

Lemar Hartman Oral History Interview

PETER JENSEN: This is Pete Jensen. Today is December 7th, 2011.

I'm interviewing Mr. Lemar Hartman. The interview is taking place in Fredericksburg, Texas at the Nimitz Museum. This interview is in support of the Center of Pacific War Studies, Archives for the National Museum of Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission for the Preservation of Historical Information related to this site. Lemar, if you'd tell us a little bit about, you know, where you were born, about your parents, where you went to school, things like that.

LEMAR HARTMAN: All right. I was born in a small town in Illinois by the name of Irving. And it was in a house that was at the edge of the town. And it just happened that I was born in the same house that my dad had been born in. And of course, that's where we lived when I was a baby. My dad lived to be 92 years old, my mother 86, and they both passed away in Irving, they still [lay there?]. What else?

PJ: What'd your father do?

LH: Well, I have a picture of him. He worked for the man at a feed store, and he drove what they -- like, a livery, team of horses, and hauled coal and kegs of beer and stuff to different local places. And then he went to work on the

railroad, and finished out his worktime there. I forget how many years he had, but anyway, he worked out until he was, [I don't know?], in the seventies somewhere. My mother was home most time, and always looking after the kids and grandkids and all.

PJ: How many brothers and sisters did you have?

LH: I had -- I have to count them. (laughter) Let's see. I had (inaudible). Three sisters and one, two, three brothers, I guess. And they -- all but one of them stayed in Irving, and the other one ended up in Kankakee, Illinois, and that's where [he's still?].

PJ: Irving, where's that located? What big cities or towns around there?

LH: Irving is in the Montgomery County, Illinois, and it's about 55 miles south of Springfield, about the same north of St. Louis. So it's in between there.

PJ: What was the house like that you grew up in, outside -- plumbing was outside, right?

LH: Right. (laughter) Yeah. We didn't -- my parents never had any plumbing until after I went in the Navy in 1940.

PJ: Well, was that pump outside? The pump was outside? Water?

LH: Yes.

PJ: Where'd you go to school?

LH: I went to school at Irving. They only had a three-year high school, and I graduated from it, and Irving students, to get their fourth year, needed to go to the next town, Hillsboro. And I decided to go in the Navy instead.

PJ: So you're, what, about 16 or 17?

LH: I'm 17.

PJ: And why'd you pick the Navy?

LH: Well, two friends -- two of my best friends, I had just gone up on Main Street there in town, and they come running over across the street and hollering at me, "Come look at the paper." And this guy that had a service station there, and he liked kids, and we'd go in there, and he sold ice cream and stuff. And so I went over with him, they showed them in, and the newspaper article said the Navy was taking them at 17, so we decided we'd go home and talk to Mom and Dad. (laughter) And that was a chore, but we got it done.

PJ: Did you have to have your parents' approval then?

LH: Yes.

PJ: Until you were, what, 18, I suppose.

LH: Seventeen.

PJ: Yeah. OK. So you went in almost a year before Pearl Harbor.

LH: Almost, yeah.

PJ: Just a couple days.

LH: Yeah.

PJ: And you then went to boot camp.

LH: Right.

PJ: Great Lakes.

LH: Great Lakes.

PJ: What was that like?

LH: Well, of course, you know, it was a lot different being up there away from home, first time that I'd ever been away from home in my life. And get homesick, you know? And, but --

PJ: How long was the boot camp? Do you remember?

LH: It was six weeks I think.

PJ: Six weeks?

LH: Yeah. Six weeks, I'd say. I don't know. Yeah.

PJ: Yeah. After boot camp then, did you get to go back to Irving?

LH: Yeah, we had a nine-day leave. And when we got back, I had qualified for school, so I started the school.

PJ: Back at Great Lakes?

LH: Great Lakes.

PJ: What was the school?

LH: It was -- they called it a group school, but it covered -- you'd go a month, and then they would help you decide which part of it you would take. And they would teach you to be

a radioman, a yeoman, storekeeper, and things like that.

And I chose radio, and they let me have it, so I was a radioman.

PJ: And how long was that training?

LH: That was four months.

PJ: Four months. Then when you finished that training, where'd you go?

LH: Then from there, I had the orders to report to the US Destroyer USS *Selfridge*, which was operating out of Pearl Harbor at that time. And so I got in with the draft, and they put us on a train, and sent us to San Diego, where we got aboard a troop ship, and took us to Pearl Harbor. And the *Selfridge* was not in at that time, but they put me on a destroyer tender, and it was the *Dixie*, I think. And wait until it came in. When it came in, I went aboard it then.

PJ: What was that like? Let's see, you were still 17?

LH: I had just turned 18.

PJ: Just turned 18.

LH: Yeah.

PJ: Still homesick, a little bit?

LH: Yeah. (laughter) But not as bad, I don't think. I was more seasick then. I was always sick, and when they go out and it'd get rough, yeah.

PJ: Is that right? That's not good when you're in the Navy.

(laughter)

LH: I know. But, you know, [I'm on my head over?] (inaudible).

Yeah. And we -- well, go ahead.

PJ: Well, what was it like being in Hawaii?

LH: Well, it was nice. You know, it wasn't cement city like it is now. It was more like it originally was, you know, when -- it was interesting. I thought it was super.

PJ: Yeah. As a young man, it was probably a lot of fun?

LH: Yeah. It was fun. I'm going to tell you, a lot of times, these two friends of mine that joined -- of course, we separated, you know, and we'd come in to Pearl. They were at the sub base there in Pearl, and I'd go over and see them. And a lot of times, I would -- it was cool over there, you know? And I'd just borrow their bunk and have a nap. (laughter)

PJ: You were [both on?] submarines then.

LH: Huh?

PJ: [You ever?] on submarines?

LH: No, they were -- worked at the sub base. But they would -- I didn't work on the submarines themselves, but they would work on equipment, like torpedoes, and (inaudible) handle them and all that. And one of them, I might have

mentioned, (inaudible), he kept wanting [China?] duty, and he got --

PJ: What kind of duty?

LH: [China duty?]. Everybody raved about (inaudible) how good it was over there, you know? And he got it. But he happened to be Corregidor at the same time Pearl Harbor was hit, they were hit, you know? And he was captured, and spent the entire war in Japan in a prison. And I don't think that was very good. (laughter)

PJ: Obviously, you've seen him after the war, then.

LH: Well, they had reported to his parents that he was missing in action. They didn't know what it was. And then they finally declared him killed in action, and they even had a funeral service for him. And when the war ended, he was released from the prison camp out there, and he was back to Hillsboro before anybody even knew that he was released, let alone alive. And I happened to be on leave when that happened, it was about two o'clock in the morning. It was (inaudible). The phone ring, and I said, asking "Who is this?" He says, "Bill." I said, "Bill?" Couldn't believe it. Yeah.

PJ: First you didn't --

LH: Pardon?

PJ: You didn't believe it at first.

LH: Well, no, not really. But, so I went after. And sure enough, it was him. And he stayed in, and he retired, and [I think?] last year or so, he passed away.

PJ: On the *Selfridge*, you were radio operator then, all the time?

LH: Yes, and I was striking for radio, I hadn't made my rating yet, first one, anyway. Yeah. And the *Selfridge*, by the way, was really a destroyer leader. Instead of -- destroyer, most of them, have four single gun, five inch guns. But we had four double, twin. Yeah. And [more power?] later.

PJ: So you were the lead ship, the lead destroyer? (inaudible)

LH: Yeah, I was considered being on the flag of the squadron.

PJ: Wow. What were you doing on December 7th? Were you on duty?

LH: I was going -- on my way to [work?]. I just had breakfast, and you know, [ladders?] would go up out [in the radio shack?] (inaudible) hundreds of grids, and then had to go one deck up to -- I just got a hold of a radio and started to go up, and somebody hollered, "They're torpedoing the hell out of the *Detroit*. And I looked around, and the sky was just full [of the thing?].

PJ: Japanese planes?

LH: Yeah. And that was it. But I didn't go on up, I went on backup. My general quarters station was emergency radio. So --

PJ: And where was that located at?

LH: Back -- not all. Between [amidships?] and the (inaudible). Yeah.

PJ: So if the main radios were wiped out, you still had another radio?

LH: That's what the purpose of it was, yeah. We just stood by. They led .250 calibers right outside of the deal, and they shot their own transmitting antennas down, and (inaudible). They were sending us a message, trying to get us to investigate what they said [was cruising?] around off the (inaudible) point. And they couldn't answer them because they didn't have any transmitting antennas. But we finally fixed that up, and this guy (inaudible) temporary antenna (inaudible).

PJ: And where in Pearl Harbor was your ship located at?

LH: I [published this book?]. I just bought a couple of them, I thought it'd be helpful. (pause) There's what was killed (inaudible) on there.

PJ: What'd you see while you were -- I mean, what was it like, the sights and the sounds when they were being -- Japanese

planes, and what was it -- what do you remember as far as, you know, sights or sounds or smells, or whatever?

LH: Well, it's just hard to say. I really don't know. The only thing that bugged me was there was one plane, they were going (inaudible). I was outside from an emergency. If I'd had a rock, I could have hit him.

PJ: You could look right at the pilot in the plane just there.

LH: That's right. And this (inaudible) two men, and (inaudible) in the rear, as he went by us, he did this. [That turned you insight out?]. (laughter) But, and then this guy he was with, he was older, and he kept saying, "Lamar," he said, "Don't worry if you get your head (inaudible) pick it up, put it back on." Yeah. (inaudible)

PJ: But your ship was -- OK, Lamar's got a map here. There's the *Selfridge*.

LH: Yeah. This is the area (inaudible).

PJ: OK. That's the battleship, right there, [Ford Island?]. And was there any damage to the *Selfridge*?

LH: Pardon?

PJ: Any damage?

LH: Got one bullet hole in the direction finder, up above the bridge. That was it. They wasn't after us. That's the biggest mistake the Japanese did. You know, not to run

those old battleships down, but some of them were built in 1918.

PJ: World War I.

LH: And they spent all that money and fixed them up, and I think they used one or two of them over at Okinawa, [the shore batteries?] (inaudible). But the men (inaudible).

PJ: You could not see the battleship [row?] from where you were at?

LH: Yeah.

PJ: You could see it?

LH: Yeah.

PJ: So you'd seen some of those ships, like the *Arizona*? Did you see the *Arizona* go down?

LH: (inaudible) absolutely were watching. Besides, we were inside most of the time because we had to stay in the radio shack. It had a little porthole window, you know? It was sticking out, but we could see everything that was going by, [surround us?].

PJ: These were all destroyers, then?

LH: All but the *Whitney*. *Whitney's* a tender. We had -- right after, not too long after -- well, a month before Pearl Harbor, we were out [in fleet?], and they called us in, just us. And (inaudible) they changed, put all live ammunition on them, and live torpedo heads, and everything,

and just load us down with food. And just everywhere they could find a corner, they'd stick a box or something in it. And we got underway, and when we got out to sea, the captain called us together and told us where [the reaching was?]. We were to go down to Kanton Island with two degrees below the equator, and bring a merchant ship back, escort it back. They were afraid to send it back by itself. Now that tells you something. (laughter)

PJ: This was a month before --

LH: Yeah, a month before.

PJ: -- Pearl Harbor. Hmm.

LH: Yeah. We got in the night before Pearl Harbor. Yeah.

PJ: And when'd you leave Pearl Harbor, then? You were in Guadalcanal. You were on the invasion of Guadalcanal. And when did you leave Pearl Harbor?

LH: Well, we finally got the message, you know, (inaudible) run out and couldn't find anything and came back in. And we had to get supplies, and a couple days after Pearl Harbor, they put together a force that we were taking Marines and supplies to Wake Island, and before we got there, we hit a storm, and we couldn't. It was breaking our fuel lines; we couldn't get refueled. And then the next day, the Japanese already had Wake. So we had to go up to Midway, and we got up to Midway, and all the way up there, the *Saratoga* got

torpedoed, the carrier. And so we escorted it back to Pearl, and almost got hit ourself, Japanese submarine at the entrance to Pearl. Yeah.

PJ: So was that one of those small -- one man, or whatever it was, small subs?

LH: Yeah.

PJ: Torpedo just missed you?

LH: Well, yeah. See, I didn't know [at that time?], my [general quarter?] station was down on number one (inaudible) passing powder over to the (inaudible) they used it. And I didn't know what was going on, but they found out later that it was [collision?]. And that they had fired that torpedo, and it was headed for the *Saratoga*. And they decided to -- the Captain and Squadron Commander decided they would ram it. Small ships supposed to protect the big one anyway, and they made a turn. And on the (inaudible) they turned for. Found out later, they were going to ram that torpedo. And they missed it, and missed the (inaudible).

PJ: So they were actually going to take your ship and try to hit the torpedo so it wouldn't hit the big ship.

LH: That's right. Yeah. Yeah, that's kind of a rule, I guess they had. I didn't know that (inaudible), that's what they said anyway. (laughter)

PJ: I didn't know that either. Huh. What is, the Battle of Vella Lavella?

LH: Yeah, you'd heard of Bougainville. Yeah, that's in the Solomons. And used to run the [slot?] up there, and that's where the Japanese Navy come down. You know, we were [out in the?] invasion -- we were the second ship in at Bougainville. And they would come to you, probably (inaudible), and it was right there too. And they'd come down and fire on us. It's, a lot of time, (inaudible) and head on back up, you know? I don't know how many nights we had battles there. Anyway, Vella Lavella is north of Guadalcanal. It was a channel over -- it'd be on the east side, that goes up and [climbs out?] into other streets and what have you, and into Bougainville. Well, this Vella Lavella, we'd been to Bougainville. We'd go up every night, and (inaudible) Japanese, getting supplies in there, or some [later?] when they started withdrawing, we'd use the same thing. But anyway, we just started to pull out, because we'd get out before dark, and before daylight. And (inaudible) takes them. Well, we just started to get out, and our guys got a radar contact, eight Japanese ships. There was three of us, three destroyers, and they radioed for help. (inaudible) But they didn't get up there in

time, so our officers decided we'd go ahead and attack them.

PJ: Was that with the *O'Bannon*, and -- was it "Shava-leer"?

LH: *Chevalier*.

PJ: "Sheva-yer." And then the *Selfridge*, there were the three?

LH: There was three, yeah.

PJ: And you took out how many Japanese?

LH: I think eight.

PJ: Were they destroyers also?

LH: It's conflicting stories in all the reports. When I did research, you know, and tried to come up with. And I would say probably eight. Yeah. And we had reports of us getting four of them, but I don't find [it?]. I think the more accurate, we got one of theirs.

PJ: But you lost two. You lost two ships there, right?

LH: Yeah.

PJ: It says here one was torpedoed --

LH: Well, we didn't lose one.

PJ: Well, I mean, but they were out of -- sort of out of commission.

LH: Well, the other one rammed the -- the other one was the first one that got hit. (laughter) And they (inaudible) both out. That's when we made a circle, to fire a round of [four?] torpedoes. And that's when we caught (inaudible).

PJ: You lost [all the ball?]?

LH: Yeah. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

PJ: So actually, all three ships then were out of commission.

LH: That's right. But to help, they'd get there right after it was over, so one of them came alongside and helped us.

They took all but 80 of us off, I think. Yeah. And (inaudible).

PJ: What happened to *Selfridge*, then? Did it sink?

LH: No, we brought it back in to Tulagi, which is (inaudible). They put a temporary bell on about there, and sent it back to the states, and they had a [doomhauer?] waiting for it (inaudible). And when they got there and they put it in, and later on, he would find out, I was in the invasion of Saipan, after the war was over, I found out they were in on that invasion. They were still out there, and I didn't know it. (laughter) But it was back in action, yeah.

PJ: So where'd you go? They sent the *Selfridge* back to Pearl -
- what, to Hawaii?

LH: Mare Island.

PJ: Mare. And so what'd you do then? You went to another ship?

LH: Yeah. See, I was on the flag, and I had to move with the flag. And I knew that another ship in the squadron -- I think Squadron Commander, (inaudible) move with him,

wherever he landed, you know? And I don't know,
(inaudible) about three of them, I guess.

PJ: So they just made another destroyer, sort of like the
leader ship, so you went to that ship then?

LH: Yeah. And it was then that we had lost about half of our
squadron, (inaudible) squadron, and another squadron had
lost about half of theirs. So we tried to make one out of
the two, and so they dissolved. Like, mine was DesRon 4.
They dissolved it and ran this other one. And we were --
when we were out in New Guinea at that time, and Squadron
Commander called us together and told us that we was going
back home. We have anything we wanted, and I said, go
home. (laughter) And so I got back home, and my orders
sent me to Oceanside, California after my leave. And we --

PJ: How long was your leave? Thirty days?

LH: See, I was in the regular Navy. And during the war, I
extended for two years. And so I had about a year left
when the war ended. Yeah. Yeah.

PJ: So you also, it says here, [visited?] Saipan. You were
involved in the invasions of Saipan?

LH: See, we go in and set up communications and follow the
Marines in. And each had established one (inaudible). We
went in, and put our radio overhead, radioed in, they
[pulled in?] with bulldozers, you know? (inaudible) And it

would be the communications for the island, and did the same thing on Tinian after Saipan was secure.

PJ: Did you get shot at? You went in after the Marines, but that must have still been --

LH: No. Not like in Saipan. We weren't very far from Garapan. That was the biggest town they had there, and they went back and forth with the Japs on that three times, and there wasn't much left after that. It was fortunate. And they had a lot of air raids, but, you know, I didn't have -- you know, I remembered walking in on Tinian, and I saw our guys laying there on the beach, you know, dead, all shot up. And (inaudible) make you sick. Make you feel like you'd [whip them by yourself?], but you can't do that.

PJ: Yeah. So you were discharged in 1946?

LH: Yes.

PJ: What'd you do after the service?

LH: Well, me and another guy bought three town buildings that were empty there in that little town, and opened a pool hall, but that didn't play out. Finally, [sold buildings?] and (inaudible). And we had to -- the wife -- uncle had his mother who lived down in Southeast St. Louis, a little town of Maplewood with [Phillips?], and a loading gasoline [term over there?]. And that's where he, her uncle, headquartered at. He was out on the road most of the time.

But anyway, they wanted us to go down, and the wife's aunt was losing her eyesight, and she couldn't take care of her, so we went down and moved in with them. And the wife took care of both of them, really. And I just happened to get a job at Phillips. Well, they had a company that housed us there, right at the turn (inaudible). And I got over and checked with [my dad?], and they had an opening, and I got a job. So I went to work for Phillips.

PJ: What'd you do for them?

LH: It was clerical. And I was there five years, and then had an opportunity to go to Indianapolis. It'd (inaudible) over there, so I've been going from there. And I don't know, [1960?]. When was Kennedy shot? Sixty-four?

PJ: Sixty-four.

LH: Yeah. OK. About that time, they had an opening, and they called me, and they wanted to go down to Arlington, Texas, (inaudible) by there and take it. And we did that. Then they wanted me to move to (inaudible).

PJ: Where?

LH: They wanted me to move to -- well, Arlington, Texas was (inaudible). Then they wanted me to go to Birmingham, so I went to Birmingham. And then my boss came by, and he talked to me, and he said, (inaudible) going to be open

(inaudible) home, you know? And so I thought (inaudible) seven, eight years, and retired there.

PJ: When did you get married?

LH: In '46.

PJ: Right after you got out of the service?

LH: Just before I got out. Yep. (inaudible)

PJ: Where'd you meet your wife? Was she from the area?

LH: She was a sister of one of my best friends there. Yeah.

We were married 59 years. She passed away. Fifty-nine years and one month, almost at 60. Yeah.

PJ: So you moved around quite a little bit.

LH: Yes.

PJ: But you're back in your hometown?

LH: Right now, yeah.

PJ: Is your parents' house, is it still there? Or...

LH: I'm living in it. (laughter)

PJ: Oh, you're living in it? (laughter) That's good.

LH: It's not the one I was born in. It's another one that they acquired while I was in the Navy. And --

HERB HIGHTOWER: How many sons?

LH: How many sons? Had three sons. Two of them are with me today, and the other one was the oldest one. He died when he was 50 years old. And he died in the VA home in Indianapolis. He had --

HH: Hew as military?

LH: -- [massive burn?]. The river in South Carolina at that time, and just visiting, and they called us down there, and --

PJ: He was military?

LH: Huh?

PJ: He was military?

LH: Yeah, he was Navy. He was on the submarine, so he (inaudible) during Vietnam. And so we got up there, and he was in a coma, and they ran all those test again just for us. And come up, and they said there just wasn't any hope. He said if there's any possible way that he would come through, he wouldn't have [the mind of?] a little child. So we [studied about it?], and (overlapping dialogue; inaudible) -- huh?

HH: He was wounded in the Navy?

LH: No, no. No, he wasn't.

PJ: He just had a brain tumor?

LH: Well, I don't know (inaudible). What do they call that, hemorrhaging?

PJ: Oh, OK. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

LH: [Mass hemorrhage?]. He was still bleeding even after we got up there, (inaudible) talked it over, finally decided to -- well, the wife wasn't -- she was getting too old.

She was having some problems, too. They was taking care of herself, and -- and so we decided to tell them to go ahead and pull (inaudible).

PJ: And your other two sons, in the military?

LH: Had one that was in... I don't know, nine or ten months, I guess.

PJ: Do you have any daughters?

LH: One daughter.

PJ: One daughter?

LH: Yeah. But none of the others was in at all, the other two.

PJ: What'd you think when they dropped the A-bomb?

LH: I thought it was super.

PJ: Saved a lot of lives. Both sides.

LH: Could you imagine what an invasion of Japan would have been? It would have been our lives instead of theirs. And I think we give up to these countries (inaudible).
(laughter)

PJ: Yeah, I think it would have been a lot of loss on both sides, tremendous loss of lives.

LH: That's right. Better believe.

HH: Where were you when that bomb was dropped?

LH: I was on Tinian, and I found out later that while I was there, you know, they were B-29s they were bringing in. They'd bombed Japan with those, and I'd go up the airstrip,

and watch them come in, and they (inaudible) that little old island, that little old strip, trying to get them out of the air, you know? And like fighters, one right after the other. (laughter) I never saw an accident that they had. (inaudible) But they were, and also, that the cruiser that carried the A-bomb to Tinian, that's where they picked it up, and that's where the bomb came from. Yeah.

PJ: Did you know what it was when they -- it was sort of a secret, wasn't it? I mean, as far as the A-bomb, until it happened? I mean...

LH: No, I didn't know it was going -- nobody did. In this outfit, there was a friend of mine that new a guy that was [in it?], and he told him, he said, "We can't say anything. If we do, we're gone," (inaudible) some other guys in my outfit, they just disappeared. We don't know what they did with them, but they disappeared. (laughter)

PJ: Because they mentioned something.

LH: Yeah.

HH: (inaudible)

LH: I don't think anybody did. Well, in Washington, [maybe?].

PJ: I guess the pilot -- well, I'm not sure that -- who was the pilot? I remember of that plane.

HH: Tibbets.

PJ: Tibbets. Yeah. I guess he must have known, or had some idea.

LH: I don't know. It wasn't until the last minute. I had a chance to go on this -- on our flight to DC from Springfield, Illinois out there, and we went out to the museum and saw that plane. They got that plane in a museum over there in Indiana. Or in DC.

PJ: Oh, is that right? DC. At the Smithsonian, must be?

LH: No, it's... I forget what they called it.

PJ: It was a B-29?

LH: A B-29, yeah. [E Gay?], wasn't it? Was that the name

PJ: I don't know.

HH: What, the name of the aircraft?

LH: Yeah.

HH: Enola Gay.

LH: I think it was the E--

PJ: Oh, that's right. It was Enola Gay after Tibbets's mother, I believe it was named.

LH: Yeah. Anyway, they (inaudible).

HH: I see you spent some time in Australia. Australia.
(inaudible)

LH: Oh, they were [in out there?]. We went from -- I don't know. While we were out there, we would escort merchant ships inside the Great Barrier, or out of Sydney Harbor, or

Brisbane, or some of them, and get it inside the barrier reef, and then we'd release them. They'd go on up to New Guinea. And things like that, and we happened to be in Sydney Harbor when they had us to get underway and go to Wellington, New Zealand. And that's where we met the task force that went in for the Guadalcanal invasion. So...

PJ: Did you get some leave time in Australia? Did you ever get R&R in Australia?

LH: Yeah, I went ashore several times. One time in Brisbane. I never did get (inaudible).

PJ: What'd you think of Australia?

LH: I thought it was great, and I thought -- I had a kind of not too good of a (inaudible) England, but England, they couldn't take care of themselves. (laughter) But, you know, they had control of Australia at that time, and they were -- what the Australians was trying to do is to get away from them, and become under the United States. But I'll tell you something about the United States [in?] Australia. I was in there, and they brought *Aquitania* and three of those big liners in the harbor, and it had Australian 9th Division on there, had been over in North Africa, fighting -- North Africa. And brought them home, and you know what was happening to the wives and all the ladies and everything? Well, Americans had money. They

didn't get very much at all. And they started riots, and fights, and well, if you go ashore, (inaudible) had to be back aboard before night. And so anyway, you know what they did? They didn't -- well, they couldn't (inaudible) country, but they loaded them back up on those ships and took them up to New Guinea, back on the [battles run?] again.

PJ: The Australians?

LH: Huh?

PJ: The Australians?

LH: The Australians, yeah.

HH: (inaudible)

PJ: You Americans were in there.

LH: (inaudible) they did that [in our country?].

PJ: Yeah. All the sailors were in town chasing the women, right?

LH: That's right.

PJ: And the Australian men didn't like that.

LH: They didn't like that.

PJ: That sounds about right.

LH: Can you blame them?

PJ: No. I had not heard that.

LH: It happened. We were in there when it...

PJ: So you have a couple of these books, if you wanted to give one of these to the museum? (inaudible) already have them.

LH: No, I don't think so. I brought those to him, and wanted to check and see if they wanted to or not. And as you already know, I worked with Helen.

PJ: Oh, Helen? Yeah, (overlapping dialogue; inaudible).

LH: And I wanted to see her if I could, and --

PJ: Yeah. Well, see if she's downstairs. She was downstairs in the ballroom, finally got your --

LH: How many do you think we'd need to cover what you'd use around here? That's what I was going to ask earlier.
(inaudible)

PJ: Yeah. [Well, Paul?] would be one that -- I'm sure that (inaudible) to have one of these.

HH: But these are great books. It's a lot of materials used.

PJ: And I wouldn't mind reading this myself.

HH: Yeah, it's real document. What happened there?

LH: At Vella Lavella, when we got torpedoed that night?

HH: (inaudible)

LH: *Selfridge*.

PJ: By the way, just so whoever's transcribing this, the other gentleman here is Herb Hightower. He's also an oral historian from Austin. So when you hear another person, you'll know who that is. I should have mentioned his name

before we started this. But yes, we could see -- we'll find where Helen is, talk to Helen.

LH: I guess she knows in the interviews, they'd have -- would she know? Or --

PJ: I'd certainly [like to have one?] just to read it. I could get it back to the museum then, but I'd certainly personally like to read it if I could.

LH: Well, you have to (inaudible). Why don't you take one of these?

PJ: Personally, I'd really like to read that.

LH: You'll share it with him, won't you? (laughter)

PJ: Sure. Yes. I guess some of those Japanese at Pearl Harbor, they were kamikazes? A lot of those, didn't they just crash?

LH: I don't think so.

PJ: No?

LH: I don't think so.

PJ: If they went down, they were shot down.

LH: That started more in Okinawa. Yeah. Yeah. That'd be terrible.

PJ: Yeah. Yeah, they --

LH: You don't stand a chance with them.

PJ: Yeah. And those guys, there was a one-way ticket for the kamikaze people. So you think that started with Okinawa more?

LH: I think so.

PJ: What'd your -- just a sideline, where'd your parents -- what was their life during the war? In Pearl, there was a lot of shortages, and did they ever tell you?

LH: No, they don't. But, you know, people back then, like, my dad always [right?] in town, [right even?] after [we were in?] town. He raised six hogs every winter, and they had chickens in the fence out there.

PJ: Right. Vegetable garden, I assume?

LH: They butchered, and he worked on the railroad. And I remember, because I used to help pick potato bugs off of them potatoes up there, and he had five [telephone potatoes?], and when they'd harvest them, he'd bring them home in a wheelbarrow and dig holes back in the [garbage?] or something, and put kernel stocks down [over there?]. (inaudible) and fill it bac with dirt. And during the wintertime, he'd go eating potatoes, (inaudible). They didn't have money. (laughter)

PJ: So it's like, what do you call it, I remember my grandparents (inaudible) -- like, a storage, like, what

they put in the ground, and just keep them. Keep them fresh. (overlapping dialogue; inaudible)

LH: Yeah. They'd keep the hole, you know? Dragging it from the [freeze?] (inaudible).

HH: Put them in straw.

LH: And my mom canned -- she'd [take a can?] in pints or quarts. You used half gallons. (laughter)

PJ: So basically, I guess, all they would buy would be maybe sugar or salt, items like that? Which I assume was even a problem getting up then, but --

LH: Then he hunted a lot. Rabbit, quail. We didn't have any deer around there. Now, they got too many.

PJ: Yeah, that's amazing. I grew up in Northern Indiana, and we had no deer, and now they're just, they're everywhere.

HH: Deer is a protected species now.

PJ: [In herald country out here?]. (laughter) Well, I can't think of anything else. Lamar, Herb, do you have any more questions? Or [think he does?]?

HH: (long inaudible) That section there, when you was in the military. I came in the military in '54, when you had the [stewards?], those guys that would operate as stewards [only?]?

LH: Yeah. Right. But general quarters, they could man guns and everything.

HH: You ever hear of [Doris Miller?]? Dorie Miller? He's on the USS *Arizona*. He shot down some Japanese aircraft.

LH: I think I read that. I don't remember the name, but somebody -- yeah. When we got torpedoed, right here, he was my friend on the *Selfridge*, and they did [Edwardsville?], (inaudible) about 40 miles south of where I lived. And when we got hit, I (inaudible) finally got to him, and got that unhatched, and stepped out, and went into a wall of water. And I caught the lifeline and hung on, and it let down, you know? And what had happened when we got hit, you know, the nose, the engines were still running, propellers still going. It was bringing the rear end up, and that was what was left (inaudible) got on there, so the water was coming up over there. And that was a wall of water from that thing. (laughter) And right out in -- after it settled down, was a guy laying there on the deck. And every time he'd raise up, somebody'd step on him, run him by. You know, and it's everybody's -- (inaudible) don't even know what to do. And so I got straddled (inaudible) medics got up there and took --

HH: Got [him going?].

LH: But I run up on the bridge, the front of the bridge, what was left up there. And that boy there, from Edwardsville, he was laying there on the deck, his general quarters was

[settled 1.1?], he'd gone to the bridge. And I got up there, and he had somehow got a stroke. It was shrapnel or something, you know? It'd just cut his throat, and blood, you could see it gushing out, you know, as it pumped the blood, it was out. They were working on him, but they didn't save him.

HH: He didn't survive?

LH: No. He was (inaudible).

PJ: Well, Lemar, thank you for your time.

LH: You're welcome.

END OF AUDIO FILE