

Harry Maclin Oral History Interview

JAMES LINDLEY: Good morning. This is Dr. James Lindley, and I am collecting the oral history from Mr. Harry T. Maclin. This is 19 January, 2010. The interview is taking place at the National Museum of the Pacific War in the Nimitz portion of the museum. This interview is support of the Center of Pacific War Studies Archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War and the Texas Historical Commission, where the preservation of historical information related to this site. And first, let me say thank you very much for coming and giving us your story, and we appreciate the service that you have given to our country. So, at this time, would you please introduce yourself, Mr. Maclin, and tell us a little bit about yourself, when you were born, where you were born, a little bit about your family, and how you came to serve our country in World War II.

HARRY MACLIN: My name is H.T. Maclin. I've always gone by my initials H.T. I grew up in Fort Worth, Texas, where I went to primary, middle school, and high school. I graduated in 1942 at the age of 16. The only child of my parents. Went off to Southwestern University in Georgetown, Texas. The pastor of our church at First Methodist was Dr. [Gene

Arthur Score?], and I graduated at the same time his son John did. And we were great friends, and so of course there was no other place for me to go except Southwestern, and so I did. The war was underway at the time, and I remember it so vividly, particularly at the attack on Pearl Harbor, like so many people will recall who lived during that era. We can remember, and certainly I do, exactly where I was and what I was doing. I had just gotten home from a church service that I went to with my grandmother at First Methodist, and was lying on the floor looking at the funny papers. Dad was listening to the radio, and the program was interrupted by the now-famous announcement by President Roosevelt, and it was shocking to hear. I think it hit us particularly hard, because we lived in a small, but very tight-knit community in Fort Worth, and people had lived there for generations. And the second door down from lived the [Boyston?] family. They had several sons. Two I knew were already in the Navy, and I thought that I didn't know what ship they were on, but when I got to thinking about it, as the news for the rest of the day was on nothing but Pearl Harbor. They were on the *Arizona*, both of them, and we were of course hoping against hope almost that we would hear from them, but unfortunately they were among the nearly 1,100 that lie entombed there in the

Arizona to this day. So it was a great shock to our community. We gathered around the Boyston's -- excuse me -- and loved them, and helped them all that we could, but as a result of that, there were about a dozen or 14 other young men in our community who had not particularly thought of joining the Navy at that moment, but because of the loss of these two brothers, who were friends of ours, about 13 or 14 guys up and joined the Navy almost immediately, and began their direction that way. I headed off to Southwestern University in the fall of '42. By the spring of the next year, '43, there were fewer and fewer [civies?] on the campus. Most were becoming Navy V-12, and to the point where all of our calisthenics and physical ed programs we went to the V-12 unit for that. And in retrospect, it was a great program, because by the time I got to boot camp in Balboa Naval Training Station in San Diego, I was in really tip top physical condition, and I didn't find the exercises and the calisthenics at the boot camp difficult at all, whereas I'm sure some who were just getting into were nearly killed by it. But it was a great experience. When we finished, I was about halfway through boot camp, and a moment I shall never forget is June the 6th, 1944, partly because it was D-Day, but perhaps for me personally more so, because I woke up that morning in my

barracks with both of jaws swelled out like this. I had a double case of mumps. What had shocked me so badly was I had had mumps already twice, once on this side as a child and once on the other side as a child. How could I possibly have mumps for the third time? And to this day, I have never met a doctor or anybody who has ever heard of another person having mumps three times. And so they hauled me off to Balboa Naval Hospital quickly and put me in quarantine, and it was a bitter experience, in a way, because I was doing well in my program, halfway through. I hated to see my shipmates go off and get their assignments, and especially when I heard some of them were going aboard an aircraft carrier, I turned green with envy, wanting to go aboard an aircraft carrier myself, but thinking I would get stuck with a tug in a harbor some place. So I got out on July 4th with an order to our company commander: "Go easy on Maclin. He's had a rough time." And he did. He was very kind. But I did finish boots, and got ready for an assignment. Well, my new company with 150 people was divided into two parts. About 140 to 145 of them were posted to the USS *Bismarck Sea*, which was a CVE-95, an escort carrier. And I was green with envy, because I wanted to be aboard an aircraft. And four of had to wait for a couple of days. And finally we saw our posting, and

it was to the USS *Coral Sea*, and because we were coming out of nothing, we didn't have that much of a medical background, but at least I think the four of us had been pre-med students. We knew a little bit of chemistry, bit of biology in back of us, so they ticketed us to be hospital [call men?]. And the *Coral Sea* apparently needed a few more, so the four of us went to the *Coral Sea*, and that was delighted. I knew they were called [G-Carriers?], or Kaiser Coffins, as they were frequently referred to. But when we got to the dock, and I had the portfolio for the four of us, and we were walking toward the bow of that ship, it looked like an absolute monster in size, though it only weighed about 10,000 gross tons. But we went aboard, and had an introduction to the staff, and we were shown our quarters, and we spent the rest of the day just sort of wandering and getting lost all over the ship to find our way. We put the sea, and were headed toward Pearl Harbor, and our doctor, Dr. [Hatch?], was a commander. We had a junior doctor, an ENT fellow, a chief pharmacist's mate, and then the various ratings of pharmacist's mates, and then the corpsman. And about halfway to Pearl, one of the ship's stewards -- in those days, all of the stewards were all African-American -- came down with appendicitis. And so the Dr. Hatch thought he should be operated on, and I

was one of the corpsmen he called in to assist him. Everything went fine. When we were through, we put him into our ship's hospital bay. He was the only one in there, and late that afternoon, one of his ship's mates, the boss to whom he reported, who was a first class cook, came and knocked on the door, and wanted to ask if he could come in, very polite, an African-American man. And of course I asked him to come in. I didn't find anything unusual about that, except that the first class cook had a very large Bible under his arm. I had never seen a sailor carry a Bible, much less a black sailor, and since there was nobody else in there, I was trying hear what he was saying. What would a guy with a Bible that big under his arm say to a shipmate who was sick, who had just had an appendectomy. Well I couldn't really hear, but he only stayed 5, 10 minutes, and then he was gone. Everyday he came back. Those were the days if you had an appendectomy and an incision that long, (laughs) they didn't let you out of bed for seven days. And so John -- I learned his name was John Alexander, from Tulsa, Oklahoma -- he had been a conscientious objector, and they told him he would not be put on ship of war, but there he was on the *Anzio*, and could do nothing more about it. And so when John came back the 11th day, and we had discharged his shipmate, and so before he

left, he said -- he called me Maclin -- said, "Maclin, we have a group of us meet down in one of the ship's stores as often as we can. Sometimes it's every night, and sometimes it's once in two weeks, depending on what our duties are. We have 10, 12, a dozen guys. Four, five, six of them play banjos, and mandolins, and guitars, and violins, and we have a great time. Why don't you come join us sometime?" "Well, I'll do that." A few nights later, I had seen the [Hang a Neck?] movie I think three or four times, and decided I would go see what they were doing. I found them in a store room. John had the keys to it all. These guys were sitting around 100-pound bags of dried beans, or rice, or sugar, or whatever, and they had their musical instruments, and they were tuning them up, and they began to sing. And some of the choruses that they were singing I didn't recognize, but I kept hearing the word "Jesus," and "God," and "praise songs," and things of that nature. The environment out of which I came they just didn't have that sort of music, but I was curiously attracted to it. And then they had a Bible study. Everybody there had a Bible but me. And when they opened up their Bibles, I could see the guy on either side of me. Both of them had Bibles that were written up. They had underlined in pink or green or yellow or something. And I remember thinking so vividly,

"Why on earth would anyone want to mark up their Bible this way?" It didn't make sense to me at the time. And then they started having their study. And they talked like it had come so alive for them, like it was a living book. I had never experienced that before. And then they decided it was time to close out, and so they were going to have a [seated?] prayer. So they all got up, knelt down on the steel deck, and used their 100-pound bags of beans, or corn, whatever it was, to put their elbows on, holding their head in their hand like that. And I could tell that they were going around, following one another, and pretty soon it was going to get to me. Well, I had never prayed in public before, and that wasn't going to be the time. (laughs) So while they had their heads bowed, I got up and sneaked out the door. I'm sorry to say that, but I just wasn't going to do that at the time. Nothing was said about it, but two or three weeks I saw John on the ship, and we were headed in, and we talked in the Marshall Islands. And he said, "We were missing you. Why didn't you come back?" I thought, "Well, I'll go back one more time. But I'm going to be ready this time. I'm going to think of some questions that I think I can stump these guys with. See what they say," I thought. (laughs) So, I went back, about the same number of guys, 10 or 12, same sort of

pattern, Bible study. And then they went around, and they said, "Maclin, what do you think about this?" And so I started raising some questions with them. And almost before I could get the question out of my mouth, the guy on one side or the other, someone sitting across, they were thumbing through their Bibles. I could hear the pages turning, and by the time I had finished the question, one of them would thrust his Bible in my face, and he would say, "Read this, Mac. Read this out loud so we can all hear it." So I would read that passage out loud, almost suddenly becoming aware of the fact that they were trying to reply to my question not with what they thought, but with what the Bible said. Well, I hadn't come there to argue with the Bible. (laughs) I wanted to argue with them. But they didn't take the bait. But they were kind, and gentle, and very open, and so they got down on their knees again, and again I sneaked out the door. And then I didn't go back for a while. Well, we were with Admiral Halsey's third fleet at the time. MacArthur had called for air support for the invasion that was on. And we were north and sort of west of there. And Halsey had made such a promise, apparently, to MacArthur that he was going to get our carriers there come hell or high water. And it was a great misfortune that he didn't hear all of the weather

reports that were coming in. Some of his ships' captains knew about it, and he had us ride into the jaws of Typhoon Cobra. Three DEs -- Destroyer Escorts -- no, these were Destroyers, [varied-class?] Destroyers. They had been made too top-heavy, and they were taking rolls as much as 80 degrees, and three of them sank, and we lost about 793 young men and officers. Our carrier was wrecked from one end to the other. President Gerald Ford was on one of the carriers. I forgot the name of it, but he was on one that caught fire on the hangar deck. And if I remember correctly, one of the big waves that hit the side of the ship and that corrugated door that ran up and down the between the hangar and the flight deck, that the water was so powerful, it just took that like it was a piece of paper up there, and a wave came right into the hangar deck, and praise the Lord, put out the fire. Nothing could explain that except it was a miracle. We lost every airplane we had. The few that were tied down to the flight deck with those iron, steel [brands?] in the light deck they just pulled out. We were rolling up to 40 degrees, and when the ship would roll to that angle, it was just a matter of time until those would pull out, and the planes would go tumbling down the flight deck. Some would get stuck in the gun wells, 20- or 40-millimeter gun wells, and the next

time the ship would roll over, a wave would come over that gun well, lift up that plane like it was a piece of paper, and knock it in the sea. The ones that are on the hangar deck, however, couldn't go over the side. Fortunately, our gang on that deck did a good job of emptying all gas tanks of the planes. And they began to break loose. Not all of them, but those that did break lose, when the ship would roll hard to port, all these torpedo bombers, and Grumman F4F fighter planes, which you could hear them. Our hospital was right under that deck, and you could hear these planes screaming across that deck, and metal grinding against metal. It just sounded like all hell was breaking loose. A dreadful time. The planes there were just shattered. All we would do is push them over the side. We had some men in our sick bay that had been suffering lacerations, broken bones, and so forth, and all of us had to wear life jackets. They wouldn't have done any good, but that was the order of the day. At the height of that storm, when I don't think many of us there felt we would survive it, and I had already noticed a few of the most vain and profane men I had ever met hanging onto anything they could hang onto, crying out to some unknown god to save them, that they'd confess and so. I was impressed with some of their words. Finally, while our sick bay was

about full, who should open that swinging door and come in, except John Alexander. He had some shipmates in there. And when I saw him, I became angry almost immediately, because the expression on his face was one of such calmness that I didn't know how he could look like that. That seemed to be the exact opposite of what everybody else in there looked like at the time. And so as he approached me -- you could hardly hear anybody even scream in there because of all the racket of these splintering planes above our heads -- and finally he got over to me, and I said, "John, how in the hell can you look so calm and collected when probably we will not live to see the light of another day?" And he said, "As a matter of fact, H.T.," sometimes he called me H.T., by my initials, "the Lord has assured me that he has a place, a ministry for me back in Tulsa, or what it is, but he has a place for me there, and since he does, that must mean that I'm going to get out of this." He said, "If this ship goes down, I can guarantee you the Lord's going to get me out of this." Well, he said it with such surety, I was dumbfounded. I didn't know how to answer a guy like that. Just didn't. (laughs) What faith he exhibited. I'll tell you the next two days that we were in that storm before we got out, I tried to know where John was. Somehow I was convinced by that time that this was

one guy that was going to be saved, and if I was somewhere nearby, maybe I could drag his leg, and he would pull me out with him. (laughs) It was a selfish act, but that's the way I felt. Fortunately, it didn't happen. We didn't need that. A few days later, we were headed to Ulithi. In fact, all the ships that were in that terrible storm were headed toward Ulithi, where Admiral Halsey had some explaining to do the day after Christmas. And he was brought before an admiral's mast. And when we were on the way there, the last two days before arriving in Ulithi lagoon, we were on a sea that was as calm as this floor, silky, glassy, hardly no ripples. The contrast was so sharp, my eyes were just glued to it, trying to take all of that in, to make some sense of it. And I was sitting out on the fantail of the ship. Nobody else was there, no lights or anything. And I heard one of the hatches screech open, paid not much attention to it, and I notice somebody else was coming out there. And he came over, and sat down on a string of heavy tie ropes, and I turn around, and who was that except John Alexander. He was off-duty. And on that ship from one end to the other, what door should he come except the very one where I was sitting? And I began to think right then, "Maybe God's got something to do with this." So, we sat down, and begin to talk about our

experiences. I told him about these guys that were among the most vain and profane that I had ever met. And he said, "Well, have you seen any of them since?" I had seen them, but said, "It looks like they forgot everything they promised." And I just felt constrained. I had to ask him, "John, where does this peace of heart and mind come from? Where do you get that?" And he began to tell me. And I knew we had some tough days ahead. We were preparing for Iwo Jima. And he said, "Maclin, I have a real strong sense that God is speaking to your heart right now. And he wants you to listen. And I suggest we pray." I said, "John, I've never prayed except in my own heart, perhaps somewhere other, but I've never really prayed like you're talking about." He said, "Well, let me pray, and see if some of the words that I'm saying in my prayer, if they resonate with your heart, you just pick up those words, and you save them, and make them your own." So, he began to pray a very simple prayer of what I later learned was called the center square. And when he got to that part, I almost surprised myself, because I was saying it. I was praying it. And I don't know how long, it was the wee hours of the morning, and it seemed like a blanket of warmth of some sort seemed envelop there on that fantail that evening, early morning. And as John Wesley once said, "My heart was strangely

warmed." And that's how I felt. And we sat out there for another couple of hours just talking about what it meant to have faith. And so the next evening, they had another Bible study, and I was one of the first ones there. I had a little pocket New Testament that the chaplain at the naval training station had given me, and I brought that. And as they did that Bible study that evening, some of the scriptures that they read I had read at one time or another, but it didn't mean that much, but in this new situation, there were things that started jumping off the pages of the Bible at me that had never jumped before. And I was utterly amazed. I knew that I had read that before. Why didn't I understand it then? So that was a question I asked them: "I read some of this before, but it didn't mean anything. Why am I seeing this kind of meaning in it now?" Well, the simple explanation was, "Maclin, God reveals himself only to those through his word that are willing to listen to him. And I believe that he finds that your heart is willing, and he's beginning to show you some things now that you otherwise wouldn't understand, because the scripture says that the word of God is foolishness to them that are perishing, and God is not going to give them an understanding unless they're going to do something with it, and as you give yourself to God, you will find more and

more an understanding which you've never had before."

Well, all these guys were members of the Navigators. Are you familiar with the Navigators? And that became a very dear group for me. And before we left that night, they gave me my first packet of B-rations, a little mixture of memory cards, about the size of a business card. On one side, the verse of the scripture. The references made on the other side of the scriptures. So each packet had 12 cards, and my first assignment was, "Maclin, we want you to memorize this, because the scripture tells us to hide the word of God at our hearts." And I began doing that, and before the next meeting, I had all 12 of them memorized. I went through that set of Navigator memory cards.

Everywhere I was, I had my pockets with two or three packs of those cards in it. It was a lifestyle that I found so exhilarating, and something that I had never experienced before, exciting. And I had no idea that the study of the word of God could be exciting, and to reveal things to you that just blew my mind, really. And I knew I was a new creature of some kind. And so we went to Iwo Jima. We were there almost a month before the invasion started. My wife's cousin, who's still living -- he's close to 90 now -- he was in the first wave that hit the beach. He was a Marine. He was a driver for one of the landing crafts.

And he was visiting us not long ago, and I had a picture, a rather large picture of the first five waves. It showed them going into Iwo Jima, and he could put his finger on the very boat that he was on, that he was captain of. We talked about a half a day about that. At Iwo Jima, we were there nearly a month before the invasion actually took place, and it was only after the big guns of the Japanese were silenced on the island that we could go in close enough as a carrier group to see the island. I began to understand, at least I thought I did a little more clearly, why our Navy V-12 unit commander at Southwestern had gotten us in and talked us into joining the Navy instead of the Marines, because while our planes are off, and they were 24 hours on and off for days. One afternoon they were off, and three of us were waiting on the deck waiting to fly back in to see if anybody needed medical attention, and so we decided, "Let's put in a few dimes, and send somebody down to the ship's medicine, get a gallon of that chocolate ice cream, buy a gallon at 50 cents." So somebody came up with this gallon bucket of ice cream, and we put it down between us with a tablespoon, and we sat there stuffing our mouths with this ice cream while we looked out across at those poor old Marines struggling up the sides of Mount Suribachi. I'll tell you, I was glad I was in the Navy.

(laughter) But the suicide planes, my God, they just came in huge troves. It's a wonder that we were not hit. The *Bismarck Sea* was there, a CVE-95, a ship I could have easily been on. A number of my shipmates were on that. It was hit by two suicide planes. One at the aft deck went through the elevator. Must have been an armor-piercing bomb, went down to the next deck, exploded, and the ship's magazine exploded. And I was standing just aft of the bridge of the carrier of the *Anzio*, and when the *Bismarck Sea* exploded, it was some distance from us. I could feel the shock waves, almost pushing us over. Huge explosion and a flame. A big photograph I have of some Navy photographer made this picture, because that is what it looked like. It looked as if the after half of the flight deck had been put on hinges, and the explosion just lifted it up, and it rose slowly, straight up in the air, and then collapsed on top of the ship. Hundreds of men were killed in that explosion, and it sank in about 20, 30 minutes. And this was in the North Pacific in February. Those who survived it, if they weren't picked up pretty quickly, they suffered from hypothermia, and perished in the sea. But it was a gruesome sight, and as I stood there on the *Anzio* in that gun well, looking at that, I began to think about, "What purpose does God have for me? There must be some

reason, some purpose for my life that I don't see and understand now." But right there and then, I made a commitment to the Lord to follow as best I could how I perceived his will to be for me, and I intended to do it and carry it out as peacefully as I knew how. And I felt a great sense of I guess peace after that. One of the first things I felt very strongly about that I didn't want to do much more of anything than find a good wife when I got out of there. (laughter) But I was in the Navy two years and 14 days. After Iwo Jima, we went to Okinawa, and that was another horrific experience. It gave us the first glimpse of really what the Japanese were willing to do, even if they were reduced to broom handles, at which they had put a sharp point. And the thought of trying to invade the home islands of Japan just chilled every last one of us to the bone, because that would have been the most bloody battle that humankind had ever known. We were about 250 to 300 miles due east of Tokyo harbor doing anti-sub patrol. Our ship, and its destroyers, and our air crews had sunk four Japanese submarines, and several dozens of Japanese aircraft. But we were just hoping against hope that we wouldn't have to go into Japan. In order to resupply, even though we were in Okinawa, we had to go south of that island chain to a small island called [Kuramoroto?], which

was where the relationships were. We started getting in and out of there absolutely as fast as we could, because one of those ships had been blown up while we were next to it. That had been two ships lost. They didn't come. The Kamikazes came, and they just didn't hit us. And 400 or 500 planes came in one wave, and it looked like it would never stop. It had been several nights since I headed in a [bunk?], and we were exhausted, and tired, and no matter what your duty was, your duty at that time was to do whatever was needed to be done. And at that particular moment, we were all out on a barge loading ammunition, and stores, and cases of apples from Australia, and New Zealand butter, and all that sort of thing to the ship, as fast we could get it aboard and get out of there. Then we started doing all these patrols off the coast of Japan, the southern part, as well, still sub hunting. And it appeared everything was moving forward. And then on one day early in August, the captain came onto the intercom, and announced to the ship's crew that an atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima, and it was the hope that would bring an end to the war. Well, it didn't. And, so another one fell on Nagasaki. And then a few days later the armistice was announced. When the captain announced that, he asked everybody that could, except for the boiler boys, to come

up to the flight deck. He had an announcement to make. He announced the end of the war, and played President Roosevelt's announcement about it. Well, I marveled that we didn't lose a bunch of guys over that, because we didn't have fences around the flight deck. (laughs) And it marvels to me to this day that we didn't lose a dozen fellows just falling over the side of that ship in the celebration that went on. Our planes flew off at Okinawa. We were ordered back to San Diego, and they welded to our hangar deck three- and four-decker bunks for about enough space for around 3,000, 4,000 men. We were going to bring back to the States Army, Marine Corps fellows that some of our men did theater war. So, we were the first American warship into the harbor of [Shanghai?], piled up along that huge big [war?]. And loaded it up, and the ship's ammunition crews had gotten about 15 or 20 500-pound bombs, taken the warhead off, dumped all the powder out, cleaned them out, and welded the fins to the steel hangar deck, and atop each one, about this high, and they poured sand in it. And this was to be a place where the guys could put their cigarettes. Well, we put out to sea, and we got into a little storm between the coasts in Okinawa. And as you might suspect, they everything but cigarette butts in it. And that's when it was passed by Captain Montgomery that

this was an Army error, and they would be expected to clean out their -- (laughter) it was a mess, the likes of which none of us had ever seen. But they did it. So we took them back. We went back for another two loads. And then finally we got our homeward bound sail, which must have been 30, 40 feet long, just a long pennant, really. And whenever we saw a ship with that, it means they were going home. And we went back to San Francisco, and as we went under the Golden Gate Bridge, news had gotten out that -- when warships came back from the Pacific, it was announced in the papers, so they knew a ship was coming in -- and as we went under the Golden Gate Bridge with the 850 men that we had on board, there were people obviously had a lot of folks on there, and they were -- (crying) I think it was one of the most moving moments for me to see all those people up there on that bridge throwing candy and bouquets of flowers, and showered our flight deck. We pulled into the base there. We were there a couple of weeks, and then were ordered to northern Virginia. So, we went down through the Panama Canal, came up, got to Norfolk, and the ship was going to be decommissioned. And that meant no matter what your [ranking?], or what you're supposed to do, you're going to do what had to be done now, and that was to take a paint chipper, and go after the decks, everything, and

repaint them, and put all the exposed gunnery and the gunnery wells alongside the flank of the flight deck to seal those, and paint them over, and get the ship ready for moth balls. And that's what we did. As my date of discharge was coming up, we had a few efforts made by two officers who'd come aboard the ship to talk to personnel up for discharge to a little fate, and with some pretty nice words about how wonderful it would be if we would reenlist again. (laughs) I don't think they got a single taker. Certainly, I wasn't. So, then finally I got my orders to leave, and go to Norman, Oklahoma, to Fort Sill, or [mustering out?]. And we must have sat through half a dozen more reenlistment talks, and showed beautiful film and pictures about seeing this, and doing this, and all that. So I got my one-way ticket back to Fort Worth, determined that I would go back to school in the fall. And went back, and we had on the campus, those who were boarding students, there was sort of a protocol that if you wanted to find a girl in one of the girl's dorms, to entertainment of the campus, musical, whatever, it was customary to send them a little letter of invitation in the night school mail. Well, they also had the custom in the dining hall at that time, the large one, that you sat at the same table for 10 students for three weeks, five boys

and five girls. That one table for three weeks, 63 meals together. And at the end of the 63rd meal, you knew everybody there, but then they mixed it all up again, and you sat with a brand new table. I thought it was a wonderful way to get to meet students. And so we had just changed tables that day, and some sort of concert had been announced. And my roommate had been there a year or two longer than me, and I had seen one of the new girls at the table, and all I remember was her name was Jackie something, so I wrote her a note. Drew a little card, too, inviting her to this whatever it was. When I got back to the dorm, my roommate, Reese Johnson, said, "Well, did you put it in the mail?" "I don't know. I still have it in my pocket." "What happened?" "Well," I kept thinking exactly, and I said, "Well, she did or said something that put me off. And I've still got it." He said, "Well, who else is at your table? You got a new table there." Well, we just met, and the only one I could think of was a girl named Alice, and I didn't know her last name, but sound of (inaudible), she sounded sort of Scandinavian. He thought for a minute. He got out his yearbook of the previous year, and he turned some pages. He came, he said, "This is her. This is Alice [Nydstrom?]." I looked, "Hell, that's her. That's her." He said, "Well, gosh, give it to her."

She's a nice girl. And besides, she's really smart." I said, "That's just what I need. A nice girl and smart." So I sent it to her. And she accepted. And I was so absolutely sure she was going to marry me by the end of our first date. Not then, but I knew she was the one. I had to nearly bite my tongue from asking her then, and decided I'd wait until at least the second. (laughs) And asked her. Took her by surprise. She was 18, and I was 20. We thought we were both mature enough. (laughs) And so the second date I asked her if she would marry me, and she said she needed to think about it. On the third date, she said she thought it would be a good idea. (laughter) Her parents had been killed in an auto wreck when she was 12, and her mother's sister and her husband had become her guardians, and loved her very dearly. And so she'd been on sort of her own for awhile, and has had idea. And I had four and a half of GI Bill in front of me, and I'd had two years of university work behind me, and so that saw me through the rest of my undergraduate degree, and graduate work. And we got married the next year. And the first place we lived at SMU was a residence just off the campus. And the lady who rented this little room, while she was showing it to us, she said, "Would you like to go to church with me tomorrow?" This was a Saturday. I said, "Sure."

We didn't know anybody in Dallas at the time. We said, "Yeah, we'll go." And without even asking her where it was, or what it was, but we went. And it turned out to be the Scofield Memorial Church, down where Dr. C.I. Scofield had pastored. Dr. Harlin J. Roper was the pastor at the time. Scofield, that name, where did I -- and I suddenly realized I had a Scofield Reference Bible. My first Bible I ever bought in San Francisco in 1945. I had it in my lap, and sure enough, Scofield Reference Bible. And this is the church that he pastored. Well, so I looked forward to that. And so it was at that meeting at the church that they announced their annual missionary conference the following February. And they were giving us four-, five-month notice. And every Sunday, I don't know how many missionaries they supported, but we looked forward to that. They had about 14 missionaries for the week, Sunday to Sunday. And Alice and I were in a young couples' class, about 14, 16 of us, couples. And our speaker was a missionary from Australia, and he had been a missionary somewhere in the South Sea Islands. We met with him probably three or four times, and his message to us was basically from Acts 26:16 and 18. "Get up, and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you my servants. You are to tell others what you've seen of me

today, and what I'll show you in the future. You are to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, so that they may receive their place as God's chosen people." And then he paused. "Now how many of you have heard the call of God to be involved in the mission of his church?" One couple put up their hands. The rest of us didn't get it. "So, maybe I better read that again." So, he read it again. Same question. One other couple put up their hands. Then he made it a little bit more. He said, "Listen, God speaks to us in various ways. One of the principle ways the Lord Jesus speaks to us and makes His will known to us is through His word. Though it was spoken many years ago to other people, yet it speaks to us equally well today. So, listen to what God is saying to you through His word." So he read it the third time. By that time, the penny dropped, and we got it. We got it. And we stood up. And we said, "We'll do it." And we went forward at the end of that service, and committed our lives to that. And both felt good about it. Though we'd been learning about South Pacific the evening before the last service, Alice and I were in our little one-bedroom, and we were sitting on the bed, talking about it, and she asked me did I have any sense of where we would prefer going? I said, "Well, yeah, don't you? Where? Well, you tell me

first." "No, I asked you first. You say first." Well, I gave her a piece of paper, and I took a piece. "Let's just write what we think." We each wrote one word: Africa. That's where it was. Didn't know where, but that's where it be. And the invitation there at Scofield we came forward, and made our commitment, and then the second InterVarsity Urbana Conference was on between Christmas and New Year's that year. We had just formed the InterVarsity chapter on the SMU campus, and we rented the biggest Chevrolet we could find. We stuffed a lot of students who wanted to go in it, drove to Urbana, and had the time of our life. Those were all such precious moments. One of the crazy things we did -- we were all from Texas, of course -- being in front of our dormitory was a flag pole. And we took a huge, big Texas flag with us, and we ran that Texas flag up that pole. And those (inaudible) from Texas would get out. We'd put our hand on our heart, and shout out real loud, "We pledge allegiance to the flag of Texas, and to the Republic, for which it stands, one state, indivisible, and plenty of room for you all." (laughter) Came out a picture in the newspaper with us doing that. But it was a wonderful experience. I got to know Lauren [Santi?] real well at InterVarsity. He was the president of it. That's a great organization. So, we were headed to

Africa. First, to Liberia. Well, that thrilled me. Completely thrilled me, because the first ever Methodist missionary from the [nine?] states went to Liberia: Melville B. Cox, 1832. He only lived four months -- died at the age of 33 there. But he was there even long enough to start a school, which became the College of West Africa, and where I was going to be the principal. I thought it couldn't get any better than this, because I [regularly?] put my hand up. Some of our baggage had already been sent to New Orleans to go by a freighter about a month before, and the Africa Secretary for the board, which was called a Board of Missions at the time, was a great board, called me and said, "H.T., we've had a totally unexpected withdrawal and retirement from the central Congo, because of illness, and we need very much to appoint somebody to go there. Would you and Alice consider it?" Well, Alice was at Hartford at the time. We were both in missionary orientation there for Liberia. The only thing I knew about the Congo at the time was I thought the equator ran through it somewhere, nothing more. And when I asked, "When do you need to know?" He said, "If you could tell us by tomorrow, it would be a great help." (laughter)

JL: No pressure.

HM: So, I said, "Let me call my wife." So, I called Alice, and we talked about 30 minutes. Our attitude was that God speaks not only through His word and through our hearts, but He speaks through the wisdom of Christian friends, and older people who know more about walking with Him and responding to Him, and if that's where we're needed, that's where we should go. So we did. So we had to retrieve our baggage from New Orleans. Spent the whole summer at the Yale School of Modern Languages for learning French, because our languages had been German, and Spanish, and Greek, and Hebrew. And now we had to learn French. But the most difficult year of our lives was spent in Brussels that next year of getting through that program. I was almost convinced that it was of the devil, to see if he couldn't somehow persuade us not to go. But we did. And we spent 20 magnificent years there, and the greatest blessing of that for me was the fact the year we arrived on the field, the first African had been made into superintendent. Up to that time they had all been missionaries. And I was the first missionary ever appointed to work with an African district superintendent. Well, he was a man old enough to be my father. Sixth-grade education, three years of Bible school, but a man whose wisdom exceeded anyone I ever knew. And I learned so much

from him. I would sit back in absolute awe at what the Lord led him to do, and how he acted, and reacted with his own people. I would never have seen that dimension of it had it been a missionary district superintendent. Not that they wouldn't have done the best they could, but they were not a part of that culture. And from that day on, my thinking in the way that we tried to do things in responding to opportunities to serve the Lord, and where we have has been with that background. And even after we were 20 years in Africa, 10 years in the Congo, 10 years Kenya, when I was travelling all over that half of the world, and then the board called me back to be on their staff for another 10 years. My things sort of run in 10-year cycles. And then we began the Mission Society, and we just celebrated its 25th anniversary. And as I look back upon all that, of course it's always much clearer to see the moving hand of God in retrospect, these little nudges here and nudges there, and you wonder how this happened, and it's only then, perhaps, that you begin to realize and see the circumstances that overtook you. And circumstances do have, at times, the ability to give us good direction pointers. And so Alice and I have had four children. I have six grandchildren. Our four grandsons, the last one has become an Eagle Scout. All four of them are, in fact.

Our oldest grandson, and his wife, and two young children when to South Africa on a six month mission last year, and had the time of their life. So, it's been, through thick and thin, and wondering if we ever were going to make it, especially getting through the year we had to spend in Brussels to obtain a working knowledge of French, and to pass what, at that time, were the Belgian colonial exams, which were really, really tough. That nearly killed us, because we were given assignments that required not only the immense amount of work, but there was no way under heaven you could do them without almost a full-time tutor on the side, so I had inherited a French tutor from the previous missionaries that they used, and thought her to be real good. When we arrived in Brussels, went over on the New Amsterdam to Rotterdam, we had two little girls, three and a year-and-a-half. And they both had infantile (inaudible) on their little bottoms. And it was the devil to try to get rid of. And then we'd been there for awhile, and then our three-year-old, Susan, began to complain of a stomach ache, almost crying with it. We had one of our young missionary doctors was there, going to Liberia. So, I called him over to see her, though we didn't have a license to practice there. But he looked at it, and he said, "This is, to me, very unusual. But I think Susie has

appendicitis. Let's call the office and get the names of some Belgian doctors, and get them to come here." Well, within less than 30 minutes, there was a local Belgian doctor knocking on our door. He came in, and had a look at her, and examined her. And he said, "No, I don't think this is appendicitis." And he gave us a prescription, and no sooner had he left the room when [Warren?] said, "I think he's wrong, H.T. Let's get another one." We got another one. Same thing happened, only the second doctor disagreed with both Warren and the first doctor. That doctor left, and we got another one to come in, whose medical training had been Switzerland. What that had to do with it, if anything, I don't know, but in any case he came in. He said, "This is really unusual. I've never seen this before. Maybe once or twice in my practice, but I think this child has appendicitis. Let's talk her to the hospital." So, we took her to Edith Cavell Hospital there in Brussels, and her appendix was huge. It was on the verge of bursting. And so, we heaved a sigh of relief, and thanks to the Lord for Warren's persistence and sticking with it. So, we got over that hump. All the time, trying to keep up with these difficult French classes. And then Alice had an emergency appendectomy. What more can happen here? Well, something more did happen. Six weeks before

the end of the exams, I had typhoid fever. I was really flat on my back for a good three weeks. I was really sick. And I knew I was going to fail. The exams covered two full days. One day were written exams of grammar and all that sort of thing. And the next day, a second full day of writing a 12- to 14-page essay on the subject of choosing of the French teacher. And unless you got that virtually perfect, you didn't have a hope of passing. So, I met with my French tutor. She had been tutoring students. This was her seventh year. So, she had a pretty good feel for the professors at the university. So, she helped me, gave me some suggestions, and I wrote three essays, and she made some few corrections in it, so I would read that. It had to be grammatically perfect, right tenses and all that. And I went to class that morning, just absolutely in fear and trembling, and wondered if I could pull it off. Well, my dad was in the meat-packing industry in Texas, Fort Worth. And one of the things about Belgium, is that they love horse meat much more so than beef. And, I was intrigued by that. They use these huge big draft horses. So, I went there, and took some photographs. Sent them to my dad. And one of the essays I wrote was about my visit to the [Abattoir du Brussels?]. So, the professor came in. He didn't say a word, just wrote up on the board, "As I was

walking through Brussels one day, I..." You finish it. I got it. I went to the Abattoir du Brussels, and I passed. (laughs) And we went home to the Congo. So, that's my story. (laughs)

JL: What a wonderful story. What a wonderful story. Let me ask a couple of questions.

HM: Please do.

JL: And see if you have any recollections. During the period of time on the ship, what was it like when they changed the name from the *Coral Sea* to the *Anzio*.

HM: It didn't seem to make a ripple.

JL: Was there any ceremony?

HM: No. Just the captain announced over the PA system, "As of this day, the name of this ship shall be the USS *Anzio*. Our former name, the USS *Coral Sea* has been given to a new Essex-class carrier." And I saw it. That carrier used to be tied up, long after the war, as a training ship at Pensacola. So, they wanted to give it in. *Anzio* was a name that was fairly well-known, having been a terrible battle there. So, no. There wasn't even a ripple about it.

JL: Any humorous things that happened on the ship?

HM: Well, I probably, before leaving Southwestern, I led a number of girls to believe they were the one and only.

And, you know, "Please write me. I'll be so lonely out there." You know, a lot of that stuff. And so I did. I got an unusual amount of mail not only from my family, and cousins, and all that, but from 25 or 30 girls that I knew quite well. And, in fact, we had been aboard the ship maybe 9, 10 months, and the postman in our ship -- I will have to say the Navy had an absolute wonderful way of we got mail every 10 to 14 days, regardless of where we were, whether the bombs were falling or not. And, I remember two mail calls. On one mail call I had 168 letters, and about six or eight boxes of stuff. The biggest one I ever got was 275 letters, and the mailman, he said, "Maclin, you get more mail than any other three other guys on this entire ship, including the officers." I said, "Well, just some of God in some heaven." (laughter) I was just inundated with mail. And, of course, everybody was very happy to share all the goodies I got, too. (laughs) The other thing was the Marshall Islands and Enewetak became the largest deep-water port for the US Navy west of Hawaii. It was a chain of coral islands that made a huge big -- so, about 20 miles across, one entrance in and out, and the Navy had figured it could anchor there up to 715 ships. The greatest number ever there was just over 600, about 610, as we were preparing for the invasion of Okinawa. And the *Anzio* went

up with our five shielding destroyer escorts as the first ones out the harbor, headed toward Okinawa on that. Well, it was the Seabees, actually, that built it on two of those islands, an R and R place. And they put up a palm branch, just roof, a place to get out of the sun, volleyball courts, all that sort of thing. They'd bring steaks over to the island, and we'd have a steak cookout, and all that. And it really was quite good. And when you got off the ship to go to the island, they gave you four chits, two for Coke, and two for Iron City beer from Pittsburgh. I had been in and out of there three or four times, I guess. And the last occasion, there were a bunch of new people coming out, and somebody had spread the rumor that Iron City beer from Pittsburgh, they had to do something to it to keep it from spoiling on that long distance, and the rumor was that they spiked it with formaldehyde. So those who wanted the beer circulated this rumor very wildly and get these poor, innocent sailors coming off to trade their beer chips for Coke chips. (laughs) And just be laughed at one side down the other. Somebody brought a dog aboard the ship, and he stayed with us for about six months, and became our little mascot. In fact, he's in one of our ship's pictures. He's sitting right in the middle of it. We had some good times. Mainly, amazing, amazing fellowship. Once I found out what

was going on in the world of the Spirit, it was the best thing that ever happened to me.

JL: Where was the ship when the surrender was signed? Was the ship there in Tokyo Bay, or was the ship --

HM: No, no, we were about 300 to 400 miles east of Tokyo. The second day after the armistice was signed, we were probably pulled within a couple of hundred, 250 miles of southwest coast of Japan, and we never knew what the reason was, or what prompted them to do it, but we were attacked by a group of Japanese war planes, who either hadn't heard that the surrender happened, or who, as a last ditch stand to give life and limb for emperor, were going to come out and try and sink us. Caught us off-guard. This was after the war was officially over, yes. We had one attack.

JL: How many aircraft attacked you, do you recall?

HM: Not that many. It seemed to me it was about 20 or 30, something like that. But, compared to what they had been at the peak of the kamikaze effort, they would come in flotillas of 500, 600 at a time. The sky would just be -- you'd see this coming, and how on earth are we doing to live through this?

JL: So, they were kamikaze? It was a kamikaze attack, this last attack?

HM: Kamikaze. Oh, yes. The last attacks even before [Charlie?], in the months leading up to the armistice, the Japanese were so desperate, that we had heard that they were flying planes off, that when they took off, they left their landing gear on the ground. So, there wasn't any coming back. There just wasn't any. And in almost every instance, the planes that were designated as kamikaze planes were overflown at a higher altitude of other Japanese planes, who were to make sure the ones below them did their job. So, that was something that was just really difficult to understand. That we lived through it is nothing short of a miracle.

JL: While on sea, did you listen to the radio Tokyo Rose?

HM: Yes, several times. We just laughed. (laughs) I couldn't see that it affected anybody.

JL: Did she ever talk about the *Anzio*?

HM: No, never about the *Anzio*. On one occasion, this was during part of the invasion to the Philippines, the *Anzio* was designated, with our six destroyer escorts, as a -- our effort was to go out and try and fool the Japanese into believing this was where the main fleet was going, was headed. And it was just our little carrier and six destroyer escorts. But we were sending out messages in different directions, with the idea that they would pick

these up, and apparently they did. And they would either go another direction, or do something different than what Admiral Halsey had anticipated. After that terrible typhoon that we survived, and went back into Enewetak, we got back in there on the 23rd or 24th of December, just before Christmas. Christmas was on a Sunday. And on Monday, the 26th of December, this admiralty court was called on the bridge of one of the ships in the harbor. And so Admiral Halsey was one of those that spoke, and apparently he was so concentrated on being positively responsive to General MacArthur plea for air cover, that he wasn't hearing the messages that were coming from his ships' captains, from barometric pressure readings that were coming in. Admittedly, the reporting then wasn't all that good, but there seemed to be enough, and I read the book *Halsey's Typhoon*. Have you read that? It's an excellent read, which I thought covered it pretty thoroughly.

JL: Did you at any time see Halsey?

HM: Just at a distance. Just at a distance. During the typhoon, there were three Farragut-class destroyers sunk. And Halsey was still determined that as many of us as could, were going to head on toward Lasam, [Samara?] area. But one of the DEs that sailed with us, the USS *Tabor*, was

captained by a young lieutenant commander, Georgia Tech graduate, and on his way, they heard apparently some shouts or screams, and found that there were men in the water. So, they stopped the ship, and sent off whale boats to recover them. And soon discovered that there was an area there that, instead of following Halsey's advice, and going where he was told to go, he just started going back and forth, doing cross patterns, and picked up 55 sailors in the water. And when we were in Ulithi Lagoon, and while Halsey was still there, he said he wanted to see this captain of the *Tabor*. But there were two things that really got to him, that the captain of this ship was only 29 years old, and second of all, he was a reserve officer. (laughs) That's just so funny.

JL: Any other stories or comments you would like to give us at this time?

HM: Well, John Alexander, who had told me that the Lord had work for him to do, and who convinced that he somehow was going to be saved, the Lord did have work for him in Tulsa. He, and his father, and his brother became very much involved in prison ministries in the Tulsa area, very much so. He joined the post office, worked for the postal service for 30 years, retired, took his real estate broker's license, was a real estate broker, and I talked to

him. He's still living in Tulsa. His daughter is a very prominent lawyer. His son is the medical superintendent for the prison systems of Tennessee, based near Knoxville, Tennessee, graduate of Meharry. I've known those two since they were knee-high [to a duck?]. And John is in a nursing home now, partial care. He can't speak very well, but [Sandra?] called me two or three weeks back, and said, "I want dad to have the chance to talk to you again." I could hear him sort of trying to utter some words, but he was struggling with it, so I just talked to him. But we've been in touch across the years. Great soul. Great soul.

JL: Well, thank you ever so much for coming in, providing your story to the collection, and certainly we thank you for your service to our country, and your service to God.

HM: My pleasure.

END OF AUDIO FILE