

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Lloyd Fulbright

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William G. Cox: Today is July the 30th, year 2007. I'm William G. Cox and I volunteer with the Oral History of the National Museum of the Pacific War, otherwise known as the Nimitz Museum in Fredericksburg, Texas. I'm here at the Bush Gallery visiting with Mr. Lloyd Fulbright concerning his experiences in the Pacific during World War II. The interview is in support of the Center for Pacific War Studies, archives of the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site.

Mr. Fulbright, how are you this afternoon?

Mr. Fulbright: I'm fine, Mr. Cox.

William G. Cox: Thank you. I was ... now where were you born and what date?

Mr. Fulbright: I was born in Waco, Texas on May 15th, 1925.

William G. Cox: And what were your parents' names?

Mr. Fulbright: My parents were ... Henry Grady and Annie Beaty Fulbright.

William G. Cox: Okay. Did you have any brothers or sisters?

Mr. Fulbright: Yes. I had ... three brothers and two sisters.

William G. Cox: Okay. Uh, I think ... you told me some time ago that ... that you went to school in Waco or ...

Mr. Fulbright: Yes, uh huh. I graduated from Waco High School in May of 1943.

William G. Cox: 1943.

Mr. Fulbright: Uh hum.

William G. Cox: Okay. Uh, World War II was in ...

Mr. Fulbright: Full swing!

William G. Cox: Were you a little bit concerned about that?

Mr. Fulbright: Oh, I ... I wasn't concerned, you know, personally when it started. I was like everybody else, we were all concerned about it when it started. I didn't think about it going as long as it did. I was ... sixteen at that time, and it

never occurred to me that I was going to be eighteen before it would be over.

William G. Cox: So, you were eighteen in what year?

Mr. Fulbright: I was eighteen ... uh, in 1943.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: May of '43.

William G. Cox: And you registered for the draft I assume.

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, I ... I was one of those guys that ... was going to join the Air Force shortly before I became eighteen, and at that time, you had to go to Dallas to take the ... uh, mental test and ... physical. And everybody squawked about how bad ... uh, mental was and passing score on it. I've forgot now what it was, but ... anyway, I took that and passed it. I thought I had everything behind me, and they started then on ... physical and a guy to the eye test and ... told me in short order I was color blind and therefore the Air Force couldn't use me. And I ... , "Well ... I can't fly ... what about ground crew?" And he says, "We're having more people daily wash out of the flight school that we can use in ground crew, so we're not accepting anybody." And ... then in March I broke ... left wrist and ... had it in a ... cast for six weeks. And doctor took the cast off after six weeks and it was terribly crooked, so they rebroke it and ... uh, reset it. Then ... when I signed up for the draft in May, I had left arm in a cast and the guy doing the physical there in Waco told me that, "Well, we don't expect any problem with that arm; we're going to classify you 1-A," uh said, "but it'll probably be a year or a year and a half before we'll take you." Well, that was like a death sentence then because if you were class 1-A, you couldn't find a job and people figured you were going to be in the service in short order anyway, so I thought, "Well, if it's going to be a ... a year or a year and a half, I'm going to go ahead and start to Texas A&M and get that much of it behind me."

William G. Cox: Now this was in 1944?

Mr. Fulbright: May of '43.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: And I went down the end of May and registered at A&M and my year and half or two years ... uh, turned into a real short year and a half because I registered at A&M at the end of May. The 21st day of September of '43, I was in service at Camp Wolters, Texas, so ... it ... my ... my year and a half, two years turned into three short months.

William G. Cox: Okay, let's stop right there just a minute (recording stopped momentarily). You mentioned that you were in ... Camp Wolters. Where is Camp Wolters located?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, Camp Wolters is ... uh, located in ... up ... just ... northwest of ... Dallas (pause) ...

William G. Cox: That's okay; I just ... for reference. Uh, what type of training did they give you there at Camp Wolters?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, Camp Wolters was a ... (cough) infantry base, but all they did with me there was just ... replacement center. They processed me through the thing; well I was only at ... Camp Wolters for ... like a week and they sent me to Camp Roberts, California for basic training. And when I got to Camp Roberts ... was where they did more processing, assigned me to the field artillery. So, I took seventeen weeks basic ... field artillery training there at Camp Roberts.

William G. Cox: What did that consist of?

Mr. Fulbright: The ... they put me in an outfit there at Camp Roberts, it was called An Instrument and Survey Battery. Uh, we did ... uh, we learned surveying, uh, fire direction control for ... uh, field artillery, and did such things as marksmanship, uh, we did ... uh, infiltration course which was ... crawling at night underneath the machine gun fire. We ended our seventeen weeks with a two-week ... camp out at a ... hundred (unintelligible) military reservation there in California. Uh, this would have been December of '43, January of '44, and ... just about froze to death there. People think about sunny California; well, it is sunny California that ... early in the morning you couldn't put on enough closes to stay warm.

William G. Cox: Now you were out in the desert?

Mr. Fulbright: Yes ...

William G. Cox: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Fulbright: ... for this basic training ... at ... for ... uh, the two weeks camp out at the end of it. Uh, Camp Wolt ... uh, Camp Roberts is located half way between ... uh, Los Angeles and San Francisco; it was actually, I think, three miles further to San Francisco ... like two hundred and fifty-three versus two, fifty. We all said the surveyors made a mistake; they intended to put it half way, so you couldn't go to either one unless you had a ... a substantial pass, at least a weekend, a three-days pass 'cause transportation as poor back then, and the country was on that thirty-five mile an hour speed limit, and California didn't have freeways like they do today. And it was a long trip to either one of those, and a long trip back, and ...

William G. Cox: When you were ... actually taking your training back at Camp Roberts, what type of food did you have?

Mr. Fulbright: Our food at Camp Roberts, I thought, was ... good. Uh, we still had ... fresh eggs at breakfast, not the powdered eggs, and we had fresh milk for our ... cereal, none of the powdered milk. Uh, and ... uh, we had ... occasionally bacon at ... at breakfast. Uh, we'd have ... stew or roast beef, uh, I ... I thought our food there was overall very good.

William G. Cox: Now was that seven days a weeks that you had food like that?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah. Our food, you know, all seven days ... of course, if you were going to leave before ... Saturday at about one o'clock, you had to have a pass. There was no such thing as leaving ... night ... just to go into town for the night. Uh, we had ... activities, our basic training, we had the cleanest barracks in the United States.

William G. Cox: (Chuckles)

Mr. Fulbright: We had a couple of Sergeants running that platoon who were from Texas down near the Rio Grande, and ... they made a point ... personally taking care of us Texans because they didn't want us to embarrass them, and they fussed at us from the day we got there until the day we left!

William G. Cox: Now this was constructive criticism?

Mr. Fulbright: Oh yeah, but it ... it ... it was something also would worry you ... like our ... our Sergeant, in the mornings he'd get up and his cadre run and he'd come out of there stand at the wall and reach just as far as he could reach to that light switch and stab as far as he could go toward my bed which was the second bed from that light ... he'd flip that light on and if I wasn't out of the bed by the time that he got there, he'd lift up the foot of that ... steel cot; he'd lift up the foot of that thing and dump me out on my head. And, you know, it didn't hurt me, but ... made ... made a mess of having to make up that bed. And he ... making sure that I was ... up and going and wasn't anybody going to say ... that guy from Texas is getting favorite treatment.

William G. Cox: Did you get a lot of KP and guard duty?

Mr. Fulbright: Got KP, got guard duty. Uh, first time I pulled guard duty there, uh, our platoon ... had more than our share of what was called, "Colonel's Orderly," which was ... job ... sitting at a ... a desk answering a telephone and taking care of any kind of calls, making sure that the Corporal of the Guard was out at ... had any problems anywhere. Uh, when I went through the inspection for that, the Officer of the Guard asked me if I had ever walked guard, and I said, "Not at Roberts; I did it one time back at ... Camp Wolters which was at Mineral Wells, Texas," but says, "I have not walked guard here." So, he put me on a guard shift and my first walk was at ... midnight, and the post I was walking, uh, had the ... base ... uh, finance ... like a bank ... uh, and ... all the instructions for that post ... it said that, "Every hour ... beginning at eight o'clock, you are supposed to check at the door ... front rear was locked." First time I checked the rear door was not locked. And they said if it wasn't, "You walk in and you'll find the Sergeant sleeping in a cot in the middle of that building." So, I went in and sure enough found the cot, and it was some guy asleep in it (cough). I started to begin with just, "Sergeant, Sergeant," and then it got to where I was screaming Sergeant, and finally got him to wake up. He says, "How did you get in here?" I said, "I came through the back door; it wasn't locked." He said, "I can't believe that door ... wasn't locked, and it's here ... twelve o'clock ... after twelve ... before we find out

that it wasn't locked." I said, "Well, it's the first time that I've walked this ... uh, particular guard deal, and the first time I tried the door and it was unlocked." So, he got up, let me out, locked the door, and I continued to ... check it from midnight till four. But next morning, the Officer of the Guard was reading things that had happened during the course of the night, and he saw that I'd had to go in and wake up that Sergeant, and he wanted to know why ... uh, we didn't ... find that before midnight, and I said, "Sir, I can't answer that; I came on at midnight. The first time I tried the door it was unlocked," And he said, "Well, you found it after somebody had been walking eight to twelve; somebody else ... was ... four to eight, but the four to eight he probably should have checked it before he left, but somebody left it for four hours and didn't find (unintelligible). I said, "Well, I don't know anything about that."

William G. Cox: (Laughter)

Mr. Fulbright: But anyway, he gave me a ... certificate ... for meritorious guard service ... he called it (laughter).

William G. Cox: (Unintelligible)

Mr. Fulbright: And ... but I got a three-day pass with it, and ... of course, I knew ... after the training was over, I was going to get to ... go back to ... Waco for a week. But I get to pay my own train fare to ... Waco and then ... back to wherever I would be assigned. And ... I ... I was saving my dollars for that train ticket. And ... I didn't go anywhere except I went to a soldier's club, a USO, and ... read magazines, newspapers, killed the day, but I wasn't having to do ... basic training duty, so that made it a good three days.

William G. Cox: So, when you ... how many weeks were you there at Camp Roberts?

Mr. Fulbright: Seventeen.

William G. Cox: Seventeen, alright. Did you immediately get orders to go overseas at that point?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, we got what was called, "Delay in route, " furlough in effect. I got a ... what was called a seven-day delay in route, and then I had a date ... at the end of those seven days and a time to report back to Fort Ord, California ...

which was a port of embarkation. And my seven days turned into about five because ... the Army ... train routing was pretty poor for ... from Los Angeles to ... uh, San Antone to Waco. But ... when I got back I went to Fort Ord, reported in there and ... the guy who ... signed us in gave us a barracks assignment, says, "Most of you guys think you're artillery," but he says, "but you're not; you're all infantrymen." And he says, "Every day you're here at Fort Ord, you're going to take Infantry Basic," and he says, "We're not going to take seventeen weeks; we're going to teach you Infantry Basic in thirteen days." And he says, "If you don't stay thirteen days, we're going to teach you Infantry Basic however many days that you are here. If you're here more than thirteen, you'll start over with day one." And they issued us the ... M-1 rifle and instead of the ... carbine like we had had at Camp Roberts for basic training. They gave us the M-1 rifle; we started in on day one. And they talked to us about ... the M-1 thumb; you've got to know how to load it to get your thumb out of there before it gets your thumb. They said, "If anybody's got the M-1 thumb, you'll know it because as far as you can see thumb, you know that's what he did ... is he got his thumb caught in that ... uh, bolt when it came ... closed." But ... we had ... uh, rifle range there, a couple of days. We did not ... fire the M-1 for qualification, but ... we fired it enough to ... be comfortable with ... having to fire it. You weren't comfortable carrying it because it was heavy compared to that little, light carbine we'd been accustomed to. But we did that ... uh, we did ... uh, training under artillery support, uh, to ... get a feel for what that was like, and ...

William G. Cox: Now this was ... firing over your head?

Mr. Fulbright: That ... yeah, it was ... artillery there at ... Fort Ord firing over our head, and says, "If you ever do have to fire artillery and know [the] importance of firing that where it's supposed to be, and not firing it short." So, we ... we got accustomed to some of that, and we did, of course, the ... hikes, uh, marches with infantry pack instead of the artillery pack. Artillery full field pack weighted ... like thirty, thirty-five pounds. Infantry was probably ... uh,

fifty ... fifty-five, and then put the M-1 rifle on your shoulder over that and ... and you are carrying ... uh, a tidy weight on a march as compared to what we did as artillery. But we stayed there at Fort Ord for ... like ten days, so we didn't finish the Infantry Basic. And we thought we were going overseas from there, but they shipped us ... uh, a little further north to ... San Francisco, just north of San Francisco ... to a Camp Stoneman located at Pittsburgh, California. And we did a little bit of ... uh, (pause) rifle firing, uh there, at ... Camp Stoneman. And we were back to firing the carbines there which we did ... basic training. I don't know why we went back to those, but I guess somebody had figured out we were still ... artillerymen, and we were at Camp Stoneman for ... uh, like about eight days. And then we ... they put us on a ferry boat there ... that was ... in ... a river, estuary off of San Francisco Bay. They took us down to San Francisco Bay, and we got off of the ferry boat, loaded onto a ... troop ship. And this was ... uh, end of February in ... 1944. We got on that troop ship with ... overload on it; had more people on it than they had bunks. They had bunks ... that were as high as six, but ... they put you on the deck for six hours and then in ... up for twelve hours, and then in a bunk for twelve hours. And we were talking about the food at Roberts ... was great. The food on that troop ship was ... absolutely terrible, and they gave us two meals a day. The day we crossed the equator, they gave us chili for breakfast, and of course, any time Army people were stopped for ten minutes, somebody had a deck of cards out and people had ... blankets and playing cards just outside of the ... uh, dining area there. And that chili for breakfast ... we had lots of people who had sea sickness tendency and they got sick and didn't make it from the dining room to the head before they lost their breakfast. And they messed up blankets all on those card games till it was terrible. But ... made that whole part of the ship smell ... that ... it was a long trip. We were by ourselves.

William G. Cox: How many days were you on that ship (unintelligible).

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, like ... thirty.

William G. Cox: Forty?!

Mr. Fulbright: Thirty.

William G. Cox: Thirty?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah. Uh, we zig zagged all the way from San Francisco to New Caledonia, and ... it was an old ship that the Dutch had and it was captured by the British in North Africa when France and uh, Dutch were trying to get all of their equipment to the Germans, and the British had captured some of the ... property, and this ship was one of the things that the British ... uh, got out of North Africa and converted it to a ... troop ship ... and ...

William G. Cox: Now was this in a convoy that you were traveling?

Mr. Fulbright: No, we were ... a single ship, and of course, no lights at night, and ... like I say, we zig zagged to ... make you feel like a drunken sailor just (unintelligible) of the ... back and forth turns that we made. And when they'd get ready to dump their garbage which just went overboard during World War II, environmentalists hadn't arrived, and when we'd dump the garbage, the ship would make a zig or a zag there ... about every fifteen seconds to try to leave a ... path of garbage that wouldn't indicate which way we were going. But ... New Caledonia was a French possession and Noumea was the capitol; it was a real modern place. They had one traffic signal, a red light as we called it, and it was a deal standing in the middle of one intersection that had an MP standing there pulling a lever on it that says Stop or Go. But ... New Caledonia was ... a replacement deal only; there was no permanent Army base there, no combat there.

William G. Cox: And you mentioned replacement, uh, what ... is that actually ... the term mean?

Mr. Fulbright: What that means is that ... you're going to some outfit, uh, that has sent people home, casualties or they barely (unintelligible), and they are needing replacements. And at ... at New Caledonia, they just did ... paperwork. They knew what we had done – basic training, uh, where we had been and when, and ... that's where I was assigned to the 43rd Division. And New Caledonia was only like a ... four day trip, troop trip, to New Zealand, and the 43rd Division was backing New Zealand at that time for ... R&R and so I

joined them in New Zealand. And this was in May of ... '44, actually my birthday in May of '44 that I joined the 43rd Division. They were just out of the city of Auckland about thirty miles. But ...

William G. Cox: So, you went from New Caledonia to New Zealand.

Mr. Fulbright: New Caledonia to New Zealand ... Auckland.

William G. Cox: And that's where you ... really got with the 43rd?

Mr. Fulbright: That's when we got with the 43rd and ... met the finest Captain in the U.S. Army; he was a guy named Bill Stevens (sp?). He was an old National Guard ... uh, man from Providence, Rhode Island and got called up with the National Guard was ... activated back in ... '40 ... '41, and of course, he had been in the Pacific and their prior stuff. They were at Guadalcanal, uh, all the way up through the ... uh, Marianas, Marshalls, but they had gone back to New Zealand for R&R and were replacing ... people that had been lost. And this Captain Stevens I talked about, he knew more about field artillery than anybody I ever knew. From the time I became a ... a field artilleryman until I was discharged, I never met anybody that knew as much about it as he did.

William G. Cox: And how long did you ... were ... were you associated with him?

Mr. Fulbright: I was associated with him from May of '43 (throat clearing) through most of our Philippine, uh, Luzon, Philippines Campaign. That would have been through like ... well, from January till ... uh, like ... May, I guess. He was promoted to Major and went to a different outfit, but we had people took his place, but we never did find anybody that replaced him. He was absolutely top drawer, and ...

William G. Cox: And when you ... now that's when you first joined with the ... the artillery unit?

Mr. Fulbright: Back ... yeah. The 43rd was where I ... officially became an artilleryman.

William G. Cox: Yeah. When you left New Zealand after joining up, did you go straight to the Philippines?

Mr. Fulbright: No, we went to ... New Guinea.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: And ... New Guinea we were at a ... place called ... well, the Australians had all of the supplies and what have you for New Guinea, and the port where we were ... they called Aitape; most of the GIs called it Aitapy (sp?). It was A-i-t-a-p-e, and the pronunciation was strictly who you were talking to. But it was just a ... port, had an airfield. The old strip that was just the perforated metal, and it was short enough that it was supposed to be a fighter strip only, didn't have any airplanes or ... airmen stationed at that field. They had ... some ... uh, ground keepers, radiomen, that kind of stuff, but planes would fly in there, get fueled up and then go somewhere else like toHollan ...

William G. Cox: Now, was ... was this a convoy that ... when you left New Zealand to ... to ...

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, New ... New Zealand to New Guinea we had to ... yeah, our division convoy.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: And ...

William G. Cox: Estimate of about how many ships that would contain? I know you couldn't see all of them.

Mr. Fulbright: Oh, artillery, uh, we generally loaded our ... howitzers in trucks that pulled them on ... back of LSTs which is a relatively small ship, but ... uh, we had probably ... I would say, uh, like ... ten of those. And then ... uh, troop ships; our division probably had ... maybe ... ten troop ships when we left New Guinea. And then when we picked up people along the way for the invasion in Luzon which was scheduled January 9th, uh, 1945, uh ...

William G. Cox: Did you have Naval ships that was ... task force?

Mr. Fulbright: We had Naval ships for escort, and we had our division. And I think by the time we got to Lingayen Gulf, uh, we had six divisions that went in ... that day or some of them were two or three days after the ...

William G. Cox: Yeah. Now the Arm ... I hadn't asked you this. The artillery pieces you were using ... what millimeter were they?

Mr. Fulbright: They were 105 ...

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: ... in the 169th which was my battalion. We had twelve, 105 howitzers, and ... but we pulled them with twelve of the Army's two and a half ton, six by sixes they were called. And ... we got those things stuck in ... New Guinea, we got them stuck in the Philippines, and ... of course, we left the Philippines to go to Japan and the war in Europe was over, and they wanted to impress the Japanese with our ... uh, equipment. We got all new equipment – howitzers, trucks, trucks that were bigger than they ... they made our howitzers look like pop guns. Instead of two and a half, I think these things were six ton, and to get up into them ... driver's compartment, they had a fold down ladder that you ... used to get into it, and the same thing for the troops to get in the back. They had a ladder that folded down from the ... uh, tail end of it as opposed to just ... managing to climb over in ... and ...

William G. Cox: Yeah, these was the vehicles that towed the art ... towed the artillery pieces?

Mr. Fulbright: Towed, yeah, towed our ... 105 howitzers.

William G. Cox: And you had artillery ammunition.

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, we had ammunition that was ... uh, in ... like a ... the Army ... two and a half ton, six by six, was really our standard vehicle for everything. And ... of course, when we went to Japan, we arrived there on the 13th day of September of ... '45, and I was still in the 43rd Division then and nobody knew ... just what was going to happen in Japan. So, we got there on the 13th, but it was dark and we were going ... to ... first locate at an airfield that was forty miles north of ... Tokyo.

William G. Cox: Can I back you up to ...

Mr. Fulbright: Sure!

William G. Cox: ... to Lingayen Gulf?

Mr. Fulbright: Yes, sure!

William G. Cox: Okay. 'Cause I think you spent quite a bit of time there; is that not correct?

Mr. Fulbright: I ... yeah, the island of Luzon, uh, we spent quite a time in the Lingayen Gulf area because ... we were still getting Japanese fire ... thirty days after we arrived there, and ...

William G. Cox: Now, when you arrived, uh, did the artillery go in with the infantry or did the infantry go in first?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, infantry went in first and then we came in right behind them.

William G. Cox: Now, would that be ...

Mr. Fulbright: I was ... I was in what was called a ... a free boat three; what that free boat three meant was that the ... uh, Navy had two men running ... Higgins boat ... and we were assigned ... my boat was assigned to the third wave, but the guy running that boat had the freedom that ... after ... anytime after the first wave, if he decided it was safer for him to take us ashore and dump us out and then go back to get another load off of that ship, he was free to do that.

William G. Cox: Now, what was onboard that ship that was there? You had an artillery piece and a truck or something to ...

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, most of what was in the Higgins boat that I was in was ... just people, uh, people and their personal weapons, had a few infantrymen, one ... pair of guys had a mortar, but ... it ... it was one ... one of the Navy screw ups. They were supposed to be dumping our battalion on the beach there ... that if you'd go ... inland ... fifty, seventy yards, there was a railroad there, and the railroad had one ... very well defined bend in it, and ... inside from the gulf and it went north and south, and there wasn't anything like a curve ... in that railroad for miles, north or south. Well, when ... this ... landing craft that I was in dumped me, I ... went straight inland to the railroad tracks and I ... stayed behind it just long enough to decide that I was going to be alright and to get up on top and look. And ... I got up on top there and looked at that thing and I ... I couldn't see a bend in that railroad north or south. So, I got back down on ... across the side where I had the railroad embankment as protection, and I was trying to decide just what I wanted to do, and a light tank came up there. And these dudes pulled up there with ... (unintelligible) taking cover from the railroad and the guy opened it up and stuck his head out ... says, "Soldier, do you know where you are?" I says, "I ... I know basically where I am, but I'm not where I need to be." He says, "Well, we were supposed to meet at a bend in this railroad track, and I can't see one."

And I said, "Well, that's where I'm supposed to be with my outfit, too, is that bend in the railroad tracks." He says, "Well, do you think it's north or south?" I said, "I have no way of knowing," but I said, "if I'm going to walk, I'm going to walk south because our division had the left flank of this beachhead or the north flank, and I don't know whether I'm still in the area that our division has or if I'm north of ... that. I may be in Japanese territory for all I know." He says, "If you're going south, we're going south." I says, "Well, if you're going south, I'm going to ride instead of walk." So, I climbed up on the back of that tank, and we started south, and I'm sure we drove that ... or I rode that thing for ten miles. And we finally see a ... bend in the railroad, so we knew we were ... in the right direction.

William G. Cox: So, they kind of dumped you out too far away?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, we just got dumped out too far north, and ... like I say, our division had the north flank.

William G. Cox: How long was it after you made that first landing before your artillery pieces arrived?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, some of it had arrived by the time I got to the bend in the railroad. That was where we set up initially. Had a few trees around, not much in that area, but ... we set up our ... howitzers there with our fire direction center there, and started firing ... infantry support ... before noon. And we had gone ashore ... uh, that morning ... just after dawn, so we ... we were ...

William G. Cox: Now, how many ... how many days did that ... particular ... operation ... after you landed, how long did that last? How many ... days or weeks?

Mr. Fulbright: Well, we ... uh, we were right there at that spot ... uh, I would say for probably ten days. I ... the 169th Infantry which was the infantry ... regiment that we were supporting, uh, basically supporting, they had would go up this Hill 355; first day they went half way up it, and ... turned dark and the Japanese chased ... what was left of them back down. So, they were ...

William G. Cox: Okay, continue.

Mr. Fulbright: Okay. Like I say, uh, they got half way up this Hill 355 first day, got chased back down that night. Then they were bringing ... replacements, support

troops, and probably, I guess, the third day ... something like that ... uh, they went half way up the hill again and got chased off that night. So, we were at that one spot ... probably ... like about ten days. And then we moved inland closer to ... where the infantry was. We were back about ... three miles at that time. We moved closer to where the infantry was, and ... into position that we could ... have a little better protection from (unintelligible) by the Japs, and set up again and ... of course, we dug in our howitzers and our fire direction center. And as to how deep they were dug in just depended on ... how long were we inland ... particular spot. We started digging when we arrived, and we quit digging the day we left. But ... we weren't making any real progress; we were ... supporting the infantry, we had ships in Lingayen Gulf that were firing support for the infantry, and we had Air Force ... uh, firing or conducting close support ... trying to get that ... Hill 355, uh, captured and ... cleared so that ... MacArthur could ... call his beachhead secure. And ... we had ... like I say, we moved to this second position; we were probably there ... uh, another ten days, and ... still the Japs owned that hill. They had artillery in it, they had ... a lot of twenty millimeter stuff that they had taken off of ... planes that they had captured there when the war started, a lot of our twenty millimeter stuff. But ... somebody decided that ... the thing that's wrong is ... we're all firing at the ... west side of that hill, and ... all that's on the west side is just an opening big enough for them to fire their howitzers out of, and entrenchment that ... Japs had done all the time they had owned that island. And ... and unless you got something that went directly into that hill, you really weren't doing a lot of damage. But somebody decided we need to send some artillery around instead of on this west side send them around to the east side, and let them fire on back side of that thing. So, our battalion was chosen to do that. We loaded up our ... howitzers, our ammo, uh, supplies, and then we went south ... probably ten miles to a road that was running east-west, and then we went far enough east that we were behind that Hill 355 and took a road north up to the town of Sison.

William G. Cox: Could you spell that?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, it was S-i-s-o-n. And we didn't set up right in the down; we set up right behind ... school building; the Japanese didn't run ... run schools for the Filipinos while they were there. But there was a school there at Sison, and surrounded by rice paddies, and we set up in ... rice paddies behind that school and started firing into the back of this Hill 355. And most of time, you didn't see anything except the ... the cloud or the dirt that would come up with the shells went off, but ... once in a while, uh, you'd put a shell into that thing; that was how they had supplied their troops was a road that went up into that ... hill, and fact, you'd get shells in there or you'd get shell into a gun emplacement that had a large opening on ... back side of that hill, and you could do some real damage.

William G. Cox: Question; I know this wasn't just indiscriminate firing; did you have some spotter out some place (unintelligible)?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, we had ... we had ... particularly when we were on the other side of that hill, we had forward observers who were people who were ... uh, embedded with the ... individual infantry companies, and they directed what fire they wanted where they could see a target, and we would fire based on the directions we'd get from them.

William G. Cox: Did they give you any coordinates or ...

Mr. Fulbright: Ah, sometimes they'd give us coordinate, sometimes, uh, each time we would fire emission (?), we would give it a concentration number starting with three hundred ... like concentration one hundred (unintelligible) would say is ... five hundred yards left and four hundred yards short, and from that we'd set that up on our map at fire direction center and get ... uh, direction and range for our howitzers. And we ...

William G. Cox: So ... so, the first shot fired was kind of a point that they gave you guidance from?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, and our objective was ...

William G. Cox: (Throat clearing)

Mr. Fulbright: ... when we started a fire mission to get that first shot out there in less than one minute. That way people couldn't move stuff around after a shell had landed in their area, but ... we didn't always make that one minute, but we did pretty good with it. Like I say, this Captain Stevens had trained all of us back starting in New Zealand and all of the time we were in New Guinea.

William G. Cox: About how much would those ... shells weight, individual shell?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, individual shell was like ... uh, forty pounds.

William G. Cox: Now, did it have it's own powder in the casing?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, we ... we ... the 105 was called a ... a separate loaded weapon; it had a shell ... like a shotgun shell except that it was, you know, five inches in diameter and it was ... uh, fifteen inches long, and you'd take the projectile out of it, and then it had seven powder bags in there. And depending on what range you were shooting, you'd cut off ... (unintelligible) with the seven bags, or you might be as few as one. Our ... general location we were firing charge for ... charge (unintelligible) because we were technically back ... like three miles from ... uh, infantry front lines.

William G. Cox: So, this would be a ... artillery piece that you ... like you see sometimes that ... say, the artillerymen are using a round ... push?

Mr. Fulbright: No, we didn't ... we ... we took the projectile out of the shell ...

William G. Cox: Yes.

Mr. Fulbright: ... that looked like a great big shotgun shell, and then we'd cut off those powder bags as to however many we were going to use. We'd put them back in the shell, put the projectile in it, and then we'd put ... the projectile shell and all into the breach of that ... howitzer, so ... we didn't have any of the ... packing like you see. Now, the 155 howitzers, you had to do that.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: You had to put the projectile in and then the gun powder behind it, ram that up to ... compact it, and then (unintelligible) and ... then close it and fire it. But ...

William G. Cox: I didn't mean to interrupt; I just kind of ... (unintelligible) information.

Mr. Fulbright: No, no; it's ... you know, I ...

William G. Cox: 'Cause we didn't ... don't know (unintelligible).

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, I get strung off talking about the thing, and ...

William G. Cox: No, you don't, no.

Mr. Fulbright: ... and I ... I wasn't ... one of the heroes of World War II; I just did what I was supposed to do.

William G. Cox: Yeah.

Mr. Fulbright: And ...

William G. Cox: How many days did you fire at that ... uh ...

Mr. Fulbright: When we got around to the back side of that hill (throat clearing), we were probably there ... uh, like two weeks. The bad thing about it ... good thing was ... we were doing lots of damage. The bad thing about it was there wasn't any infantry between us and the ... back side of that hill, and the Japanese never figured out that ... there was ... as few of us there as there was because ... uh, on the back side of that hill, we had ... a total of like ... four hundred people. And the intelligence was great because we got the word one afternoon that ... Japs are going to evacuate that hill tonight, and they're going to use this road that's right in front of that school house, is probably seventy yards from where our fire direction center was located. But we were told they're going to evacuate that hill tonight, and we don't want any noise, we don't want anybody firing, not even a rifle. They're coming down that road, they're getting out of that hill, and we're going to let them do just that! Well, this was ... middle of the afternoon, and none of us knew just ... how good that intelligence was, but that's what we had been given. And sure enough, they were ... probably 10:30 they started out of that hill with people, artillery pieces, trucks, they had (unintelligible) artillery in that hill. But it all comes down that road that's right there in front of us, and nobody fired a shot (laughter). Heck, we didn't make any noise, and ... they went right down that road, and ... went ... uh, east, oh, probably three miles ... something like that. And then there was a main road north and south, and they turned north. Well, at daybreak, we had our light

airplanes that were pilot, field artillery observers, we had them in the air just as quick as they could see to ... get an airplane in the air, and then ... we started firing on the Japs who were on this road with no cover of any type. And our ... I've often compared it to the road that ... the first Gulf War had their ... out of ... uh, Kuwait when ...

William G. Cox: Uh hum.

Mr. Fulbright: ... Iraqis were trying to get back to Iraq, and they were being slaughtered there because that's what that was. We ... we were firing on ... Japanese ... in the open. And they brought more artillery out of that hill that night than ... the whole U.S. Army took ashore back on January 9th. You could see why our infantry hadn't been able to take that ... hill; they had lots of people and they had lots of artillery, and ...

William G. Cox: You men ... you mentioned the air ... aircraft; were they fighter planes or spotters?

Mr. Fulbright: No, ours were spotters that were assigned to our unit. Now, we'd of like to have got ... the ... fighter airplanes into the air strafing these people, and the Navy started firing on them. But first fire they drew was from us because they were turning north which meant they were going to get of our range before too long, so as quick as our ... uh, observers in the airplanes could see to tell us ... what and where, uh, we started firing on them. And it ... it was like ... uh, directly this Captain Stevens I was talking about ... he says, "Well, this is ... this is going to be good and bad." He says, "Good is, we're getting rid of a lot of them," he said, "and the bad is ... we're turning them around and they're coming back south. They may decide to go right back to this same hill that they just left and there's no infantry between them and that hill to keep them out of it." (Chuckles) he said, "If they come down this road in the daytime, they're going to see us; we won't have to wonder about it, they're going to see exactly, uh, what's here and ... and it could be a long day." (Chuckles), but ...

William G. Cox: How'd it turn out?

Mr. Fulbright: It turned out great. Only thing was bad was we fired so many shells that morning and fired them so fast that we burned up two of our twelve howitzers ... meant they got overheated from firing them more rapidly than ... uh, what the book says, you know, that they ... were designed for. I think the book said something like about ten rounds a minute, and we were probably firing, uh, twenty-five, maybe thirty rounds a ... a minute, and ...

William G. Cox: Now, when the artillery piece fails, what does it do? The rifling leaves (?)?

Mr. Fulbright: The rifling would crack, pieces would come out of the rifling 'cause that was the weak link in them ... was ... uh, the ... the rifling. They ... they'd just get so hot that they'd lose their strength. And then you'd fire it again and it built up pressure in it, too, but in ... where you'd have a piece that was maybe just cracked, it might ... break it completely lose. And then ... we ... we continued to fire them ... you lose some accuracy, too, ... gets in that shape, but ...

William G. Cox: You were just more or less lobbing them.

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, but ... we ... that morning it was a matter of getting as many shells on that road as quickly as we could. And like I say, Air Force ... later in the morning got involved and even some of the ships, Navy ships, that were in Lingayen Gulf ... fired into there.

William G. Cox: Now, what was the end result of all of this activity?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, we ... broke up what they intended to do, and they scattered, and ... got down to where, you know, they were individual soldiers ... trying to get out of there.

William G. Cox: Uhm.

Mr. Fulbright: I'm sure they wound up ... eventually joining forces with ... uh, Japanese outfits that were further north there ... than Lingayen Gulf because that ... the north end of it was the last part of Luzon island that the Japanese held out resistance. And, in fact, uh, the war was over ... and they still had Japanese commanders in the northern end of Luzon who wouldn't believe that the war was over, and in spite of the ... having Japanese ... people all onboard aircraft broadcasting to them that ... emperor had thrown in the

towel, the still wouldn't believe that Japan had surrendered and they were still fighting in the north end of Luzon there ... after August the 15th.

William G. Cox: Now, was this the end of your activity there when (unintelligible)?

Mr. Fulbright: That was the end of our activity. We, well we left there and, like I say, we went to the ... three dams that supplied water for Manila when we left there. But that was the end of our activity in the Lingayen Gulf there, yeah.

William G. Cox: What was ... did those dams have a particular name?

Mr. Fulbright: Ipo, was I-p-o, that was the first one that we ...

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: ... got. And then we got a ... Wawa dam, which was a ... just a W-a-w-a. And the third one, I believe, was called Manila dam. But all three of them were water supply for Manila, and of course, the fear was that the Japanese would ... uh, blow them up and ... flood the area as well as the end of their ... public water supply. But ... our infantry was able to ... capture that Ipo dam without them blowing it up. They had lots of casualties, but ... the Japanese were running supplies across the ... river below that dam at night. We had absolutely air superiority, so most of their movements ... got to be night, and they were supplying troops that they had there at that dam ... across the river there at night in boats. And they sent a searchlight battalion up to where we were and they would shine those things on the clouds at night and they'd reflect the light back down from those clouds to make it almost like daylight. And our forward observers could keep up with trying to move supplies across that ... river to keep the people at the dam supplied. So, with our forward observers, it didn't make any difference whether it was day or night; they could see ... they could see it, we could shoot them. And ... like I say, the infantry finally took all of the controlled areas, chased the people out of that dam that were ... the Japanese who were in it, and they took over control of that. And then I think because we were able to get that one without them blowing it was why the Sixth Army assigned us to the ... Wawa dam and did exactly the same thing there. We got it without them

blowing it or ... doing any real damage to it. And after that then we got the third dam which ... like I say, I think was called Manila dam, and ...

William G. Cox: Yeah. From the time you made the initial invasion ... until you got to this point, about how much time had elapsed? Weeks or ...

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, months. This is probably ... April ... uh ...

William G. Cox: '45?

Mr. Fulbright: ... April of '45, uh huh. Uh, because after we left the third dam, our outfit went to ... uh, Cabanatuan which had been a POW camp. The Japanese had American POWs there, and ... we didn't go in there; the Army had it ... already taken it and chased the Japanese out. We just went in there and set up ... started ... serious training again to go to Japan. We didn't know we were going to Japan; we just knew that ... we had been relieved of all combat duty there on the island of Luzon and we were getting ready to go somewhere else.

William G. Cox: Now did you ... where did ... uh, you went to Japan from the Philippines?

Mr. Fulbright: From the Philippines, uh huh.

William G. Cox: Where did you embark from in the Philippines ... Manila or ...

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, no, uh, we ... left ... uh, from a point there in the Lingayen Gulf.

William G. Cox: Okay, back up where ...

Mr. Fulbright: Right back where we had gone in ... basically. And, like I say, we started out with relatively small convoy, but it got bigger each day ... and ...

William G. Cox: Now, there's quite a bit of time in here from the time ... like April until they dropped the bombs. You didn't go ...

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, yeah. Now, what ... mainly what ... we were doing there at Cabanatuan, uh, was training. 43rd Division had people who went over with it originally were able to come home from ... Cabanatuan, and this would be like in ... uh, June ... that ... those guys came home; they had all been in ... the South Pacific from way back at ... uh, Guadalcanal days, and they came home and was really our concern about having, you know, nobody told us we were going to Japan, but we knew that's where we ...

William G. Cox: Did you get replacements, is that what ...

Mr. Fulbright: We got replacements, but like when we went to New Guinea, our fire direction center had two new people. One other guy and myself; he was from Kansas; I'd gone through basic training with him, and we'd been together all that time. But there were two ... two experienced people in our fire direction center which would be like ... ten, so we had ... two experienced people and eight ... uh, who didn't really know what field artillery was all about as opposed to being the other way of like eight and two when we went to ...

William G. Cox: Now, this was the initial time that you were ... before you went into the Philippines? Or did you go back to the ...

Mr. Fulbright: They ... no, the initial time that we went into the Philippines, there were just two of us ...

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: ... who were new. We had gone in New Guinea, but ... New Guinea for our division was basically a holding operation.

William G. Cox: (Unintelligible), but you never returned to New ...

Mr. Fulbright: Never went back to New Guinea, uh huh.

William G. Cox: Got you!

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, went to Luzon and then ... from Luzon we went to Japan, but ... the ... the old heads in the 43rd Division came home from Luzon in like ... April, and we went to work trying to train new ... recruits and doing the best job we knew how to do. But ... we really ... well, we missed this Captain Stevens that I spoke about. He was really the brains of that outfit. Our battalion commander was a Colonel, but Stevens knew more about it (chuckles), that part of it than the Colonel did.

William G. Cox: When did ... when did you ship out to Japan?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, Japan ... we were on the ship ... uh, (pause) ... like I think ... fourteen days.

William G. Cox: And you knew where you were going?

Mr. Fulbright: When we got on the ship and left the Philippines ...

William G. Cox: Right.

Mr. Fulbright: ... they told us where we were going.

William G. Cox: Because you already knew they had dropped the bomb?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah. We knew ...

William G. Cox: (Unintelligible), okay.

Mr. Fulbright: ... both bombs. In fact, when they dropped the first one, and we got that on the ... armed forces radio, and talking about how terrible that bomb was, and the damage it had done, and they compared that one bomb to all the bombs that had been dropped on Europe, and said, you know, that ... powerful as ... like all of the bombs combined if ... you'd ... been dropped on Europe. And it ... well, yeah, that ... that wiped out Nagasaki. We didn't realize there was a second one that was going to come right behind that.

William G. Cox: When you first heard about that, what was your basic to ... people's reaction to it?

Mr. Fulbright: I think ... none of us could believe it was going to be as strong as it was, and we figured that was going to ... help the invasion of Japan tremendously, but we weren't thinking in terms of it ... ending that invasion. And then when they dropped the second one, uh, on ... Nagasaki, uh, you know, weeks later ... then you had to believe that ... the Japanese ... they're ... they're crazy, but they're not crazy enough to continue this thing with what ... we've shown with these two bombs. And then pretty quickly, uh, we heard that the Japanese had decided to surrender ... still terms and negotiations going on, but ... the invasion of Japan ... they told us, you know, "That's not going to happen." So, we had relaxed a little bit; we're not going to have to go in with a beachhead in that thing.

William G. Cox: So, where did you actually ... go to in Japan?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, on the night of ... the 13th of September, uh, we got off of our troop ship ... in ... uh, Yokohama, and after we got on the ... dock there, it was dark and somebody had figured out this is kind of dumb ... taking these people off of this ship and put them in trucks and where we got forty miles to drive to where we're going, uh, roads they don't know, conditions they don't know, and we don't know whether the Japanese are going to try to fight us to keep

us from going to that ... it was an airfield where we were setting up, and ... we didn't know whether the Japanese were going to try to keep us out or not. So, somebody made the decision ... get back on the ship and we'll leave here ... tomorrow morning, and that's what we did. We went back ... slept on that ... ship ... was the SS Brookings [s/b USS Brookings], that ... that and one I went over on which was the ... MS Blue Fontaine (?) were the only two ship names I can recall; the others are gone, but ... those two were ... uh, memorable trips, and ... the names stuck with me. But ... the next morning we got in our trucks, had our howitzers hooked up and we went up to this airfield that I was talking about ... that was like ... forty-five miles north of ... uh, Tokyo, and we set up on that airfield just like it was a combat situation.

William G. Cox: Did you see whether Japanese in that ... miles that you drove?

Mr. Fulbright: Oh yeah, we saw Japanese, you know, on the road.

William G. Cox: Were they mostly civilians or ...

Mr. Fulbright: Civilians, no ... nobody dressed in a uniform, just ... just civilians. But ... no ...

William G. Cox: What was their reaction?

Mr. Fulbright: Nobody was ... cheering or doing anything, you know, like getting in the road to try to stop the traffic. They ... they left us completely alone. But when we got to the airfield, uh, we set up our howitzers, our fire direction center, and ... you know, well, infantry came up there also, and ... they set up ... a couple of miles from where we were. But we set up, did everything you would do like in, you know, in a new combat situation. But Japanese did not bother us. We had no problems with them. And then the 43rd Division was the first division to come back to the States from Japan. So, this was ... uh, like the 1st of October. I helped pack them up ... for them to come home because it was just senior people who had enough points to ... come home with the division. If you were in that division you could home with five ... fewer points than somebody being transferred into it ... just to come home, but you had to have fifty-five points. And I had fifty-one, so they said,

“Well, surely you’ll go with the next outfit.” And they shipped me to the Americal Division; they were in Yokohama, and I went into that outfit and helped pack them up, and they came home ... and I still had fifty-one points and you had to have fifty-five. And ... after the Americal Division, I went to the 27th, and they came home. So, in the calendar month of October, I was in three separate divisions, and ... bad part about that was I got the shots ... three times, all of them. And of course, records didn’t catch up with me so I didn’t get paid for a few months, but ...

William G. Cox: Was there anything to buy?

Mr. Fulbright: No. We could go in ... we could go to ... uh, Tokyo or Yokohama. They had ... nice trains, electric trains. The ... the bad problem about it was the train stations looked like each other. They were built by the Japanese depending on the size of the city. The station at Yokohama looked just like the one in Tokyo. Then the small towns in between ... all of those looked alike, and the only way you knew when to get off the train was by counting stations. And if you screwed up, got off at a station and you found out that’s not where I ought to be ... the only thing you could do was to catch a train, go back to Tokyo or go to Yokohama and start counting over because you didn’t know if you were north or south.

William G. Cox: Now, was there a PX set up at that time?

Mr. Fulbright: We ... we had a small PX set up ... uh, division, you know; they were still giving cigarettes. I didn’t smoke, gave my cigarettes to this kid from Kansas ... all the time we were overseas, but ... (pause) the ... Japanese had a ... brewery at Yokohama that was called Kirin Brewery. When I was in the Americal Division, uh, that ... that was one of the division’s duties ... was to guard that Kirin Brewery and make sure that anybody that got beer out of it ... uh, was authorized and had the right papers. And we had to keep ... order at that brewery. And then houses of ill repute ... we had to keep order there. And ... I was fortunate, I got assigned to the brewery, and at that time I was a Staff Sergeant and had ... one other Staff Sergeant and we had ... I believe, twelve people that were assigned to us. And our battery commander told us

... that, “Nobody gets in this gate ... without one of you two guys checking the paper to make certain that it’s right and that he’s supposed to get and does get what he’s authorized to get.” But ...

William G. Cox: Was it mostly military that was going in there?

Mr. Fulbright: It was all military (coughs), yeah, nothing was going to civilians then. And ... but our battery commander made the mistake and told his ... , “Nobody gets in unless one of you guys ... say, now your guard can ... send somebody away and tell them they don’t have the right papers, but he can’t let them go through this gate unless one of you two guys is here.” (Coughs) First day, I think we walked ... like ... four guard posts all day inside the brewery, and then we decided, you know, this is crazy. Nobody gets in the ... to this gate unless one of us is here. So, what we’re going to do ... we’re going to wake up four guards and get them on duty if we have to come to the gate, so nobody’s going to get in here and catch us (chuckles) without having people on guard. So, we told the guys who ... who were assigned to us, says, “Well, we ... we’ve got the choice – we can either walk guard at these posts twenty-four hours a day, or when somebody comes up to the gate that we have to check, we’re going to wake up four people and ... you go take a guard post, and you may not be the right turn, maybe you just ... you did that yesterday, and anybody else went on guard there for two days, but we’re going to wake up four people and you’re going to go to guard duty; get dressed and go.”

William G. Cox: What was ... quality of the beer?

Mr. Fulbright: The beer was ... a ... a little bit strange. Well, the stuff came in bottles that were ... (unintelligible). Each bottle must have held like ... uh, two liters and they were tall enough. The people would sit them behind their Army cot and the neck of that bottle would stick up above an Army cot.

William G. Cox: Couldn’t hide it?

Mr. Fulbright: No, it was ... it was ... in plain sight. It ...

William G. Cox: When did you finally get to leave Japan?

Mr. Fulbright: I left Japan ... uh, January ... of ’46.

William G. Cox: And ... you arrived where in the States?

Mr. Fulbright: We were supposed to go to Seattle, but ... they changed that ... on our troop ship. We ... uh, left Yokohama on this troop ship that had a guy that was on a, a Navy man, was on the P.A. and he was explaining to us that, "This is going to be a little different trip," says, "we're going to use lights; we're not going to zig zag. And he said, "When we left Yokohama, we were ... fifty-five hundred miles from Seattle," and he says, "Our intention is to put you off in Seattle in twelve days." Well, we left ... well, over half the troops on the ship got sea sick; we ran into a typhoon that was in ... uh, the Pacific in January of '46, and we didn't hear from this guy who was going to tell us all about the trip ... for three days (throat clearing). He came on after days and he had ... called his program, Trip by Drip" ...

William G. Cox: (Chuckles)

Mr. Fulbright: And ... he said ... came on he says, "This ... this is the Trip by Drip," and he said, "as I told you when we left Yokohama, uh, we were ... fifty-five hundred miles from Seattle," and he says, "This morning at ... oh-six hundred, we were fifty-five hundred and thirty miles from Seattle (laughter). We had run into that dadgum typhoon, and it turned south trying to get around it (throat clearing), and we kept going south. We got almost back to the Philippines ...

William G. Cox: (Laughter)

Mr. Fulbright: ... before we finally turned east and we were on just the fringes of the ... uh, hurricane. The weather it ... improved enough that they decided it's safe to head into that, and we turned east and came straight across the Atlantic ... to ...

William G. Cox: Pacific?

Mr. Fulbright: ... uh, Pacific, yeah. Just came straight across the Pacific to ... uh, where we could see the shore of Mexico, and then we turned north. We'd gone all the way around ... the bad weather. And ... when we turned north, of course, we were looking at the coast of California. And ... this dude broke up the day there ... day or two after we ... could see land, and were back far enough

from land that we couldn't see it, but they ... he came on and says, "Well," said, "we've got good news." He said, "As ... as you know, we are just off the coast of California, and we have been cleared to put you guys off at ... port of San Pedro," which is Los Angeles. And he says, "We've been cleared to put you guys off there, so that's going to cut about eight hundred miles off of ... (recording interrupted momentarily).

William G. Cox: Okay, I think we're clear. This is side ... uh, A of tape 2, continue.

Mr. Fulbright: Okay, and like I say, the Navy got clearance to let us off of there at Los Angeles instead of going to Seattle, so we got off of the ship a little early. And that is good and bad; they were ... weren't prepared for ... uh, troop trains that were going to be picking us up; they had put us onboard ship in Japan ... based on what ... uh, post or camp you were going to for your discharge. So, everybody in ... that was going to Fort Sam Houston in San Antone ... which is where I was ... finally discharged ... we were all put together and they were building up a troop train to go over to San Antone. And ... instead of having a train ready, they were *getting* it ready. And ... I ... as a troop train, it was the old Army type of car ... uh, didn't look like the Pullman cars, this was the ... looked like the ... uh, Army or ... or like the civilian ... freight train. It was wooden ... uh, car, had overhead water tank in the car that I was assigned to, and when I got on it ... well, walked into where I was looking for a seat, and that dadgum thing dripped water on me, and I says, "You know, it's going to be a heck of a mess by the time we get to San Antone," because it was like ... two days ... the Southern Pacific track from San Antone to ... uh, Los Angeles. I think it made every nook and turn that ... the border did. It ... it ... they could have called it the border. But ...

William G. Cox: Did you have cushioned sheets ... seats?

Mr. Fulbright: We ... we had a seat that had a pillow in it.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: And ... it was ... a ... a long two days ... from Los Angeles to San Antone.

William G. Cox: Did the seats recline?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, would lean back ...

William G. Cox: Right, yeah.

Mr. Fulbright: ... just a little bit, not en ... well, no I wouldn't call it a reclining seat, but it wasn't straight up. It would ... lean back just enough to ... help, but ... (throat clearing).

William G. Cox: Was your baggage checked or did you have it onboard with you?

Mr. Fulbright: Oh, the only thing that I had was a ... Army duffel bag.

William G. Cox: Where was it located?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, it was up under the seat where I was sitting. And ... everybody had one.

William G. Cox: Uh hum.

Mr. Fulbright: And of course, all ... all of the ... the belongings that you owned were in that duffel bag (throat clearing). I had ... two items in there that ... of ... that I had gathered up along the way. Uh, one was a Japanese officer's ... Samurai sword, uh, and then when we ... went to that airport, first day we were in Japan, our ... uh, Supply Sergeant found a box of ... Japanese ... uh, aircraft flight jackets, and they were too small for most of the people in our division, but ... he pulled one out of that box and it fit me like a glove. And he says, "Well, there's nothing says I can't, so I ... everybody can wear one of these things; I'm going to issue it to him." So, I ... put that ... Japanese flight jacket and I had that Samurai sword in it that I had the title ... cleared by ... by the commander back in Japan to bring this home. But the handle of that ... sword was sticking out of my ... uh, duffel bag, and it ... when we got to Fort Sam Houston, it was ... oh, probably eight-thirty at night, and ... after all those years I let the Army snooker me one more time. Uh, they had us go to a ... gymnasium and when we went in there they had numbers painted on the floor around ... the circumference of the basketball court, and a guy says, "Okay, now get a number and put your duffel bag on that, and we're going to take you get something to eat. But be sure you keep up with that number 'cause nobody's going to know ... where your bag is but you." So, we went to eat, we came back ... the gymnasium is dark, and the door is locked, and there's a sign on it says, "Go to building some number and you'll be given ... a blanket and sheets and a ... barracks assignment for

tonight.” So, sure enough we do that, and now my personal stuff is in that duffel bag is over in that gym. And it said, you know, well, “Eat breakfast in the morning and then we’ll pick up your stuff.” Well, we ate breakfast and we went to the gym and ... when I got to my duffel bag ... the handle ... it had been taken off of the Samurai sword, and my Japanese flight jacket was gone, and ... I was squawking about it and an officer who was ... handling us for our processing says, “Well, Fulbright, it wasn’t really yours anyway.” I says, “What do you mean it wasn’t mine?” And he says, “Well, it was ... property of the U.S. government,” he says, “because when Japan surrendered, their property, other than some very personal type items, were given to the U.S. government.” And he says, “You don’t have anything showing that the U.S. government gave it to you.” “No, I don’t; I do own that Samurai sword.” And he says, “Well, I can’t help you with that ... handle on that.” He says, “There’s no telling who ... who got off with that handle.” It had gold inlayed stuff in it that was wrapped with ...

William G. Cox: Probably an ivory handle.

Mr. Fulbright: ... yeah, yeah. And ... that’s why it had been stolen, but anyway, I got snookered that one last time. And then we started into the process of getting ... checked out ... discharged. And we went through all the rigamarole; they told us that ... to be discharged you’ve got to have a full ... uh, class A uniform on; it has to show you’re insignia, your division’s insignia, your rank; it’s got have all of the ... ribbons and medals that you earned on it, and ... you’ll also get a fresh haircut, and then you’ll have one final inspection. So, we go through all of that. We all did ... suited up. It’s the first time I’ve had to have a tie in ... over two years, and ... but we get all spruced up, back into formation, and they have this Captain inspecting us, and he’s step up in front of the individual, check him over. He’s got papers in hand, and he’s stepped up in front of me says, “Fulbright, you can’t get discharged now.” He said, “You don’t have on ... proper ribbons, medals.” I said, “I think I do.” He says, “I know you don’t.” He says, “Because I don’t see the American Defense Medal.” I says, “Uh, that’s right, Captain, you don’t see

that because I didn't earn it." And he says, "Everybody earned American Defense Medal." I says, "Well, the scoop on that medal says you have to have served in continental U.S. for one year, and I wasn't in the continental U.S. one year." He says, "I can tell by the ... service wars on your sleeve there that you were in the Pacific for two ... like two years." And I says, "Yeah, that's ... that's correct." And he said, "But you weren't in the States for one year?" And I said, "No, I wasn't." So, he gets a copy of my discharge and a DD240 ... whatever it was out, and checks the date as to ... when I went into the Army and when I went overseas and when I got back to ... uh, Los Angeles there, and he says, "Well, 'cause I think somebody is overdoing ... by not having you down for this medal," he says, "but you're right. I agree, you weren't in the continental U.S. for a year," and he says, "so, got involved with you; I'm not going to prevent you from getting out." I says, "That's the best thing I've heard (laughter)."

William G. Cox: (Laughter)

Mr. Fulbright: So ...

William G. Cox: When did you get back to Waco?

Mr. Fulbright: 7th of February ... and, uh, it was ... a ... I caught a train out of ... San Antone ... probably ... like about three o'clock in the afternoon, and just a ... civilian passengers were still ... had passenger trains into Waco then, and I got just a passenger train ... still with one duffel bag, plus a uniform on my back, and I got to Waco ... it was about eight-thirty that night ... something like that. That was ... uh, February of '46. All my friends that had gone in the service were getting out ... almost on an hourly basis. I'd ask a question about somebody and, "Oh, yeah, he got out ... yesterday." "He ... he got out three days ago."

William G. Cox: So, what did you do when you got ... back into civilian life?

Mr. Fulbright: I ... basically ... uh, visited with my relatives, family, for a few months, and then ... summer I went back to Waco High and ... and took three ... post-graduate courses. I ... I took a course that was called College Algebra, uh, Trig, and Physics; took those three that summer because I knew I was going

to go back to ... Texas A&M in September, and I had learned enough to know that that was going to help. And ... like ...

William G. Cox: So, what ... year did that ... not ... uh, you'd already spent some time in ... A&M, so you entered as what ...

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, well I just ... I just ... spent one semester at A&M, that was that short three months that I was talking about.

William G. Cox: You just got ... you just ... were still in the fish tank.

Mr. Fulbright: I basically just ... got my feet wet, and ...

William G. Cox: You were still a fish.

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, yeah. Uh, but when I went back ... I knew that ... when I was there the first time, I really hadn't worked at it. When I got the letter from the Army saying that ... I was going in on 21st ... A&M had ... what was policy ... that once you got your ... letter notifying when you were going in, if you had taken the last major quiz, you could leave school two weeks before the end of the semester and get the grade that you had at that time. Well, I was watching that two-week deal, and ... somebody wanted to play baseball, I played baseball. If ... if they wanted to play football, I played football. If they wanted to go see a show at night, and I had enough money, I'd go to the show with them. And ... after I got that notice, my grades went to the dogs. And I had decided while I was in the Army ... that ... I got out, I was going to back to school or ...

William G. Cox: Yeah.

Mr. Fulbright: ... do a good job at it.

William G. Cox: So, you did go back?

Mr. Fulbright: So, I went back ...

William G. Cox: (Unintelligible).

Mr. Fulbright: ... and like I say, I had taken those three course ... post-grad courses at Waco High and that put me in good shape to start over. So, I ... I just started over as a new freshman, but ...

William G. Cox: What dorm did you stay in?

Mr. Fulbright: I was in dorm number 5 then; I had been in 15 when I was there that summer semester. But that summer was a screwed up deal at A&M. They were trying lots of new items, uh, they were worried about the hazing situation, and they were going to eliminate that, and they were going to eliminate lots of the Corps customs. So, they put a ... that summer of '43, they put an Army officer, a Second Lieutenant, as a tactical officer in each dorm. And ... instead of being assigned to ... like a, you know, field artillery (unintelligible) or Signal Corps or what have you, we just lived as a ... a ... infantry company. I was in what was called Company C that summer, but when I went back, I of course, went back as a ... vet and went into dorm 5; I was on second floor of dorm five. Athletes had first floor of dorm 5.

William G. Cox: What ... what did you major in at A&M?

Mr. Fulbright: Uh, mechanical engineering.

William G. Cox: You made ... you did graduate?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, I graduated and then I went back and got a masters in ... '58 in mechanical engineering.

William G. Cox: So, that's what your profession was?

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, yeah. And ... and I worked as a mechanical engineer most of my career at McGregor Tech; we built solid rocket propellant ... uh, solid rocket missiles for ... uh, Air Force, Navy; a few motors for NASA. But I worked for ... uh, Rocketdyne, and they sold the thing. I worked thirty-four years in McGregor, uh, in the same location but for like ... six different companies that ... it was a Navy facility, and they had ... uh, government contractors running it. And I had like ... six different contractors along those thirty-four years. But I retired in '93 from ... uh, Hercules Propulsion; they were the last outfit I worked for.

William G. Cox: Obviously, you got married when you got back.

Mr. Fulbright: Got back, married ... uh, best thing that happened to me in my life. I married, a lady in May of '52 after I had graduated from A&M, and we ... we've been married now fifty-five years. And Pat ... who is here is our youngest, and Pat has a combination of seven brothers and sisters. Uh, we

had ... four girls before we had a boy. Our fifth one was a boy. Sixth one was a girl again, and then the last two were boys. Pat graduated from A&M, got a degree in ... accounting, and worked as an accountant for ... uh, like a year and decided he didn't want to do that; he wanted to be a coach. So, he's been a coach ... various places since then. Right now, he's coach at Midway High School; it's just outside of Waco, but he coached at Midway before ... uh, he was a head coach at Angleton. When he went to Angleton, Angleton ... had, I think, uh, one in ten record the previous year. And Angleton was looking for a coach to put them back into a football role like they had been before, and ... that first year Pat was there, he broke even. And they ... got to go to the playoffs. Second year, he won their ... uh, division ... undefeated and went to the playoffs, and ... they had a few money problems, a few problems that with some of the higher ups, and ... Montgomery, Texas made him an offer to come over there as head coach, and ... Montgomery was ... they must have had their hand in the bank somewhere.

William G. Cox: (Chuckles)

Mr. Fulbright: They had money! And made him an offer you couldn't refuse.

William G. Cox: (Chuckles)

Mr. Fulbright: So, he coached there for a couple of years and then decided he wanted to get back in ... home area of Waco and ... he's back ... coaching at Midway at ... (unintelligent) coaching quarterbacks this year.

William G. Cox: Well, the number of ... of children, I'd suspect you're not only a grandfather, you might even be a great-grandfather.

Mr. Fulbright: I have one great-grandchild. Uh, but grandfather to ... sixteen.

William G. Cox: Uh hum.

Mr. Fulbright: But, uh, yeah, the kids are all grown, married and doing great.

William G. Cox: Can you remember all their names?

Mr. Fulbright: Oh yeah, yes.

William G. Cox: (Laughter)

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, I ... I keep the names, even birthdays of the kids. The in-laws, I don't do as well with. I ... wife keeps up with everybody, but ...

William G. Cox: When you're ... now that you're retired ... and everything, what do you do to occupy your spare time?

Mr. Fulbright: Well, I help the kids now and then. I'm now ... uh, eighty-two so I don't do as much physical activity as I ... once did. At ... I'm pretty good at giving instructions or advice, so I ... I'm the chief kibitzer of jobs that they're doing, and we enjoy the grandkids.

William G. Cox: Do they ask you for advice or it just (unintelligible)?

Mr. Fulbright: Sometimes I give it to them when they didn't ask.

William G. Cox: That's where the ... Staff Sergeant comes in (laughter).

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I actually got discharged as a ... Tech Sergeant.

William G. Cox: Okay.

Mr. Fulbright: But I got that ... that last stripe in Japan. Uh, I was in the 27th Division.

William G. Cox: You had the two rockers instead of one.

Mr. Fulbright: Yeah. Yeah, they ... I was in 27th Division and they were looking for a ... First Sergeant in the battery I was in there in the 27th. Uh, their First Sergeant had come back to the States.

William G. Cox: Are you still in contact with any of your ... military ...

Mr. Fulbright: The one that ... I went through basic with and stayed with until the war was over ... the name was Sam Allenbaugh (sp?), one of ... Kansas. We went through the whole shebang together, and ... uh, he's been through Waco a couple of three times. We've been to Kansas I think three times, and ...

William G. Cox: Your ... your unit, the 43rd does has a ... an association; are you a member?

Mr. Fulbright: They do, and I don't, you know, I don't ... I've never chased down ... uh, that thing.

William G. Cox: Before you leave, I'll give you some stuff on it.

Mr. Fulbright: You got it? That's good; I'd love to have it. Uh, particularly on ... anything or thing to do with the 169th because of the 169th Field Artillery who I got the, you know, well I had lived ... ate, slept with them for ... a couple of years, nearly two years, so ...

William G. Cox: Let me ask you this ... have we covered anything ... that you would like to get into this ... tape here?

Mr. Fulbright: Well, I don't know of anything, Bill. I'd like to tell you that ... that I was a hero and I did this or that or the other, but ...

William G. Cox: Well, you ...

Mr. Fulbright: ... I did what ... I was told to do and tried to do it well.

William G. Cox: My feeling is everybody that served ... in those wars ... was a hero, some of them just greater heroes than others, but ...

Mr. Fulbright: Well ...

William G. Cox: ... they all did their job, and they wouldn't have been a hero up at the top if it hadn't been some at the bottom.

Mr. Fulbright: We ... , of course, being in the artillery, I developed a ... the deepest of respect for the infantrymen. Those were the guys who carried it on their back, day and night, and ... their job I'm telling you, I don't know how they managed to do it ... day after day.

William G. Cox: Well ...

Mr. Fulbright: That was ... their job was ... *tough*.

William G. Cox: On behalf of the Museum, I'd like to thank you for your ... time and your effort. And personally, I'd like to salute you for what you did.

Mr. Fulbright: Well, Bill ...

William G. Cox: I know you're a non-comm, but you still can be saluted (chuckles) ...

Mr. Fulbright: Well ... (chuckles) ...

William G. Cox: ... out of respect (chuckles).

Mr. Fulbright: ... I ... I (unintelligible) like to salute along the way, but ...

(end of interview)

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CD – #OH03941 – Mr. Lloyd Fulbright

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