

National Museum of the Pacific War

Nimitz Education and Research Center

Fredericksburg, Texas

Interview with

Mr. Glenn Taylor

Date of Interview: July 5, 2013

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Interview in progress.

Larry Rabalais: This is Larry Rabalais, and I'm interviewing Mr. Glenn Taylor. And this interview is in support of the Nimitz Education and Research Center, archives for the National Museum of the Pacific War, Texas Historical Commission, for the preservation of historical information related to this site. Today is July the 5th, 2013, and the interview is taking place in San Antonio at the Air Force Village at his residence here. And with that, I'll let Mr. Taylor go ahead and begin with where he was born and went to school and we'll take it from there. Go ahead Glenn; it'll pick up pretty good, so you're okay.

Mr. Taylor: Now, okay, I was ... I was born on a farm in Kansas and went through high school there and ... and ...

Larry Rabalais: What ... near what town was that?

Mr. Taylor: In Lebo.

Larry Rabalais: Lebo.

Mr. Taylor: That's (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Okay. Was that near Wichita or Topeka or further west?

Mr. Taylor: About half way in between.

Larry Rabalais: In between, alright.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: What year ... what year ... what was your birthday?

Mr. Taylor: Well, I had ... what?

Larry Rabalais: What was your birthday?

Mr. Taylor: Oh, I was born in (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: (Laughter)

Mr. Taylor: February the 22nd in 1917.

Larry Rabalais: Alright. And you went to school there in that area?

Mr. Taylor: I went to high school at Lebo, Kansas.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And worked for about four years, and then started (pause) I started college at Colorado State (unintelligible) Fort Collins.

Larry Rabalais: Did you get some kind of scholarship or your parents ever afford to send you there or you just worked?

Mr. Taylor: I worked my way through.

Larry Rabalais: Worked your way through.

Mr. Taylor: By milking cows.

Larry Rabalais: Oh oh!

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible) in the morning. I got a dollar a day on the weekends.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And then I ... then I worked in the summers for the Soil Conservation Service at ... in Colorado and a lot of odd jobs. Second year of college I went to Kansas State and had two years at Kansas State. And then I tried to join the Air Force, Air Corps, and but while I was at Colorado State, I was in ROTC.

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh.

Mr. Taylor: And Colorado National Guard. And then I went back to Kansas State and (cough) I tried to get into the Army Air Corps. I missed one letter with my left eye (laughter) and I couldn't even ... but they ... they started the ... the draft board was pretty (unintelligible) let me finish my second year, and ... and I went and I got in the Army in '41.

Larry Rabalais: That was before Pearl Harbor?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. And ... and that's where I ... after I'd been on the ... after I got into the Army, why, the cadet examining board came by and I took a test over again and passed it. But by the time they called me, I had already completed Ensign train ... basic training.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And they had me all slated to go to Panama Canal Zone, but my orders come through for me to get into the ... the Air Corps. So, I was out ... out of the Army and ... and into the Air Corps. And I was on my way to California to go to flying school when the Japanese hit Pearl Harbor.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. So, on that particular Sunday, when that happened, you were on your way over there?

Mr. Taylor: I was on my way to flying school in California, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Did you sort of know where Pearl Harbor was or ... a lot of American's didn't realize exactly where it was at and ... and all that.

Mr. Taylor: What?

Larry Rabalais: Did you know where Pearl Harbor was at that time when you heard about it or ...

Mr. Taylor: Oh yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Oh yeah, you were pretty familiar with it then.

Mr. Taylor: But, of course, I'd never seen it.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: But yeah. At any rate, I got to flying school and they cut the school and the time in half, but they didn't cut the curriculum down.

Larry Rabalais: So, that was in California?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: What ... where ... part of California?

Mr. Taylor: So, I ... I graduated from Stockton.

Larry Rabalais: Stockton.

Mr. Taylor: In June of '42.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Okay, where was your first assignment then? And ... and that was ... that training ...

Mr. Taylor: Well ...

Larry Rabalais: ... was that in multi-engine?

Mr. Taylor: ... as that they ... uh, they ... they sent us to Charlotte, North Carolina in P-39s, but there were fourteen in my class that were too big for the cockpit. So, I flew a ... a P-39 a little bit. But then they moved fourteen of us to B-25s, and within a month I was an instructor pilot in B-25s.

Larry Rabalais: Had you taken any multi-engine training in ... as part of your flying school?

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Not really? So, you just sort of hit it cold like ... with a check pilot, I guess?

Mr. Taylor: (Chuckles), no we went through flying school in a ... a single engine plane.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But they didn't teach us fighter tactics. They were teaching us formation and ... and instrument flying, teaching us the thing we needed for (unintelligible) in that airplane. So, when we got in fighters, we were prepared for the fighters (chuckles). But any rate, yeah, sent us to B-25s and as I say was in a month, I was an instructor pilot in B-25s. And so, when this 345th Bomb Group was formed ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... I was invited to join that as a flight leader.

Larry Rabalais: Were they sort of formed in North Carolina or ...

Mr. Taylor: It was ... it was formed on South Carolina.

Larry Rabalais: South Carolina.

Mr. Taylor: And, at any rate, I was one of the original cadre in ... in the 345th and stayed with those, and when we went overseas ... well, first of all, we picked up our ... went to the factory and picked up our own airplane and trained with that until it was time to go. And we flew it overseas, and we first ... B-25 outfit to ... to fly our own ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... airplanes to cross the Pacific.

Larry Rabalais: So, where did ya'll leave from – San Francisco or ...

Mr. Taylor: San Francisco.

Larry Rabalais: ... San Francisco, uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: That's a long hop! Did ya'll ... what did they have to do to the airplanes? Anything like add some extra tanks or ...

Mr. Taylor: We had ... well, (chuckles), but it was real touch and go.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: It was ... I ... we'd been out ... we'd been airborne about eight hours and the navigator told me we weren't going to (chuckle) that we didn't have the wind we were supposed to have. We had a headwind.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: So, ya'll had a belly tank that was added or ...

Mr. Taylor: We had ... we had ... we had a bomb bay tank.

Larry Rabalais: Bomb Bay tank.

Mr. Taylor: And, at any rate, we were ... navigator said, "We're ... we're past the point of no return." So, I had been one that was trained for long-range cruising in that ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... so, I had (unintelligible), our radio operator, contact the plane behind me. And we were taking almost thirty-eight minutes apart and the two behind me were past the point of return also, so I gave them the power (unintelligible) and I contacted everybody by hand and had them ... had them turn ... turn back to California, so they came over later when they had better winds. But I landed at Hickam Field.

Larry Rabalais: Boy, I'll bet you were breathing a sigh of relief when you finally saw land!

Mr. Taylor: I pulled in and parked and then I kept the engine running so I could contact the wing ... wingman who was coming in. And I'd been on the ground about fifteen minutes, both engines died.

Larry Rabalais: Wow! What kind of air speed when you're trying to do long-range cruise? How ... how slow could you go that would work for ya'll? About a hundred and fifty or ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, about a hundred and sixty.

Larry Rabalais: A hundred and fifty?

Mr. Taylor: But ... but, of course, the plane behind me (pause) I told him what power settings to use and ... and hold his altitude until he had Hickam Field in sight.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Did he make it, too?

Mr. Taylor: He made ... he ... he landed and both engines died when he was on the runway.

Larry Rabalais: Oooh!

Mr. Taylor: And the third airplane, I was telling him the same thing. Well, and he lost both engines on final approach, but he was able to make a dead-stick landing. And

so we ... we made it alright. But the other, you know, the other planes came back when they had more favorable wind.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: And ... and most of them made it, but ...

Larry Rabalais: Probably about twenty-four hundred miles or how far is it that you think that is? It was a lot of hours in the air, that's for sure.

Mr. Taylor: Well, I was up ... I was up in the air twelve and a half hours.

Larry Rabalais: Twelve and a half hours.

Mr. Taylor: (Chuckles), I had about ten hours fuel.

Larry Rabalais: How do you go to the bathroom in that length of time?

Mr. Taylor: (Chuckles), no way.

Larry Rabalais: No way.

Mr. Taylor: (Cough), but ...

Larry Rabalais: You use a can, I guess.

Mr. Taylor: ... but the (unintelligible) took our big tank, bomb bay tank and put in a smaller tank. And then we ... so, individually went across on to ... island hopped over to Australia.

Larry Rabalais: You have to have a pretty good navigator when you're island hopping because that's some ... small islands.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, small, well, I had my regular ...

Larry Rabalais: You had ...

Mr. Taylor: ... (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: You were happy with your navigator; he was pretty good, huh?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, and since I was leading the squadron, why, I was ... I had ... the navigator. You know, each flight leader had a navigator, and ... at any rate, we ...

Larry Rabalais: Now, the Japanese, at that time, had pretty much taken over the Philippines and everything, so you had to stay away from the Philippines.

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: So, how did you get to Australia? You just ...

Mr. Taylor: No, we ... we went to ...

Larry Rabalais: New Caledonia, I assume or ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, we ... we lost some (unintelligible), and went to Christmas Island.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And I was almost out of gas when I got there. Then we went to Canton.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: They called the radiator, uh, radio went off the air through the Japanese submarine off of ... of Canton Island. And ... but we had no place else to go. We ... we around, but evidently the Japanese thought we were going to bomb them. At any rate, they ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... they submerged, and we went ahead and landed at Canton.

Larry Rabalais: Well, there wasn't much of an airstrip at Canton Island, if I remember correctly.

Mr. Taylor: It was one strip about five thousand ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: ... a little over five thousand. There was one ... one palm tree on the island.

Larry Rabalais: I remember a picture I saw of that Canton Island with it's one palm tree.

Mr. Taylor: That's right.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: Just a big sand bar.

Mr. Taylor: And we didn't (chuckle) well, we gassed up and we got off there early the next morning before that submarine came back.

Larry Rabalais: You were able to gas up there at Canton?

Mr. Taylor: No (?) ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... not very much. From there on to, oh, all the way down to Fiji and New Caledonia and ... and on to ...

Larry Rabalais: Now, in Australia where did ya'll end up? At Adelaide or South ...

Mr. Taylor: No, no, no.

Larry Rabalais: ... Sydney or ...

Mr. Taylor: Townsville.

Larry Rabalais: Town, oh, okay.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: That's on the north side on the hot side.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Tropical.

Mr. Taylor: And we went to town and then we went from there we split up and went to a little strip called Reid River and stayed there for ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... till ... till the rest of the group got there.

Larry Rabalais: Now, the Japanese had already taken over a lot of New Guinea at that time already and this ... what you are is basically, at that point, you were just right across that narrow area ...

Mr. Taylor: That's right.

Larry Rabalais: ... of the Pacific from New Guinea, yeah.

Mr. Taylor: But they ... they'd moved them back ... they ... well, we got to ... we got to town the old way (unintelligible) that's how they welcomed us, and they even told us what airstrips we were going to in New Guinea.

Larry Rabalais: (Chuckles).

Mr. Taylor: That kind of shook us a little bit. But well, we went up ... and (unintelligible) picnicked at our different airstrips up there.

Larry Rabalais: Townsville.

Mr. Taylor: And (unintelligible) to Port Moresby.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And then we went to a strip called ... called the Seventeen Mile Strip, and we were there, lived in tents and ... and actually in the jungles, and we flew out of there for uh, oh, a short time.

Larry Rabalais: Now, those kind of strips in a jungle ...

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible), we didn't have ... what?

Larry Rabalais: Was that metal mats that they used on ... for those kind of strips?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, that's right.

Larry Rabalais: Pretty ... pretty poor strip, huh?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, just a ... they said that (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: At any rate ...

Larry Rabalais: You can just put it right here, it'll be alright (showing where to put some object). That's be fine right there.

Mr. Taylor: But uh, at that time, we just had the one nose gun, and ... and we were ... actually, all we could do is drop supplies ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... to the infantry up there on ... on the ground. And ... and we couldn't really do what we wanted to do, but ... then we ... we flew back down to Brisbane and had our planes modified and put in a ...

Larry Rabalais: A solid nose with more machine guns?

Mr. Taylor: ... put in the A4 firing machine guns and ... and, yeah, then we went back and ... and tried to load it all. And then we ... we all (unintelligible) skip bombing.

Larry Rabalais: Did ya'll have any cannon put onboard or it was just all machine guns?

Mr. Taylor: That was later.

Larry Rabalais: That was later, yeah.

Mr. Taylor: That was after we got up to the ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... but then in about six months, we got the seventy-five automatic cannon. And ...

Larry Rabalais: So, did ya'll use the small bombs with parachutes on them at any time?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Parafrags? Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: Yes. We dropped ... we had package bombs with parachutes.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And ... and we got ... matter ... matter of fact, I got credit for thirty something airplanes on the ground one time.

Larry Rabalais: Wow!

Mr. Taylor: I was lead ... leading and we came over ... over the hill and the airplanes are ... were on the ground, and I went right down the row of them dropping these

parafrog bombs. And what had happened, they had sent the heavy bombers over early in the morning.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And they were at high altitude and they ... they dropped heavy bombs and catered the runway and ... and so forth, and ... and so the Japanese had sent all their fighters up to intercept them. But ... but they couldn't reach them. Yeah, at any rate, they ... some Japanese fighters had to come up to gas up and that's ... that's when we caught them (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: That's when you caught them. Well now, was the anti-aircraft guns a real problem on those kind of things? Obviously, if you got hit, that low, that close, you know, that would be a problem. And I know you did because I saw in the book and it said that you guys took some damage ...

Mr. Taylor: Well ... well that's right, but that was the reason we ... we'd come in so low they didn't see us coming.

Larry Rabalais: Low and fast.

Mr. Taylor: And they'd come in and ... and strafe; we hit ... hit their guns and ... and all their air defenses and then get out of there before (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Did you pretty much open up the engines, you know, to really get the best speed you could out of that?

Mr. Taylor: Uh yeah, we ...

Larry Rabalais: You could go about, what, two-forty or so?

Mr. Taylor: Two-forty, two-fifty (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Two-fifty, somewhere in there?

Mr. Taylor: Uh hum.

Larry Rabalais: All in the cross hairs.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. Come up with that ... go and get out of there, and so, we had fairly light losses with that type of ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... strike force.

Larry Rabalais: So, the strikes were fairly short distances from your jungle strip ...

Mr. Taylor: Uh (chuckles).

Larry Rabalais: ... or were they long?

Mr. Taylor: (Laughter).

Larry Rabalais: No?

Mr. Taylor: They were (chuckles) they were around five hundred miles.

Larry Rabalais: Oh! My goodness, I didn't realize.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah ...

Larry Rabalais: This is all engine ...

Mr. Taylor: ... all we had to worry about ... we had to worry about (unintelligible) on every trip.

Larry Rabalais: On every trip. And so, this was all in the New Guinea area, so it ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... I didn't realize New Guinea was that big.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Does ... there's different islands, too, (unintelligible).

Mr. Taylor: We started out to get out of town and we ... in other words, we were cross ... yeah, island, too, a place called Dobadura which is probably a couple of hundred miles across ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... from town to the island, and then on up to (unintelligible) which is another three hundred miles and ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: ... and worked our way up that ... that way. And ...

Larry Rabalais: Did ya'll encounter, well, in your particular instance, were the ... were ... were the Japanese fighters, at that point, a real problem yet, or ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, they were ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: ... yeah, they ... a lot of our missions. Some of them we had to abort because the weather was bad and our fighters couldn't ... couldn't escort us (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Were you ...

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Were your escorts usually P-38s then?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Or did they have some P-39s also escorting you?

Mr. Taylor: Uh, P-39s are gone.

Larry Rabalais: They were gone?

Mr. Taylor: Uh hum.

Larry Rabalais: 'Cause that was a lousy airplane for altitude and ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, it was just not ... not enough air (unintelligible) to that area.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And that ... what (unintelligible) what ... when we had the P-38 escorts, why, (unintelligible) well, we could do a lot of damage.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And (pause) ...

Larry Rabalais: Okay, so ...

Mr. Taylor: ... after we got the ... after we get the loaded guns, and about the first mission, and you all know I was leading it and ... and a zero coming right straight at me, and he hadn't heard about those eight guns.

Larry Rabalais: Uhm!

Mr. Taylor: I opened up and caught him ... caught him with all eight of them (laughter).

Larry Rabalais: You blew him up, huh?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. And I didn't realize that I had guys behind me, and they were screaming, "Hey, your empty shells are going (unintelligible) ... (laughter)." So, we changed our tactics and ... and flew fighter formations after that. Then ... but ...

Larry Rabalais: So, ya'll flew together as a ... a tight little group when you tried to do ...

Mr. Taylor: Well ...

Larry Rabalais: ... but not acting individually too much?

Mr. Taylor: No, we were flying as ... instead of ... the reason they started flying ... a diamond.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: By the time we ... we reached the plane, that's ... fighter formations at two, a plane and a wingman.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And that ... that way it would ... we were able to handle it pretty well. But the ... hadn't ... got to ... on this one trip to ... to Rabaul, well, we came off a target and a ... one of the P-38s was yelling for help. And we looked up and a bunch of ... of zeros coming after, so I told him, "Fly in front of the strafers." He dropped down to two hundred feet right in front of me, and they came across and ... and there were three airplanes, three zeros after him, and they dropped down, and I shot the first one, and that scared the second one, pulled straight up and my gunner got him. The next one went down, but we felt the concussion on the hit ... hit the ground under us, and we couldn't ... couldn't claim it because we didn't see him.

Larry Rabalais: You didn't see him, yeah.

Mr. Taylor: But at least we knocked the three of them.

Larry Rabalais: Well, that was pretty good, knocking all three of them out like that.

Mr. Taylor: And I got the P-38 fly on our wing, and we took him home.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And he had a wing ... (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: So, you protected the P-38! That's a little unusual, it's supposed to be the other way around!

Mr. Taylor: But ... but we got him home. It ...

Larry Rabalais: Now, the missions to Rabaul, were those flown from New Guinea or where did you fly from to get to Rabaul? That's a long ways!

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, we usually flew from ... from Dobadura.

Larry Rabalais: That's ... that's on the island of New Guinea?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: It was on ... up on the east island ...

Larry Rabalais: On the east end, yeah, the east end.

Mr. Taylor: ... (unintelligible), a couple of hundred, closer than ...

Larry Rabalais: That's still a pretty good run, I imagine to Rabaul.

Mr. Taylor: Oh yeah, it was long.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: It was a long haul. But ...

Larry Rabalais: Now, in between, if you ran across Japanese shipping, did ya'll stop ... do ... do something different for your mission, or did you try to interdict those ships or ...

Mr. Taylor: Well ...

Larry Rabalais: ... you stuck to your mission pretty close?

Mr. Taylor: Most of our missions was ... were after the small Japanese ships.

Larry Rabalais: After the ships, okay.

Mr. Taylor: We don't ... you know, we got the fighters, so the fighters (unintelligible), but we were aft ... we went after shipping. And we sunk a lot of their ship along ... up along the ...

Larry Rabalais: After a while ...

Mr. Taylor: ... New Guinea and ... and up in New Britain, on up (pause).

Larry Rabalais: This would have been in late '43? Would that have been ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... primarily ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... somewhere in there? Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: We were taking some losses then because of a lot of things – weather and just all kinds of things; ya'll were losing a lot of aircraft. I was looking in the book here.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Like where some of these ... like plane disappeared on a run from so and so and so and so.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: I notice a number of them disappeared on a flight from California to Hawaii, quite a few of them ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... just disappeared and never got there.

Mr. Taylor: That's right.

Larry Rabalais: That's a dangerous crossing then in those days, you know?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, it was.

Larry Rabalais: Reciprocating engines.

Mr. Taylor: Uh before ... before we ... we made a long-range flight, they were shipping B-25s over on ships.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But ... but we were really the firsts ones that took a whole group over.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum, wow!

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. Had a little (unintelligible) ... long-range cruiser.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, that's stretching the capability of a [B-25] twenty-five, you know.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Even with ... even with extra tanks, yeah. Can't ... can't afford to be wasting gas on the engines. Did they change out the engines fairly often out in that jungle situation?

Mr. Taylor: Well, that's where we, you know, we made ... we were making a mistake, but we were changing them every two hundred hours. And we (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Even if you had a ...

Mr. Taylor: We found out afterwards, we didn't need to change them that often.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, even if you had a good running engine, they'd change it out anyway.

Mr. Taylor: Right.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But it was ... it was ... it was safer, and we didn't lose very many because of engine failure.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum, uh hum. So, that was a dependable airplane?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: As far as you're concerned, yeah. Now, it could take some damage, but obviously, ya'll were hit ...

Mr. Taylor: It took a lot of damage.

Larry Rabalais: With ... with small arms fire or with small, I would say small caliber anti-aircraft and stuff like that. Probably ya'll took quite a bit of (unintelligible).

Mr. Taylor: You know, we got quite a bit of that ... that ... and ... of course, we had some structural damage, and ... and ...

Larry Rabalais: Well, I noticed at one time in the book there, it said that ya'll took some damage and then when you put it down, the landing gear collapsed. That was ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... was that out of New Guinea also? Eniwetok or where was that at?

Mr. Taylor: Oh well, (chuckles) we had several of them.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, several of them like that, okay. Alright. When you put it down and it ... you ... the gear collapses, that's not a fun thing, I guess, huh?

Mr. Taylor: (Chuckles), nope. No, it was, yeah. Oh, we had one I had to put down, the nose gear collapsed, but that was because ... and ... and I strafed a little freighter, a ship, and ... and he caught me with anti-aircraft, right over the ship.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And it blew out the hydraulic gear (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: So, I ... I get this thing home and with ... without ailerons and without our elevators. So, we ... we landed that one on the main gear, and the tail skid.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. So, you just bring it in like that.

Mr. Taylor: And ... yeah, and it ...

Larry Rabalais: As ... as steep an angle of attack as you can get away with and ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... put it down like that, huh?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. But we ... we jacked it up, put the nose wheel down and (chuckles) and we flew the thing. I had ... I was ... we were due to go to Australia on leave, so ... so we straightened out the propellers and ... put the nose gear down and I flew the thing to Australia just the ...

Larry Rabalais: Boy, you guys were tough!

Mr. Taylor: (Chuckles), I got down ... to ... to the depot and ... and they fixed us up, and "I need to go back in about ten days." (Chuckles) and ...

Larry Rabalais: So, they repaired the plane? They didn't give you another plane?

Mr. Taylor: (Laughter) they said "You not going any place with this one!"

Larry Rabalais: So, you pretty much stuck with that one plane for a good while?

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: No?

Mr. Taylor: Well, I ... I ... we flew our own airplane as well as we could, but later on, like that one, we had to take it down; they just give me a new airplane, and ...

Larry Rabalais: Well, the new one's a little faster maybe or better armed?

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Not really?

Mr. Taylor: The same thing.

Larry Rabalais: Same thing.

Mr. Taylor: But ... so, it was ... and of course, they ran into some (pause) ...

Larry Rabalais: The ... the big Rabaul run, uh raid that of course, is in the book that I saw the letter that you'd received from Hap Arnold on that. Uh, that was a real big effort apparently, and ya'll really did some damage to the ships. I ... I was amazed at those photographs.

Mr. Taylor: Oh yeah.

Larry Rabalais: That the accuracy of your bombing was really remarkable. 'Cause a ship, you know, at high speed like that when you're moving and that ... that ship is not very wide ...

Mr. Taylor: Uh uh.

Larry Rabalais: ... when you're coming across there to do a hit like that, that ... that's pretty good! They sunk a lot of ship there in that Simpson Harbor.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. But not only that, and I say that was just one day.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. So, ya'll did that a number of days or several days?

Mr. Taylor: I ... I went back to that place four days in a row.

Larry Rabalais: Four days in a row! Did you get hit? They had a lot of anti-aircraft there.

Mr. Taylor: I only got hit on the first day, got one ... one hole.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But after that ... thing got a little more rough (chuckle).

Larry Rabalais: Uh, did ya'll have good fighter escort on those missions, and was that also P-38s mostly?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. That's the only thing that had ... only plane that had enough range ...

Mr. Taylor: At that time.

Larry Rabalais: ... to go with you guys. Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: Well, yeah. A little later on they got the P-47s ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, yeah.

Mr. Taylor: ... that were there.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: And they could go.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But ... but we got ... we get up to Nadzab (sp?) and I had ... I had over fifty missions in. Yeah, had enough ... I wasn't supposed to be flying ...

Larry Rabalais: Oh, you weren't?

Mr. Taylor: ... every day (chuckles), but ...

Larry Rabalais: Were you ... were you operations officer then?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, uh hum. But ...

Larry Rabalais: So, as your responsibility as operations officer, you sort of helped assign the crews? Assign the crew and ... and the missions and all that sort of thing?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But then I'd actually flown about four or five missions that were not on the books.

Larry Rabalais: Uhm!

Mr. Taylor: And ... but then I got dengue fever.

Larry Rabalais: Uh oh!

Mr. Taylor: And I lost about a hundred and eighty pounds down to about a hundred and fifty-five (chuckles) in about four days.

Larry Rabalais: Where were you at at that time? Were you in New Guinea then?

Mr. Taylor: I was ... I was up in ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: ... up in New Guinea, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: The weather was pretty bad; it rained a lot and ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... muddy and what not?

Mr. Taylor: Well, you had equatorial front.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And you take off early in the morning, and ... and (pause) and you ... you ... usually do alright, but the ... the front would move back in about noon.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: So, you'd come back in and have to ... had big rain storms (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Wet all the time. Everything was wet all the time, huh?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: That made ...

Mr. Taylor: After I got ... I got dengue fever, well, they (pause) put me on an airplane and sent me to Hawaii (chuckles).

Larry Rabalais: Oh, that's not so bad.

Mr. Taylor: Said I was done.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: Well, I'd already finished my missions, and I ... by that time I had a couple ... I had two Air Medals and two Distinguished Flying Crosses.

Larry Rabalais: So, what'd you ... what'd they assign you to do in Hawaii? They ... they give you some operations staff duty or ...

Mr. Taylor: No, oh, I was ... main thing was just to recuperate.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, just to recuperate. Oh okay.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, I get recuperated and then sent me back to the States.

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: That would have been in '44?

Mr. Taylor: yep, uh hum. Sent me back to South Carolina and started instructing again.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And (pause) ...

Larry Rabalais: Did you recuperate pretty well from that dengue fever, or did it last with you?

Mr. Taylor: Well ...

Larry Rabalais: Did it stay ... like malaria sometimes comes back anyhow. This is different?

Mr. Taylor: Uh, it ... no, I came out of it pretty well.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: In about a month, I gained my weight back again.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And ...

Larry Rabalais: So, you were instructing again back in the Carolinas.

Mr. Taylor: Yep, but ... but since they ... they had to kind of ... the combat experience, we were instructing them in the low-level bombing and ... and by that time, we had the B-25, uh, the seventy-five-millimeter cannons (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Okay.

Mr. Taylor: And so, I spent most of the time on that. And then ...

Larry Rabalais: Now, when you're shooting that seventy-five out of a B-25, that's got to shake that air frame from one end to the other (chuckles).

Mr. Taylor: On the ... on the early ones, it did.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: Because they put in an artillery seventy-five.

Larry Rabalais: So, it wasn't a lot of fun.

Mr. Taylor: That thing weighed about eight-hundred and fifty pounds.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: And then they switched and put in a ...

Larry Rabalais: A lighter weight one?

Mr. Taylor: ... they put in a lighter ... lighter weight one that ... that only weighed about four-hundred and fifty pounds. But it still pulled the same ... pilots of combat experience 'cause I went back a way of CBI [China/Burma/India]; flew the Hump for another fifty-one missions (rattling sounds).

Larry Rabalais: All with cargo planes?

Mr. Taylor: Uh, B-25s.

Larry Rabalais: B-25s. What were you doing flying the Hump in a B-25? For protection?

Mr. Taylor: (Squeaking sounds). Same thing. You get over there and cut them, low, low strafing. It was the Japanese army on the run over there.

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh.

Mr. Taylor: And so, I ran up the ...

Larry Rabalais: So, where were you based?

Mr. Taylor: ... (unintelligible). We couldn't ...

Larry Rabalais: Were you based in Burma or India?

Mr. Taylor: What?

Larry Rabalais: Were you based in Burma or India?

Mr. Taylor: Based in India, but we were ...

Larry Rabalais: Flying over ...

Mr. Taylor: ... over the Hump into Burma, and ... and ... until we (pause) ran them so far out we couldn't reach them anymore, and so ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Now, what ... was ... was that a newer model of the B-25 then that was equipped differently or ...

Mr. Taylor: They switched to ... switched to ... gave us a ... B-26s.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, B-26s!

Mr. Taylor: A-26.

Larry Rabalais: Oh, the A-26?! Were you flying the A-26?

Mr. Taylor: On my second tour.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. That's a hot little plane!

Mr. Taylor: But I had ... but I had what, nine campaigns in the Southwest Pacific, so that was quite a few.

Larry Rabalais: That A-26 was a fast plane.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: And it had a lot of armament. Ya'll had a lot of machine guns on that one!

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: You could put some lead down with that!

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: That thing would go over three hun ... it'd go to three hundred miles an hour, wouldn't it?

Mr. Taylor: Hell, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. Now, on the A-26, did you have a co-pilot?

Mr. Taylor: Uh uhm.

Larry Rabalais: So, you were ... you were the pilot, and then you had what, a navigator, a radio operator or ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, we had a ... well, they had the navigator on the lead airplane usually.

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh.

Mr. Taylor: but most ... usually, I ... I flew the (unintelligible) solo. Oh well, no, solo ...

Larry Rabalais: Did you have a gunner? Did you have a gunner?

Mr. Taylor: Had ... had an engineer.

Larry Rabalais: An engineer?

Mr. Taylor: Uh hum.

Larry Rabalais: Did he also man the gun, the turret?

Mr. Taylor: Yep, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: How? And that little plane ...

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible). And he also loaded the cannon (chuckles).

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh. What size cannon was that ... that ... on that A-26, what size cannon was that? Was that a 37 millimeter?

Mr. Taylor: No, we ... we had a seventy-five.

Larry Rabalais: Had a seventy-five?! On that little plane?! I didn't realize they had seventy-fives on there, too. I know that ya'll ... they were experimenting with it on the twenty-five.

Mr. Taylor: But they changed it ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: ... but we used mostly the fifties.

Larry Rabalais: Well, I didn't realize the A-26 was used on the Japanese there towards the end.

Mr. Taylor: Well ...

Larry Rabalais: I take that back. I did interview a gentleman who was ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, what it was that they ... they ... by the time we got them over there, they ... well, they couldn't reach us.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: And ... oh, Ponder (sp?) ... (unintelligible), I have to tell you about that because he stayed with them and ... and they still had the ...

Larry Rabalais: Well, I inter ...

Mr. Taylor: ... B-26s over (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: ... I interviewed a gentleman ... I interviewed a gentleman who was the engineer/gunner on an A-26 ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... right at the end of the war; he was shot down in Japan. They were strafing Japanese targets at low level and his job ... they had ... they had two, thirty-seven millimeters, and then he had canisters that he would load, he was right behind the pilot ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... and he would load these canisters in that thirty-seven millimeter while they strafed an airfield just outside of Tokyo. And they ... they got a direct hit in their left engine by a large-diameter shell, knocked the engine completely out of the wing, so the pilot just went ahead and put it down in rice paddies, they skidded to a stop, and they were surrounded by Japanese troops within a matter of two minutes, and so, he spent six months in a prisoner of war camp.

Mr. Taylor: Uh hum.

Larry Rabalais: But he was fly ... they were on an A-36 with thirty-seven millimeters ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: ... that they were shooting. Let me ask you something.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, they did a lot of things with that ... that twenty-six.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: Great airplane!

Larry Rabalais: Tough airplane! On this map, you know, this is New Guinea here, and ... but where is Rabaul at? Is it ... is it separate? An island separate or something like that? (Squeaking of chairs). I'm trying to remember where Rabaul is at.

Mr. Taylor: Hum.

Larry Rabalais: Now, this is New Guinea, and that's New Britain, right there. So, is it on New Britain?

Mr. Taylor: No, just a minute; I can't see.

Larry Rabalais: Alright. Is Rabaul on New Britain? It doesn't show Rabaul, but I think it's on the island of New Britain.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. So ... so, it's right off the eastern end of New Guinea, right there.

Mr. Taylor: Up in here, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Right in there, okay. So, Townsville, ya'll flew over to New Guinea from Australia there.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: And then this is the eastern end here.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Alright. Right at that eastern end, right there (pointing on map at the location of Rabaul).

Mr. Taylor: Now, of course, they moved that ... that 345th moved on all the way on up, and ...

Larry Rabalais: Well, that's Borneo over there.

Mr. Taylor: But they actually went ...

Larry Rabalais: Through the Philippines?

Mr. Taylor: They went to the Philippines.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, uh huh. Well, that was while you were gone?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, I already ... I finished up down here.

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh.

Mr. Taylor: At ... at Nadzab.

Larry Rabalais: Those distances don't look big on the map, but I bet in real life there was some long flying hours!

Mr. Taylor: (Laughter). And an awful lot of water!

Larry Rabalais: And a lot of water, too. Boy, you better have good navigation when you're doing that!

Mr. Taylor: Uh hum.

Larry Rabalais: That would scare me to death! So, you had to have a lot of trust in your navigator then.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. But then, of course, when I finished up over in ... finished up over in India ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, been over there.

Mr. Taylor: ... (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Let's see (looking at map).

Mr. Taylor: And, yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah, that's China. So, India would have been over there.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: But we ... we'd take our A-26s ... took them back to ... to Germany for the occupation air force.

Larry Rabalais: And did you ... did you go there?

Mr. Taylor: I took ... yeah, I ... I had ... we took ninety-eight A-26s and flew ... flew them to Germany.

Larry Rabalais: For the occupation period?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh. So, you got to see Germany also!

Mr. Taylor: Oh yeah.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah? What time of the year was that? Was that ... was that wintertime or ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, we got ... well, just before Thanksgiving.

Larry Rabalais: So, that's quite a change in temperature for you (chuckles)!

Mr. Taylor: (Laughter).

Larry Rabalais: (Chuckles), yeah.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, we were (pause) all warm clothes. I mean, awful warm weather clothes until we get to ... get into Germany, and then we did some fast swapping.

Larry Rabalais: Did ... well, by then, the European war was over with.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: So, what happened when the ... VE Day occurred, when the Japanese surrendered then? Where were you at then?

Mr. Taylor: What?

Larry Rabalais: When the Japanese surrendered, where were you at?

Mr. Taylor: Well, I was over in India.

Larry Rabalais: You were in ... still in India? Alright.

Mr. Taylor: I was (sounds), we were still chasing the Japanese with the A-26s (laughter). I mean, oh, we'd just gotten the twenty-eights when (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: But the ...

Larry Rabalais: And so, after Germany, after you ferried those airplanes over there ...

Mr. Taylor: Yeah (unintelligible).

Larry Rabalais: ... did you go back ... go back to the States?

Mr. Taylor: I'd already had two ... two full tours and ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah.

Mr. Taylor: ... and I came back to the States.

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. Did you decide to stay in then?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah. And I stayed ... and I was stationed down here at Kelly Field.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Were you married at the end of the war or after the war?

Mr. Taylor: Yeah.

Larry Rabalais: And you were already married there at the end of the ...

Mr. Taylor: Well, I was married (pause) when I went overseas the first time. And I was divorced while I was over on my second tour.

Larry Rabalais: Uhm! Okay.

Mr. Taylor: Then I came back and ... and remarried.

Larry Rabalais: So, just ... just as a general background, uh, after the war then, I assume you were assigned to different places all over the ... all over the place probably.

Mr. Taylor: Well, I was stationed here at ...

Larry Rabalais: Kelly.

Mr. Taylor: ... Kelly, and when ... then I went to ... to the Institute of Technology; they sent me to ... up to Kansas University.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And I got my degree up there and then back to Georgia as chief of flight safety for the 14th Air ... 12th Air Force.

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum.

Mr. Taylor: And ... and a lot of different things.

Larry Rabalais: What's ... what the closest call that you had during the war in terms of danger to yourself? Some other crash landing maybe or some of the near misses? One that left an impression on you.

Mr. Taylor: (Pause), oh, I had some ... could have told a test pilot (unintelligible) there. But I ... I was pretty lucky. I didn't have many ...

Larry Rabalais: Yeah. Well, you saw some of your buddies killed, I assume, that were flying planes with you, and other airplanes that went down, I'm sure, during the war. And that ... that's got to be pretty hard if you become pretty close friends with them. But I guess you just move on then.

Mr. Taylor: (Unintelligible)?

Larry Rabalais: I say when you lose some of your close friends that you've been ... they've been flying other planes and you see them go down or some that I know that's got to be hard.

Mr. Taylor: Well, we ...

Larry Rabalais: But you just keep going on.

Mr. Taylor: Yep.

Larry Rabalais: Just going on. Well, Glenn, I can't ...

Mr. Taylor: We lost a lot of them, but (pause) ...

Larry Rabalais: Well, that was a long time ago, and I know our country has ... has recognized you in some ways, but it's never enough for what you and ... and all your fellow ... fellow men did, and we today that are not quite as old as you are, but getting up there ourselves, we appreciate what you have done probably more than anybody. And on behalf of the Nimitz Museum, I'd like to thank you for sharing this experience with us. We'll make a CD disk of this and ... and send it to you and you can listen to it.

Mr. Taylor: (Chuckles).

Larry Rabalais: I ... I hope it came out alright. I think they usually do it ... picks up pretty well, and ... and so, had you been fully interviewed before by some others ... some other outfits maybe, museums or somebody?

Mr. Taylor: No, not really.

Larry Rabalais: Not really?

Mr. Taylor: I've got some other disks to ... that were made but ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh hum. Well, this will be something for your children and grandchildren, I assume, that might be interested in that.

Mr. Taylor: Oh yeah, they're ... they ... they're nieces and nephews that ... that's the reason I ... I hang onto these ... these books because I ... I promised them to my ...

Larry Rabalais: Uh huh. Well, I'm sure I can find one on the internet, and I'm definitely going to try to find one for the Museum on that book 'cause that's a fantastic book. It ... it's got a lot of detail in it. You went ...

Mr. Taylor: Uh, thing about it, it's ... it ... it (chuckles) it's true life. I mean, it's ... holding our own little cameras out the windows sometimes and ... and ...

Larry Rabalais: And that's the way it was.

Mr. Taylor: Then we ... when Hickey (sp?) started building that book ... there were about seven of us that had quite a few pictures of ...

Larry Rabalais: So, you helped him out with pictures and things like that, yeah, okay.

Mr. Taylor: Yeah, uh hum.

Larry Rabalais: Well, that's (unintelligible). Well, again, on behalf of the Museum, Glenn, I want to thank you and to personally thank you for what you have shared with us. I know sometimes some of these mem ... memories can be a little bit painful, but ... but you're the last living links that we have to what was an important time in our nation's history, and we want the ... the youngsters today to appreciate what ... what ... what all that you've done.

FINAL copy

CD – #OH03949 – Mr. Glenn Taylor

Transcribed by: K. Matras

Houston, TX

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