fighting for your last breath so you got the will to live." So they took me inside there and he looked at an X-ray, and all he had was the one X-ray and he said, "look at this book, here are your options. I can go in there and get that", what I had was a -- our grenades have serrations and when they go off those square blocks are what hits what you are throwing at. But the Japanese are not uniform in the explosive area and it made this powder. I was in a hospital with a guy whose whole back was covered with powder, with just little bitty grains of powder. They had him in a cave with two entrances and they'd throw a grenade, he'd run to one end and he was in a bad batch of Japanese grenades. He really

wasn't hurt bad, he just had a helluva lot of little holes in his back. But mine was a serration and a half that went in. And he said, "now I've got to take out two ribs to get to that, probably. I know I have to get out one, and here is a picture of what you'll look like the rest of your life. Doubled over like that, or I can go in there and try to sew it up, sew up your lung, and come back and sew the other side and sew you up on the outside and if you don't have a cold now, and you don't cough for a week, or sneeze, you'll probably make it." So I said, "let's do that. Option Two." But I said, "I don't want to be put out." He said, "Hell I'm going to do some stuff that is going to hurt." I said, "I'll let you shoot some morphine in there for that, but I don't want to be put out because when I lay down the blood runs out my mouth and I don't like that." And he said, "you know, he may be right it may be just as good. Nurse, go get my barracks bag." He got his barracks bag, I sat on the end of the operating table, crossed my arms like this, and the nurse held this elbow here and he went in and operated, came back out and sewed it up. He said, "you know, nobody is going to believe the dammed operation that just went on in here." And I said, "Doctor, are those hamburgers I smell?" And he said, "Yeah, don't tell me you want something to eat." I said, "I haven't eaten in a long time and I certainly haven't been eating any hamburgers." He said, "Nurse, let's just stop for a while and eat." And they sat there, pulled up chairs, and I wasn't doing a lot of chatting, but the three of us sat there and ate those hamburgers. I had been on a hospital ship and I was supposed to go to Hawaii, and the kamikaze hit the hospital ship and so I was two more days there and another hospital ship came in, but by that time they had picked up a lot more people needing to go

Mr. Graham: You weren't on the ship when the kamikaze hit were you?

Mr. Ellis: No, no. I was laying on the beach when it was hit, waiting to be put on a boat to take out there, and so we got this one and it was very crowded. Because we were badly

injured there was a small room that had four cots in it and a guy from 184th was right here, and across was another fellow, I don't remember a lot about, but right across from me was a Navy, I don't know what his grade was, equivalent of a Captain in the Army or something like that, but he was a Naval Academy graduate. He was obviously, by far the worst hurt of all of us. All of us were in there with tanks and all that kind of stuff, but this guy was really hurt. He'd lost one leg, and another leg was crippled up. He'd lost an arm at the wrist and he had bandages all over his face and everything. He was an interesting story that ought to be remembered. He was on a ship that was hit by a kamikaze. What they call them picket boats out there. He was the Executive Officer. And not only was the ship hit, but he was torn to pieces and blown into the water, and two of the sailors on that ship dove in the water after him, knowing that the ship was underway and the orders are that you don't go back for anybody that is in the water. Two of them jumped in there. Another ship was coming along behind and it got hit, another one of these boats, or some kind of a boat. It was hit and now his boat had drifted away from him but this other boat came up and it got hit and was stopped almost where they were. They did send some people out and they rescued all three of them together. Those other guys, I don't know what happened to them. But that is this guy across from me. He had to have their respect for them to have done this and I thought a lot of this guy. I got in a big guys fight, everyone of us in the room joined in together. They had a Doctor come through there and look at an X-ray and it was the foot that had been cut off of the man and all of this kind of stuff. Not on this ship. This is after we got to Saipan. On this ship it couldn't have been better. Great nurses, everything, but it was a small room. A Navy person of some kind came in there and said, "I have to be apologetic to you, but we are going to have to put a cot in here. We are going to have to put somebody else in here, we are just over-crowded with people. So, that is fine, you know -- what the hell, you know we are glad to be getting the good treatment we are getting. They

bring this cot in and the guy comes in there and he just kind of looked wild eyed and came in and laid down there and went to sleep that night. The next morning he got up, folded the tent, put it over to the side, I mean the cot, and went out again. So, we thought, you know, this guy he looks spooked, but he don't belong in this place I know that. That evening he came back again and he said, "I owe you all an explanation. I'm being taken back to Hawaii to be tried for desertion. I'm a Captain in the Marines and I want you to know my story. We took a hill and we were holding it until there were only three of us left on that hill and we were all wounded. I said we got to be relieved and they said you'll get no relief, you hold that hill at all costs, and all costs means die -- you die. He said I told the other two guys get out of here, you are relieved. I fought them by myself. One time. They were all over the hill, but they pulled back before they realized it. And he said I've done all I should do. The next time they come they are going to take the hill. He said, you know I've got two or three scrapes on me is all I've got on me, but he said, here is what I did. I walked back and I walked right through and I went all the way back to the Major that had given that order to me and I said if you want that hill you go take it with some people because I can't hold it without any people. Here I am on my way to Hawaii." We landed in Saipan and we were put in Quonset huts and the same guys were right around me that I was on with the Hospital Ship. We were all there together. They had a Captain in the Marines down two beds from me and I could hear him crying at night. He had a straight face in the day time, but this poor devil had been in that hospital for over a month, had his arm tied up to a rope in the ceiling and what not, and I was told that his shoulder was shot away. There was nothing they could do about it, they couldn't fly him out on a plane, only until a ship came in there that had the right facilities would pick him up and take him back could he ever get to the States. This is a hopeless situation. I went down there. He told me the story because the nurses would bring in his mail and throw it on the bed and there wasn't any way

he could read it. I went down there and read his mail to him. I was supposed to be a bed patient, but I was getting around. The four of us had been on the Hospital Ship together teamed up and the next time -- those officers they never saw me because the first day we were there this guy came in with a great big thing like a tube like this, with a big needle on the end of it, and we were in a chest ward. That guy would have two orderlies would hold a guy over and he'd run that damned thing into their lung and drain the blood out and then he'd go down to the next one. When I heard them hollering and screaming up at the other end of the ward on this, I got up and went around and took my name tags and everything off of the head of that bed. I just went on out of there and I waited until that damned guy left. He came every other day and he never got me. I was the first one to leave too. But anyway, we decided we were going to jump these people. They didn't know what the hell they were doing to this Navy guy and we did. We jumped them on about him and we jumped on about this other fellow. In two this guy was gone on a Merchant ship that was going back to the States that had a facility that could take care of him and they had somebody that was a medical person that could do it. There were maggots in the wounds on this Navy Officer too when they finally did treat him like they were supposed to. So, we had a kind of, I don't know that they had me, I was a spokesman, but all of us stood together on this.

Mr. Graham: What did they do about the Marine Captain?

Mr. Ellis: I'm going to come to this. They issued us a little piece of paper, not a piece of paper, it was like a little booklet. It was either the Time magazine or one of these other weekly newsletters, condensed version. I was reading this one day and here, low and behold, here's this Captain. He is in Hawaii and the newspapers had picked up on it and it was in the paper. And then they had repeated it in this thing that I was reading so I passed it around. Then the very next time they gave us one, in there it said the 7th Infantry Division is attacking the escarpment on Okinawa,

and Companies they've suffered so many casualties that Companies are being led by Sergeants in the 17th Infantry, which was my outfit. I'm out every day as a bed patient, but I'm out walking. The first time I walked about 100 yards and I had to lay down and rest for about 10 minutes before I could get back, but I was doing that. So I knew that I was going to make it and I was pretty well healed, and so when I read this thing all I had was my pocket book and I'm in pajamas and the skivvies and a robe. I went out and walked across the quadrangle they had to where this guy in charge of the hospital was. He was a Naval Captain or something. He had an orderly or somebody out in front and I said I need to speak to him. I came in and I said, "I want to be discharged and go back to my outfit." He said, "what is your name?" I told him and he had my file brought in. He said, "Hell, you are a bed patient. There isn't any way we can discharge you." I said, "I've got to get back to my outfit, they need me back there." He said, "you'll never go back to your outfit. They will take you back and fatten you up and send you probably back to the States for discharge. You got a big hunk of metal inside your chest there. You're never going to be in combat again. Forget about it." Thank you sir. I went outside and there was a jeep coming down. I flagged that jeep down and I said, "are you in the infantry?" I had seen, it had an I and F on there. He said, "yes sir." I said, "take me to your platoon sergeant, I mean to your supply sergeant." He took me to the supply sergeant, an old guy in there. I said, "You look you are regular Army." He said, "I was." I said, "I was too, I was in the Army down in Panama when I was a kid and I know that a supply sergeant can do any damned thing that he wants to. What I want you to do is, here's my identification. I'm an officer, whose outfit is in combat, and I want to get back to them. I want you to give me a complete outfit." He furnished me with everything, including a pistol. He didn't have the holster. He had the kind that nobody wanted to carry, but he didn't have the kind you could wear on your belt. He kept that guy there and when I got all the clothing there and dressed in them

he said, "take this officer wherever he wants to go." I went right out to the airfield, walked right in there. I said, "I'm Lt Ellis and I'm trying to get back to my outfit on Okinawa." We don't have any flights going right now Lt, but we got one that is going to go to Guam, and lay over tonight, and then it will go to Tinian. I said, "fine I'll take that." So he said, "you've got your parachute haven't you?" I said, "yes sir, it is right outside." He said, "OK". I didn't have any damned parachute. I went out there and got on the plane. It took me down to Guam. I spent the night in the BOQ there, went to the PX and bought some stuff, including a bottle of booze, which I took with me, and we went to Tinian. I got a plane within ten minutes that was about to leave. Went right from one to the other one. They already had them turning the motor. They said you can get on that one, and flew me right over to Okinawa and I went out and flagged down a jeep and said I need to get to the southern end of the Island. He said, well I'm only going part way, but I'll take you to a motor pool. So twenty-eight days after I had been wounded I reported into the S-1 of my regiment, who looked at me like a bull at a bastard calf. He said, "I remember you Ellis. You got shot and left. We thought maybe you were dead." And I said, "No, I'm reporting back." He said, "oh, I'm glad to have you back then. Where are your orders?" I said, "I haven't got any orders. I'm over the hill out of the hospital, but I'm reporting in here because I'm ready to go back to my outfit." He said, "I've got to talk to the Colonel about this." He went in and talked to Colonel Buckler (?), and he said "the Colonel says get you a place to sleep tonight and said you look like you need some rest." You get a place tonight and something to eat and he'll talk to you in the morning. So, the next morning he said "Ellis, I know a little bit about you from Colonel Wallace. He thought you were a pretty damned good officer. We never expected anything like you show up here AWOL from a hospital." And I said, "Sir, I'm really not AWOL, I just don't have any orders. I don't have any papers. They told me I'd never be able to come back here and I think that I'm needed back here. I read this

in the paper, so I'm here." And he said, "Well, we need officers, there is no question about that." And he told the S-1, "I don't know we will sort this out. Wallace liked him, then send him back to Wallace. He'll take care of him." And so I went back. They put me in a different Company, where they had a different kind of a problem, and they were in the line at that time, on Hill 89. We were on the right side of it. They only had one other officer and what we were doing was we were throwing grenades at small holes and blasting them with a flame thrower in bigger holes, or if it was a great big hole, a 25 pound satchel charge. But I was in reserve I had the reserve. The reserve was about 15 people and we were on that hill. But that was the hill of the headquarters of the general command in Okinawa. Ukijimi, I think his name is, and that outfit that I was with took that hill and we threw a bunch of satchel charges down there. I say "we", the people out in front of where I was, threw those satchel charges down there and I brought a month ago and gave to this outfit a bunch of pictures that came to be official later on, and included in those were some private pictures that were taken of this man with his aid, with his second in command, and they never committed hari-kari. We killed them down there with those satchel charges. That was all a bunch of B.S.

Mr. Graham: Once again, I want to go back. What happened to the Lieutenant that was called a deserter. He was a marine--

Mr. Ellis: I don't know whether he beat the case or not. I have no idea, but I would like to know. Because he peeled his shirt off and showed us and this guy had cuts and bruises and everything all over him, but I mean he could have stayed and fought.

Mr. Graham: I think it would have been a needless sacrifice.

Mr. Ellis: He would have been sacrificed because he wasn't saying I'm not going to continue to fight. He said, I'm going to go back, but you got to give me some people to help hold

that hill.

Mr. Graham: OK. After this where did you go next?

Mr. Ellis: Well, immediately after we took this hill, they put us across the island. We knew from deserters that there were about 5,000 soldiers still there that had orders. Their last orders were to get through the American lines and get up to the north into the mountains at the north of Okinawa. They were going to be doing it and so we established a picket line. I had a big piece of ground there to cover and I had no contact with anybody else. Nobody ever came to see me or anything else. I sent people out to get supplies and ammunition and grenades, and all that kind of stuff, but nobody ever came to see me until about the third day. A Major Davis came. He was the S-3 of the Regiment. He said, "I hear that you are killing a hell of a lot of Japanese down here and they are also getting a lot of surrenders, and I want to know what kind of deal you got going here." I said, "well when I was a kid we used to have what they call 'rabbit hunts' out in West Texas and we'd round up the rabbits and when you'd get them cornered in a place, then is when you would kill them. You didn't go out and hunt them rabbit-by-rabbit." He said, "How in the hell are you doing this?" I said, "In the mornings this is all fields out there and our enemy is back on those hills. They are penned in back there by the ocean, they can't get any place, and we can't go get them because that is terribly rough property in there, and so what we've done is we've got this picket line across here and I've got one of the places that is logical for them to come through, because they can come through these cane and sugar fields and get through terrain features that they've already picked out to get through. I'm on one of those routes, that is why I'm getting a lot of Japanese coming through here. And so what I'm doing is I send a squad up-wind in the morning, whichever way the wind is blowing, and they throw a phosphorous grenades in there, and we're down below with my other two squads and when they come out if their hands are up,

they are waved over here, and they are surrendered, and if we can't see their hands, we kill them. That is the way it is." So he said, "I got to see some of this." So I said, "Well we are shooting a few at night." When nightfall came, he could hear the machine going and all, and he said, "I'm going to go down there and use that machine gun myself in a little bit." He and I had sampled that bottle of booze that I had. He said, "You are a most unusual son of a bitch that I have ever been around, you know, everybody else trying to kill these Japs one by one, and you are out there burning their ass down to where you kill them all at one time." He said, "Conversion from a rabbit hunt, is that what it was?" I said, "from a rabbit hunt." So we went back. They pulled us back out of the line about two days after that, deloused us, and you know how you got deloused. They just, the stuff that everybody is scared of right now, they just sprayed you with it.

Mr. Graham: DDT?

Mr. Ellis: Yeah. You are sleeping in a bunk in a tent at night and they'd come through there and raise the flaps and spray some more on you, but we were taken back, we fixed up like that, and it started raining. We were ankle deep and we'd go to the mess hall, the officers would go last, and there were only two of us, we'd go through there and get something to eat, and then come back out, not back out -- it was all done in the rain. We'd stand out there in the rain. I said, "this is not my kind of Army." So, the very next morning I went to the motor pool, down where the motor pool was, and just like it was official, got a truck, had two men with me, we went back to the beach that I remembered being at, and there was a lot of lumber laying on that beach. We loaded that sucker down, nobody said a word to us about anything. One of the guys I had was a Sergeant. I said, "Now you know where it is, and nobody paying any attention, you get all the damned lumber you think we need to build a kitchen, and a place to eat." He said, "well what are you going to do about a top?" I said, "I'm going to get another truck and two more guys and we're going to find

where they got the tents.” In one day’s time we found everything we needed and then the next day before dark we had it all built. Everybody in the outfit pitched in on this thing. Guys that had ever used a hammer was in there. Another day and a half after that the Colonel came down. We had gotten a new Colonel. This was Colonel Hardel (?spelling). The other Colonel had already been sent back to the States. Colonel Hardel said to the Captain -- we’d gotten a Captain in there in the meantime, and said, “Captain, when I came up here I thought I had found the Battalion Headquarters. They tell me this is your outfit here. How in the hell did you do this?” He said, “Lt Ellis, tell the Colonel how you did this.” And I said, “Colonel, we saw the men standing out in the rain. This is the men’s mess hall. This is where they eat. We saw them standing out here in the rain, getting their food, eating it in the rain, wet and then going back to try to sleep. This isn’t the way the Army treats people. So we did something about it. We knew there was some old lumber laying around, not being used down there on the beach, and we just brought it up here and built us a mess hall for the men.” He gave me a big grin, and he turned to the Captain and said “Carry on Captain.” Two days after that I was brought up to the Headquarters. I skipped Battalion. They brought me right into the Headquarters and I was made the Assistant to that Major Davis that had visited me down there. He brought me up there as his Assistant. We were getting ready then they had the orders that we were going to go land in Japan. In Tokyo Bay we thought. We were starting the planning for it and he needed more people in Plans and Training, and he said “I want that guy Ellis from down there.” So, I was brought up and within the month that was left to us, I had been given the I&R Platoon, I was Information and Education Officer, and I was the S-3 for the Regiment. I mean I was S-2 for the Regiment, and Assistant S-3. I had four jobs. The rationale for this is, you really need good officers with the men. If you are getting ready for something, they are the guys that are going to do the fighting. You just need some people that can do the kind of stuff that you

have to do in a Headquarters, and so I was fortunate enough to be one that they picked as having been around a little bit, a guy that would cut corners and do whatever you had to do to get it done. We did a lot of things. I'll tell you an interesting one. One that really belongs in here. On my outfit, before I got in it, was made the original landing on Leti, and they had time and again been bombed by our own people when they called for air. They were really "P.O.ed" at the Air Corps. I had been told this time and again by the people. I went down to the airfield, as part of the Education and Information Officer, and asked to speak to the Colonel in charge there, and I told him that I understood that he headed that outfit up and this was a sore spot with them and that I would appreciate it if, I'm getting the Regiment together once every week, everybody that can come, and having somebody as a principal speaker, and that I knew that I was asking a lot of him, but I was asking if he would come down there and tell them why they got bombed. He said, "Well I appreciate this opportunity because I headed that outfit. I flew some of those flights myself, and I'll come myself," and he did. When the Colonel heard it he almost fell over. "Do you know what that officer is getting into?" I said, "I think this officer from my, from what I see of him, can handle it." That guy got up there and when he was introduced, there were a thousand people in there. He just patiently waited and then he started speaking. He said, "Let me tell you what the story is. You asked for help and we tried to deliver help. And, some time by the time we could get correlations and everything together about where we were supposed to bomb, you had already taken the position and we bombed you in that new position. Your maps were different from our maps. We always tried to be sure we had them, but your maps are different from ours. We always tried to understand this. You put markers out and we bombed to the markers. Sometimes you didn't pick your markers up. Sometimes we were bombing people that had come in behind you there. All of those kinds of things happened and we knew they happened and we grieved about them happening,

but it didn't change the way it is. The real reason is that we didn't have artillery spotters like the artillery has. We didn't have flight bombing spotters. I had recommended it. Nobody has ever paid any attention to it, but it is the only way you can prevent this from happening. We have difficult jobs in bombing, and we get shot at, and so what I want to make you an offer is -- I have flights going every night, bombing every night in Japan. Every night. I am making an invitation to the Colonel here, I'll take one of your people every night, or as many as four every night, on our planes or as many as you want to see what we do because we are in a fight ourselves and we do suffer casualties." So the Colonel said, "I can't let any of the officers go, I don't have any officers." So he got up and he said, "I'll let 12 Sergeants go." And we almost got stomped in the process of Sergeants running up there to volunteer, and when they came back I interviewed some of them and they said we want to tell what it was like. They had given them bomber jackets and they let them keep them. They got up there and they made the presentation the next week for me at about what they had seen and done and they said -- these people go through a lot of hell, you know. They are shooting at them. They are sending up planes after them, they are trying to crash into them and everything else, and they are killing a lot of people down there. A lot of them are civilians, but they are trying to bomb places that we are going to be trying to take later on, so they are doing a great job. That was his story.

Mr. Graham: OK.

Mr. Ellis: Now we've gotten to where the war is where I'm going to tell you about what I did next. We had a hill there that the IR Platoon had tracked the people to, and damned if it wasn't near where we showed our pictures, and they said there is lots of Japanese going in and out of this hill. Lots of them. I went down there and there were. So we sat up and we captured one of them, the Japs, one night and they told us "the war's over." This was after the war was over and we

were leaving in two days. He said, the Japanese said, “we didn’t have any idea that the Emperor had made this announcement.” He said, “we had no idea. I’ll go back and tell those people.” We did. We gave him papers and everything else. They rolled his head out in a different entrance, but he had told us there were at least a thousand Japanese there. We were going to go off and leave this and some other outfit, fresh from the States or something was going to come in there and a thousand Japanese would be right there on top of them, armed and ready to come out. So I went and talked to the Colonel, and he said “do it.” I called that Air Corps Colonel and said, “have you got a tanker a bad gas up there?” He said, “I don’t know how you know this, but I’ve got about three-quarters of a tanker load of gas up here that we are going to have to dump some place. I said, “let me have it, send somebody up here, in the morning at this location.” I was up there with a Sergeant, my Sergeant, and I said, “Sergeant I don’t want you up here in on this.” We took this tanker guy up there on top of that hill where we’d found an air vent, and we pumped it out. He wanted to quit after a few minutes when he finally figured out what we were doing. I said, “now you empty that whole damned load.” He emptied it and he took off. He went down that hill twice as fast as he should have gone and as soon as I was sure he was gone I tossed a phosphorous grenade in there and ran like hell. It blew the damned hill. It imploded. And so then we were full on the boats and we were ready go, we were on the way to Korea. We thought we were going to go Japan. MacArthur has recommended the three principal places for us to go immediately -- Tokyo, Pusan (at the foot of the Korean peninsula), and Seoul. Those are the three important places. These others were important because of the Russians had entered the war and were already coming down. At my level you didn’t know anything about this, and I’m on a boat. I was told there would be two CIC Officers that are going to be looking for you, and you take care of them. Which they did, and I did eventually, had one of them, the head one as my roommate later on. And there is two OSS

guys, they don't belong to anybody, but if they need something they are going to call you. I never heard anything about them. So I was down there just checking on my people and this guy came around "Lt Ellis." I said, "yes sir." He said, "You are wanted on the Admiral's Deck." So I know that much about ships that I followed him and we went up there and I went into a room and there is two Admirals in there, and General Arnold, and my regimental commander, in this room. So the ranking guy for me was General Arnold, and I didn't know he was General Arnold, but I know he is a two-star General. I saluted him.

Mr. Graham: Was it Hap Arnold?

Mr. Ellis: Not Hap Arnold, this is Archibald Arnold. The other one was an Air Force guy. I saluted him and said, "Lt Ellis reporting." He said, "at ease Ellis. They tell me you know a lot about Korea." I said, "Colonel I delivered a briefing on Korea when we found we were going to go there, but I don't know a lot about Korea." He said, "well, we got an assignment for you. General MacArthur is bringing the Missouri into Tokyo Bay in two days time for a surrender of the Japanese Government. He wants to be sure that the Japanese are actually going to surrender. The Japanese military is going to actually surrender, so we're going in here early. Your job in the morning is to go on a Navy boat with a radio operator and find out if the Japanese are going to resist us when we land, are they going to give up, or are they not even going to be there. You are going to be met on the beach by five Japanese Majors and five Japanese civilians. They will be separated on the beach. You go in there. I understand that you know something about interrogation of people and what not, give it your best shot, find out can we get ashore without any problem at all. If they are going impose us are they far enough back that we can safely go ashore without artillery preparation and kill a lot of civilians, or are they going to make a determined fight and we're just going to have to do the whole thing. Do you have any questions?" The Admiral spoke

up. He said, "you know about the tide?" I said, "yes sir, I know there is a 50 foot tide, whatever we do we have to do in a hell of a hurry." He said, "that's right. Well my boat will be there for you at 0400. So, at 0400 I was down there on the boat, I made them check the radios, and we went in. Neither one of them liked that job that they had -- going in there with me. I went in, I went up to them, these Japanese Majors, I initiated a salute, which they returned. I said, "I've been sent here by General MacArthur to talk to you about your situation here. But I want you to wait until I talk to these Koreans over here, but I have to talk to them about theirs." And I got them over there and I said, "where do you people come from?" And they all were from Seoul. I said, "when you came in here did you see any Japanese military anywhere on the road or anywhere." They said, "no, these are the only ones that we've seen, right over there." What were you told about this? They said, "we were just told to come down here and that somebody representing the American Army would come here and we would tell them everything we knew and cooperate in every way we could. That is what we were told by the Japanese." I said, "OK. I want to separate you and talk to you." When separated I could ask them questions that couldn't each other hear and I got the same answers. I went over and did the same thing with the Japanese. In the process I evaluated them. I picked out the smartest Jap and the smartest Korean, and I went back up the hill, back up where I knew there was a road and along came a charcoal burning truck and I stopped it. We got this guy out and I made the Major walk away and I had the Korean question him about what he had seen. Where did you see those Japanese soldiers? He hadn't seen any Japanese soldiers. You know, these were the kind of questions. I did that, to make a long story short, I did that at that position. I went up where I knew there was an intersection. I stopped two more trucks from coming from different ways. Same things, same answers. I said to myself, "the Japs are not anywhere around here." Went down to the beach. Got the radio operator. I told them to take that boat back out a little bit. Came in and

said, "get General Arnold on the phone there." He came on and I said, "General, it is Option One. If I'm wrong, Option Two is entirely feasible, but I don't think I'm wrong." He said, "OK Ellis, we'll see you in a little while." Hung up the phone. A voice behind me said, "Blimey Mate, you look like you're from Mars. What are you?" I turned around and said, "you sound like you are an Australian, what are you?" He said, "they got us in a PW camp up here. He said, " a bunch of us have been on Japanese boats." He said, "come on over here, this guy is one your Americans." He waved and an American came over. He had been on the Bataan March. They had been on ships, Merchant Ships, that had been torpedoed, and all of them that came there they just collected them in a PW camp, right there at Inchon. Nobody even knew they were there. I said, "how the hell did you get out of there?" They said, "two days ago they started treating us nice and yesterday there were fewer of them, and this morning we got up early, this Yank and I, and there wasn't any Japanese guards at all. He said something is going on. We came down here to the beach, and we saw you running around -- you looked like you were from Mars with all that odd looking helmets and everything, running around ordering these people this and these people that, and you got a boat coming and going, and we figured -- hell it was our people who won this damned war." And I said, "we have won this war, how many of you are there?" He said "156." I said, "are you all ambulatory?" They said, "there are about five that we will have to carry, but we can have them back." I said, "how quick can you get them down here on the beach?" They said, "we can have them back here on the beach in 15 or 20 minutes." I said, "get them all." I called that Radio Operator who was trying to get back on the boat, you know because I was dismissing them, and I said, "get General Arnold back on the phone there." I said, "General, would ask that Admiral if we can put, there are 156 prisoners, American prisoners of war, and some Australians, I'll have on this beach here when we're landing and as our people leave these boats, they can put them on there and

take them to the Navy if the Navy will accept them and take care of them because some of them are in bad shape.” The Admiral, himself, came on the phone, and said, “that is a hell of an idea Ellis. You put them on there and we’ll take care of them.” As we landed, our people, I told them the story and they started helping these prisoners get back on the boat, and by the time we had half of our regiment there, they were all out there on the ship being taken care of. So that we what happened that morning, and then that afternoon I was rounding up the things that I was supposed to do and somebody said, “we’re hunting for Lt Ellis, the General wants to see you.” So I went back and there is General Arnold. He’s back up in the middle of town, he’s got him a little tent pitched there, and he is sitting there having a soda or something. He said, “at ease Ellis. I got another job for you. You did a good job this morning, great job, appreciate it. Got another job for you. General MacArthur wants to put some bombers on that airfield here. Do you know where it is?” I said, “yes sir. It is about half way between here and Seoul.” He said, “he wants to put some bombers on there that will start landing at 7 o’clock in the morning, 0700. I want you to go down there and run those Japs off there. There is about 2,000 of them and I want you to run them the hell out of there and then I want you to go back in the morning with a Major somebody that is going to take a battalion. We’re going to hold that place with a battalion while the air corp can take over.” So I said, “all right sir. I came up here in a jeep, and I really need more suitable” “Oh,” he said, “hell I already know about that. You are going to look like General Patton going in there. I already got a Recon outfit coming in there.” And about that time the Recon outfit came in with orders to do whatever I told them do, and so I took the Japanese with me as an interpreter, and as we started driving in we’d go through little villages and they got Russian flags out, standing out there waving Russian flags and hanging on the railing. The Russians had already gotten all the way down to the 38th parallel and they were across in two places. MacArthur knew this and MacArthur had put us in there as fast

as he could possibly get us in there to stop the Russians because they would have been right in Seoul as far as that is concerned. And so I went down there and I told this Japanese Major, who was a smart guy, I said, "We're going in there and I don't know what I'm going to get into, but this is what I have got to do is to get them out of this airfield," and when we got to the door a Japanese soldier stood out there and came up holding a rifle at port arms and that Japanese Major grabbed his rifle away from him and give him a butt stroke and knocked him right down on the pavement there and we marched in and went up the stairs, and as we went up the stairs I could hear them hollering and laughing and joking and going on in there. We went in there and there was about 60 Japanese officers around a table, 50 or 60, great bit table, in like an auditorium. Sitting in the middle of it facing me as I came in, across the table was a General, a Japanese General. He said when he saw us come in all those people started laughing, you know and joking and whatever, they were wondering what this was. I said, "tell him that I am here representing General MacArthur to make arrangements for his surrender." So he gave them the translation and he stood up and said, "I can't make a surrender. I have to have orders or I have to surrender to someone of equal rank to me." I said, "that is why I am here representing General Arnold, who is of equal rank with you, who made the arrangements. I will accept your surrender in the name of General Arnold, who will receive your sword." Now nobody ever wrote a script for me. I had to do something and that is what I said, and with that he surrendered, we saluted one another, I handed the sword to this Japanese Major to keep for me. I said, "now these are your instructions. The battalion that is going to be on this airfield in the morning is the battalion that eliminated your Japanese organization that participated in the rape of Nanking. They killed everybody. Everybody that was in that Army was killed. That is the battalion that is going to be in here in the morning. General Arnold does not want them to kill any Japanese. Your Emperor has surrendered, we're having a peaceful surrender

activity take place in Tokyo in two days and so we want you to peacefully leave, and I know that you want to do it, so I'm authorizing you to take any of your planes that can fly, take as many of the people as you can with you, and you can fly directly to Japan. For those that can't fly, you can take everything that you have in the way of automobile equipment, and you take you take your people and their families, load them in there and I authorize you to carry a rifle in each of these vehicles for your protection, and you go to Pusan, and in Pusan there will be accommodations to take you to Japan." Nobody had ever told me anything. I just knew that Pusan was at the bottom there and it was pretty close to Japan, but it was the logical thing to do. So with that, he said, "do you have any further orders? I said, "no, that is all." So he and I saluted and I went off and left him. The next morning I went back with that battalion. There wasn't a Japanese in the place. Not only that, everything they had that was left there had an inventory tag on it in English and in Japanese as to what it was, motor mount or whatever. The equipment was all tagged and everything and they were all gone. Now this made me the official acceptor of surrenders because there were lots of little Japanese detachments scattered all around that they just went off and left. They'd come in hunting for somebody to surrender to and they'd say "Ellis you got another one over there," and I'd go out there and I take the surrender. Now we had a lot of Yen that we had picked up that they were passing around and what not on Okinawa and they had used it in the Phillipines too, and it was just worthless. I started trading them for Korean Won (?spelling). I said I want your official treasury. So we picked up a hell of a lot of Won that improved our food menus and everything else real quickly. That was on the side. So we got that done, and now I'm back and the Colonel told me, "we got a bunch of brass coming in here and I don't want any part of what I hear about it. You represent this regiment." I was the only one to represent the regiment. We fed them and listened to these guys talk about "we're going to tear this down, tear that down." They had a Colonel, the rest

of them were Majors. They had one Captain with them, and I listened to this story and they finally said to me, “well you are representing your regiment here, what do you think about all of this?” I said, “I think that you have the wrong idea about what we’re here to do. We’re here to displace the Japanese and we’re doing that in very successful way so far. We’re here then to set up a government of the Korean people so they can take over their lives and rehabilitate themselves as Koreans because they are now half Japanese, managed by the Japanese, they work for the Japanese. Those buildings that you are talking about, that machinery you are talking about destroying will be the life-blood of the economy of these people so they can achieve their rehabilitation that we are trying to protect. The fact that they made sores in one factory and guns in another factory doesn’t mean that the factory can’t be converted to something that is useful to civilians. So my opinion is that you people ought to be stopped from what it is you are trying to do.” They said, “Well, I guess we finished our business here.” They got the hell out just like I set them on fire. The General, who was a very detached person, I mean he never, you never saw him slap anybody on the arm or anything like that, he damned near hugged me when I told him that story. He said, “that was what everybody said about those damned people, you know, they were just in here to loot and destroy.” So then, about two days later they said, “Ellis, we got a hell of a problem. There is a guy out here that is telling the head man of a village and they’ve got some soldiers from the Air Corp that are quartered just on the edge of that village and they’ve been in there, they are black soldiers, they are Quartermaster type people, and they have been in there, and they’ve raped and tortured and beat up people in two of the houses last night.” This is in our area of responsibility. The village is our responsibility. The General had learned about this, and the General said, “send that guy Ellis down there and tell him this has to be stopped. You don’t need to tell him anything else.” That is what the General told me to tell you. I said, “all right, sir.” I went

down there with my R&R Platoon Sergeant and we drove in there and there was a black soldier walking across the street there, and I said, "where is your Company Headquarters?" Well, he said, "there is just a platoon of us here, the Lt is right over there." I went in there and there is a Master Sergeant sitting there, and I said, "Sergeant, where is your Commanding Officer?" He said, "It is Captain so-and-so. He is unavailable right now." I said, "Well where is he?" He says, "He's busy resting." I said, "Sergeant, I have business with your Captain, and I want, I must talk to him right now." He said, "Well, he's in that room right over there." I went over there and tried the door. The door was locked. I knocked on the door. Nobody answered and I knocked twice more and nobody answered. I kicked the door open. I went in there and here is a drunk guy sitting on the edge of the bed, just about like this, not even looking up at me. I said, "Are you the Captain of this outfit?" He said, "Yes I am." And I said, "Well Captain, you get some clothes on you so that you can find out what is going to happen here, and come out and try to look like an officer." I went back out and said, "Sergeant, you get all of your non-commissioned officers out in front of this building." So in a couple of minutes they had them all lined up out there. Oh, I had taken my Korean, and I told him, "You go down there and find those two houses and talk to those people. I want to be sure we are not talking about whores that just got into fights with soldiers or something like that. I want to know what this is." So he came back and he said, "these men have been beaten up badly, some of the women were beaten up. These are women that just work out in the fields. These are just field people. These are not prostitutes." I was taking this thing kind of personal now. They were hurting the Army, and so when these Non-Coms were out I went in there to that Captain and I said, "Captain come out here I want you to hear what I'm saying." So he came out and sat down on the porch on which I stood in front and talked. I said, "I want to tell you that you people have some men in here that are going to be investigated by the CID. I'm going to see to that. And when they

find them, some of them will probably be hung for what they have done. You are in our area of responsibility and tonight I'm going to have some people that are combat troops in here and if they find anybody on the street, here or in that village, you are confined to your quarters and if I find anybody out at night, either place, we are going to kill them. We are not going to say 'halt' or 'stop', or 'who are you'. If they are white or if they are black, we are going to kill them. Now do you understand? Is there anybody here that doesn't understand that?" They were looking at me like -- you know, what in the hell is this guy talking about. I said, "the second thing I want to tell you is I don't know what you have been told, or what you think, but you are part of the American Army and you are going to behave that way until you are moved out of here, and that means that anybody in the daytime is in that village and we find them, we are going to kill them. In the daytime you move in this little area where you are, or back to the airfield, but that is it. Everybody understand that? Everybody understand it now because what I'm telling you means that some of you are probably be hung for what has happened here and if I find anybody trying to duplicate it, they are going to get killed. And that's it! Anybody got any questions?" Nobody had any questions and I turned to the Captain and said, "Captain stand up." He stood up. I said, "do you understand what I said?" He said, "Yes, I heard you. I understand it." I said, "it is your responsibility then if any of these men are killed." I didn't salute him, I turned and walked away, went over and got in my jeep, went back. That night there wasn't anybody moving anywhere -- nothing. We had them out on the second day, they were moved out of there. They didn't have a CID in there at that time. We had to ask for one a little earlier. A little guy, looked like a baby almost, was the guy they sent, but he did a hell of a job on them. He wrapped that up and then I gave him another job later on that he did. It was a Sergeant. Sergeant in CID. We didn't have enough of those people out there, but that is what happened there.

Mr. Graham: What was the result of the investigation?

Mr. Ellis: I don't know. They were Air people. We didn't have anything to do with them and we weren't responsible for them. That was isolated from us. We were moved on into Seoul too on top of everything else. When we got in there I was housed in a little set of quarters. We'll call it quarters, but this is where the princesses stayed that were burned at the stake when the Japanese originally came in there 40 some odd years earlier and we were in that compound where the Queen had lived. It was nice facilities for us. We were in there and then I've got to tell you about the money situation because this is important thing and it is important today. It is almost unbelievable. When I got through that morning with that airfield, and turned it over -- I say turned it over, I went and asked that Lt Colonel (actually I think I said Major earlier, he was a Lt Colonel), "are you finished with me?" He said he didn't want me there to start with I'm sure. He said, "yes, you are free to go." I said, "have you called General Arnold and told him?" No he hadn't called him. "I'll call him." I said, "I'll wait until you call him, he may have other instructions for me." That made me think he should have done this, you know, but he hadn't done it. So he called him and told him that was it, nobody said anything. I said, "All right, I guess I'm finished then and thank you." I saluted him and left. I went outside, and I had in the car with me the CIC officer that I told you about, who wanted to join me. He was going to be my roommate in our quarters, and I had the two people that I had kept for interpreters, two Koreans. I had already sent that Major back. Told him to get the hell down to Pusan and take the family with you. So, we were free. I said, "why in the hell don't we go into Seoul? I'm hungry, are you hungry." Everybody was hungry. And I said, "we got two guys here that need to go get a change of clothes too." We went in. We had a good restaurant. A restaurant that they recommended was not an oriental restaurant. This guy was a Lebanese. We ate with him. My driver later married his daughter and I had to get all that

straightened out too, but that is another story. He told me, he said, "It is interesting because we thought that the Russians were going to come in there because of the Russian Counsel General that came in here the day before you all landed, day before yesterday." I said, "Who was he, I didn't know about that." "Oh," he said, "he came down here, gave orders to everybody, the Russians were coming in the next day. That explained why those people were flying those flags. When we went back that night, they all had American flags and stopped the truck and I'd give them a little speech, you know, Americans are here and all that. So, sort of like Patton on this. But, anyway, now he's telling me about this Counsel General, and he said, "You know the word around here is that he went to the mint and demanded the money that was supposed to be waiting for him." Nobody told them anything about any money, but he was so insistent, demanding that they picked up a big bag of money for him and he went out. When he got it, he opened it up and he looked at it, and he said, "now I want to see the plates that this was made from." I want to be sure that I've got legitimate money here." So he had them so intimidated they went back and gave him the plates. They went back with him. Well now there came a time when, I haven't told you this story, but I had been moved up into the, I was Acting G-2 for the Division. OK? I guess I got to tell you that story. You are awfully patient to listen to all of this.

Mr. Graham: Sure. Go ahead.

Mr. Ellis: We were killing civilians trying to loot warehouses to get food and clothing that actually belonged to them. They worked in those warehouses and it was part of their pay. I wrote this up and I was ordered by a Major in Corp not to write this up. I wrote it up again anyway. He threatened me and I wrote it up a third time, that this is wrong, these orders were coming from Corp, OK? Winter was coming on and these people were going to freeze to death and starve to death if they didn't get the food out of the warehouse that belonged to them. It was as simple as

that. So I was called up in front of General Reddy (?spelling), General for the Regiment. No, the Division General, excuse me. When I reported up there the Chief of Staff said, "I've just finished questioning the Major that brought the charges against you and let me go in and talk to the General." So, he was in there about five minute and he came back out. He said, "General Reddy wants to see you." I'd never seen. I'd heard of General Reddy, but I'd never seen him. And he said, "Ellis, what in the hell is this business between you and that Major at Corp. Corp wants me to Courts Martial you." And he said, "I know you are a damned good officer, and I'm not going to Courts Martial you, but I want to know what the hell the story is so I can do something about it." I told him. He said, "Ellis, what would you do if you had my problem on this? Not your personal problem, but the problem of these Koreans?" I said, "back on Okinawa I talked to a Military Governor or Okinawa. He told me was the only classmate out of Harvard that was sent to the Pacific. All the rest of them went to France. We are not going to get any military government here. We are going to have to be the military government, and so what I would do if it were me is, I would tell every Regimental Commander and send orders down, all the way down to squads that are in isolated places by themselves, that you are the military governor for the area of your responsibility. And we have to do this to keep order in this place until we can get some Koreans in here, strong enough to take over and elect a Government. We are the American Government. I mean we are the Korean Government. We are just not practicing it, and that is what I would do." He reached over there and picked up a phone. He called one regiment, told them to do that. He called a second and told them to do it. He called my regiment, told them to do it, and he said, "I'm bringing Ellis up to Division as the Acting G-2 effective tomorrow morning." He hung up the phone; he said, "I'll see you in the staff meeting in the morning."

Mr. Graham: Well, that was quite a story. You nearly got reprimanded bad didn't you?

Mr. Ellis: I went out looking for that Major. I'd like to kick his ass, but he was gone. He had been sitting in the hall when I went in. I went back to where the Colonel was who was sitting out in front there, the Chief of Staff, and said, "I know you had a hand in that, the way it all came out. I want to thank you," and I saluted him. Then I said, "what are they going to do with that Major?" He said, "that Major is on his way back somewhere." So I went back and the G-2 was leaving was packed and ready to do. I got a good briefing from him. He said, "this is a hell of a job to stick on a Lieutenant, but he said from what I hear you'll be able to handle it." I did. I stayed there until I got a Regular Army Commission was going to be sent to work with the German people. It was an intelligence job, but I worked with the German Customs in Germany. I had a delay enroute to get there. They said, "Oh by the way, you haven't had your physical." I said, "oh I had a physical back in Korea." This was at the Pentagon, this conversation. They said, well we don't have any record of it, but we don't quite need you over there yet. Take an extra two weeks. In the next two weeks go back to Dallas, there is a Camp Swift near there. Go in there and get your physical. We'll send your papers down there. At Camp Swift these damned people, busy bodies that they are, they decided that they needed to have a serious ___ ? ___ of my chest and they found that piece of metal that somebody had said was smaller than it was, way too big to be on active duty. And I said, "But I've been on active duty, you know." And they said, "we're going to recommend, we're very impressed that your promotion and everything was signed by MacArthur." Well MacArthur had to sign my promotion because I'd gone over the hill and I had no papers and the only way they could ever give me the promotion that I originally had gotten but had never received, was if MacArthur signed the papers. So, somebody on his staff signed for him, but that impressed these clerical type people. So, with that I went out and went back to Customs and had a good career in Customs.

Mr. Graham: Well listen, I begin to tell you of all the interviews that I've had I don't think I have anything near as exciting, profound, and as significant as yours was. I can't believe, like one of your people said, that all of the responsibility and assignments that they gave you that they kept you at the level of a Lieutenant.

Mr. Ellis: As soon as the Battle of Okinawa was over all promotions were frozen. They and to go back and resurrect my other one. OK.

Mr. Graham: Is there anything else that you would just like to close out and say?

Mr. Ellis: No, I'm very supportive of what has been done here. I had known about it when it was just the Nimitz Foundation. I live near here and get over here and was impressed by it. I am a very firm believer in MacArthur. I was in New York City at the time that MacArthur came back. I was one of those people standing on the street at his parade. I went to Washington, at my own expense, and stood there where he was welcomed into the Congress and we found a TV station and stood there and heard him make his delivery there. If I'd been a little bit weaker yet I would have cried when he did it because it was wonderful, wonderful. And, then when he died they brought him back and he laid in state at the Capitol, and my wife and I stood in the rain. I believed in MacArthur. I never got to work for him like I was supposed to, but I thought he was -- I believed in West Point. My oldest son went to West Point. I would give an arm today to have just gone there because it epitomizes, as an Eagle Scout and that kind of a person. I was kicked out of high school for agitating to get an ROTC unit in there and then became an officer in it. I believe in the military. You have got to have a strong military. I know this, I don't just believe it, I believe it. My kids believe it. My kids are the right kind of people and their kids are the right kind of people too.

Mr. Graham: OK. Well, let me just say on behalf of the new Nimitz Museum, thank

you, thank you, thank you.

Mr. Ellis: Well I appreciate what you are doing. Anyway you want to edit that thing, you do it the way you think it ought to be. I just think this is great. I don't know how they will ever use this kind of stuff, to tell you the truth. I hope they do in some way. I know that that little booklet that I'm giving. It is only about 130 or 140 pages, but it has got a bunch of pictures and all in there too that they will be able to use this sometime because this is the straight dope about the money. Oh I didn't ever tell you about the money, did I? About the Wan? About that

Mr. Graham: Oh yeah.

Mr. Ellis: You got to hear this, and I'm imposing on you now. They had taken those plates back up there and duplicated the Wan and we were having inflation in there, and we were being paid our money at ten to one. We were being paid, the American troops in Korea were being paid ten to one in Wan. And everybody started to complain about it. Well you know I was so busy with all of these jobs that I didn't spend any money, it didn't affect me. But when I started hearing all of this, I looked at it from an Intelligence perspective. Remembered what this guy had told me in the restaurant. I said those people up there are duplicating the, counterfeiting the money with those plates. So I went to the Mint, with an interpreter, and I got the guy that he had gotten the plates from. And, of course, he was trying to protect himself. You know, he had been working for the Japanese, and the Japanese were gone, so he didn't know what the hell to do. He had nobody to tell him what to do. So, I said to him, "What is happening to your money." He said, "it is being inflated." I said, "how do you think it is being inflated?" He said, "I don't know." I said, "have you ever looked at the numbers on them?" I knew the answer when he hung his head. The plates that he gave them were being duplicated, and that is they were financing all of the things that they were doing down there, and all the torment we were going through. And, so, I had been in the Treasury

Department. I had been in Customs, which is part of Treasury. I had been through the Treasury school as an Agent. I understood all of this kind of stuff. I am saying that I had then, but I'd never been to the school. I'd been an Agent, but I'd never been to the school, but I had studied what they teach at the school. And, so, I saw the implications of this, because the Secret Service goes through the same school we went through, and all that literature about the counterfeiting. So I wrote all of this up as an Intelligence Report, and then I explained to General Ready really the implications of it. He was on his way to MacArthur's Headquarters at that time, which he did about every two weeks. He went over there. MacArthur took this up officially. He had a man there, on his staff, who told my General that this man was a communist forced on him by the State Department. That man was the man who later on was caught at _____. He was the Russian trading company in New York. That man that MacArthur said was a spy was caught by the FBI turning over documents. They didn't expect him in there. They were fixing to try to raid it the next time somebody showed up and they bagged him in the process and the Russians had in their hands classified documents, of which this guy was the last person to sign off on. All right. That is what was happening to MacArthur. Now this explains, I think, why the State Department got a hold of it. It was sent to State to do something about it and nobody ever did anything about the counterfeiting of the money. And MacArthur talked to two or three Generals about this and said, "this is politics. What we need to do is to insist that the inflation rate is harming us and ask for more money." And so they got a 50 to one, instead of a ten to one we got a 50 to one. Still counterfeit money of course, but that was it. But the key to that whole story is that they broke a code back at that time. They never could completely break it, so they figured it was just routine messages go back and forth to the Russians and the Russians were our compadres so let's keep trying to break the German codes and the Japanese codes. So they put it on the shelf. In 1996

somebody pulled that stuff off the shelf. These were embassy messages all right, but their spies were also using them and there was one of those in the first batch that they broke that has got Chambers in there, Alger Hiss is in there. The guy in charge of the currency at the United States Treasury Department that made that decision is in there, this guy's name was White. And some of this stuff came out as a result of Alger Hiss' trial where he sued Chambers and Chambers then told the whole story that he hadn't told before and came up with the "Pumpkin Papers." You remember? All of that fits together with what was going on. It is now known. I have copies of the breaking on this that I got off of the Internet, of the first two of the three sections, and the other one is now out and being printed and should be in the print at any day. But it identified all of these people. What was happening to us and our money there in Korea, was all part of a master Russian deal and that Russian General Counsel was a fair-haired boy of a man that was master-minding and became the Korean War that we were involved in. He had Air Force assigned to him in Manchuria that were used against us. All of this by this guy that was going to be the head man when they took over Korea and the next guy left is the head of the Russian Soviet Government, he was going to get the job, and when they had to go back to the 38th parallel, and the Chinese, all those, we killed a hell of a lot of Chinese in the process, in the Korean War. That guy was sent to Siberia and hopefully his associate there, the Counsel General is with him.

Mr. Graham: Well, I tell you what. Thank you very much once again and we really appreciate it.

Mr. Ellis: Shows you that everything is tied together somewhere doesn't it?

Mr. Graham: Yes sir, sure does.